



A PUNCTUATE! THEATRE PRODUCTION

THE
BEST
MOMENTS
MADE OF
OOLAR

BY
MATTHEW MACKENZIE
AND MARIYA KHOMUTOVA

October 11 - 29, 2023 | Main Stage

persephonetheatre.org | Box Office 306-384-7727 | Remai Arts Centre 100 Spadina Crescent East

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Persephone Theatre is located on the beautiful lands of Indigenous peoples who have lived here since time immemorial, including the Nêhiyawak, Nêhithawak, Anishinabek, Nakawe, Nakota, Nehinawak, Lakota, Dakota and Dene peoples.

This place is also the homeland of the Métis. At Persephone, we also like to acknowledge the contributions of the Whitecap Dakota and Round Prairie Métis peoples in establishing our city of Saskatoon. Persephone Theatre is located on Treaty 6 territory and is committed to living in good relations with our Indigenous neighbours, in the spirit with which the Treaties were intended.



A PUNCTUATE! THEATRE PRODUCTION

FIRST MÉTIS MAN OF ODESA

BY
MATTHEW MACKENZIE
AND MARIYA KHOMUTOVA

PRESENTED IN THE



Persephone Theatre is a member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres and engages under the terms of the Canadian Theatre Agreement.

Professional artists are members of Canadian Actors' Equity Association.

Production staff are members of I.A.T.S.E. Local 300.

**No recording devices or photographic equipment are allowed in the theatre.
Video or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.**

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theatre

READING LIST

Curated for ***First Métis Man of Odesa***

By Matthew MacKenzie & Mariya Khomutova

Persephone Theatre is pleased to partner with **Turning the Tide Bookstore** to create book lists for our performances.

Lists will be curated by the Turning the Tide staff, to act as a supplement to what you see on our stage.

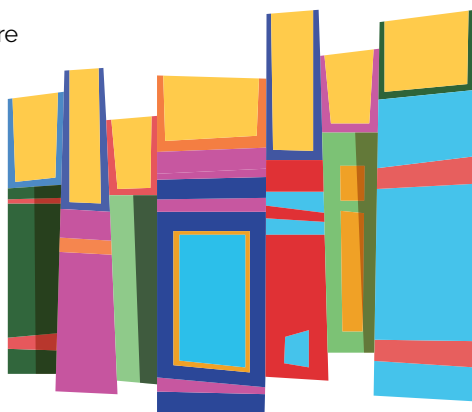
Expand your knowledge about the themes, history and information within our productions.

Click Here to see the list of books that were chosen for *First Métis Man of Odesa*.

All the books on the list are available for purchase through the Turning the Tide.

**Use the promo code
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any titles on this
curated list.**

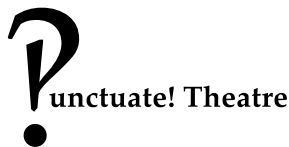
List curated by
Tracey Mitchell



Matthew MacKenzie & Mariya Khomutova	Writers and Performers
Lianna Makuch*	Director
Daniela Masellis	Production Design
Amelia Scott	Projection Design
Daraba	Composition
Aaron Macri	Sound Design
Krista Lin	Choreographer
Matt McGeachy	Dramaturgy
Lore Green*	Stage Manager
Trent Crosby	Production Manager & Technical Director
Cameron Fraser	Associate Design
Dawn Marie Marchand	Design Consultation & Scenic Artwork
Maria Nelson & Krista Leddy	Beadwork
Sheiny Satanove	Producer
Alyson Dicey	Associate Producer
Emily Randall	Head Scenic Painting
Amy Powell & Ashley Hlibner	Painting
Theatre Garage	Drape Stitching
art lab	Fabrication

*The participation of these Artists is arranged by permission of Canadian Actors' Equity Association under the provisions of the Dance Opera Theatre Policy (DOT).

The production runs 90 minutes with no intermission.



Punctuate! Theatre is a Toronto Dora and Edmonton Sterling Award winning theatre company based in Edmonton. Led by Artistic Director Matthew MacKenzie, our company endeavors to create accessible, relevant and subversive theatre that entertains and provokes thought amongst diverse audiences.
www.punctuatetheatre.com

CONTENT ADVISORY

Recommended age: 13+

Content Warning: strong language, theatrical haze; reference to true historical events, including the Covid-19 pandemic, the Revolution of Dignity and the Russian invasions of Ukraine (2014 and 2022); discussion of violence and war-related trauma.

PLAYWRIGHT THANK YOU

Olga Chorna
Beth and Ian MacKenzie
Mila Kozlov
Simon Bracken
Guillermo Verdecchia
Nastia Ziurkalova
Keith Barker
Nicolas Billon
Rosa Labordé
Kaitlyn Riordan

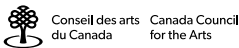
Charlotte Corbeil Coleman
Michael Shamata
Jo Ann Saddleback
Jerry Saddleback
Christine Sokaymoh Frederick
Sheldon Elter
Daryl Cloran
Sarah Pocklington
Luke Reese
Weyni Mengesha

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Erin Voaklander
Edmonton Fringe Theatre
Adventures
Gabriel and Olenka Baron
Julien Arnold
Kevin Humphrey
Kiidra Duhault
Megan Dart
Mile Zero Dance Society
Nestor Makuch

Patrick Lundeen
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Tynan Boyd
Soulpepper Theatre

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The Cultch (Vancouver, BC)

Persephone Theatre (Saskatoon, SK)
Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre
(Winnipeg, MB)
Talk is Free Theatre (Barrie, ON)



ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

First Métis Man of Odesa shines a new light on the enduring connection between Ukraine and Canada in this transcendent love story. Saskatchewan, in particular, is rich in Ukrainian culture and history, and is a place Indigenous and Ukrainian people share a unique history together. I'm delighted to have Matthew and Mariya with us to share their story, as it offers special insight into how and why the people of Ukraine and Canada continue to be connected.

Masha says, "I'm not sure that writing a play based on the real words of real people can be art." I think the presence of such realism makes for rather compelling art. Stories that dominate the news when events like the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine happen feel epic in their scope, and rarely capture the ordinary moments; the moments where life just continues as if the world isn't falling apart. Transformed into art, this is what Matt and Mariya's story captures so exquisitely – the minute, every day, ordinary moments, which make up an extraordinary life.

I love this play for its humour in the face of adversity, and most of all for its limitless hope. Matt and Masha pursued their love against all odds. When our hearts are bolstered by love – love of our partners, our families, countries, and cultures – we gain a strength and resolve not otherwise accessible to us. Love is what makes it possible to persevere, because where there is love, there is hope.

Thank you so much for being here – for valuing art, stories, the sharing of culture, and live performance in Saskatoon.

Enjoy the show!

Heather Cant
Artistic Director



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

What an absolute joy it is to present Punctuate! Theatre's *First Métis Man of Odesa*, the second production in our 49th season. This real-life love story takes us from the beaches of the Black Sea to the riverbanks of the North Saskatchewan River, amidst the backdrop of the pandemic, the onset of the war in Ukraine, and the race to be together when the world had shut down – not to mention, the birth of their first child. This story, at its core, is about two people. Two people so in love, they will go to unimaginable lengths to be together. Their story, while incredibly unique, is one so many of us can resonate with. The sheer power and determination of these two individuals, and the lengths they went through to be together is a true testament to the power of their love.

This is the first time Persephone has presented Punctuate! Theatre, and we are so pleased to have them with us as they continue on their national tour of this beautiful, heartbreaking and incredibly funny show.

As the world continues to grapple with the continued effects of the pandemic, and the ongoing crisis and war in Ukraine, it is truly beautiful to bare witness to this stunning piece of theatre. Sharing both Ukrainian and Métis Culture in one truly remarkable love story is a gift, one we are fortunate to experience.

Breanne Harmon
Executive Director



Photo of Persephone Theatre 2022-2023 Staff by Judith Schulz



MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the 2023/24 season "Love Your Theatre" at Persephone Theatre, located on Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis.

Persephone Theatre continues to showcase world-class theatre performances in Saskatoon. Their presence in River Landing plays an important role in transforming our south downtown into a premier destination centre. Persephone uses theatre as a tool to promote inclusivity in our increasingly diverse city.

The continued commitment to growing the arts community is felt through their delivery of accessible performances and newly added PlayDate performances, allowing caregivers to enjoy shows while young children attend a theatre arts program.

Theatre has a remarkable power to bring people together, to inspire, and challenge us. It taps into our imaginations, pushes us to think about how to build a stronger community, and brings out the best in one another. This season's performances promise to deliver thought-provoking productions.

To all of the casts and crews this season, break a leg!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charlie Clark".

Charlie Clark
Mayor

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DAVID EDNEY COMMUNITY LIBRARY

The Edney Community Library is a collection of plays and theatre-related books, hosted at Persephone Theatre, for community use. The Library includes a wide array of items, including: technical books, theory books, contemporary and modern playwrights, Canadian playwrights, Indigenous playwrights, Queer playwrights, playwrights from the Global Majority, and European, British and Greek classical theatre, among others.

All books from the Edney Community Library are free to borrow. You are welcome to stay and enjoy the Tier 2 Lounge while you read, or take the book with you. All we ask is for all books to be returned to the library when finished.

The Library launched in the fall of 2022. It was made possible by an initial donation from David Edney, which was supported with further donations from Phillip Adams, Derek Butt, Heather Cant, Grahame Kent, Yvette Nolan and the Sask Playwrights Centre. It has continued to grow with support and donations from other members of our community. We are so grateful to these folks for helping us bring this resource to our community.

Do you have plays or theatre books you would like to donate to the library? Please contact Grahame Kent, Artistic Associate – Community Building at grahame.k@persephonetheatre.org.

We gratefully accept both books and monetary donations to keep the library well stocked each year with fresh titles.

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DIRECTOR'S NOTES

This is a love story. And like any grand, sweeping love story, our lovers are faced with grand, sweeping obstacles that challenge their fate. They are faced with modern challenges, like Facebook messaging over great distances throughout a pandemic. And like the many great love stories that came before them, Matt and Masha's story is also set against the backdrop of war.

I have been witness to Matt and Masha's love story from the beginning. It is only fitting that these two theatrical romantics would fatefully meet through the theatre. It was at a workshop of my play *Barvinok* in Kyiv that Matt and Masha first met, and a second workshop that brought Matt back to Ukraine prior to the pandemic. At the time, I had no idea that being a third wheel would grant me a unique perspective as their future director. I also had no idea exactly how quickly and significantly our worlds would change in so many ways.

When Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine began on February 24, 2022, it was impossible to turn away. For so many people part of the Ukrainian diaspora, the war was and continues to be omnipresent. Mundane, routine tasks are weighted. News about it is inescapable. The cognitive dissonance of scrolling through Instagram dog memes followed by images of horrific Russian war crimes has been a reality for the last year and a half. To be part of the Ukrainian diaspora is to contend with your head and heart breaking for your loved ones in Ukraine, and striving to not fully dissociate from your safe, physical reality in North America.

This is also a love story about Ukraine. I want audiences to fall in love with all that Ukraine is, undefined by Russia's atrocities. Just as Matt and Masha's love blossomed on the cobblestone streets of Kyiv, or the ultra-romantic promenades outside the iconic Odesa Opera House, there is so much about Ukraine to fall in love with. Like any grand, sweeping love story, this one shows us that not even the greatest obstacles, like the most evil forces of war, can taint true love. Matt and Masha's son, Ivan, is a reminder of this unbreakable spirit. Ivan is a beautiful union of two cultures whose love has created a symbol of the kind of future we are fighting for.

Слава Україні. Все буде Україна.

Lianna Makuch

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CAST & CREATIVE TEAM



TRENT CROSBY | Production Manager &
Technical Director

Trent is an Edmonton-based artist and arts enabler with a specialty in activating non-traditional performance spaces. A graduate of Grant MacEwan's Theatre Production program and The Banff Centre for the Arts, Trent has spent the last 13 years as a Lighting Designer, Production Manager, Technical Director, and Entertainment Programmer.



DARABA | Composition

Daraba is a creative audiovisual formation (based in Kyiv, Ukraine). It was founded in 2020 by composer Andrii Merkhel and designer Yaroslav Zen. Composers and sound-designers Tetiana Khoroshun and Serhii Vilka became part of the sound studio for cultural solutions. Over the years, the team has presented a number of projects in collaboration with leading productions, institutions, and theatres in Ukraine and other European countries. Their focus is on performance, creative solutions for films, computer games, installations, and exhibitions. Each of the members that make up Daraba have many years of experience in musical, performing, and visual arts.



ALYSON DICEY | Associate Producer

Alyson Dicey is an Edmonton-based artist and graduate of the BFA Acting class of 2012 at the University of Alberta. She is a founding member of *Girl Brain Sketch Comedy* and is proud to write and perform with a troupe that celebrates and promotes the strength of women. Alyson is an Artistic Associate with the Edmonton immersive theatre company, Thou Art Here Theatre, and Volunteer Coordinator/Administrative Assistant for the multidisciplinary arts festival featuring women-identifying and non-binary artists, *SkirtsAFire*. During the summers, Alyson can be found at the Edmonton International Fringe Festival in her role as KidsFringe Coordinator.



CAMERON FRASER | Associate Designer

Cameron Fraser is a multidisciplinary artist with an extensive background in performing and visual arts, spanning over two decades. He has contributed projections, sets, props, or assisted designers for such companies as The Shaw Festival/ Why Not Theatre, Vancouver Opera, The Grand Theatre, Alberta Theatre Projects, Vancouver Asian Canadian Theatre, The Confederation Centre for the Arts, Kentucky Opera, Theatre Calgary, Vertigo Theatre/ The Arts Club, Talk is Free Theatre, and more, as well as for a variety of corporate clients. He is a Guinness World Record Holder and a proud member of the Associated Designers of Canada.



LORE GREEN | Stage Manager

Lore is thrilled to be working with Punctuate! Theatre on this beautiful show! Selected credits include: *A Christmas Carol*, *West Side Story*, *Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, *Sense & Sensibility*, *Hadestown*, *Silver Arrow*, *Peter Pan Goes Wrong*, *Clue* and *Jersey Boys* (Citadel Theatre); *Timothy Findley's The Wars*, *Mamma Mia* and *Titanic: The Musical* (Grand Theatre); *Barvinok*, *Michael Mysterious* and *Alina* (Pyretic Productions). Lore is the resident stage manager for Pyretic Productions and holds a BFA in stage management from the University of Alberta. Slava Ukraini!



MARIYA KHOMUTOVA | Writer and Performer

Mariya Khomutova started her theatre studies in Odesa at the age of 12. She graduated from the Kyiv National Theatre University in 2012 and worked in two repertoire theatres in Kyiv. Some of the favourite roles she has played are Agafya Tikhonovna (*The Marriage* by N.Gogol), Grushenka (*The Karamasov Brothers* by F. Dostoyevsky), Dunyasha (*Cherry Orchard* by A. Chekhov), Irodiada (*Salome* by O.Wilde). In 2020, Mariya was the recipient of a Golden Duke Award from the Odesa Film Festival for Best Actress in *Two of Us* (dir. Vladislav Vitriv).



OUTDOOR ADVERTISING



KRISTA LEDDY | Beadwork

Krista Leddy is a proud Métis woman whose family comes from the historical Métis communities of St. Albert and Lac St. Anne. She currently calls amiskwaciywâskahikan (Edmonton) home. Her beadwork is influenced by the beautiful teachings, stories, and patterns of her Métis ancestors and brings the spirit of her grandmothers into all of her pieces, whether they are traditional or contemporary in nature. Krista also works to reconnect Métis people back to the community through traditional arts including beading, weaving, sewing, storytelling, and dance. @beadedchickadee



KRISTA LIN | Choreographer

Krista Lin is a contemporary artist based in amiskwaciwâskahikan (colonially Edmonton). A graduate of The School of Toronto Dance Theatre, Krista has studied with renowned instructors in Israel, Taiwan, and across Canada. Krista has performed in works by Heidi Strauss, Justine Chambers, Good Women Dance, Matthew MacKenzie, Gerry Morita, and Susie Burpee. Krista teaches dance in public and private institutions, and has taught outreach workshops in Ontario, Alberta, and Taiwan. With a diploma in Arts and Cultural Management from MacEwan University, Krista is a part-time arts manager and arts advocate. She is a mom to Andy, Lily, and dog-child Louie.



AARON MACRI | Sound Designer

Aaron Macri is an award-winning composer and sound designer based out of Edmonton, Alberta. Over his more than twenty year career he has created music and sound design for theatre, television, dance, & film. His works have been broadcast nationally, and Off Broadway.



MATTHEW MACKENZIE | Writer and Performer

Matthew MacKenzie is a citizen of the Métis Nation of Alberta and proud father of Ivan (Eevan, Vanya, Vanichka). Artistic Director of Punctuate! Theatre, Matthew is also the founder and an Artistic Associate with Pyretic Productions, a founding member of the Pemmican Collective, as well as Canadian Liaison of the Liberian Dance Troupe. Matt's plays include *Bears*, *After the Fire* and *The Particulars*.



LIANNA MAKUCH | Director

Lianna Makuch is a Ukrainian Canadian playwright, director, performer, co-Artistic Producer of Pyretic Productions, and a producer with Punctuate! Theatre. She has travelled several times to Ukraine to research and develop her plays *Barvinok* and *Alina*, which have garnered awards and recognition including the Shevchenko Foundation's 2020 REACH Award, a 2022 Edmonton Artist Trust Fund Award, and was shortlisted for the 2022 Alberta Playwrighting Award. Lianna was recently Assistant Director on *Jane Eyre* and *A Christmas Carol* for the Citadel Theatre, and won the Dora Award for Outstanding Direction for her work on *First Métis Man of Odesa* this past theatre season. Thank you to Patrick for his ongoing love and support. #StandWithUkraine



DAWN MARIE MARCHAND | Design Consultation & Scenic Artwork

Dawn Marie Marchand is a member of Cold Lake First Nation in Treaty Six territory. *cipêhcakwawêw-iskwêw* (Blue Horse Spirit Woman) is a Cree and Metis artist, educator, advocate, author, writer, speaker, and mother. She received an Aboriginal Role Model Award for Art in 2017, during her term as the Inaugural Indigenous Artist In Residence for the City of Edmonton. Facilitation of the Indigenous Artist Market Collective engagement and launch in 2018. An installation called "The Longest Journey" as part of the Nuit Blanche Festival in 2018. Since then she has created public art in the Stanley Milner Public Library and had artwork projected in Expo Dubai in 2020. Her Treaty 6 oral history recognition artwork, *10 Sticks* was projected with the Juno 2023 Land Acknowledgement in Edmonton.



MATT MCGEACHY | Dramaturgy

Matt McGeachy is a Toronto-based dramaturg. He spent 10 seasons with Factory Theatre leading the revitalization of that company's new work development program, and has also worked with the Guthrie Theatre, the Kennedy Center, Theatre Passe Muraille, Canadian Stage Company, and Ronnie Burkett Theatre of Marionettes, among others. Matt is an alumnus of the Toronto Arts Council/Banff Centre Leaders Lab, is the president of LMDA Canada, and currently works as head of government relations at the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Upcoming: World premiere of *Vierge* by Rachel Mutombo and world premiere of *Armadillos* by Colleen Wagner.



DANIELA MASELLIS | Production Designer

Daniela Masellis is theatre designer and artist based in amiskwacîwâskahikan (Edmonton, Alberta), Treaty 6 territory. Daniela's training includes a B.F.A. of Theatre Design from the University of Alberta, a Diploma of Fine Arts, and a design apprenticeship in Italy at 'Teatro alla Scala Milano'. She has collaborated on over 85 professional productions across Canada. Her credits include work with The Stratford Festival, The Citadel, The Arts Club, Soulpepper, Workshop West, Mile Zero Dance, Western Canadian Theatre, The Belfry Theatre and many others. She is a full member of the Associated Designers of Canada and IATSE 659.



MARIA NELSON | Beadwork

Maria Nelson is a Métis-Ukrainian woman from Redwater, Alberta. Beading is a way of building and maintaining the connection between my heritage, my past, and my identity moving forward. My favourite part of beading is exploring how colours and patterns can play off each other. I began working on reconnecting with my community and heritage around the same time I began beading. My family connections are primarily from Saskatchewan and Red River, and it was my great-grandmother's generations that we entered Alberta. I am a Lavallee, Piche, Arcand, Poitras, Anderson, and many more. It has been an educating and rewarding experience to be able to rebuild my connections to my past and heritage while also being able to build new connection in my present.



AMELIA SCOTT | Projection Designer

Amelia Scott is a video designer, projection technologist, and new media artist. Her focus is in visual storytelling, using animation, film, video, and live cameras to implement nuanced integration of video and projections into live performances. Amelia is also an instructor of Video Technology and Design at the National Theatre School of Canada. Notable collaborations include: National Arts Centre of Canada, Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, Munich Kammermusik, The Barbican Centre, LA Philharmonic, New Zealand Opera, Festival Trans Amériques, Porte Parole, Crow's Theatre, Espace Go, Théâtre aux Écuries, Théâtre Denise-Pelletier, Alberta Theatre Projects, The Banff Centre.



SHEINY SATANOVE | Producer

Sheiny Satanove (she/her) is a Vancouver-born theatre and film producer who has lived in Treaty 6 amiskwaciwâskahikan for over 10 years. She is a proud founding member of Punctuate! Theatre, and currently serves as Managing Director. Sheiny has produced over twenty plays, including several world premiere productions. She is also a freelance producer and coordinator in the film industry, and has worked on several feature films and television shows across the country. Sheiny is thrilled to be touring with the Punctuate! team this year, and to be sharing such an important story. Much love to J & E.

Punctuate! Theatre is fundraising in support of Ukraine.

Funds raised will be sent directly to our artist and volunteer veteran connections.

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THE UKRAINIAN FLAG **Yellow and Blue**



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Blue Blueberry Juice
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- Meet new people and gain marketable skills.
- Opportunity to have an individualized Persephone Volunteer name tag.
- Name listed in the show program.
- Opportunity to see Persephone productions for free.
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- Annual Volunteer Appreciation Event.

**Please inquire with Melanie at
foh@persephonetheatre.org**

THIS IS HOW WE GOT HERE

by Keith Barker

January 31 - February 18, 2024 | Main Stage

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| Actors from Persephone Theatre perform a scene from *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*.
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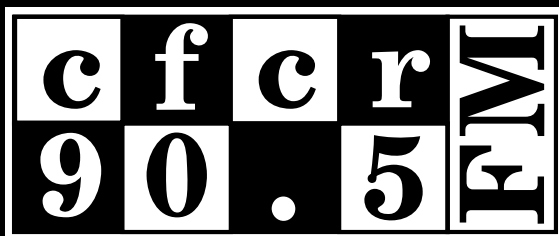
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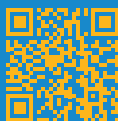
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