Presidents’ Message

Welcome to the 2020-2021 Season!

This season has been described as "a season unlike any other" for a number of reasons. It is off to a terrific start with the finalization of a five-year contract for the orchestra. This contract recognizes the numerous challenges that the current situation presents while offering the opportunity to examine and assess what has been done and how to do more in different and imaginative ways to reach and benefit more people.

Your BSA is following suit. We are looking both within and out to the community. We have committees reviewing our policies and procedures to bring them up to date and make our operation more efficient and welcoming. We are also exploring ways to reach and include more groups of BSO music lovers by working more closely with the development staff of the BSO.

Two new opportunities to support the BSA and the orchestra are coming soon: a fall celebration (see details on page 2) and our much-awaited playing card project which has gone to the printers (see details on page 3). Both of these endeavors offer new ways for the BSA to reach out to a wider community.

We want to hear from you with your ideas and suggestions for activities and projects that will help the BSA reach more members of our wider music-loving community. Please contact either of us.

Barbara Kelly & Jo Kendig
Co-Presidents

Barbara Kelly
Jo Kendig
Tribute to Marguerite Walsh, Past President

Thank You Marguerite!

Little did you know when you accepted the position of BSA President the unusual challenges you would face during your tenure. As you became President in 2017 all of the usual BSA projects seemed to be in place. We were completing a Show House and had everything in place for our other big project, Kitchens of Note. This turned out to be the lull before the storm.

Who could have imagined that there would be a lock-out of the musicians and a cancellation of the Summer Season? Throughout this you kept the focus on how we as the BSA could help and support our musicians. You worked with management and the BSA Board to carry out the provisions the State Legislature required to develop a long-range program for the Orchestra’s success.

Once this seemed to be on the way, everyone and everything came to a screeching halt as the COVID-19 pandemic stopped events and we went into lock-down. Your focus continued to be on maintaining connections and support for members and musicians.

Oh, and just to add a real challenge, you did all this while successfully overcoming a major personal health challenge. You kept us focused and grounded through caring for each other throughout these challenges. We will always be grateful for your dedication and support.

We love our BSO boosters!

Owners Sandy and Ray Frank of Inverness Farm Brewery have declared Sunday, October 18, 2020 BSO DAY at Inverness Brewery

In Beautiful B’more County Hunt Country
16200 Markoe Rd., corner of Monkton Rd.

Featuring . . .
BEER – October-festive Inverness brews!
FOOD – Locally-sourced beef, “brat,” and more!
MUSIC – Recorded encore performances by BSO musicians plus a “virtual” sneak peek at what’s ahead.

For every beer, “brat” or beef item sold from noon to 5 pm, Sandy and Ray will donate $1 to the BSA/BSO in support of the orchestra’s many on-going music education programs!

Check the brewery’s website HERE to plan your visit on BSO Day at Inverness. Have a great day in the country and celebrate our fabulous Baltimore Symphony Orchestra!

No admission fee or reservations required. Operating under all COVID guidelines.
Sponsorships Sold Out!
Decks are being printed!

Our Symphonic Scenes of Maryland personalized card decks are at the printer! The printing and checking process can take up to two months but we hope to receive them no later than November 1st. The cards come in beautiful boxes with a custom design that includes our BSA logo and images representing each section of the orchestra – Brass, Strings, Woodwinds, and Percussion. Each card has a photo of a notable Maryland ‘scene’, an identification of that scene and the dedication that each card sponsor requested. The decks will make a nice gift and a great stocking stuffer!

Remember that you will receive one deck for every card you sponsored. If you want to purchase more or have friends and family that would like to buy them, the prices are:

- One deck - $8
- Two decks - $15
- Three decks - $20
- Four decks - $25

Buy all four decks to have the complete symphony orchestra! We will send a special message when the cards are available for you to purchase – just in time for the holidays.

Thanks to everyone who helped us complete this fundraiser by sponsoring cards – we know you’ll love the finished product! And thanks to Freddye Silverman and Randy Jacobs who have seen this project through to fruition. Well done!

2021 BSA Events

We all know that 2020 has been a bust, but we don’t know how 2021 will be as far as the pandemic is concerned. Nevertheless, the BSA has set a few tentative dates for events in 2021 – COVID-19 permitting. Please note your calendar and watch for updates.

Second Fiddle Shoppes
Saturday, April 24, 2021

Kitchens of Note
Wednesday, May 19, 2021

With fingers crossed, we will be holding our Kitchens of Note event in May. It will still be in beautiful Hunt Country/Monkton and we will have six marvelous homes. If you purchased tickets for the 2020 event, those will all be honored in 2021. If you didn’t keep your printed ticket, don’t worry about it – we have all the information we need on a report.

Winey Wednesdays will resume when we can safely gather together.

Music Adventures will depend on the BSO schedule and availability of musicians.

BSA Odds & Ends

The BSA Needs Your Membership Renewal!

We have all enjoyed the many activities of the BSA in one way or another, from Family Concert Luncheons to the Symphony Store to Winey Wednesdays and much more. Because of COVID-19, our activities have been placed on hold but not our planning and excitement for the future. The work of the BSA is vital in reaching out to the community through our peripheral events, to all ages from children to adults, and we can’t wait to start up again.

The BSO administration is using this pause to make exciting advancements and outreach efforts. These include longer-term artistic planning; community engagement work; an enhanced patron experience; greater statewide service; and the adaptation of new technology.
The BSA has an important and unique role to play in this forward-looking journey. The year ahead is a time in which we will discuss and solidify that role, and we invite all BSA members to join us in that process.

You have been a loyal supporter of the work of the BSA, and it is vital for us to remain committed to our significant fundraising and sustaining role. By renewing your membership now, you will help our community engagement efforts to continue. We will keep you informed about our volunteer opportunities as they return so that you can participate in our important work.

You will receive your membership renewal mailing soon. The deadline for renewals is October 30. Do it as soon as you can!

Thank You Notes to the BSA

You’ll recall from the last edition of News Notes that the BSA made a special contribution to the BSO’s OffStage programming. This donation was in lieu of our annual Musician Appreciation Luncheon for the musicians and staff.

Brian Prechtl, Chair of the Players’ Committee responded by saying “This is so touching. Thank you so much for this lovely gesture.”

And Allison Burr-Livingstone, BSO VP and Chief Advancement Officer, wrote “...the additional gift of $2,000.00 made on June 11, 2020 to support BSOffstage demonstrates the BSA’s commitment to our continuation of vital musical enrichment and outreach despite extraordinary circumstances.”

Allison went on to state “...concert cancellations this spring make the impact of the BSA’s partnership and philanthropy more profound than ever. With a passionate volunteer and advocate corps such as the Associates in our corner, we can look ahead beyond current challenges to a bright future for this organization.”

BSA Nominating Committee

As required by the BSA bylaws, the members of the Nominating Committee were selected earlier this month. They will begin work on developing a slate of nominees for BSA offices which will be voted upon at the 2021 Annual Meeting. The Committee will be chaired by Past President Marguerite Walsh. Other members are Linda Kacur, Sara Levine, Ruth Ann Shepard, Debbie Stetson, and Bob Whitby. Expect to hear more from the committee in the near future.

Bylaws Work Group

At its September meeting, the Board of Directors also created a work group to study and recommend revisions to the BSA Bylaws. Members of the committee are Jo Kendig, Barbara Kelly, Marguerite Walsh, Sandy Feldman, Barbara Dent, Louise Reiner, Marge Penhallegon and Betsy Osterman. Please contact a work group member with suggestions and recommendations for changes. All amendments to the Bylaws will be presented to the Board and then to BSA members for their consideration and approval.

BSA Trustees

BSA bylaws stipulate that the President may appoint up to three individuals to serve as Trustees on the Board of Directors. The current Trustees are Debbie Stetson and Mary Carroll Plaine.

BSA Board Meetings

The Board of the BSA will usually meet on the first Wednesday of each month at 10:00 am. (Meetings are currently held via Zoom.). Members who would like to attend a meeting should contact the Co-Presidents Barbara Kelly and Jo Kendig as well as Office Manager LaRay Johnson. You are welcome to join in the fun!
**In a Virtual Experience, BSO Players Broaden Music’s Reach**
by BSA Member David Joseph

How does classical music, a centuries-old art form that’s inherently challenging to share with virtual audiences, take “one small step and one giant leap” forward into the virtual universe?

Enter a global pandemic that’s silenced live performances, along with the ingenuity of our beloved musicians who have continued gracing us with wonderful music even in the darkest of hours. From here emerges the vision of how to achieve the very goal of broadening classical music’s accessibility.

**BSOffstage** is a thoughtful new series of virtual performances featuring our very own Baltimore Symphony Orchestra players in a novel experience of classical music. While it may lack the thrill of witnessing the full ensemble live in concert, we are certainly enjoying some unprecedented insight into the music we love.

Whether it’s a favorite Bach suite presented in our viola section’s witty and entertaining series, “Lunch-Bachs,” or a cherished weekend recital showcasing intriguing repertoires, harvest of material put players trying times simply new the consistent fresh, engaging forth by our during such has been incredible!

But how does a classical instrumentalist who is accustomed to playing amongst a large section of an orchestra suddenly adapt to performing as a soloist—oh, in their living rooms no less, videoing themselves on iPhones?!

“It’s definitely not what we signed up for,” remarked violinist Ivan Stefanovic with a brief chuckle. “Having to perform alone in front of the camera especially with the knowledge that what goes online will stay there forever, really exposes us in ways that we aren’t normally used to as symphony players.”

Typically, a slightly imperfect note goes undetected within the overall sound of the orchestra. In a solo virtual performance though, even the faintest of errors are fully audible and visible to everyone.

That’s aside from the monumental adjustment of having to shift from performing before hundreds of delighted fans to playing in front of no one from the confines of home quarantine. “It was quite lonely at first—even kind of depressing to be honest,” said violist Karin Brown about the unique challenges of at-home performances. “I really had to take a timeout for some soul-searching during the early days of the shutdown just to try and envision how all of us in the classical community were going to move forward with this whole play-from-home thing.”

Yet, as many of us can now attest to, there are surprising advantages to virtual programming. “I’d like to welcome the entire BSO family right here into my living room,” exclaimed our cherished pianist, Lura Johnson, as she began what would be the BSO’s first virtual recital back in late-March as we all grappled with the onslaught of the COVID-19 pandemic.

What began as the sobering task of our players searching for a means to offer solace and serenity during a time of crisis quickly flourished into an unprecedented personal connection between the musicians and the BSO family at large.

“Usually, we walk in through one door, the audience through another, we play the music, everyone cheers, we bow—and then we walk out those same separate entrances, and there isn’t much interaction between us and the patrons.” “That’s all changed now,” remarked Stefanovic, who like others in the performing arts have come to recognize the value of...
watching a favorite artist deliver a personal serenade right to one’s living room, albeit virtually.

This new degree of personal connection between artist and listener which virtual programming so perfectly lends itself to ought not to be seen as a mere byproduct of the unusual circumstances of the last half year. The anomaly of recording classical music on consumer electronics away from the concert hall is likely the very phenomenon that enables the artform to thrive in an all-digital world.

“We should have been doing this all along,” said violist Colin Sorgi in regard to the need for more digital media in classical music. As the one largely responsible for producing “Lunch-Bachs,” he credits his own experience as a freelance artist which has helped him “venture into the unknown.”

It is not without an astounding rise in quality of inexpensive home electronics, paired with the dedication of our players to their music, that we can enjoy such a viable alternative to live concerts.

“Music isn’t just a profession, it’s a way of life,” said Lura Johnson on a recent segment of WYPR’s Midday. She discussed how she and her colleagues have embraced all of their new technical responsibilities for the sake of continuing to share music no matter the circumstance.

From there, a delicate dance of great musicianship and the arduous task of simultaneously controlling all of the technical facets while playing is how our musicians have produced such wonderful virtual offerings for everyone to enjoy.

With live-streaming now a centerpiece of classical programming as we continue navigating the straits of the pandemic, the BSO has recently announced the launch of a new digital concerts series to begin later this fall as small groups of players have now returned to the Meyerhoff. Robotic cameras have been installed at strategic positions above the stage to capture multiple viewpoints of the musicians as they embark on their socially-distanced journey of making music again during such remarkably strange times.

“While COVID-19 may have placed us in very unusual settings that we’re not accustomed to as symphony players,” reflected violinist Ellen Troyer, “we are still fulfilling our paramount role as artists, which is to gift the public with meaningful entertainment—perhaps to forget about the troubles of life for a while?!”

An iPhone and an iPad astutely positioned near the piano, ready to record a recent web-recital by pianist, Lura Johnson.

An affordable pair of microphones, a smart phone, and a computer replaces what conventionally would have amounted to thousands of dollars’ worth of studio grade equipment. All that’s really necessary is the wit to create an inviting backdrop to shoot video somewhere at home — hardly an uncommon chore during our current stay-at-home-era.
An Extraordinary Agreement & An Exciting (Virtual) Fall
From Allison Burr-Livingstone
BSO VP & Chief Advancement Officer

As many of our friends in the BSA well know, for the past year, the BSO has been on a journey. This journey has not always been easy, but we (the collective we – management, musicians, board, endowment trustees and community leaders alike) have also realized new creative heights and points of alignment along the way. And as we shared in our recent family announcement, “Just as these tumultuous times have revealed the unmatched value of music to nurture and uplift hearts, minds and spirit, they have also reaffirmed that we were perhaps better poised to navigate the challenges of COVID-19 because of all that we have experienced together.”

We hope you will have read all of the news outlining the extraordinary five-year collective bargaining agreement reached with our superb musicians and announced just a few weeks ago. If not, please find that full announcement here!

Now, we have been able to get back to the work of what we all do best – making great music and music education. Though we can’t accommodate audiences in our halls just yet, we are excited to be launching a new digital concert series and platform in October. Featuring socially-distanced, smaller cohorts of BSO musicians performing beloved works, emerging voices and hidden gems of the canon, this series is being captured and packaged in an entirely new format – including never-before-seen backstage and conversational content that brings the featured works, composers, and, the creative process of a symphony orchestra and individual symphony musicians to life. We are also thrilled to be once again featuring Associate Conductor Nicholas Hersch as well as introducing you to the newest member of the BSO family, Assistance Conductor Jonathan Rush.

Please stay tuned for official news including schedule, pricing and more very soon, and we hope you will all join us online (or via whatever streaming platform/app you prefer – Netflix, Chromecast, Apple TV, Roku, and more) this fall and of course in person when once again possible.

From Brian Prechtl
BSO Percussionist and Chair of the Players’ Committee

In many ways, 2020 has been a year we’d all like to forget, but it is helpful when we get discouraged to remember all that we’ve accomplished this year. The Baltimore Symphony Musicians remember vividly the difficulties of the past. We were walking a picket line just last summer, and in 12 short months we have made enormous strides in so many areas.

We have established a decision-making process with the establishment of the Vision Committee; participated in a work group at the state level led by former state Senator Ed Kasemeyer; shepherded a new bill through the Maryland General Assembly that would have provided for ongoing bridge funding for the BSO; engaged Michael Kaiser to help us write a 5-year strategic plan; and subsequently worked together to raise a nearly $10 million transformation fund to provide for a bright future for the BSO.

And then came COVID-19. We had a difficult decision about how to move forward. Thankfully all of the work we did to establish a collaborative approach to our future propelled us forward in the face of a scary and uncertain future. BSO leadership and the musicians agreed that we should continue to stay the
course that Michael Kaiser laid out for the institution, which included getting a long-term agreement. We met continuously beginning on March 20th all the way through the summer until finally reaching a tentative settlement on August 27th. This historic agreement provides for many things that are essential for the continued health of the BSO. We agreed to sacrificial salary cuts in the 20-21 season of between 26%-35% for most of the musicians; however, this historic 5-year agreement makes great progress on rebuilding the complement that has been badly depleted over the last 10 years due to financial constraints. The stability of a long-term agreement will not only drive donor confidence, but it will allow many of the newer musicians to put down roots and consider Baltimore a place they can build a life for themselves and their families. Finally, it’s important to recognize that the salary gains in the later years of the contract will allow us to attract world-class musicians.

All of these things are worth celebrating in a year when there is so much bad news. Another thing to look forward to and celebrate is the new digital season that we have already begun to create. The string section has been hard at work since September 8th, rehearsing and recording performances that will be part of this exciting new season. I asked a couple of the members of the Players’ Committee what it has been like to be back together on the stage after the forced isolation of the last few months. Associate Principal Second Violinist, Ivan Stefanovic, wrote an eloquent portrait of what it has been like for him to make music throughout the pandemic that you can read below this piece. Violinist Kevin Smith put it beautifully: It’s such a pleasure to be back on stage with all of my colleagues. It’s wonderful to see people’s faces and hear the warm sonorities in the Meyerhoff after so many months away. I’m looking forward to performing with the entire ensemble together at some point in the future and getting back to playing music for our amazing audiences.

Thanks for all you do to support us both on and off the stage.

**Thoughts from Ivan Stefanovic**

*Associate Principal Second Violin*

It has now been about 6 months since the world changed for everyone, and especially so for musicians. Without being able to play beautiful music together with each other and for our audiences, in the same space, in order to feed both our and your souls in that most direct, and yes, interactive way, we were left stumped and depressed.

But that couldn’t last long, as our souls need food as much as our stomachs do. After a much-needed break from our instruments (our profession is surprisingly hard on the body), we picked them up and started playing again. Scales, exercises, and pieces we haven’t played in a long time, all rang out from BSO musicians’ houses strewn about gorgeous Baltimore neighborhoods and through our beautiful state of Maryland.

That was necessary and satisfying for a while, but something was missing—the souls and ears of others. So, mics, apps, and other equipment was bought, and tips and know-how were shared, and a whole new (to a lot of us) way of sharing music emerged. Short gems, entire recitals, discussions about music, instrument demonstrations, and many errant kids and cats appeared on our various home screens. Most were for solo instruments, but quite a few also featured family ensembles, in households which were lucky enough to have family members who were also musicians.

Mine was lucky to be in one of those, as my 3 sons, Sebastian, a violist at Rice University, Luka, a cellist at Oberlin College, and Tristan, also a cellist at Baltimore
School for the Arts, were all home. It didn’t take long for us to prepare not one, but two programs featuring various combinations for those instruments (plus viola da gamba, which Luka also plays), and offer them to those needing a respite from the strange new world we had all found ourselves in. My wife Jennifer made sure the home phones were turned off, that the cats didn’t completely steal the show, and that all was in order for us to produce something of quality in our homes, which normally takes a crew of professionals (in fields we didn’t belong to) to put together properly.

BSO musicians were more prolific than most other orchestras, and kept our audiences entertained for these 6 months.

But that could only last so long. We are now thrilled to be able to finally play music together in Meyerhoff Hall, that amazing jewel of acoustics, and offer you, our fans, as close an experience to the one you used to enjoy what seems like a lifetime ago. But, let me correct myself...in some ways, this will be even closer, as you will be able to see close-ups of our faces and instruments which even the best money couldn’t buy before!

And we are so very happy to see our colleagues and play with them live. Even though with masks on and 6 feet away from each other we often can’t understand what the conductor is saying, it’s sometimes hard to catch a breath after a difficult passage, we can’t hear or see each other very well, and we can’t get close to the stand in front of us to catch new markings in the music, and I could go on listing the new challenges...those are all so worth it, just knowing that we are recording music, really food for all of our souls, which we will finally be able to share with you in this new way.

And we still can’t wait for the day, hopefully soon, when we can greet each other in person, look each other in the eyes, gaze at the architecture of Meyerhoff and Strathmore Halls, and all enjoy the sounds of glorious music at the same time, in the same space, while letting our minds wander together. Until then, please stay safe and healthy.

What’s going on in the BSO Education Department?

School-based programming
The BSO Education Department is planning to have two digital programs and related activities available for schools during the fall semester. One program will feature string instruments and the other program will feature brass instruments. Both programs will be performed by a small number of musicians on stage at the Meyerhoff Symphony Hall and recorded "live". The conductor, Nicholas Hersch will be familiar to the audiences as he has been the conductor for these concerts for the last several years.

OrchKids
OrchKids plans to start their program year by the end of September or early October. They project an enrollment of 260 in the after-school programs as well as serving the majority of those in the "during school" programs either virtually or in a modified in-person capacity. This brings the total student enrollment to nearly 2,000. As of this date no student performances have been scheduled but the staff are looking forward to being able to add concerts via Zoom or streaming.

Baltimore Symphony Youth Orchestras
Welcoming Back our Young Musicians
From Alicia Kosack
Manager of the BSYO
The Baltimore Symphony Youth Orchestras (BSYO) kicked off their 9th season on September 13 with a Virtual Welcome Day! After a parent meeting and student welcome session, all three youth orchestras participated in virtual workshops led by professional beatbox, vocal percussionist and breath artist Shodekeh and percussionist Jeff Stern, who is the executive director, co-artistic director, and founding percussionist of icarus Quartet. And, since it’s important to get to know each other and have some fun, double bassist and educator Yoshiaki Horiguchi led a number of ice breakers for the students. The
day ended with each orchestra having its first rehearsal of the season!

BSYO Cellist Luka Porter listens during a lesson.

BSYO now has weekly virtual rehearsals. Joined by BSO members and other guest musicians, each orchestra spends half of its time in full orchestra rehearsal and the other half in instrumental sectionals. The students will also have the opportunity to participate in monthly masterclasses; recitals; workshops, to address specific topics such as how to prepare for auditions and dealing with performance anxiety; and social opportunities such as trivia (music-related, of course!) and virtual scavenger hunts. Working within a virtual format has its limitations, but the students are embracing this new “normal” and look forward to approaching things in creative ways!

It should definitely be a busy fall!

Congratulations, Marshall Levine!

Congratulations to BSA member Marshall Levine, MD! Marshall was selected as a 2020 Physician Titan of Care by the Greater Baltimore Medical Center (GBMC). While providing compassionate cancer care to patients for more than 40 years, Marshall developed clinical programs, taught, conducted research, and raised funds for cancer research and programs. A national expert on head and neck tumors, he introduced new treatments for these types of cancer.

Marshall is currently the Secretary of the BSO Board of Directors. He and his wife, Sara (BSA Vice President of Recruitment and Membership), have been strong supporters of the BSO for many years.

BSA DIRECTORY CHANGES

Joy Munster has a new email address: Munsterjoy@iCloud.com

Mona Mohamed has a new condo unit number (same building): 4100 N Charles St. #910, Baltimore, MD, 21218

Linda Hartke has moved. Her new address is: 129 E. Main Street, Apt. 104 Westborough, MA 01581

Please note: All renewed members will receive a 2020 – 2021 BSA Directory upon payment of their annual dues. The directory will have updated contact information on all members.
**Do You Have an Occasion to Celebrate or Recognize? Here’s the Perfect Solution...**

**BSA ALL OCCASION CONTRIBUTION CARDS**

- **BSA General Fund**
- **Libby Younglove Education Fund**

Baker’s Dozen (13) cards for $30. Cards are available at all BSA meetings and events. For more information contact Carolyn Stadfeld at 410-549-5157 or cstadfeld@comcast.net.

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**Happy Birthday to our Members Celebrating from September through November**

**September:** Paul Araujo, Helene Breazeale, Judi Cataldo, Ron Dencker, Kathleen Earlebeck, Sandy Feldman, Judith Raphaeli, Carl Richards, and Sandie Weisfeld.

**October:** Kay Adler, Tom Duggan, Marnie Fallon, James Garland, Susan Hutton, Lynn Jeppi, Joy Munster, Neil Ruther, JoAnn Ruther, Robert Schmitz, Greta Stetson, Marguerite Walsh, Bill Ward, Bob Whitby, and Elizabeth Younglove Conlon.

**November:** Jane Anthon, Pat Anton, Vicki Chambers, Lee Cole, Lois Gutman, Judy Kahl, Jo Kendig, Carolyn Lassahn, Gwendolyn Lindsay, Sandy Losemann, Pat Ruggieri, Christine Schmitz, Betsy Slagle, Larry Townsend, and Charlotte Whitenight.

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**Sad Tidings**

We have lost another BSA friend . . . J. Brooke McCrystle - husband of long time BSA member Joyce McCrystle. Joyce is a former Show House Chair (‘82) and Past President of the BSA (‘83 – ’85), in addition to being involved in many BSA projects!

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**Do you happen to know . . .**

. . . a human resources professional who is looking for an exciting position? The BSO seeks a Director of Human Resources and Inclusion. [Here](#) is the position announcement. Please feel free to share it with others.

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**BSA Office Contact Information**

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