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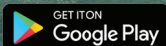
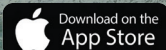
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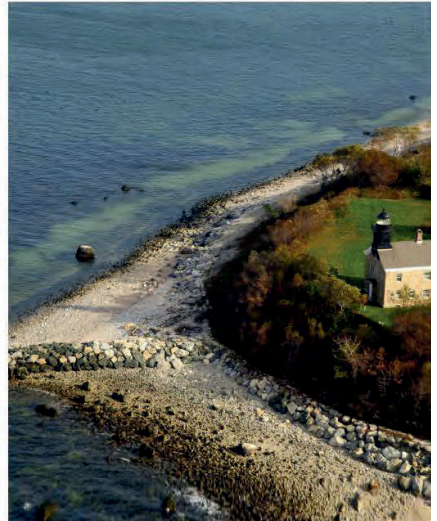
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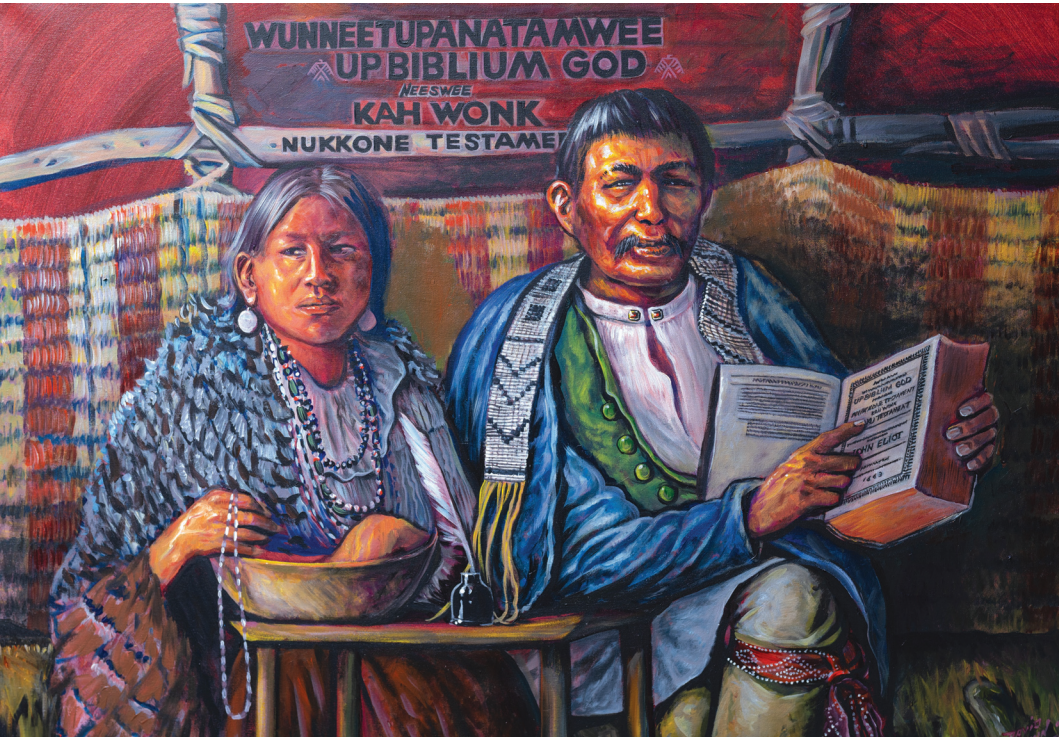
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STONY BROOK OPERA

2025 – 2026 CONCERT SEASON

The Stony Brook Opera features graduate students in voice, many of whom have already established professional singing careers. The three-year repertoire cycle typically includes one Baroque opera, one contemporary opera and a standard work, all staged or semi-staged.

Saturday, October 25, 2025, 7:30 PM
Sunday, October 26, 2025, 3:00 PM
Jacques Offenbach – *Le Violoneux*
(*The Fiddler*)

Offenbach – *Les Deux Aveugles*
(*The Two Blind Men*)

Free Admission, Recital Hall
Join Stony Brook Opera for their Fall chamber opera production, an Offenbach double bill of *Le Violoneux* (*The Fiddler*) and *Les Deux Aveugles* (*The Two Blind Men*).

Sunday, February 22, 2026, 3:00 PM
An Afternoon at the Opera

Free Admission, Recital Hall
Gala program of scenes from beloved and traditional operas with projected titles in English, semi-staged with piano accompaniment. Conducted by Daniel Beckwith and directed by Brenda Harris.

Saturday, April 25, 2025, 7:30 PM
Sunday, April 26, 2025, 3 PM
Main Stage Production

Christoph Willibald Gluck's
Orfeo ed Euridice

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STONY BROOK SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

2025 – 2026 CONCERT SEASON

The Stony Brook Symphony Orchestra is composed of outstanding musicians from all over the world pursuing advanced studies in the graduate school of the Department of Music with renowned performance faculty.

STALLER CENTER MAIN STAGE, 7:30 PM

Pre-concert Lecture, Recital Hall, 6:30 PM

Tickets: \$30 adults, \$25 Seniors and \$10 Students (with SBU ID) unless otherwise noted

UPCOMING PERFORMANCES

Saturday, October 11, 2025

Unsk Chin – *Subito con forza*

Copland – *Clarinet Concerto*

Brahms – *Symphony No. 1*

Featuring clarinetist Daniel Meszaros

Conducted by Alan R. Kay

Saturday, November 8, 2025

Fernando Arroyo – *Al Pie de la Montana*

Bartók – *Violin Concerto No. 2*

Schumann – *Symphony No. 3, "Rhenish"*

Featuring violinist Chaewon Kim

Conducted by Anthony Parnter

Saturday, December 6, 2025

Beethoven – *Overture to*

"The Consecration of the House," Op. 124

Vaja Azarashvili – *Cello Concerto*

Dvořák – *Symphony No. 7*

Featuring cellist Sandro Sidamonidze

Conducted by Paul Watkins

Saturday, February 28, 2026

Brahms – *Piano Concerto No. 2, Bb Major*

Jessie Montgomery – *Transfigure to Grace*

Stravinsky – *Firebird Suite (1919)*

Featuring pianist Muli Yu

Conducted by Michelle Merrill

Saturday, March 28, 2026

Mozart – *Sinfonia Concertante*

Tchaikovsky – *Symphony No. 5*

Featuring Faculty Soloists

Jennifer Frautschi, violin

Matthew Lipman, viola

Conducted by Eduardo Leandro



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STONY BROOK SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Saturday, December 6th, 2025, 7:30 PM

Paul Watkins

Conductor

Sandro Sidamonidze

Cello

PROGRAM

The Consecration of the House, Op. 124 Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Cello Concerto

Vaja Azarashvili (1936-2024)

I. Andante

II. Allegro

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 7 in D minor, Op. 70, B. 141

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

I. Allegro maestoso

II. Poco adagio

III. Scherzo: Vivace — Poco meno mosso

IV. Finale: Allegro

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STONY BROOK SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Paul Watkins **Conductor**

Acclaimed for his inspirational performances and eloquent musicianship, Paul Watkins enjoys a distinguished career as concerto soloist, chamber musician and conductor. He is the Artistic Director of the Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival



in Detroit (since 2014), the cellist of the Emerson String Quartet (2013-2023) and Visiting Professor of Cello at Yale School of Music (since 2018). He took first prize in the 2002 Leeds Conducting Competition, and has held the positions of Music Director of the English Chamber Orchestra and Principal Guest Conductor of the Ulster Orchestra.

As a cellist, Watkins has given regular concerto performances with prestigious orchestras across the globe. Also, a dedicated chamber musician, Watkins was a member of the Nash Ensemble (1997-2013) and the Emerson String Quartet (2013-2023).

In 2023, after 44 successful seasons, the Quartet has decided to retire, after embarking on an extensive series of farewell tours, culminating in their final performances in New York Lincoln Center in October 2023, where the concert is being filmed for a planned documentary by filmmaker Tristan Cook, and the release of their final recording of Berg, Chausson, Schoenberg and Hindemith with prestigious guests soprano Barbara Hannigan and pianist Bertrand Chamayou.

Watkins has conducted all the major British orchestras, and a wide range of international orchestras including the Kristiansand Symphony, Swedish Chamber Orchestra, Vienna Chamber Orchestra, Prague Symphony, Ensemble Orchestral de Paris, Tampere Philharmonic, Netherlands Radio Chamber Philharmonic and the Melbourne Symphony, Queensland and Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestras. In 2006 he made his opera debut conducting a critically praised new production

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of Poulenc's *La Voix Humaine* for Opera North.

Recent highlights include his conducting debuts with the Minnesota Orchestra and Detroit Symphony, as well as concerto appearances with the BBC Symphony under Semyon Bychkov and Sir Andrew Davis, the City of Birmingham Symphony under Alexander Vedernikov, and the European Union Youth Orchestra under the baton of Bernard Haitink, in a tour featuring performances at the Grafenegg Festival and Amsterdam's Concertgebouw. Last season also saw appearances at the Sante Fe Chamber Music Festival and Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center.

Sandro Sidamonidze Cello



Sandro Sidamonidze is an Opus Klassik- and German Recording Critics' Award-nominated cellist whose playing has been praised for its expressive depth and artistic individuality. Hailed as a "cello virtuoso" with a gift for "making time stand still with a low, warm flame of flickering melody" (Lansing City Pulse), he is recognized for performances that fuse interpretive insight with emotional intensity.

Sidamonidze is a core member of the Vienna-based Trio Revolution alongside flutist Temo Kharshiladze and pianist Ketevan Sepashvili. The ensemble's debut album, *Unconventional Journey*, earned nominations for OPUS Klassik Best Chamber Music Recording (2024) and the Preis der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik, with critics praising it as "a real discovery in the realm of chamber music" (BremenZwei) and noting its "elegant brilliance" (Kultur Tipp).

Internationally active, Sidamonidze has appeared across Europe, the United States, and the Caucasus region, performing at major festivals including the Newport Music Festival, Telavi International Music Festival, and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festspiele. He has collaborated

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with distinguished musicians such as Natalia Gutman, David Geringas, Istvan Várdai, Sergey Antonov, Francisco Fullana, and Gianluca Marciànò. Highlights include performances for the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom at 10 Downing Street and participation in the United Nations "Georgian Overtones" project celebrating Georgia's centenary of independence.

A recipient of the Louis Sudler Prize in the Arts and top honors at numerous international competitions, Sidamonidze made his Carnegie Hall debut at Weill Recital Hall. His recording of works by Arvo Pärt for the Gramola label further reflects his dedication to thoughtful and spiritually resonant repertoire.

Sidamonidze previously taught at Albion College and Michigan State University. He is currently pursuing his Doctor of Musical Arts at Stony Brook University under the mentorship of Colin Carr.

The Consecration of the House **Ludwig van Beethoven**

This work was originally premiered in 1822 as part of the opening celebration for the Theater in der Josefstadt in Vienna. In this context,

Beethoven's music is seen as blessing/sanctifying the space, hence the title "Consecration of the house". This piece explores two contrasting characters that share a common theme. The listener can hear a mix of heavily ceremonial and majestic gestures, as well as more energetic and jubilant ones. The piece opens with stately chords that set a solid foundation for the rest of the work. The beginning is almost march-like, slowly incorporating different sections symbolizing the passing of a procession. This section unfolds at a leisurely pace, with a regal, self-assured demeanor. This section is followed by the introduction of a contrasting character with the same theme, achieved through modulation, which represents a jubilant celebration to bring the work to a close.

– *Note by Emily Lay*

Cello Concerto **Vaja Azarashvili**

Azarashvili's cello concerto is an invaluable work of contemporary Georgian composition representing his country on an international stage. The concerto is filled with beautiful points of profound lyricism and majestic melodies.

STONY BROOK SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

This composition exemplifies the composer's proclivity for heavy emotional depth and flair for the dramatic, representative of the heavily neo-romantic reception of the work. While the work has been widely performed around Europe, this performance is among the first performances in the United States, the first of which was premiered by the same soloist performing in this concert, Sandro Sidamonidze.

– *Note by Emily Lay*

Symphony No. 7 **Antonín Dvořák**

Symphony No.7 was premiered in April of 1885 in London after being completed the year prior. There were two main points of inspiration that guided the writing of this work. The first was his own grief from the loss of his mother and child, as exemplified through the soft, slow, and melancholic themes that appear throughout the work. The piece also represents his own patriotism reflected through the Czech national identity. He masterfully incorporates Czech folk rhythms and nationalist themes into the symphony,

underscoring the importance he attaches to his own national identity through his desire to advocate for his country.

Movement 1: Allegro maestoso

The first movement starts with a calm, gloomy, and yet determined opening. The second theme in the first movement dramatically contrasts with the beginning. The theme is majestic while also maintaining the strong determination from the opening, creating a dramatic shift in tone.

Movement 2: Poco adagio

This movement returns the gloomy character introduced at the beginning of Movement One, but this time, you don't feel the stabilizing pull of optimistic determination; instead, it is replaced with an oppressively solemn undertone. This movement is inspired by his own personal struggles with grief, as exemplified by his footnote referring to this movement as exemplifying "the dark times." While most of this movement is steeped in utter despair, we never lose hope, as it culminates in a turn to a brighter character by shifting to a major key that feels like a resolution and acceptance.

Movement 3: Scherzo (Vivace)

The third movement represents the culmination of his own patriotism and his desire to bring his Czech identity to the international stage. This movement is energetic, fast-paced, and jubilant, drawing inspiration from traditional folk dances. Dvořák once again makes space for dramatic intrigue by ending this movement in the key of D minor, like the beginning of the first movement.

Movement 4: Finale (Allegro)

The closing of the symphony returns to the character and themes of the beginning of the first movement. Dvorak includes a culmination of the themes from the last three movements, expanding on their character and finally resolving the central theme in D minor to D major, representing a point of enlightenment and hope.

– *Note by Emily Lay*

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Saturday, February 28, 2026

Brahms – Piano Concerto No. 2, Bb Major

Jessie Montgomery – *Transfigure to Grace*

Stravinsky – *Firebird Suite* (1919)

Featuring pianist Muli Yu

Conducted by Michelle Merrill

Saturday, March 28, 2026

Mozart – Sinfonia Concertante

Tchaikovsky – Symphony No. 5

Featuring Faculty Soloists

Jennifer Frautschi, violin

Matthew Lipman, viola

Conducted by Eduardo Leandro

Saturday, April 25, 2025, 7:30 PM

Sunday, April 26, 2025, 3 PM

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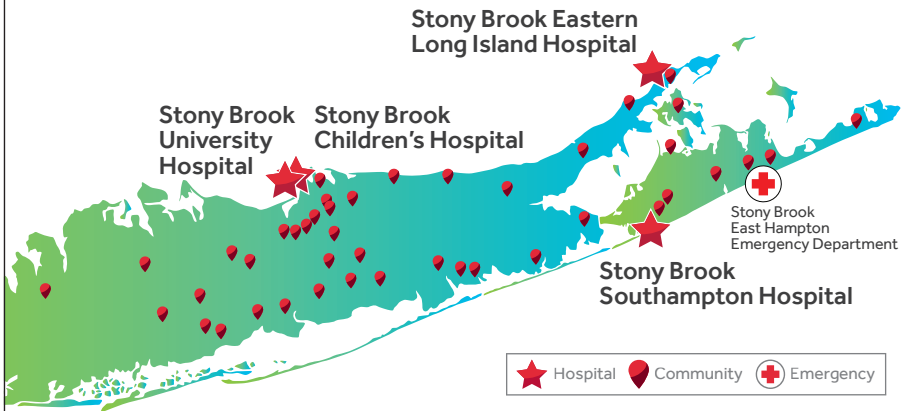
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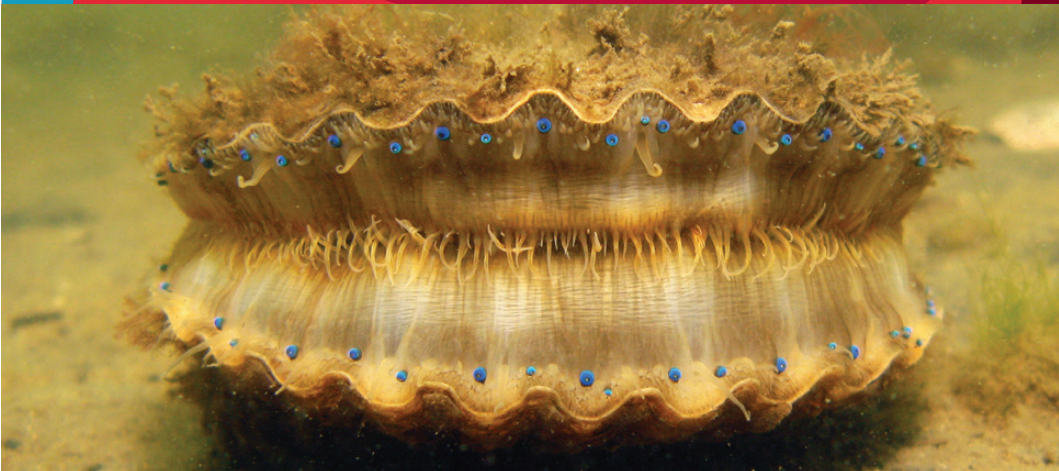
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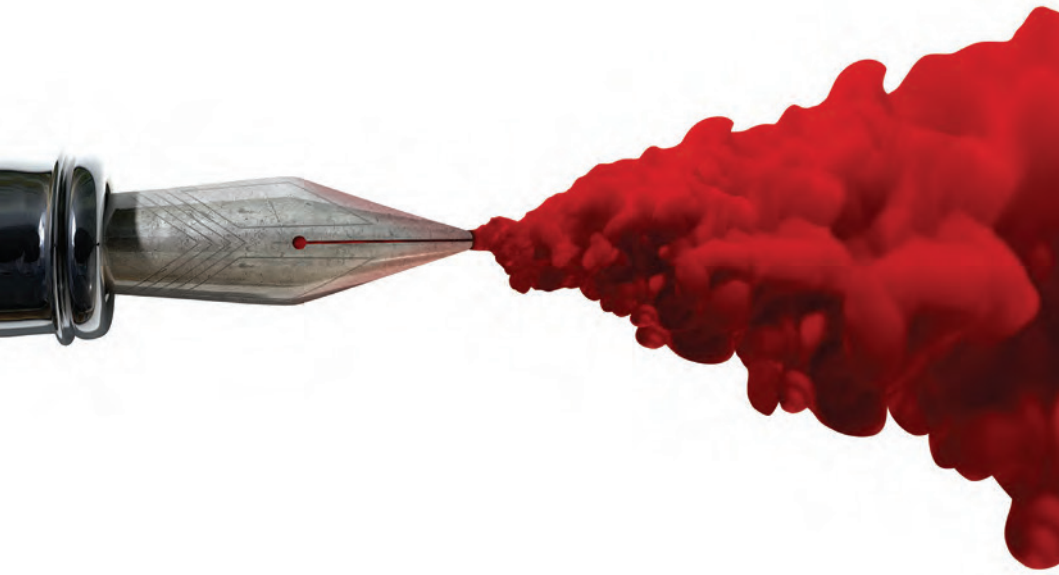
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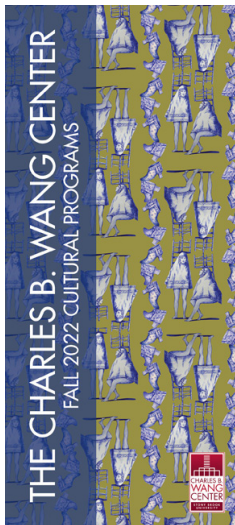
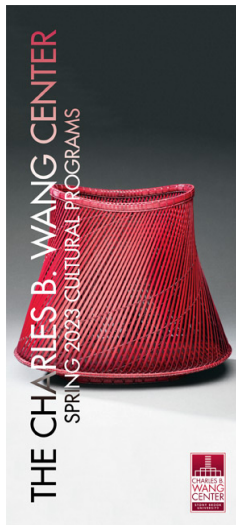
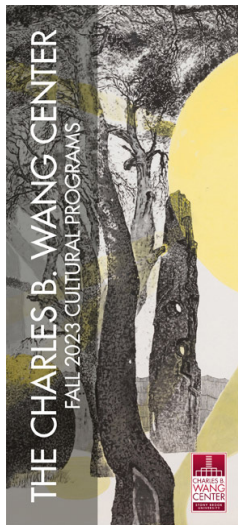
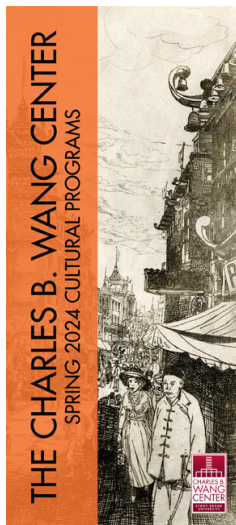
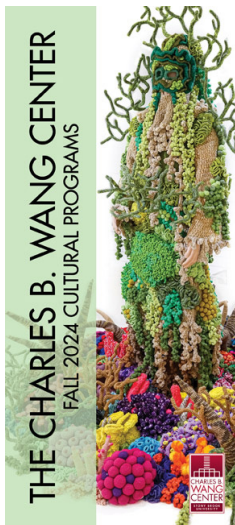
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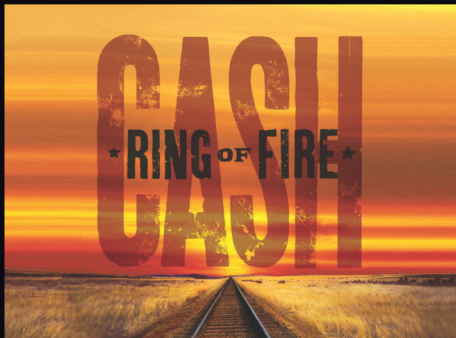
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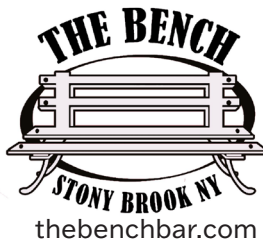
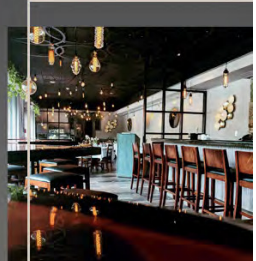
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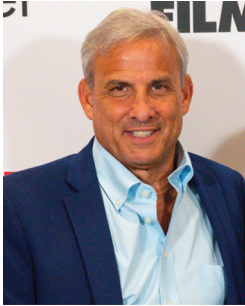
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Once again, welcome to the Staller Center. Now, sit back and enjoy the show- I guarantee it'll be a good time.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan'.

Alan Inkles

Director of the Staller Center for the Arts
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