

## BALTIMORE JAZZ ALLIANCE

# March 2017

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THE BJA NEWSLETTER

WWW.BALTIMOREJAZZ.COM

# A Jazz Jam That Welcomes Singers

By Liz Fixsen

Surely many a jazz singer first coming to a jam session has experienced something like this exchange: "Can I sign up to sing a couple of songs?" "We don't have a microphone." "I brought my own." "We don't have an extra amplifier jack." "I brought an amp." "We don't play in non-standard keys." "I brought charts." "We don't use charts." There are some jams that might as well just post a sign, "No Singers Allowed." Others are fairly welcoming, although it's clear that the band would far rather be jamming on "Witch Hunt" or "Isotope" than on "Pennies from Heaven," and eyeballs roll if you step up to the mic and start crooning, "My Funny Valentine" or, God forbid, "Summertime."

But 30 miles from downtown Baltimore, in the heart of historic Annapolis,



Bill McHenry



PHOTO CREDIT: LIZ FIXSEN

From left: Dick Glass, John Starr, Tom Korth, Ralph Bernabe

you'll find Starr's Jazz Jam. Here, they don't just tolerate singers—they welcome them, every first and third Wednesday of the month, from 7 to 10 pm. Since I started participating in the jam about a year ago, I've heard singing that ranges from decent to dynamite. I've never heard a singer so terrible that you just couldn't listen. I've heard professional quality singers; I've heard young singers who haven't quite hit their stride and older singers who are past their prime. But every one of them has brought his or her own unique voice and personality to the familiar standards. Some fine instrumentalists also regularly join in to play.

This band loves playing together, which they've been doing at 49 West

Coffee and Wine Bar for almost ten years. Their repertoire of jazz standards is vast, and they can handle the tunes in just about any key—and if they can't, they're happy to use your charts. This band's mission is to make a singer sound good. They make it easy to hear where to start and where to come back in after solos. If you should come in at the wrong place, they'll jump right to wherever you are. The audience is equally welcoming and tolerant. If you forget the lyrics (as I've done on occasion there), no big deal—a few lines of mumbling or scatting are readily forgiven. Newcomers should check in with the elegantly dressed and ever-gracious hostess Pat White, sitting at the back table. Every singer is invited to

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The Baltimore Jazz Alliance is a 501(c)(3)  
tax exempt organization.

The Baltimore Jazz Alliance (BJA) is a grass-roots organization of jazz aficionados, musicians and venues dedicated to enhancing and promoting jazz in Baltimore and the surrounding areas. New members sharing this passion are always welcome as the BJA continues its efforts to build a stronger and better networked jazz scene. Together we can help this music thrive in the region and reward listeners and musicians alike.

#### BJA Priorities

- To develop new audiences for jazz
- To strengthen communication within the jazz community
- To improve media relations on behalf of the jazz community
- To bring greater visibility to the entire array of jazz offerings in the Baltimore region
- To provide greater access to performance opportunities for Baltimore-area jazz musicians

Visit [www.baltimorejazz.com](http://www.baltimorejazz.com)  
for information about our  
accomplishments and future goals.

**Baltimore Jazz Alliance**  
847 North Howard Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Please direct your  
questions and comments to:  
[webmaster@baltimorejazz.com](mailto:webmaster@baltimorejazz.com)

#### BJA BOARD

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# JAZZ JAM SESSIONS

Where the cats congregate to groove and grow!

**\* NOTE: As these events may be subject to change, it's always a good idea to CALL AHEAD for CONFIRMATION!**

## MONDAYS

**NEW! An die Musik Live!** – Jam sessions every other Monday. 409 N. Charles Street. For more info contact: [nathanhook7@gmail.com](mailto:nathanhook7@gmail.com). Adult \$10, Student \$5. No charge for participating musicians. 7:30 pm. 410-385-2638

**NEW! Joe Squared** – Monday night jam sessions hosted by Hot Club of Baltimore, mostly Django Reinhardt music, 1930s-'40s & standards, some bebop for more advanced players. Vocalist are welcome but no space for drums or piano. 7-11 pm. 33 W. North Avenue, 410-545-0444.

**NEW! Taybor Ethiopian Restaurant** – Clarence Ward III presents The Session at 328 Park Avenue. All are welcome to come out and express themselves. No cover, one drink minimum. Come on in and swing with us. 8:30-11:30 pm. 410-528-7234

## TUESDAYS

**Randallstown CC** – Open Jazz Jam Sessions/Book and Poetry Readings every Tuesday at 6-8 pm. Hosted by Derrick Amin. 3505 Resource Drive, Randallstown. Musicians and vocalists are welcome. Sponsored by BJA. 410-887-0698

**The Judge's Bench** – Charlie Schueller leads informal jam sessions on the first Tuesday of each month from 8:30 pm-midnight. 8385 Main Street, Ellicott City. 410-465-3497

## WEDNESDAYS

**49 West Café** – FIRST and THIRD Wednesdays. "Starr's Jazz Jam" at 49 West Street, Annapolis. Hosted by John Starr and house band. Musicians and singers very welcome! Delicious and reasonably priced food and drink available! \$10 cover. 7-10 pm. Reservations 410-626-9796

**HOMEslyce** – Todd Marcus leads jazz jam sessions every Wednesday. Musicians and singers welcome. 336 N. Charles Street. 8-11 pm. 443-501-4000

## THURSDAYS

**The Place Lounge** – Jam session/open mic hosted by Spice. 315 W. Franklin Street. Musicians and vocalists are welcome. 7-10 pm. 410-547-2722

**If you know of local jam sessions, please share the information with our readers by emailing the details to the editor at: [jazzpalette@gmail.com](mailto:jazzpalette@gmail.com)**

**If any of the jazz jam sessions listed are discontinued,  
PLEASE INFORM THE EDITOR at: [jazzpalette@gmail.com](mailto:jazzpalette@gmail.com)**

**Help us support live jazz in Baltimore  
by becoming a member of BJA. See page 11.**

# Jonathan Epley: *Songbird*

By Michael Raitzyk

Guitarist Jonathan Epley has a new CD entitled *Songbird*, recorded in July 2015. Together with bassist Jim Ferguson (who has played with Clark Terry, Red Rodney, Nat Adderley, Jimmy Heath, Tommy Newsom, Lew Tabackin, and Chris Potter) and drummer John Alvey (Greg Tardy, Jeff Coffin), Epley offers eleven tracks and one alternate take of seven original compositions and four standards.

Epley grew up playing guitar in the mountains of East Tennessee. His uncle John Arnold, noted Martin guitar historian and luthier, initiated his interest in guitar. At his uncle's shop he met guitar giants Norman Blake and Doc Watson. Epley's roots come through his music loud and clear and his right hand technique of thumb pick and fingers gives him a large palette to create different tones while expressing his musical ideas.

His tune "Papaw's Song" has a country ballad aesthetic, and is beautifully played on acoustic guitar. His other acoustic guitar track, "File," a medium bossa nova groove, shows us his solo phrasing style using slurred triplets and open drone strings. Epley places a finger on a guitar slide-glass/metal cylinder on "Skylark." This track and "Interlude" create what



## CD REVIEW

I would call Guitar Americana. Like jazz guitar master Bill Frisell, Epley employs a contemporary American roots style with elements of country and folk. "I'll See You In My Dreams" is very much in the Bob Wills/Texas swing tradition. Recorded with a touch of delay on the guitar and modern bebop harmonic ideas, this is groovy, dance hall two-step music.

Standards like "I Remember You" and "It Could Happen to You" are treated with harmonic and rhythmic detours that add nuance and give Ferguson and Alvey solo space. "Elie's Lament" captures sorrow in sound, and that's what a

good lament does. The funky "Cyprus" is the rocker of the set. On this tune, Epley's solo builds in intensity with groups of notes pouring out of the guitar that remind me of the style of Ben Monder.

I hear Epley using a liberal dose of Lydian mode in his composing/improvising, which gives the music a very bright, ascending feeling. The recording quality, the level of musicianship, the compositions, the improvising and the group interplay make this CD a winner.

*Songbird* is available at [www.jonathanepley.com](http://www.jonathanepley.com) or CD-Baby.com

## A Jazz Jam That Welcomes Singers

(continued on page 3)

sing two songs.

Joe Byrd, brother of the famous jazz guitarist Charlie Byrd, and Joe's wife Elana started the jam in 2005. After Joe retired at the end of 2008, he passed the jam on to bassist John Starr. Starr got his first paying gig (\$25) at age thirteen, with a band called Ray and the Mystics. He later earned a music degree from Washington College in Chestertown, Maryland, in music theory and composition. Over the years, has played in some of the best function bands in the region and has contributed many compositions to the Annapolis Chorale. He has seen some of his pupils go on to top schools such as Berklee College of Music. Besides the bass, John plays flute and electronic wind instrument (EWI)—and he also sings, with a lot of pizzazz and a great sense of humor. His sassy and audacious rendition one night of "Making Whoopee" brought the house down.

In fact, the band has TWO bass players (both on electric)—a rare feature in any jazz combo. The other bass man is Dick Glass, who also plays flugelhorn. When Starr sings or solos on EWI, Glass plays bass, and when Glass plays flugelhorn,

Starr plays bass. And Glass does a pretty mean scat when soloing on bass. He studied at Berklee (1968) and went on to play in the US Naval Academy band from 1972 to 1977—not only bass, but also trumpet, guitar, keyboard, vocals, and arranging. From 1977 to 1995 he held the post of Senior Chief Musician in the US Navy Band.

The band is rounded out by Tom Korth, former chair of music at Howard University, bringing a terrific sense of groove on the piano, and the always tasteful drummer Bill McHenry, who started drums at age fourteen and in 1969 went on to play with the US Army Band out of Augusta, Georgia. Landing in Annapolis in 1984, he has since been playing mostly Dixieland throughout the area.

The jam happens in the cozy back room of the 49 West Coffeehouse and Wine Bar, at 49 West Street, Annapolis. Parking is available in the small adjacent lot, at nearby Gott's Garage, or on the street. Cover charge is \$10. The welcoming camaraderie at Starr's Jazz Jam should make it a top destination for every aspiring jazz vocalist.

# BJA Teams Up With Light City and Rhythms and Reels

By Ian Rashkin

Every now and again someone approaches the BJA looking for a jazz band—not often, since, after all, our main role is not to be a booking agent or referral service. But it's certainly true that we have many fine musicians among our members and even more among our collective contacts, so it's natural that people will sometimes look to us when trying to hire jazz artists. This year we've been fortunate to work with both the Baltimore Office of Promotion & the Arts (BOPA) and the Baltimore City Department of Recreation & Parks (BCRP) to present live jazz in a number of free spring and summer events, and we've had a few other inquiries lately as well, so we're excited to be doing our part to bring more jazz (and gigs) to more of Baltimore.

In April, BJA will present three groups (Swing 'n' Samba, Djangolaya and Rodney Kelley) as part of BOPA's Light City Baltimore festival. These artists will each perform two separate sets, each group on a different date, in the Mini Light City at the Kaufman Pavilion in Baltimore's Inner Harbor. Mini Light City is a special part of Light City geared toward families with children, with interactive exhibits, crafts, and live performances that will let the artists introduce future audiences to their music and to jazz in general. Plus, BJA will be on hand to provide even



more information about where to find jazz as well as about our Jazz for Kids program. We're happy to see other jazz acts in the overall lineup as well, including long-time BJA member George Spicka, neo-soul/jazz band the Fruition Experience and the one and only Dirty Dozen Brass Band. Jazz is alive and well in Baltimore and it's great to see it well represented in this new city celebration. For a schedule of events, including BJA's programming and other jazz performances, see <http://lightcity.org/music/music-schedule>, or visit our jazz calendar at [www.baltimorejazz.com](http://www.baltimorejazz.com).

BJA is also pleased to be working with Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks for their Rhythms & Reels series of free music and films in Baltimore parks. Thanks to our ongoing partnership with BCRP stemming from the 2016

Baltimore Jazz Fest, we were able to help them fill their lineup for this great summer series, which will bring live music to neighborhood parks every week in the summer. Look for a ton of great jazz in Druid Hill Park, Leakin Park, Middle Branch Park, and one special event (a boxing match paired with live jazz!) at the Upton Boxing Center. We're bringing a great variety of music to the parks, including Deep Water, Cold Spring Jazz Quartet, Sterling Silver, Spice, Jan Knutson w/ Cassandra Allen, The Firm, Jazzy N Blue, and Rufus Roundtree and Da B'more Brass Factory. These park events are great opportunities for reaching out to new audiences to let people know what a wealth of jazz is out there for them—and just to have a lot of fun. For information on dates and times, see <http://bcrp.baltimorecity.gov/special-programs> (as of this writing, their page is not yet updated for 2017), or visit our online jazz calendar at [www.baltimorejazz.com](http://www.baltimorejazz.com).

We continue to get queries about local jazz. We are not primarily in the booking business and we do not wish to be. We are busy keeping Baltimore informed about the jazz scene. But when people come to us seeking out performers, we will always do our best to promote the best that our city has to offer and to help bring more jazz to Baltimore. That is what we're all about!



[www.unifiedjazz.com](http://www.unifiedjazz.com)

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[www.49westcoffeehouse.com](http://www.49westcoffeehouse.com)

## REVIEWS: CD/DVD/GIG/VENUE

BJA members may submit their commercially produced jazz CDs or DVDs for review consideration to the editor.

If you would like to have a gig or venue reviewed, please contact the editor.

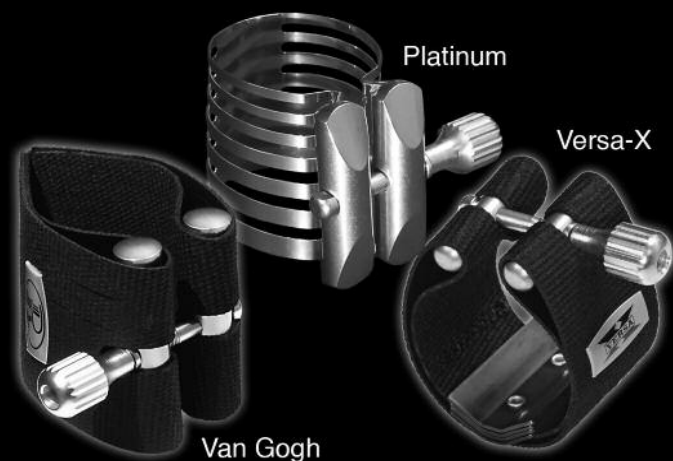
Please note that we're less likely to review bands or venues that have been covered in previous issues.

Contact the editor at: [jazzpalette@gmail.com](mailto:jazzpalette@gmail.com)

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## AN EVENING AT GERMANO'S

# The Annapolis Jazztet

By Liz Fixsen

An evening at Germano's cabaret in Little Italy is always a pleasure, and Saturday, January 21st was particularly so after I had spent a long day at the Women's March in Washington. For all the uplifting comradeship and fervor of that event, it was a demanding excursion, and by that evening I was ready to sit back and relax with a good meal and good music, which the Annapolis Jazztet delivered with pleasing style and panache.

The six-piece Annapolis Jazztet is like a little big band. Now, you wouldn't expect to find a big band, even a little one, in an intimate setting like Germano's, but the A.J. made it work (and certainly the wonderful acoustics of the space played a part). The group is made up of Vince Corozine, the bandleader and alto saxophonist, plus two additional horn players (trumpet/flugelhorn, trombone, drums, bass, piano, and vocals—the individuals filling those roles varying from one show to the next. This night, Don Keller played trumpet and flugelhorn, Jim Tavener played trombone, Tom Patti covered bass, Blake Cramer held down the piano, and Nick Pasternak handled drums and vocals. All of them boast impressive musical credentials (see [www.annapolisjazztet.com/bio](http://www.annapolisjazztet.com/bio)).

Corozine says of the Annapolis Jazztet, "I always wanted to form and write for a group that combines the sound of the West Coast Dave Pell Group with the feel and excitement of East Coast bebop." However, the repertoire on this particular night was drawn almost totally from the Great American Songbook, with swing favorites popularized by Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett, Ella Fitzgerald, and the like—favorites such as "A Foggy Day," "East of the Sun," "How High the Moon," "Just Friends," and "Moonlight in Vermont." I found myself humming along with nearly all these well-loved tunes. Pasternak sang several of them, employing a mellow, hip style reminiscent of the great male vocalists of yesteryear.

Corozine writes all the arrangements for the group, and some of them are quite ingenious. I particularly enjoyed how in "Blue Bossa" and "Summertime" the sax played a melodic counterpoint to the trombone so that the counterpoint echoed the melody, but two bars behind. I also liked how the horns played a unison melodic variation on "Almost Like Being in Love."

On every tune the horns and piano took turns soloing, and all the solos were quite pleasing, but I was particularly impressed by the little melodic and harmonic surprises in Cramer's piano solos, and by Keller's playing first the trumpet with one hand, then the flugelhorn with the other in his solo on "Easy Street," and also by how quietly and sweetly



PHOTO CREDIT: LIZ FIXSEN

From left: Tom Patti, bass; Vince Corozine, alto sax;  
Don Keller, trumpet; Jim Tavener, trombone

Tavener could play the trombone. While every band member played solid solos, Patti's bass solos garnered the greatest audience applause. Maybe it was his sotto voce scatting along with his solos that the listeners found so engaging.

Throughout the show, Corozine gave some tidbits of background on the tunes and cracked some corny jokes. Example: "We get lots of requests—but we keep playing anyway," and my favorite: "Here's the song that the ram hates the most: 'There Will Never Be Another You'" (that's "ewe"—get it?). The jokes were so corny that they were endearing. But in an intimate setting like Germano's, it's a good idea to engage with the audience.

Vince Corozine is a New York musician who moved to the Annapolis area two years ago. He plays saxophone, arranges, composes, and conducts. He was music arranger for the USMA Band at West Point for ten years; he studied musical composition with Bernard Wagenaar of the Juilliard School and with Jimmy Giuffre and film scoring with Don Sebesky. He has conducted and recorded his original music and arrangements with members of the Toronto Symphony, the Hong Kong Philharmonic, Philly Pops, and with the Kunming Symphony in China.

Corozine is also the author of *Arranging Music for the Real World*, published by Mel Bay Music. He was music director for the Norm Hathaway Big Band, which appeared six times at the Iridium Jazz Club in New York City and made a special appearance on *Saturday Night Live*. Corozine was inducted into the Blues Hall of Fame in 2013. He lives in Edgewater, MD, with his wife Norma, and teaches twelve music courses online.

The group plays regularly at Germano's. Check their schedule at [www.annapolisjazztet.com/tour](http://www.annapolisjazztet.com/tour)

[www.baltimorejazz.com](http://www.baltimorejazz.com)



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More info at: [www.baltimorechamberjazz.org](http://www.baltimorechamberjazz.org)

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BJA Members receive a \$2 discount off the general admission price! Just indicate your affiliation when ordering tickets.

The Baltimore Chamber Jazz Society is a non-profit organization and is supported by a grant from the Maryland State Arts Council, an agency dedicated to cultivating a vibrant cultural community where the arts thrive.

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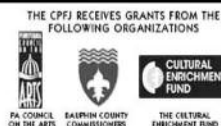
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Reserve tickets:

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Tickets also available at the door

This production is made possible by a grant from the Maryland State Arts Council Touring Artist Program.

Additional funding made possible by the William G. Baker Memorial Fund, creators of the Baker Artist Portfolios ([www.bakerartist.org](http://www.bakerartist.org)), the Citizens of Baltimore County.

The Maryland State Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts.

“Thomas’s dancing, which burns with intensity to a score of changing musical styles; classical, soul . . .”  
(Lucy Ribchester, *The List*)

“Thomas’s charismatic presence is matched by his grasp of theatricality, and he moves with a muscular ease that is wonderful to watch.”

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[www.vtdance.org](http://www.vtdance.org)

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# BJA Member Notes

## WELCOME!

We welcome new member Derrick Michaels.

## Condolences

Our condolences to Marianne Matheny-Katz who lost her beloved mother Agnes Nappi on Valentine's Day.

## Nico Sarbanes Review

In February, Nico Sarbanes's *Live in Baltimore* CD got a good (and rare) review from *Baltimore Sun* music critic Tim Smith.

# BJA Member Benefits

Your support is crucial to the success of the Baltimore Jazz Alliance! When you join, membership benefits include receipt of our monthly newsletter, discounts on BJA merchandise, advance notice about all BJA events, and of course the satisfaction of being a part of Baltimore's best source of information and advocacy for jazz.

**But that's not all!** The following venues and businesses offer discounts to BJA members:

- An die Musik offers 10% discount for BJA members for music purchases at the An die Musik record store.
- Baltimore Chamber Jazz Society offers BJA members a \$2 discount off the general admission price. Just indicate your affiliation when ordering tickets.
- Eubie Live! at the Eubie Blake Cultural Center at 847 N. Howard Street offers a discount to BJA members on rentals of its performance and events spaces.
- Jazzway 6004 offers BJA members a \$5 discount on performances at their venue.
- Germano's Piattini often offers discounted tickets to specific events for BJA members, announced by email.

## Attention Members:

Many of us are now receiving a variety of publications in digital form only. The BJA is considering a shift to a digital newsletter, sent by e-mail to members. We'd like to know who would be interested in a digital-only version of the current newsletter (the past month's newsletter is always available on the website) and who would like to continue receiving the print newsletter. Please complete this short survey at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/85JKXKY>

Alternatively, you may e-mail Liz Fixsen at [efixsen@yahoo.com](mailto:efixsen@yahoo.com) or write to the Baltimore Jazz Alliance, c/o The Eubie Blake Center, 847 N. Howard Street, Baltimore, MD 21201.



## J.A.M.

# Jazz In Bloom

By Bob Jacobson

Plans for BJA's Jazz Appreciation Month (J.A.M.) event on Thursday, April 20th, have moved ahead with the addition to our program of musicians Ebban and Ephraim Dorsey, Michael Raitzyk and Simone Summers, all of whom will provide demonstrations of jazz styles, talk about their instruments and answer questions. Jazz historian James Edward Jones will speak briefly and act as a "roving resource" and veteran musician and jazz aficionado Donald Smith will be on hand to talk about Baltimore jazz history.

Saxophonists Ebban and Ephraim Dorsey and trumpeter Simone Summers are talented middle-school students who have received BJA awards and scholarships. The Dorseys have been taught by Carl Grubbs, have attended his summer program and played in the Peabody Prep jazz ensemble. In 2016 they performed their first gig as leaders at the Caton Castle. Simone Summers plays in the youth big band led by saxophonist Paul Carr, which performed last summer at the Silver Spring Jazz Festival. Guitarist Michael Raitzyk has been a mainstay of the Baltimore music scene (and beyond) for 35 years, focusing on jazz, but also playing plenty of blues, klezmer, and recently, Celtic music with his wife and children in The Organic Family Band.

James Edward Jones is a visual artist who has taught both art and jazz history at Morgan State University. Donald Smith has been an active saxophonist on the Baltimore jazz scene. He was lucky enough to experience jazz in its Baltimore heyday, visiting many of the clubs along Pennsylvania Avenue.

All this, plus free refreshments, a jam session, giveaways and more will take place from 6 to 8 pm at the Rawlings Conservatory, 3100 Swann Drive in Druid Hill Park. The event is co-sponsored with the Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance and the Howard Peters Rawlings Conservatory.

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BJA has been granted 501(c)(3) status by the IRS. Anything pledged above the basic \$25 membership is tax deductible and greatly appreciated!



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