

From Your President

Jerry Blackstone and Abbie Betinis to Headline Summer Conference

AS I WRITE this morning, glancing out my window at the scenic, peaceful, snow-covered ground, I'm aware that this busy second half of the academic year will speed by and summer will be here before we know it! With the warmer weather will come our wonderful tradition of the OCDA annual Summer Conference held on the beautiful Otterbein University Campus. This year's event will take place on June 17–19 and I am incredibly excited to announce that Jerry Blackstone and Abbie Betinis will be joining us as our headliner clinicians!

Jerry Blackstone is a leading conductor and highly respected conducting pedagogue. Now Emeritus Professor of Conducting, he served on the faculty of the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre & Dance for thirty years where, as Director of Choirs, he led the graduate program in choral conducting and oversaw the University's eleven choirs. In February 2006, he received two Grammy® Awards ("Best Choral Performance" and "Best Classical Album") as chorusmaster for the critically acclaimed Naxos recording of William Bolcom's *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*. His choirs have sung at numerous national conferences of both ACDA and NCCO, and have toured extensively in both the U.S. and abroad.

Professor Blackstone is considered one of the country's leading conducting teachers. His 2016 rehearsal techniques DVD, *Did You Hear That?* (GIA Publications) deals with the conductor's decision-making process during rehearsal. Santa Barbara Music Publishing distributes Blackstone's acclaimed educational DVD, *Working with Male Voices*, and also publishes the *Jerry Blackstone Choral Series*.

Composer **Abbie Betinis** writes music called "inventive" (*New York Times*), "incandescent" (*Boston Globe*), and "ethereal" (*Cambridge University Press*). She has composed over 70 pieces for world-class organizations, including the American Choral Directors Association, American Suzuki Foundation, Cantus, Chorus Pro Musica, The Dale Warland Singers, James Sewell Ballet, New England Philharmonic, St. Olaf Choir, Young New Yorkers' Chorus, and Zeitgeist. In 2019, she will be the American Composers Forum's "ChoralQuest" composer, visiting schools around the U.S. to write



OCDA President
Richard Schnipke

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new choral music for and with middle school singers.

A two-time McKnight Artist Fellow featured in *Musical America* for her “contrapuntal vitality” and “ability to use her talents to effect social change,” she is adjunct professor of composition at Concordia University–St. Paul and co-founder of Justice Choir. Abbie lives in St. Paul, Minnesota, where she hosts a weekly recital series and sings in a local doo-wop quartet.

As in previous years, the Summer Conference also will feature performances by our OCDA Women’s, Men’s, and Children’s Honor Choirs. Ohio clinicians Dr. Robert Ward (Ohio State University) and Sarah Baker (Little Miami High School) will serve as conductors of the high school ensembles,

and Dr. Barbara Lamont from Missouri State University will join us to work with the children. I hope you will encourage your students to participate and have the chance to work with these wonderful people! Applications for Ohio performing ensembles are due on February 15 (2019 OCDA Summer Conference Performing Ensemble Application) and we look forward to hearing several of our state’s finest ensembles perform at the conference!

In addition to these wonderful clinicians and performances, our OCDA Repertoire and Resources Chairs will be presenting the following reading sessions: Music and Worship/Community Choirs, Elementary/Children’s Choirs, High School/University Choirs, Junior

High/Middle School Choirs, and Choral Gems. And, our Vocal Jazz, Show Choir and Contemporary A Cappella R&R Chairs will be sharing performance tips as well as repertoire in their reading session/clinic. As always, the conference will also include roundtable discussions by R&R area, exhibitors, and our annual conference party.

As you can see, the 2019 OCDA Summer Conference promises to be packed with useful information and inspiring materials, presentations, and performances. Mark your calendars and save the date for June 17–19 at Otterbein University! I wish you all the best for a wonderful start to 2019 and I look forward to seeing you in June, if not before then! ♦

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A Quest for Balance

Beth Vaughn, Northwest Region Chair

LAST YEAR at the 2018 OMEA conference, five colleagues and I provided a clinic entitled “Eyes on the Prize: Tips for Avoiding Teacher Burnout.” Many people came up to us afterward and thanked us for identifying this topic as important and for sharing our ideas and insights. Oftentimes, many of us—myself included—get caught up in our performances, rehearsals, paperwork, and meetings. We are constantly giving to others, and in the process, forgetting the important task of also giving to ourselves.

This past summer I took a course in which one of the assigned books was *The Well-Balanced*

Teacher, by Mike Anderson.¹ I thoroughly enjoyed the course and it made me reflect on my practices and how I am taking care of myself. Teaching is identified as one of the top ten most stressful professions. Emotional burnout, heavy workloads, challenging relationships with adults and students, long days, and long hours all contribute to stress and burnout. As teachers, we are charged with molding and shaping some very prized possessions: our students. In order to be the best we can be for our students, we first need to make sure we are taking care of ourselves.

In Anderson’s book, he identi-

fies five main areas where teachers struggle and provides ideas and tips on how to improve in these areas. Below are some ideas, tips, and suggestions that can support you in your quest to find balance.

Self-Care: proper nutrition, adequate sleep, hydration, and exercise

This is an area in which we have a plethora of information. At times it can be overwhelming. Meal prep, meal kits, ClickList, exercising in the morning, Paleo, Keto, drink 8 glasses of water a day—suggestions



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and opinions are never ending! The key is to find what works for you, what is most beneficial to you, and what you'll be able to commit to long term. I've found yoga to be a positive addition to my life physically, mentally, spiritually, and emotionally. I've been able to en-

hance my teaching by incorporating breathing techniques into my rehearsals and it is something I can do wherever I am.

Community and Sense of Belonging

1. Build relationships with colleagues. I have a couple of teachers to whom I can go professionally to run ideas by them, ask for advice on how to deal with a student, or simply vent. I've also joined a book club with fellow teachers where we get together outside of school time and read books for enjoyment.

2. Build relationships with administrators. We know that administrators can also be bogged down with all that their jobs require. Be proactive in getting to know them so that they will get to know you as well. Invite them to your classroom for one of your favorite lessons or when you are showcasing your students. Keep them in the loop. Copy them on communications to parents. Administrators can feel isolated at times too. Stop in and say "hi." Don't be afraid to go to them for advice or to share a success.

3. Build relationships with students. When we create personal connections with students, they are more likely to be engaged and enjoy school. Here is a great idea from Don Graves, author of the book *A Sea of Faces: The Importance of Knowing Your Students*. Create a three-column chart. In the first column list your students in the order that you think of them. This in itself can be telling—who do you struggle to remember and

who do you think of first? In the second column write down one thing that you know about the student outside of school: favorite hobby, sports interests, recent vacations, etc. In the third column, mark if you've talked with the student about this fact. This is a great tool to make sure we are investing in every one of our students! Attend activities and sporting events in which your students are involved. They will appreciate the support, and you can even connect with some parents.

4. Build relationships with families. Parents and guardians are more likely to be supportive of our efforts if they feel connected. Call or write home with good news. Parents will appreciate the positive communication and hearing good news from school.

5. Build relationships with the greater educational community. This is an area that most of you have taken advantage of by being a member of OCDA. Especially if you haven't yet, attend the summer conference to network and build relationships with other choral directors.

Significance and Sense of Purpose

Maslow identified one of the most fundamental human needs as having a sense of purpose in what we do.

1. Keep a file folder, box, or online scrapbook of notes, copies of emails, pictures, or newspaper articles that remind us of the impact we have made and how we have affected others.

Ohio Choral Directors Association

Proudly announces

The 2019 OCDA High School Honor Choir

Men's Chorus & Women's Chorus

In Conjunction with OCDA Summer Conference at Otterbein University

June 17, 2019



Men's Chorus
Dr. Robert Ward
Director of Choral Activities
The Ohio State University



Women's Chorus
Mrs. Sarah J. Baker
Director of Choirs
Little Miami High School

Visit www.ohiocda.org for online application information

Teacher Recommendation Deadline: March 15, 2019

Student Registration Deadline: April 30, 2019

For more information, contact Ann Johnson & Jessica Myers at

OCDAhonorchoir@gmail.com

Ohio Choral Director's Association proudly announces

The 2019 OCDA High School Honor Choir Men's Chorus & Women's Chorus

*In conjunction with the
OCDA Summer Conference at Otterbein College in Westerville, Ohio*

June 17, 2019

The honor choirs are designed to focus on literature specific for (T)TBB & SSA(A) voices for students who were freshmen through graduating seniors during the 2018-2019 school year.

High School Choir Directors **DO NOT NEED TO BE ACTIVE OCDA OR OMEA MEMBERS** to recommend their finest singers to participate.

OCDA understands and respects time limitations of educators and hopes that the teacher recommendation rather than recording and processing audition material will encourage more choral programs to take part in what is sure to be a wonderful experience.

Please note that in order to better ensure balanced ensembles we are asking that you recommend two complete quartets for each group. More details can be found on the teacher recommendation form.

Student registration fee is \$85 and includes:

- 2 meals, water, and snacks
- Honor Choir t-shirt to be worn at the concert
- Admission for family members or friends to the evening concert
- Packet of music and access to learning tracks on OCDA website

The High School Men's & Women's Chorus Concert will be presented on Monday, June 17, 2019 at 7 pm at Church of the Messiah, 51 N. State St., Westerville, 43081

Registration materials online and more information will:

www.ohiocda.org

2. Take on a student teacher or mentor another teacher. We can share our passion for teaching, pass on our knowledge and skills, renew our sense of purpose, and help those starting out in the field.

3. Remember your why. Craft or rework a philosophical statement. Revisiting or writing a philosophical statement can remind us of the big picture and why we do what we do.

4. Practice positive self-talk and a positive mindset. Focus on what you can control. Develop a mantra or personal motivation statement. Here are some examples of mantras that you might be able to adopt if you want to add more positivity to your life. <https://www.thelittlepine.com/99-mantra-examples-positive-life/>

Positive Engagement

Teaching should be fun! Being “in the zone” during a lesson can be a pleasure, but so can just being around our students and colleagues. When we have fun, we are

more relaxed, more able to think clearly, and most importantly, more able to stay positive.

1. Breathe new life into lessons by integrating your and your students’ interests and passions. Think about ways to add a new twist or connect it to everyday life.

2. Create a fun and engaging classroom. Again use your interests and passions to spark your creativity!

3. Enjoy the relationships with your students and colleagues. Be playful, shift your mindset if needed, and avoid negativity. It is up to us to foster a sense of fun and positive engagement on a daily basis.

Finding Balance

1. Remember, you cannot do it all. Find out what is non-negotiable on your list of roles and responsibilities that are important to you, and eliminate all else if you feel swamped. Learn to say no!

2. Work more efficiently. Find the time of day when you are most

productive and minimize distractions to maximize your time. Turn off phone and e-mail notifications or put a sign on your door to come back later if possible.

3. A schedule can be beneficial to carve out time for items on our non-negotiable list. However, remember there may be times when it is okay to ignore the schedule.

4. If you have perfectionist tendencies, relax a little! At times we need to be okay with “good” work so that we are not emotionally exhausted or worn out.

Finding balance can seem like a daunting task, but the key is to take small steps. Try one thing at a time; don’t try to change everything at once. Start now—just do it. You may have some missteps but remember that tomorrow is another day! ♦

¹Anderson, Mike. *The Well-Balanced Teacher: How to Work Smarter and Stay Sane inside the Classroom and Out*. ASCD, 2010.

Teaching Young Singers to Sing Through the Repertoire We Choose

Jeanne Wohlgamuth, Youth Area: Community Children R&R Chair

CHOOSING REPERTOIRE that teaches young children to sing can be an incredibly gratifying experience, but it can also be a very scary adventure as we strive to instill in our singers the habits of correct vocal technique. If we are lucky, our singers come to us with a clean slate and we are the ones who

begin to mold their vocal knowledge and musical future. We are the lucky ones who help them discover their voices, build their confidence, and feed their emotional and intellectual needs. We are the ones who take that lump of clay, that raw talent, and mold it into a masterful singer and musician.

Allow me to share with you the questions I try to consider as I choose repertoire for my young singers.

Is the music age appropriate?

Does the music teach what your singers need to learn? Does it have



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any educational value? Be sure to choose the finest folk and composed music. Through good quality music you can teach about other cultures, religions, languages, and historical events to name a few.

Is the text of the music appropriate? Does the music help to expand the singers' knowledge of their world? Is it worthy? Is it rich in prose and/or poetry? Be sure to choose whimsical texts like animal poems, children's rhymes, and folk stories, as well as texts that are rich in historical and cultural content.

Is the music conducive to developing music literacy? Are there sections of the music that contain repetitive melodic and rhythmic

patterns that can be extracted and used to teach literacy? Folk songs and pentatonic pieces are a great choice for developing literacy.

Where does the tessitura of the octave lie? Look for music that develops the singer's head voice and leads gently into the mid-range. Much of the music that our singers listen to nowadays consists of pop songs that are placed in the chest voice, so great care needs to be taken to help them find and build a pure, clear, free, unforced, crystal-like head voice. As such, it is important to give special attention to choosing music that guides our singers to discover their full vocal potential. As your singers gain in-

dependence and experience, begin to introduce songs that allow you to teach your singers how to control the quality of sound in the mid to chest voice. Among some of the pieces that could be used to develop head voice are "Path to the Moon" (Thiman), "Bist du bei mir" (Bach), "Pie Jesu" from *Requiem* (Fauré), and "Cuckoo" from *Friday Afternoons* (Britten).

Does the music help to develop pure vowel sounds and build choral tone? Look for canons and/or octavos that help to build pure vowels. Songs in foreign languages help to reach this goal. Uniform and centered pure vowels will also aid the singer and the choir

OHIO CHORAL DIRECTORS CHILDREN'S HONOR CHOIR JUNE 17-19, 2019

Give your 4th-8th grade students an opportunity that will shape their love of choral singing for a lifetime.



Dr. Barbara Lamont is director of choral activities at Southeast Missouri State University where she directs all choral ensembles and teaches choral music education classes and conducting. She has a passion for conducting, teaching, and exploring the choral art with young singers and has served as adjudicator and clinician in Missouri and New York. She is looking forward to directing honor choirs in Arizona and Ohio in the coming months. Dr. Lamont has also been actively engaged as a collaborative pianist since 1994, accompanying ensembles as well as soloists. She received her Master of Music degree in choral conducting from Michigan State University, studying with David Rayl, Sandra Snow, and Jonathan Reed, and her Doctor of Musical Arts degree in choral conducting at Texas Tech University in May of 2016, studying with Rick Bjella and John Hollins. Dr. Lamont is a charter member of mirabai, a professional women's ensemble in residence at Michigan State University, and is featured as a pianist on mirabai's debut recording, Ecstatic Songs. She is also a 200-hour certified yoga instructor and enjoys exploring the connection between yoga/kinesthesia and choral singing.

Nominate your 4th-8th grade treble singers today!

Singer registration fee of \$195 includes:

- 6 hours of music preparation in 2 satellite rehearsals
- 12 hours of rehearsal and performance on campus at Otterbein University
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- Complimentary T-Shirt, Award certificate and pin

Limited financial aid is available for those who qualify.

Singer nominations will be accepted online February 15 – March 15, 2019

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with intonation. The less experienced singer will have greater success with melodic lines that contain open vowels on high pitches rather than closed vowels. Simple songs in foreign languages such as Latin, Hebrew, Spanish, and Japanese help to aid singers in forming perfectly shaped vowels. Canons such as “Jubilate Deo,” “Dona nobis pacem,” “Da pacem Domine,” and “Hotaru Koi,” and octavos like “Good Night” (Rao), “Al Shlosa D’varim” (Kaplan), and “Dodi Li” (Rao) can be perfect vehicles for attaining pure, unified vowels.

Does the music present the opportunity to build legato singing and engage the breath? Choose music that teaches the child legato singing and how to sing “on the

breath.” Again, this concept will help to ensure good intonation and a well supported choral tone.

Does the part writing fit the vocal independence of your singers? The following part writing is listed in order of sequence for developing part-singing: Unison singing enables your singers to listen for blend and balance and focus on vocal technique. The use of ostinati provides your singers with the experience of producing differing musical sounds simultaneously and is a great foundation for independent part-singing. Descants are one of the best compositional techniques for harmonic singing when teaching young, inexperienced choirs. Composers such as Ruth Dwyer and the late Betty Berteaux have arranged many songs with

descants suitable for young singers. The use of rounds and canons is a great way to prepare your singers for part-singing. Partner songs use two independent melodies that have the same harmonic structure. Exact imitation, countermelodies, and homophonic writing in parallel thirds and sixths are considered more difficult for young choirs.

Choosing quality music that aids in the development of young singers is one of the most challenging aspects of being a children’s choir director. While there are other considerations such as form, accompaniment, and pedagogical implications, remember to choose your repertoire carefully and don’t settle for anything but the best—for as Kodály said, only the best is good enough for children. ♦

Listening to Contemporary A Cappella

Brody McDonald, Rep. Specific: Contemporary A Cappella R&R Chair

CONTEMPORARY A CAPPELLA has been a growing genre for some time. As I thought about what to write to help all of you become more familiar with the style, I realized that, well ... someone else has already done that job better than I can. This primer on a cappella listening will open your ears (and mind) to a diverse landscape of a cappella options that could ultimately enhance your existing program. It was written by Dave Sperandio, who is a legend in the a cappella community for mastering albums. That is to say, he’s heard it

all! Before I turn things over to Dave, here’s a quick list of some other resources to help you on your a cappella journey. *Enjoy!*

- Acappellaeducators.com The A Cappella Education Association is a professional organization geared specifically toward teachers of a cappella.
- Casa.org The Contemporary A Cappella Society of America is more comprehensive than the A Cappella Education Association and is also home to many resources including many of a cappella’s award programs.

- Campacappella.com

Camp A

Cappella is the nation’s premiere a cappella immersive camp, hosting tracks for middle school, high school, college, and music educators. Professional development hours and graduate credits (from Wright State) are available.

- Acappella.how A compilation of videos and articles on how to do a cappella—specific things, from vocal percussion to instrument imitation.





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Essential Listening

BY DAVE SPERANDIO

In the last few years, contemporary a cappella music has exploded in popularity: movies like *Pitch Perfect*, shows like NBC's "The Sing-Off," and artists like Pentatonix have brought popular vocal music to the top of the charts and generated a lot of interest in this style of music, and a great deal of music inspired by these acts and more has been created and recorded.

Incorporating contemporary vocal music into your repertoire is a great way to draw new singers—and new audiences—to your ensemble. The breadth of styles of contemporary vocal music being performed and recorded over the last several years is quite large and runs the gamut from extremely organic to more "produced." Nearly every genre of music now has its own contemporary vocal equivalent.

For those looking to learn more about examples of different types of a cappella music, there is so much great and accessible contemporary vocal music to listen to these days! No matter what your preferred style or level of production is, you're sure to find inspiration in this fast-growing area of music not only for your singers, but also for yourself.

I've compiled a few examples that I'd consider good options for "required listening" in the realm of recorded contemporary a cappella music. A few qualifications:

1. This is far from an exhaustive list; there is much more great a cappella music out there!

2. I didn't include many more notable artists that you may already know about (Take 6, Rockapella, PTX, etc).

3. I limited the songs I chose to ones that were available on Spotify, so that you could easily access them.

Finally, in the interest of full disclosure, some of these songs are ones I have had some part in the production of (usually mastering). Most I'm just a fan of.

Here is a playlist of all the songs I have listed here, and others: <http://spoti.fi/2nL3vyU>.

Firedrill!, Hyannis Sound Authentic, all-male, organically produced. The vocal chops on both of these groups are something you have to hear to believe, with their use of syllables as rhythmic and tonal tools being especially notable.

Sonos/ARORA From all-natural to fully electronic, they can truly do it all. They took the scene by storm with their smoky, hyper-vocal reimagining of "I Want You Back," and later redefined the genre with their landmark album "Bioluminescence," including the electronic-textured opener "The Bridge."

Street Corner Symphony All-American, authentic, soulful, and rocking—all at the same time. Their original song "Voodoo" conjures a magical, creole-rock feel, while the wistful "Southern Autumn Nostalgia" conveys a deep sense of longing.

Tufts Beelzebubs Along with the Yale Whiffenpoofs, one of the most influential college a cappella

groups ever. Deke Sharon, Ed Boyer, and other notables are alums. Start with "Who Are You," "Paranoid Android," or "The Trial," depending on your mood.

Brandeis Voicemale Their original song "Phoenix" is a masterclass in organic vocal arranging and production.

Juxtaposition, Bruin Harmony, Bare Naked Statues, Clef Hangers, Pitchforks Collegiate all-male a cappella music is the oldest voicing of contemporary vocal music, and it remains extremely popular. The Beelzebubs performed "Teenage Dream" on GLEE, and many other all-male groups continue to set a high bar for recordings, inspiring a new wave of singers to push boundaries.

Musae, GQ Simply beautiful, artful, and strong professional, all-female a cappella. "Glitter in the Air" is pure, all-natural beauty; "Amnesia" is gritty and incredibly powerful. "Timshel" was a viral sensation, challenging all preconceived notions about what a Sweet Adelines ensemble "could" do.

OneVoice, Vocal Rush, Forte These high school ensembles give the pros a serious run for their money, covering every style from spirituals to pop, rockers to tearjerker ballads. "Make It Holy" uses layering and space to highlight simple beauty, build, and catharsis. "Blind" shows that even young adults can write compelling original songs. "Save My Soul" is an "aca-pop" success story.



2019 SUMMER CONFERENCE

June 17-19, 2019
Otterbein University
Westerville, Ohio

FEATURING · Performances by outstanding choirs from throughout Ohio · Reading sessions offering music selected by Ohio Repertoire and Resources · Opportunities to watch conductors/clinicians work with the High School and Children's Honor Choirs · Opportunities for early-career choral conductors to chat with veteran conductors in one-on-one or small group "brainpicking" sessions.

Registration materials online beginning in February:

www.ohiocda.org

Graduate Credit Available – Reduced Student Registration Rate

Questions? Contact: Christopher Dent, Conference Chair
ocdaconference@gmail.com • 614.208.6778

CLINICIANS INCLUDE:



Dr. Jerry Blackstone,
Professor Emeritus of Music
University of Michigan



Abbie Betinis,
Composer

Children's Honor Choir Conductor:



Dr. Barbara Lamont,
Director of Choral Activities
Southeast Missouri State University

Voices in Your Head, Scattertones, Mix, Chordials, SoCal Vocals, Nor'easters Mixed collegiate a cappella music has broken much of the “new ground” of recent years. Songs like the completely reimagined “We Found Love” by Voices in Your Head and “Stop This Train” by the Scattertones will seriously inspire you.

Cluster This Italian group is a must-listen. Their original song “224” has a life-changing moment. Their cover of “Volare” will absolutely blow you away.

Vox One, Wibijazzn' Vocal jazz done oh-so-right. Light on the production, heavy on the harmonies and vibe.

Committed, Naturally 7, Eight Beat Measure More soul than you can shake a stick at, with a side of complex voicings and an extra helping of 'tude. R&B and Hip-Hop is very well represented in contemporary a cappella music.

The Swingles Pure unadulterated vocal perfection, for more than 40 years. The Swingles (formerly The Swingle Singers) have a massive catalogue of recordings. Their cover of “Libertango” is sublime; check out the music video for it as well!

The Techtonics Re: “Earthquake” —this is all voices?!

I'd encourage you to use this list as merely a starting-off point for your exploration of contemporary a cappella music. Happy listening!

Additional Resources:

Best of High School/College A Cappella <http://varsityvocals.com/best-of-a-cappella-albums>

“SING” http://casa.org/sing_cd

“Voices Only” <http://voicesonlyacappella.com>

Women's A Cappella Association <http://www.womensacappella.org/recordings> ♦

Dave Sperandio is the founder of the SoJam A Cappella Festival and the “SING” album series. As founder and chief mastering engineer of Vocal Mastering, Dave has listened to and worked on thousands of recordings from around the world: <http://vocalmastering.com>

Upcoming Events

ACDA National Conference

February 27–March 2, 2019, Kansas City, MO
acda.org

OCDA Summer Conference

June 17–19, 2019, Columbus, OH
ohiocda.org

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