EUGENE DIFFICULT MUSIC ENSEMBLE

STORIES FROM THE UNHOUSED

My name is Tina and I sit in the sun

This is our community right here

I've known failure for a long time

My daily routine is way different every day now

Brings me joy in my heart to help people





June 16th, 2024 2:00pm Park Blocks

Can't we just get something where people are really honestly true...in their heart of hearts that they wanna take care of people and help them?

-Grandma Ruby



Welcome to EDME's Stories from the Unhoused!

This project has been an incredible journey from beginning to end. When we initially dreamed up Stories from the Unhoused in the winter of 2022 after a helpful prompt from Charly Swing at ArtCity, I couldn't have imagined what a trek it would become. The people we've met along the way have been instrumental to this journey. Currently and formerly unhoused people like Ruby, John, Stephanie, Moondancer, Nick, and Tao, who have demonstrated awe-inspiring resilience in the face of incredible economic and political adversity, are bright spots in this world. It's unfotunate that we only have the opportunity to present small excerpts from our many long chats with them and the eighteen other participants. The result is nonetheless powerful and compelling, an interweaved fabric of voices, instruments, and movement stitched together into a contemporary ballet addressing salient twenty-first-century issues.

With three different composers on the project, the six major topics in the concert-length work receive unique approaches that reflect the idiosyncrasies of each creative mind. Everything from tonal underpinnings to raucous dissonance characterize the movements. The music and dance support and enhance the words of the interviewees, bolstered by an array of compositional styles. In true EDME fashion, the final musical document is a stitched-together PDF of graphic scores, extended techniques, traditional notation, metered and unmetered bits, time-based improvisations, and strictly interpreted parametric scrawl.

Our project represents a first step towards addressing a world a crisis: inviting the humans most profoundly impacted by the crisis into conversation. It is, after all, their narratives that our art merely augments. As such, Stories is confrontational. It directly challenges assumptions, beliefs, and emotions many of us would prefer to never address. For people with consistent shelter, it's easy to invent boogeymen, fictional creatures who stalk the streets, walking symbols of danger and crime. These inventions have no names, no thoughts, and no histories. When spotted in real life, they are, at best, blocking the view.

And here we are today with an alternative—a glimpse at reality. This reality is filled with people who have memorable names, creative thoughts, and deep histories as rich as they are often troubled. Unhoused people are our community members. They are our brethren lost in a distressing situation, one that many of us teeter closer to the brink of than we may want to admit. For working people, a lost job, a serious injury, or a market crash can all push us over that ledge. We have a choice, even a responsibility, for kinship and solidarity above state-sanctioned violence and control, for building networks that can catch anyone who is shoved onto the streets. If we refuse to blame the most powerless individuals among us, the question then turns not towards those who are pushed, but rather towards more formidable entities. We should ask, who does the pushing? And how can we stop the system that encourages it?

Stories from the Unhoused would not be possible without the time, effort, and generosity of the many people involved. It has been a pleasure to work with my friend Sara Stockwell, who has not only created all the choreography for the piece, but also managed a troupe of dancers and their rehearsal schedule on her own. I'm excited to mix the colorful sounds of EDME with the imaginative movement of her ad hoc dance group, including Maria Antonieta Alvarez, Antonio Lopez, Eric Ragan, Gabriel Warren, and Steph Young. Also on the creative front, I couldn't imagine producing such a large-scale work in such a small timeframe without splitting composing duties with EDME members Ellie Jakes and Max Mabry.

Our board members Lee Pembleton and Adrian Cervantes have met almost weekly with me since the start of the year, helping immensely with administrative duties and planning for Stories and other endeavors, not to mention operating their own independent projects at the same time. All our EDME members have performed countless acts of invisible labor, such as making and printing programs, writing up contracts, buying food, interviewing unhoused folks, and tons of other duties too long to list. As such, I appreciate not just the musical skills, but the dedication to the project given by Owen Atlansky, Thomas Calletano Gonzalez, Jayne Cronin, K.C. Isaman, and Ellen LaMora. EDME is primarily a volunteer endeavor, and all the behind-the-scenes administration is conducted for free by our passionate team.

We would not have been able to complete our project without generous support from Lane Arts Council's Community Project Grant, the Downtown Program Fund provided by the City of Eugene's Cultural Services, and a general operating support grant from the Oregon Community Foundation's Fred W Fields Fund. These gifts have enabled us, among other things, to pay our artists fairly. David Dickenson from the City has been a wonderful resource who has helped us secure the equipment we need for today, and #instaballet has gladly provided their subfloor at no cost. Furthermore, Stories would never have happened without the amazing help of Charly Swing at ArtCity, who initially proposed that we work with the unhoused community over a year-and-a-half ago, afterwards helping us with budgeting and grant proposals. Our project has also been made possible by our incredible partner First Christian Church, where Zane Ridings and Trevor Eubanks not only provided us a space for interviewing, but also the participants to interview, along with a free training in social work skills. Those participants, who took time out of their day away from the resources they need to survive, deserve the most thanks for expressing their joys, insecurities, passions, and vulnerabilities to a pair of strangers on a spontaneous weekday afternoon.

Thanks again to all who have helped, and we hope you enjoy the show as much as we've enjoyed putting it together.

JP Lempke Executive Director, EDME

iBienvenido a EDME Stories from the Unhoused!

Este proyecto ha sido un viaje increíble de principio a fin. Cuando inicialmente ideamos Stories from the Unhoused en el invierno de 2022 después de un útil mensaje de Charly Swing en ArtCity, no podría haber imaginado el viaje que sería. Las personas que hemos conocido a lo largo del camino han sido fundamentales para este viaje. Personas que actualmente y anteriormente no tienen vivienda como Ruby, John, Stephanie, Moondancer, Nick y Tao, que han demostrado una resiliencia impresionante frente a una increíble adversidad económica y política, son puntos brillantes en este mundo. Es lamentable que solo tengamos la oportunidad de presentar pequeños extractos de nuestras largas charlas con ellos y los otros dieciocho participantes. No obstante, el resultado es poderoso y convincente, un tejido entrelazado de voces, instrumentos y movimientos unidos en un ballet contemporáneo que aborda cuestiones destacadas del siglo XXI.

Con tres compositores diferentes en el proyecto, los seis temas principales del trabajo de concierto reciben enfoques únicos que reflejan la idiosincrasia de cada mente creativa. Todo, desde fundamentos tonales hasta una estridente disonancia, caracteriza los movimientos. La música y la danza apoyan y realzan las palabras de los entrevistados, reforzadas por una variedad de estilos compositivos. Al más puro estilo EDME, el documento musical final es un PDF ensamblado de partituras gráficas, técnicas extendidas, notación tradicional, bits medidos y no medidos, improvisaciones basadas en el tiempo y garabatos paramétricos estrictamente interpretados.

Nuestro proyecto representa un primer paso para abordar un mundo en crisis: invitar a conversar a los seres humanos más profundamente afectados por la crisis. Después de todo, son sus narrativas las que nuestro arte simplemente aumenta. Como tal, Stories es conflictivo. Desafía directamente suposiciones, creencias y emociones que muchos de nosotros preferiríamos no abordar nunca. Para las personas que cuentan con un refugio constante, es fácil inventar hombres del saco, criaturas ficticias que acechan en las calles, símbolos andantes del peligro y el crimen. Estos inventos no tienen nombres, pensamientos ni historias. Cuando se ven en la vida real, en el mejor de los casos, bloquean la vista.

Y aquí estamos hoy con una alternativa: un vistazo a la realidad. Esta realidad está llena de personas que tienen nombres memorables, pensamientos creativos e historias profundas, tan ricas como a menudo problemáticas. Las personas sin vivienda son miembros de nuestra comunidad. Son nuestros hermanos perdidos en una situación angustiosa, una situación en la que muchos de nosotros estamos más cerca del borde de lo que quisiéramos admitir. Para los trabajadores, una pérdida de empleo, una lesión grave o una caída del mercado pueden empujarnos a superar

ese abismo. Tenemos la opción, incluso la responsabilidad, de tener parentesco y solidaridad por encima de la violencia y el control sancionados por el Estado, de construir redes que puedan atrapar a cualquiera que sea empujado a las calles. Si nos negamos a culpar a los individuos más impotentes entre nosotros, la cuestión no se dirige entonces hacia aquellos que son empujados, sino hacia entidades más formidables. Deberíamos preguntarnos ¿quién empuja? ¿Y cómo podemos detener el sistema que lo fomenta?

Las historias no serían posibles sin el tiempo, el esfuerzo y la generosidad de las muchas personas involucradas. Ha sido un placer trabajar con mi amiga Sara Stockwell, quien no solo creó toda la coreografía de la pieza, sino que también dirigió un sexteto de bailarines y su calendario de ensayos por su cuenta. Estoy emocionado de mezclar los coloridos sonidos de EDME con el movimiento imaginativo de su grupo de baile ad hoc, que incluye a María Antonieta Álvarez, Antonio López, Eric Ragan, Gabriel Warren y Steph Young. También en el frente creativo, no podía imaginarme producir un trabajo de tan gran escala en un período de tiempo tan pequeño sin dividir las tareas de composición con los miembros de EDME, Ellie Jakes y Max Mabry.

Los miembros de nuestra junta directiva, Lee Pembleton y Adrian Cervantes, se han reunido conmigo casi semanalmente desde principios de año, ayudándome enormemente con las tareas administrativas y la planificación de Historias y otros esfuerzos, sin mencionar la operación de sus propios proyectos independientes al mismo tiempo. Todos nuestros miembros de EDME han realizado innumerables actos de trabajo invisible, como crear e imprimir programas, redactar contratos, comprar alimentos, entrevistar a personas sin hogar y muchas otras tareas que son demasiado largas para enumerarlas. Como tal, aprecio no sólo las habilidades musicales, sino también la dedicación al proyecto de Owen Atlansky, Thomas Calletano González, Jayne Cronin, K.C. Isamán y Ellen LaMora. EDME es principalmente un esfuerzo voluntario, y nuestro apasionado equipo lleva a cabo toda la administración detrás de escena de forma gratuita.

No hubiéramos podido completar nuestro proyecto sin el generoso apoyo de Lane Arts. Subvención para Proyectos Comunitarios del Consejo, el Fondo del Programa del Centro proporcionado por la Ciudad de Eugene Servicios Culturales y una subvención de apoyo operativo general del Fondo Fred W Fields de la Oregon Community Foundation. Estos obsequios nos han permitido, entre otras cosas, pagar a nuestros artistas de manera justa. David Dickenson de la ciudad ha sido un recurso maravilloso que nos ha ayudado a conseguir el equipo que necesitamos hoy, y #instaballet con gusto nos ha proporcionado su subsuelo sin costo alguno. Además, Stories nunca habría existido sin la increíble ayuda de Charly

Swing de ArtCity, quien inicialmente propuso que trabajáramos con la comunidad sin vivienda hace más de un año y medio, y luego nos ayudó con el presupuesto y las propuestas de subvenciones.

Nuestro proyecto también ha sido posible gracias a nuestro increíble socio First Christian Church, donde Zane Ridings y Trevor Eubanks no solo nos brindaron un espacio para entrevistar, sino también a los participantes para entrevistar, junto con una capacitación gratuita en habilidades de trabajo social. Aquellos participantes, que se tomaron un tiempo de su día lejos de los recursos que necesitan para sobrevivir, merecen el mayor agradecimiento por expresar sus alegrías, inseguridades, pasiones y vulnerabilidades a un par de extraños en una tarde espontánea de un día laborable.

Gracias de nuevo a todos los que han ayudado y esperamos que disfruten el espectáculo tanto como nosotros disfrutamos armándolo.

JP Lempke Executive Director, EDME

2024 EDME New Music Festival



Join us this fall for our amazing four-concert series, featuring original works by international composers and guest artists!

October 4th-6th, 2024

Program

Stories from the Unhoused

I. Introductions

II. Travel and Personal History

III. Daily Routine

IV. Hardship

V. Community

VI. Music

VII. Hope

Composers: Ellie Jakes, JP Lempke, Max Mabry

Choreographer: Sara Stockwell

Musicians: Thomas Calletano Gonzalez, Ellen LaMora, Adrian Cervantes, Jayne Cronin, K.C. Isaman, Owen Atlansky

Dancers: Maria Antonieta Alvarez, Antonio Lopez, Eric Ragan, Gabriel Warren, Steph Young

Conductor: JP Lempke

Transcription

Want to follow along with our interviewees? View the transcription of the entire piece by scanning the QR code below.



Alternatively, visit edmensemble.org/stories and click on "Transcript."

Program Notes

Our goal with Stories from the Unhoused is to humanize the lives of Eugene's unhoused community members by magnifying their recorded stories within a performance space. With three composers for the project, we tackled the piece from our unique perspectives under this shared objective, approaching it individually in the context of each of our chosen subjects.

"Hope," by JP Lempke expresses both long and short excerpts of future-oriented and positive insights from the participants set against stagnant, often consonant backdrops. "Hardship," on the contrary, breaks the interviewees' voices down with distortion into their raw emotional contents, paired with crushing effects on the solo electric guitar.

Ellie Jakes' "Community" realizes both the harmony and tension of individuals within a group dynamic through rhythmic and pitch unisons, which break away from each other before reuniting fleetingly and then breaking away again. Her "Daily Life" movement travels from mundanity and regularity into chaos and destitution as she traces a route from our participants' most mundane routines to their everyday struggles.

"Music" by Max Mabry is distinctive among the movements. Rather than fit pitches and rhythms to spoken words, he riffs off the musical talents of the pianists and rappers who gave us performances during their interviews. The repeated motives of his "Travel/Personal History" section mimic the movement of people from one location to another, motives that become the basis for an improvisation in the more freely structured second half.

Finally, the "Introductions" movement was compiled last out of a joint effort from Mabry and Lempke. The former cut together audio of everyone introducing themselves, at first omitting their names in order to parallel the lack of individuality unhoused people feel when stereotyped as homeless, most strangers not even bothering to learn who they are. Pitted against a stable sustained chord built from the harmonic series in Lempke's graphic score, our interviewees then get the rare chance to speak for themselves.

In structuring the dance, Sara Stockwell drew inspiration from the emotions she felt in bits of the recorded dialogue. Once the music compositions were completed, these acted as additional catalysts to the dancers' movements. Her hope is that the diversity and unity of the styles and movements will bring forward a sense that we are all connected and all face challenges. If we show more grace to others, we will be more likely to receive it when our turn to manage difficulties comes. Everyone experiences hardship, and everyone is capable of carrying through it. Our unhoused community is a glowing testament to human resilience under brutal adversity.

Notas del programa

Nuestro objetivo con Stories from the Unhoused es humanizar las vidas de los miembros de la comunidad sin hogar de Eugene magnificando sus historias grabadas dentro de un espacio de actuación. Con tres compositores para el proyecto, abordamos la pieza desde nuestras perspectivas únicas bajo este objetivo compartido, acercándola individualmente en el contexto de cada uno de nuestros temas elegidos.

"Hope", de JP Lempke, expresa extractos largos y cortos de ideas positivas y orientadas al futuro de los participantes en contextos estancados, a menudo consonantes. "Hardship", por el contrario, rompe las voces de los entrevistados con distorsión de sus crudos contenidos emocionales, junto con efectos aplastantes en el solo de guitarra eléctrica.

"Community" de Ellie Jakes da cuenta tanto de la armonía como de la tensión de los individuos dentro de una dinámica grupal a través de unísonos rítmicos y tonales, que se separan entre sí antes de reunirse fugazmente y luego separarse nuevamente. Su movimiento "Daily Life" viaja desde la mundanidad y la regularidad hacia el caos y la miseria mientras traza una ruta desde las rutinas más mundanas de nuestros participantes hasta sus luchas cotidianas.

Entre los movimientos se distingue "Música" de Max Mabry. En lugar de adaptar tonos y ritmos a las palabras habladas, resalta los talentos musicales de los pianistas y raperos que nos ofrecieron actuaciones durante sus entrevistas. Los motivos repetidos de su sección "Viajes/Historia personal" imitan el movimiento de personas de un lugar a otro, motivos que se convierten en la base para una improvisación en la segunda mitad, más libremente estructurada.

Finalmente, el movimiento "Introducciones" fue el último en compilarse gracias a un esfuerzo conjunto de Mabry y Lempke. El primero cortó el audio de todos presentándose, al principio omitiendo sus nombres para comparar la falta de individualidad que sienten las personas sin hogar cuando son estereotipadas como personas sin hogar, y la mayoría de las personas ni siquiera se molestan en saber quiénes son. Frente a un acorde sostenido estable construido a partir de la serie armónica en la partitura gráfica de Lempke, nuestros entrevistados tienen la oportunidad de decirnos quiénes son.

Al estructurar el baile, Sara Stockwell se inspiró en las emociones que sentía en fragmentos del diálogo grabado. Una vez completadas las composiciones musicales, actuaron como catalizadores adicionales de los movimientos de los bailarines. Su esperanza es que la diversidad y unidad de los estilos y movimientos generen la sensación de que todos estamos conectados y todos enfrentamos desafíos. Si mostramos más gracia a los demás, será más probable que la recibamos cuando llegue nuestro turno de gestionar las dificultades. Todo el mundo experimenta dificultades y todo el mundo es capaz de superarlas. Nuestra comunidad es un brillante testimonio de la resiliencia humana bajo una adversidad brutal.

Bios

Maria Antonieta is a Mexican professional dancer, teacher and movement explorer with a strong background in Ballet and Graham techniques. Based in Oregon since 2011, she has performed and collaborated with many local artists and choreographers. In 2017 she became a DanceAbility certified teacher. Maria Antonieta shares DA's mission to dissolve barriers and create safe places for everyone to come together, share and learn from each other on the dance floor. For the last 4 years she has been actively teaching ballet and mix-abilities classes to young and adult students in the Eugene and Springfield areas. Her passion is to continue cultivating a dance community of respect, diversity and acceptance for all people.

Owen Atlansky is from Portland, OR and is currently studying music technology at the University of Oregon. He was a choir kid in high school and he became interested in making music and music production when he got FL Studio his senior year. Owen is inspired by hip hop, electronic music, jazz, video game soundtracks, and all music and sounds. He has performed in the Oregon Electronic Device Orchestra and has released some music under the name XDL. In his free time he enjoys chilling, hanging out, kicking it, and relaxing.

Adrian Cervantes is a craftsman and tinkerer who enjoys working with a plethora of mediums. In the past, he has worked with ceramics, paint, wood, cardboard, sound, electronics, and instruments. Born in Oregon but identifying strongly with his Hispanic heritage, he strongly believes in collaboration across different fields and is influenced by many different artists across various mediums including Fashion, architecture, classical literature, bootleg toys, design toys, land artists, noise, hip-hop, and video games. He is classically trained in playing the cello but is most interested in contemporary music around the world. He is currently studying to be an ethnomusicologist researching electronic music.

Thomas Calletano Gonzalez is a violinist, performer, and composer studying music education at the University of Oregon. Born in Oregon, his Hispanic heritage guides him toward exploring new perspectives in both music and communities. Having studied classical music and playstyles most of his musical career, he has recently been able to explore more modern contemporary projects involving dance and original music within the school of music and dance. He believes in the expansive nature of music that explores diverse identities while providing opportunities for collaboration in the arts and beyond.

Jayne Cronin is a music education student and double bassist from Mundelein, Illinois. Jayne's accolades include winning a Leonard Bernstein Award, performing as a senior soloist, and being elected as her high school's symphony orchestra president. Outside of performance, she is most fascinated by music history, specifically the influence and contributions of Islam on western Europe. She is very excited to get back into performing with others after taking a year-long hiatus.

Bios (cont.)

K.C. Isaman is an active performer as a multi-genre bassist. An orchestral bassist, chamber musician, jazz bassist, collaborator, and improviser, K.C. thrives in creating a rich musical landscape for listeners. A thoughtful and engaging player that is fun to watch and even more fun to play with, K.C. enjoys performing and learning about all genres of music and strives to be a reliable, trustworthy, and dynamic performer. K.C. is pursuing a Master's Degree in Music Performance with a specialization in Historical Performance Practice at the University of Oregon, studying under Tyler Abbott. K.C. graduated from the University of Idaho Lionel Hampton School of Music in 2023 with a Bachelor's Degree in Music Performance and a minor in Jazz Studies, where he studied under Joshua Skinner, Vern Sielert, Kate Skinner, and Daniel Bukvich.

Ellie Jakes is a composer, cellist, and synthesist whose work encompasses classical, electroacoustic, jazz, free improvisation, and film scoring. She is a frequent collaborator of Fermata Ballet Collective and has had her compositions performed by the Oregon Jazz Ensemble, participated in the Westben Performer-Composer Residency, and had a sound installation on display at the Studio Gallery in Washington, D.C. She graduated from Lawrence University in 2015 with Bachelor's Degrees in Music Performance and Physics, and received a Master's Degree in Jazz Studies from the University of Oregon in 2019.

Ellen LaMora is currently studying violin performance and music education at the University of Oregon. She is interested in pursuing a career performing as well as teaching violin and other string instruments and ensembles. She is a member of the University of Oregon symphony orchestra and has performed other chamber and solo works on campus. In her free time, Ellen enjoys hiking, reading, and crocheting.

JP Lempke is a composer and creator of bizarre things, many of which have been performed by individuals and groups like unassisted fold, Kanae Mizobuchi, and WasteLAnd. A winner of the American Guild of Organists Student Commissioning Project and a nominee for the Destellos Foundation Electroacoustic and Video-Music Competition, his works have been featured throughout the United States, Europe, and South Korea. In February 2020, he became executive director of the Eugene Difficult Music Ensemble, and he started up the Eugene Garbage Project that same year. He is currently teaching piano, theory, and composition at the Pavilanis School of Music in Eugene.

Antonio Lopez (They/Them), born in Albuquerque, New Mexico, started ballet training at Ballet Repertory Theater of NM and New Mexico Ballet Company. Antonio attended summer intensives such as Joffrey NYC, Walnut Hill, Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet and Alonzo King Lines Ballet. After Antonio's two year training at CPYB in 2016, joined St. Paul Ballet. In 2018, Antonio joined Twin Cities Ballet of Minnesota and received their associate degree in Integrated Sciences with a certificate in Public Health and Safety from Central New Mexico Community College. Antonio is joining Eugene Ballet for their 5th season as a company artist.

Bios (cont.)

Max Mabry is an American composer and performer born and raised in Oregon. He holds a double major in Music Composition and Performance from the University of Oregon, and received awards for Music Theory and Composition upon graduating. One of the primary goals of Max's compositions is to use music as a medium to explore different ways of storytelling, and to take influence from not just the tradition of classical music, but also from a wide range of contemporary art. He also believes that through performing he can help bring to life the music of other people, and mostly performs works by living and more contemporary composers.

Eric Ragan's 30 years of dance experience have taken him from Tulsa Ballet Theatre in 1988 to Ballet Austin, and then to the Eugene Ballet, where he collaborated Tony Pimble, leaving an indelible mark as Mercutio in Romeo and Juliet. He later ventured to Switzerland's Stadttheatre StGallen before returning to Eugene Ballet and then moving on to New York, embracing soloist roles at Dances Patrelle, Ballet for Young Audiences, and the Suzanne Farrell Ballet. He is the founder and artistic director of the Long Island City Ballet. Currently he is diligently crafting a video biography and authoring a book.

Sara Stockwell was born in Rochester, Minnesota, and trained at the Royal Winnipeg Ballet School. She has danced with Eugene Ballet since 2011 where she has been featured in diverse repertoire, including Suzanne Haag's Petrushka, The Large Rock and the Little Yew, Sabrina Madison-Cannon's And Then There Were 5, Toni Pimble's The Sleeping Beauty, and others. She appeared last year in Birds Flying Through, a mixed media show by A-Squared Productions. As an advocate for greater community involvement in the arts she appears in #instaballet events, select Fermata Ballet Collective projects, and is involved in planning for ArtsAlive.

Gabriel Warren is a 16-year-old pre-professional dancer in Eugene, Oregon. Gabriel specializes in modern dance and contemporary ballet, receiving training at both Flex Studios and Eugene Ballet academy for 11 years. He is also a member of the advanced tap performance group T.O.E. and has trained with Alonzo King Lines for two summer intensives. Gabriel sees dance as not only an art for himself, but as an art that can help the world. For centuries, art has been a catalyst for change and an outlet to express abstract ideas. It's his goal to take part in this long history.

Steph Young is a movement advocate for expressionist arts, presenting space for the unique abilities of all bodies. She works with people of all ages and abilities through many dance studios, youth clubs, and fitness programs. Young's ambition as an instructor is to connect life skills discovered in the studio to real-world applications. She holds a B.A. in Dance and a B.S. in Business Management from the University of Wyoming. Currently, Young is a multiple genre instructor at Flex Studios, choreographer for their Competition group, and a movement instructor and event facilitator within Eugene Recreational Centers.

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