PADEREWSKI MEMORIAL CONCERT

ALEXANDER MELNIKOV PIANO
ANDREAS STAIER PIANO

FRANZ SCHUBERT
(1797–1828)

March No. 3 in B Minor from Six Grande Marches, D. 819, Op. 40

4 Ländler, D. 814
   No. 1 in E-flat Major
   No. 2 in A-flat Major
   No. 3 in C Minor
   No. 4 in C Major

Polonaise No. 1 in D Minor from Six Polonaises, D. 824, Op. 61

March No. 1 in C Major from Deux Marches Caractéristiques,
D. 968b [D. 886], Op. 121

Andantino varié in B Minor, D. 823, Op. 84, No. 1

Rondo in A Major, D. 951, Op. 107

INTERMISSION

Variations on an Original Theme in A-flat Major, D. 813, Op. 35
   Theme. Allegretto
   Variation I
   Variation II
   Variation III (Un poco più lento)
   Variation IV (Tempo I)
   Variation V
   Variation VI (Maestoso)
   Variation VII (Più lento)
   Variation VIII (Allegro moderato)

Fantasie in F Minor, D. 940, Op. 103
   Allegro molto moderato
   Largo
   Allegro vivace
   Tempo primo
FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797–1828)
WORKS FOR PIANO FOUR HANDS

In February 2019, the technology company Huawei used artificial intelligence to complete Schubert’s Unfinished Symphony. The company taught a neural network to generate melodies based on the symphony’s first two movements, then enlisted composer Lucas Cantor to orchestrate the score. “It’s like having a collaborator sitting right next to you,” Cantor enthused in a promotional video, “who never gets tired, who never runs out of ideas.” To many ears, the experiment fell flat: the resulting score was bombastic and inelegant, bearing little similarity to Schubert’s original composition. Yet there are curious parallels between this effort and the piano duets on tonight’s program, beyond the obvious shared composer. Piano duets (that is, four hands at one keyboard) also involve collaboration with someone who is—literally—“sitting right next to you.” In the nineteenth century, the format itself was often used as a technology, a utilitarian way to transcribe orchestral music so that amateurs could play it at home. And if the comparison still seems far-fetched, consider Princeton music theorist Edward Cone’s well-known description of piano duets as “the blending of two players into a single four-handed monster,” a type of music-making that goes beyond the ordinary limits of human behavior.

PIANO DUETS ARE...
“the blending of two players into a single four-handed monster”
—Edward T. Cone, Princeton Professor, Composer, Theorist

In other ways, though, much divides this futuristic endeavor from the context of the piano duets’ creation. Schubert’s chamber music is famously convivial. Much of it was composed for events known as Schubertiades, gatherings held in the homes of the composer’s close-knit network of friends and devotees that involved a mixture of performing, listening, drinking, and socializing. Piano duets, which required only two performers and were often diminutive in scale, fit the bill perfectly. Schubert returned to the genre often throughout his life: his first cataloged work is a piano duet he composed at the age of 12, and he eventually composed 35 such pieces. All of the works on tonight’s
program date from the final five years of his life. In these works, intimacy of scale catalyzes artistic expansiveness. It is easy to imagine listeners at a Schubertiade lulled into comfort by the easy lilt of one melody, then astonished by a piece’s sudden turn to profound despair. Perhaps these emotional contrasts are what make his music seem somehow monstrous or superhuman—even when artificial intelligence has nothing to do with it.

**March No. 3 in B Minor from Six Grande Marches, D. 819, Op. 40 (1824)**

1824 was a year filled with piano duets for Schubert; he composed three standalone works and two sets of related pieces, including the Six Grande Marches from which this march is taken. A thumping opening rhythm gives way to a playful tune and a delicate trio. It is refined without being kitschy, a march whose grand ideas are still of appropriately domestic proportions. Whereas many works for piano duet were transcriptions of favorite orchestral works, this march took a reverse journey. Liszt later transcribed it as part of both piano and orchestral arrangements, drawing out the piece’s implied grandeur in a bravura fashion.

**4 Ländler, D. 814 (1824)**

Schubert wrote an astonishing 400 dances for piano, including waltzes, ländler (a popular Austrian folk dance), and other folk-inspired forms, during his short life. Many began as improvisations; Schubert would formalize those he especially liked into written compositions. These 4 Ländler glimmer briefly and brightly before fading away, like a beautiful vista passed on a scenic drive. The gentleness of the opening ländler yields to a more robust rhythmic drive in the two middle dances before softening to a delicate close. Each features playful interplay between the two players—the cuddly side of the “four-handed monster,” perhaps. The gracious simplicity of these works adds to their appeal. Technically straightforward, they seem to invite the pianist to sit alongside a friend, delving into the subtle pleasures of even the most uncomplicated melodies.

**Polonaise No. 1 in D Minor from Six Polonaises, D. 824, Op. 61 (1826)**

The polonaise is not difficult to dance. Closer to a choreographed walk performed in pairs, it is moderate in tempo and regal in character. It originated as a Polish peasant dance performed at weddings and other celebratory affairs and was later transformed into a court processional. Listeners in Schubert’s Vienna would have been familiar with the polonaise, which had long provided fodder for composers, including Bach, Mozart, and Couperin, who embraced its distinctive rhythmic verve and triple-meter motion. Schubert’s Six Polonaises exemplify rather than transform the dance. Although one critic
of Schubert’s day criticized these works for their “undue uniformity,” that quality can also be understood as part of their appeal: we know just what to expect as we hear the sober martial beginning and the swirls of melody that ensue. And in any case, these particular polonaises inspired Schumann to compose similar works, ensuring the dance’s continued presence in the piano repertoire.

March No. 1 in C Major from Deux Marches Caractéristiques, D. 968b (D. 886), Op. 121 (1826)

All vigor and exuberance, this march springs into action. The opening section, replete with sudden dynamic changes, moves into a calmer a-minor trio section, a respite before the glorious vitality of the opening returns. But why does this work merit the designation “caractéristique?” It (and its partner in the set) are in fact quite unlike the 15 other marches for piano that Schubert wrote. They are in a scherzo-like 6/8 meter, virtuosically fast-paced, and not especially militaristic. Consider, however, that an early biographer of Schubert included these marches on a list of works representing the composer’s best qualities: “think of the abundance of the thoughts; the sudden surprises, the wonderful transitions, the extraordinary pathos of the turns of melody and modulation, the absolute manner in which they bring you into contact with the affectionate, tender, suffering personality of the composer—and who in the whole realm of music has ever approached them?” This is clearly a bit over the top. But it does suggest another way in which this piece might be understood as characteristic, exemplifying not so much marches in particular as Schubert in general.

Andantino varié in B Minor, D. 823, Op. 84, No. 1 (1827)

There is something vaguely morbid about this set of variations, written when Schubert was only 30 years old but nearing the end of his life. An introspective theme is followed by four variations that seem to be searching for just the right expressive quality. The first three wander in minor keys. The final variation, in B Major, is muddied by twisty chromatic harmonies that make it seem more resigned than triumphant. Because the theme-and-variations structure maintains a steady tonal and harmonic pattern, it relies on differences in texture to generate musical interest. This makes it ideal for the piano duet, allowing for deep collaboration between the two players. Here, the pianists take turns playing the melodic line, and they imitate, echo, and respond to one another in a display of profound emotional intimacy.


It is tempting to draw a straight line from Schubert’s life to his work, to assume that his music necessarily elucidates his identity and innermost thoughts.
The Rondo in A Major confounds this expectation. Written just months before Schubert’s death, a period during which he also composed an array of profoundly ambitious works—the Cello Quintet, the “Great” Ninth Symphony, three magisterial piano sonatas—it is a notably placid, even leisurely work. The longer-than-usual refrain ambles along for 32 bars, and the ensuing episodes are similarly unhurried. The piece’s hybrid structure combines elements of sonata and rondo forms, allowing Schubert to develop and elaborate upon certain melodic ideas. If we were to listen to the Rondo without knowing the poignant circumstances of its creation, we might imagine that it was written by someone with all the time in the world.

Variations on an Original Theme in A-flat Major, D. 813, Op. 35 (1824)

If Schubert often used the piano duet to relatively modest ends—to write down a just-improvised melody, to explore a popular dance form—at other times he delighted in its more expansive possibilities. These Variations have an orchestral sensibility, with eight transformations of the theme unspooling in an unhurried manner. Perhaps the most dramatic is the fifth variation, which evokes the famous slow movement of Beethoven’s Seventh Symphony. The piece’s emotive breadth calls into question a distinction that scholars of Schubert’s music have often made between his “serious” and “sociable” styles, a characterization implying a bifurcated compositional personality. Works like this one suggest that those two styles were more like, well, duet partners, collaborating with one another rather than occupying wholly separate spheres.

Fantasie in F Minor, D. 940, Op. 103 (1828)

The Fantasie begins from near-total silence, with a whispered plea of a melody that draws the listener in close. If something about watching piano duets...
(and chamber music more generally) always feels slightly voyeuristic, this is especially true for a piece as inward-looking as this one. Yet that contemplative mood does not last. The two middle movements—the piece’s structure is sonata-like, but continuous—take on a more extroverted, if still unsettled, character. The final movement returns to the original themes, now intertwined in an intricate fugue, as well as the first movement’s wistfulness. This bookended structure is part of what gives the piece its nostalgic feel: it looks backward as a way to evade or put off facing the dangers of the future. It is poignant to note that the Fantasie, today among Schubert’s best-known works, was never played at a Schubertiade. First performed just months before Schubert’s death in November 1828, it was published posthumously the following spring. We can only imagine how Schubert’s friends and admirers might have responded to this music, or what it might have meant to Schubert to share it with those he loved.

The Paderewski Memorial Concert is funded in part by an endowment from The Paderewski Foundation, Edward and Jeannette Witkowski, Founders. It honors the memory of Ignacy Jan Paderewski: Polish pianist, composer, and statesman. Born in Poland in 1860, Paderewski was a student of Leschetizky, and rapidly rose to international fame — indeed, his name is still synonymous with virtuosity.

Following World War I, he laid aside his concert career, holding the offices of Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland. As such, he was a signer of the Treaty of Versailles, becoming friendly with President Woodrow Wilson whose support had been influential in the establishment of Poland as an independent state. On Tuesday, November 10, 1925, Paderewski performed here in Alexander Hall in tribute to Wilson, who had died the previous year.

Princeton University Concerts thanks The Paderewski Foundation for its generous support of tonight’s concert.
Alexander Melnikov made his Princeton University Concerts debut in 2016 playing the complete preludes and fugues of Shostakovich.

Alexander Melnikov graduated from the Moscow Conservatory under Lev Naumov. His most formative musical moments in Moscow include an early encounter with Svjatoslav Richter, who thereafter regularly invited him to festivals in Russia and France. He was awarded prizes at eminent competitions such as the International Robert Schumann Competition in Zwickau (1989) and the Concours Reine Elisabeth in Brussels (1991).

Known for his often unusual musical and programmatic decisions, Alexander Melnikov discovered an interest in historically informed performance practice at an early age. His major influences in this field include keyboard players Andreas Staier and Alexei Lubimov. Melnikov performs regularly with distinguished period ensembles including the Freiburger Barockorchester, Musica Aeterna, and Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin.

As a soloist, Alexander Melnikov has performed with orchestras including the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Berlin Philharmonic.

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Orchestra, NDR Elbphilharmonie Sinfonieorchester, hr-Sinfonieorchester, Russian National Orchestra, Munich Philharmonic, Rotterdam Philharmonic, BBC Philharmonic, Orchestre des Champs-Élysées, and the NHK Symphony, under conductors such as Mikhail Pletnev, Teodor Currentzis, Charles Dutoit, Paavo Järvi, and Valery Gergiev.

Together with Andreas Staier, Alexander Melnikov developed a program that sets excerpts from Bach’s Well-Tempered Clavier (Andreas Staier, harpsichord) in musical dialogue with Shostakovich’s 24 Preludes and Fugues (Alexander Melnikov, piano). Additionally, the duo recently recorded most of the pieces you will hear tonight on an all-Schubert disc of four-hand pieces. An essential part of Melnikov’s work are intensive chamber music collaborations with partners including cellist Jean-Guihen Queyras.

Alexander Melnikov’s association with the label harmonia mundi arose through his regular recital partner, violinist Isabelle Faust, and in 2010 their complete recording of the Beethoven sonatas for violin and piano won a Gramophone Award. This album, which has become a landmark recording for these works, was also nominated for a Grammy. Their most recent release features the Brahms sonatas for violin and piano.

Melnikov’s recording of the preludes and fugues by Shostakovich was awarded the BBC Music Magazine Award, Choc de Classica, and the Jahrespreise der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik. In 2011, it was also named by the BBC Music Magazine as one of the “50 Greatest Recordings of All Time.” Additionally, his discography features works by Brahms, Rachmaninoff, Shostakovich, and Scriabin. Along with Isabelle Faust, Jean-Guihen Queyras, conductor Pablo Heras-Casado, and the Freiburger Barockorchester, Melnikov recorded a trilogy of albums featuring the Schumann Concertos and Trios. Other releases include works of Prokofiev, a recording with Chausson and Franck repertoire, and his most recent release, Four Pieces, Four Pianos.

In the 2018/19 season Alexander Melnikov will tour his project “The Man with the Many Pianos,” where he performs a solo recital on different instruments reflecting the periods in which the works were written. In addition to concerts with Mahler Chamber Orchestra and the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, he continues his collaboration with Camerata Salzburg and as an Artistic partner with Tapiola Sinfonietta. Other highlights include the current tour with Andreas Staier and recitals at Pierre Boulez Saal Berlin, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Elbphilharmonie, Cité de la Musique Paris, and the Chamber Music Hall of the Berliner Philharmonie, as well as being an artist-in-residence at London’s Wigmore Hall.
This concert marks Andreas Staier’s Princeton University Concerts debut.

Andreas Staier’s indisputable musical mastery has made its mark on the interpretation of baroque, classical, and romantic repertoire for period instruments. Acknowledged by his peers and a wider audience, Andreas continues to defend intellectual and artistic standards in both known and neglected works for the keyboard.

Born in Göttingen, Germany, Andreas studied modern piano and harpsichord in Hannover and Amsterdam. For three years, he was the harpsichordist of Musica Antiqua Köln with whom he toured and recorded extensively. As a soloist, Andreas Staier performs throughout Europe, North and South America, and Asia with orchestras such as Concerto Köln, Freiburger Barockorchester, the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, hr-Sinfonieorchester Frankfurt, Orchestre des Champs-Élysées Paris, and Orquestra Barroca Casa da Música. On modern piano he performs regularly with orchestras including the Orchestre Symphonique de Québec, Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte-Carlo, Orquestra Sinfônica do Estado de São Paulo, and Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra.
Andreas has been invited to leading international festivals including the Festival de La Roque-d’Anthéron, Festival de Saintes, Festival de Montreux, Edinburgh International Festival, Lufthansa Festival of Baroque Music, Styriarte Graz, Schubertiade Schwarzenberg, Schlwswig-Holstein Musik Festival, and Bachfest Leipzig. He has also performed in major venues including the Vienna Konzerthaus, Berlin’s Philharmonie, Kölner Philharmonie, Gewandhaus in Leipzig, Alte Oper Frankfurt, Tonhalle Düsseldorf, Wigmore Hall and Royal Festival Hall in London, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, Tonhalle Zürich, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées Paris, Teatro della Pergola Florence, Suntory Hall Tokyo, Carnegie Hall and the Frick Collection in New York City.

Andreas performs regularly with pianists Alexander Melnikov, Christine Schornsheim, and Tobias Koch, violinists Isabelle Faust and Petra Müllejans, and in a piano trio with violinist Daniel Sepec and cellist Roel Dieltiens. He has also worked with actresses Senta Berger and Vanessa Redgrave, as well as singer Anne Sofie von Otter and pianist Alexei Lubimov, and his musical partnership with the tenor Christoph Prégardien produced numerous lieder recordings.

Andreas has recorded extensively for BMG, Teldec Classics (with whom he had an exclusive contract for seven years), and harmonia mundi France, the latter since 2003. His catalog boasts numerous awards including a Diapason d’Or for his Am Stein vis-à-vis with Christine Schornsheim (Mozart), the 2002 Preis der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik and, in 2011, the Baroque Instrumental Gramophone Award for his CPE Bach concerti recording with the Freiburger Barockorchester. His recording of the ‘Diabelli Variations’ received Diapason d’Or and the BBC Music Magazine’s Disc of the Month, and his selection of 17th century works for harpsichord from both German and French repertoire earned him a second Gramophone award in 2013.

Andreas Staier has been an Associate Artist at the Opéra de Dijon since September 2011 and was resident at the Wissenschaftskolleg in Berlin from September 2017 to July 2018.

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Glimpses of a Remarkable History: Princeton University Concerts over the Past 125 Years
By Professor Emeritus Scott Burnham, © 2018

Imagine Princeton in 1894, the year Princeton Borough began governing itself as an entity fully independent from Princeton Township. And now imagine the Old Princeton Inn, a building that stood where Borough Hall stands today. At half past three on a Monday afternoon in late October, a group of music enthusiasts gathered there to enjoy a concert performance by the renowned Kneisel Quartet. They concluded with a piece of new music, namely Antonin Dvorak’s most recent string quartet, the so-called “American” quartet, which the Kneisel players had premiered in Boston some months earlier and which was one of the fruits of Dvorak’s extended stay in America.

That inaugural concert was organized by the “Ladies Musical Committee,” founded in 1894 by Philena Fobes Fine. Mrs. Fine was a remarkable spirit who persuaded the community to rally round and underwrite this new venture, which in its early years presented about six concerts annually. She was the first in a long line of such spirits: to an extraordinary degree, the history of Princeton University Concerts is a history of determined women making wonderful things happen. The initial committee was all women, and the driving forces for supporting and managing the concert series throughout the entire history of Princeton University Concerts have been mostly women, exclusively so for the first fifty years. Mrs. William F. Magie became chair of the
committee after Mrs. Fine’s death in 1928 (in an interesting parallel, her husband, William F. Magie, had succeeded Mrs. Fine’s husband, Henry B. Fine, in the role of Princeton University’s Dean of Faculty back in 1912). And for a fifteen-year span during the 20s and 30s, Mrs. Williamson U. Vreeland did much of the heavy lifting, organizing the concerts, choosing the artists, and managing the finances.

Had you been around in the 1920s, you would have caught the Princeton debut of violinist Fritz Kreisler in March of 1920; or heard Pablo Casals, then lauded as the world’s greatest cellist, play Bach in 1922; or heard 23-year-old Jascha Heifetz play five encores after his concert on April 7, 1924; or attended the historic concert in 1925 that featured Polish pianist, composer and statesman Ignaz Paderewski in a program including Beethoven’s “Waldstein” Sonata and Liszt’s Hungarian Rhapsody. Not to mention a steady array of orchestral performances by the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

A turning point for the Ladies Musical Committee came in 1929, marking a new and crucial stage in its relationship with Princeton University. The first move was to stabilize and augment the committee’s finances. Mrs. Fine had led the concert series for over thirty years at the time of her death. During those years, she had managed to raise about $35,000 to support the concerts. In 1929, Mrs. Jenny Hibben and others helped increase that number to about $52,000, and the committee established a fund in Mrs. Fine’s memory, stating that the monies had “been raised for the purpose of securing for Princeton audiences better music than they could otherwise afford.” The name of the committee changed to Princeton University Concerts Committee at this time as well, but its constitution insisted that “at least a majority of the members shall be women” (this wording was not altered until 1977!). In accordance with the name change, the University became increasingly involved throughout the 1930s and 40s. Nominations to the committee had forthwith to be approved by the President of Princeton University (the President at the time was John Grier Hibben, husband of Mrs. Jenny Hibben); the university Controller’s Office soon began keeping the books; and in 1946 President Harold Dodds authorized payment for the building of a stage set that would enable the chamber concerts to move to McCarter Theater, where the orchestral concerts and showcase recitals were already happening.

When Mrs. Magie resigned in 1944, Professor Roy Dickinson Welch took over as head of the committee. Welch was also the father of the Music Department, which began in 1934 as a subsection of the Art and Archaeology department. A dozen years later, in 1946, Music became an official university department, housed in Clio Hall. In that same year, Welch hired Mrs. Katharine (Kit) Bryan as concert manager. They had collaborated before: in 1935, Mrs. Bryan co-founded the
Princeton Society of Musical Amateurs with Welch; the group still exists today.

Among the many highlights during Mrs. Magie’s tenure was the historic 1937 appearance of American singer Marian Anderson, who sang four sets of arias and Lieder and then concluded with a stirring set of spirituals. Also notable were several concerts by the Trapp Family Singers in the early 1940s. Highlights of Mrs. Bryan’s early years as concert manager include performances by the recently formed Bach Aria Group, founded and directed by Princeton legend William H. Scheide.

When Mrs. Bryan retired in 1964, she was replaced by Mrs. Maida Pollock, who greatly professionalized the entire operation, bringing it up to speed in ways that are still in effect today. A force of nature, Mrs. Pollock ran the Princeton University Orchestra as well, and was also very involved with the Princeton Friends of Music. Due to the greatly increased expense of hiring symphony orchestras, the concert series stopped programming orchestras in 1975 and began focusing exclusively on chamber music. In a recent interview, Pollock asserted that her most cherished goal was to get a worthy concert hall for chamber music up and running at the university, and in the 20th year of her 22-year tenure, her efforts were finally rewarded. Richardson Auditorium became the concert hall it is today in 1984, thanks to a donation from David A. Richardson ’66, in memory of his father David B. Richardson ’33, a lifelong enthusiast of classical music.

One of the most memorable nights of Mrs. Pollock’s reign was almost a disaster, because Spanish singer Victoria de los Ángeles had to cancel at nearly the last minute. Pollock quickly obtained the services of Russian soprano Galina Vishnevskaya, who happened to be the wife of Mstislav Rostropovich; he played the piano for her in an electrifying performance.

After Mrs. Pollock retired, Nate Randall took over in 1988. Randall broadened the purview of Princeton University Concerts, introducing programs of jazz music and world music. He also oversaw the 100th anniversary season of the series, and assisted with the inauguration of the Richardson Chamber Players, along with their Founding Director, Michael Pratt.

Our current Concert Director, Marna Seltzer, came to Princeton in 2010. Recognized by Musical America in 2017 as one of their “30 Movers and Shapers,” Seltzer’s many audience-friendly innovations have clearly established Princeton University Concerts at the forefront of the future of classical music. These include new ways to interact with the musical artists, such as live music meditation sessions, late-night chamber jams, and “Performances Up Close” that feature onstage seating. In introducing these additional ways to get involved in music, Marna Seltzer continues to honor the original and sustaining intention of Philena Fobes Fine: that Princeton
University Concerts should reflect the values of our community as a whole. As such, it enjoys pride of place as perhaps the finest ongoing town/gown affiliation in Princeton.

The history of Princeton University Concerts has been remarkably consistent for these past 125 years. Passionate, committed women (and a few men) have presented the premier musical artists of their age, from fiery 20-somethings taking the concert world by storm to larger-than-life stars who can captivate us merely by taking the stage. An exalted lineup of the world’s finest string quartets has always maintained pride of place in the series, from the Kneisel Quartet in the first decades through the Budapest Quartet in the 1930s to the Takács, Brentano, and Jerusalem Quartets today. A special relationship has always endured between all these musical artists and their Princeton presenters. Back in the day, Mrs. Fine, Mrs. Magie and Mrs. Vreeland often entertained artists after the concert; as an early history of the Concerts Committee put it: "the artists came to think of Princeton people as their friends." That holds true now more than ever, for our visiting artists regularly declare that they love playing in Richardson Auditorium, they love the way they are treated by Marna and her staff, and they love all of you, who so demonstrably value the experience of music, who take in and give back the brilliant energy of their cherished performances.

“Music offers infinite capacity for infinite self-renewal.” This is what Music Department founder Roy Dickinson Welch fervently believed, and this is what Princeton University Concerts will continue to offer us, one unforgettable concert after another.

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