European Jazz

Stories that needed to be told

Francesco Martinelli

RESEARCH ON JAZZ history has made giant strides in the past 20 years. Today we have hundreds of specialists working on its different aspects. Biographies, detailed musical analysis, regional histories, interviews, social and cultural studies are available in a wealth of material that is like a dream for those who began to read about jazz in the 1960s and '70s, where apart from a few books there were only album liner notes to read and re-read, trying to squeeze out the last bit of information. Recordings that were long unobtainable are now made available daily by major labels or by people willing to share their personal collections; and even compressed mp3 files are better than the dull and distant sound we used to get from endlessly copied cassettes. Despite extension of copyright for longer and longer periods of time through legislation sponsored by the record labels, the wealth of well-made reissues of older material is unprecedented, while jazz archives worldwide strive to preserve historical recordings.

A deeper understanding of the history of jazz can, however, be weakened by the efforts to create a 'canon' for jazz modelled on European classical music. The creation of a canon is a discourse of power and exclusion—it reinforces the ideology of the canonizer while devaluing the others—and the very idea of a 'canon' is inherently incompatible with serious research; for the history of its formation in classical music, see Weber (1999), an enlightening analysis that could apply to the establishment of the 'jazz canon'. So far, jazz history books have only to a very limited extent considered the critiques of canon creation that are commonplace in critical studies of ethnomusicology and popular music, despite jazz being one of the first examples of a globally spread popular music.

Jazz has been defined as the quintessential 'American' music: one of the most famous and visible examples being Gary Giddins's statement at the beginning of Ken Burns's jazz documentary:

> Jazz is the quintessential American music. And the important thing that you have to begin with is that it could only happen in America. It's not an African music, obviously; it's not a European music, obviously; it's something that comes right out of this soil. Out of influences that come from all different cultures. And all of those come together. But in jazz, unlike all of the other folk musics of the world, it blossoms into an authentic art. (Quoted in DeVeaux 2001–2002: 361)

This conventional narrative does not take into account the fact that jazz appeared on the US market with a strong element of exoticism, apparent in the bands' names—Creole, Dixieland, Louisiana, New Orleans—reinforcing the idea of music coming from a specific region of the country. Now separated by a sharp national border, New Orleans and Cuba were for decades part of a different cultural basin, of the Gulf of Mexico, dominated by a Spanish- or French-speaking Creole culture centred on Cuba. In the words of Thomas Fiehrer:

> Early jazz was the product of a thoroughly suppressed civilisation—namely Louisiana's variant of the French colonial or Creole universe—which came via geopolitical happenstance under the aegis of the United States in the early decades of the past century. This hypothesis dovetails with yet another—one which holds that the roots of jazz are actually Afro-Latin-American. (Fiehrer 1991: 21)

In 2012 Nicholas Gebhardt brilliantly re-elaborated Fiehrer's observations, concluding:

> Once we locate the origins of jazz within the particular historical conjuncture of proto-industrial plantation societies, the transatlantic trade in people and goods, the spread of Enlightenment ideas of autonomy and democracy, the rise of revolutionary movements throughout the Americas, the consolidation of mercantile capitalism, and the shifting centres of hemispheric power from European to New World societies and cultures, a different kind of narrative comes into view. Such an account refigures jazz from the perspective of the world, rather than participating in a narrative of global domination. (Gebhardt 2012: 195)

Gebhardt's article is recommended reading and it comes with a substantial bibliography.

Writers on jazz in the USA associate the term 'African American' with a specific community or cultural identity that developed in their country. In the global discourse on jazz, however, this means the practical exclusion of other African-derived cultures and musics. Many jazz listeners are surprised to hear that African people captured for slavery and brought forcibly by the European powers to the New World mostly ended up in Cuba and Brazil, while the actual proportion that arrived on the shores of today's USA is as low as 5 per cent according to some estimates; so African-American music is Cuban and Brazilian music. African-American music and culture from the USA occupy a disproportionate place in the imaginary geography of the jazz world, where one will hear of a 'fusion' between 'jazz' and 'Latin' or 'Brazilian' as if they had different origins. Similarly, looking at the bigger picture, 'the blues' becomes an unexplained exception in the wider panorama of African-derived musics in the New World, and we should not discount all the African musical and cultural heritages in the Americas where blues is not present.

The rich complexity of the culture of New Orleans, the interest of jazz musicians of every stylistic denomination in Italian opera or the French avant-garde, the very deeds and words of jazz musicians of any era, tend to be ignored in order to construct 'unadulterated' jazz musicians, culminating in the travesty of the oxymoron 'pure jazz'. I am mentioning a general trend. This was never the attitude of the great musicians, from the very beginning with the Bechets and the Bushells; after World War II, American jazz musicians seemed to keep suggesting to the European colleagues that they should look afresh to the whole of their own heritage. Miles seizing 'Dear Old Stockholm', or 'Ack Värmeland, du Sköna', from Stan Getz, and Coltrane's working around Spanish folk songs in *Olé* are the two most famous examples. After recording Gil Evans's arrangement of a Spanish *Saeta*, a song of the Passion rites, Miles called a piece 'The Spanish Key', and Wayne Shorter 'The Moors'—what more could they do? The fearless explorations of Ornette Coleman led the way towards a general interest among jazz musicians in the traditional musics of the world; AACM (the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians) and its exponents refused to accept genre divisions in the USA or in Europe; while visionary bands such as the World Saxophone Quartet and Air initiated a movement of true rediscovery of the innovative traditions of early jazz and ragtime.

The connection between the building of a jazz canon in the USA and the marginalization of whatever happened beyond its borders was already pointed out by E. Taylor Atkins in 2003 in his introduction to *Jazz Planet,* a volume that does shed light at least on some details of European jazz, but this is far from generally accepted. Still, a forward-looking author like Howard Mandel, in his 2000 book, does not see any *Future Jazz* outside the USA, using Europe as well as other locations worldwide only as a background for conversations among visiting Americans. And, in 2013, *People Get Ready* (Heble and Wallace 2013) uses the same words in its subtitle, *The Future of Jazz is Now!*, a coincidence maybe revealing a certain anxiety about things yet to come that produces a sort of pre-emptive ownership declaration. Editors Ajay Heble and Rob Wallace, maybe after a belated realization of the limited scope of the collection, rather weakly justify the decision only to include music from North America by citing lack of space, later implying that American jazz is global 'per se' as musicians from the rest of the world can be mentioned—as long as they have collaborated with North American artists.

A major step forward is the 2016 collection of essays entitled *Jazz Worlds/World Jazz*, edited by Philip V. Bohlman and Goffredo Plastino. Not surprisingly, this did not come out of the 'jazz studies' field, but from the milieu of ethnomusicology. Surprisingly, in all of its *c.* 500 pages the work of Fiehrer is never quoted, but the book does include excellent contributions: George Lewis's and Plastino's introductions (pages xxi–xxii) are

substantial advances on previous reflections on the subject; nonetheless, the book still never looks 'south of the border', and keeps using 'African American' as a synonym for 'USA citizen of African descent'. The questions posed by George Lewis in his introduction must frame any discourse on European jazz and jazz in general. Why would Roach and Ellington try to distance themselves from the jazz genre definition, whereas European musicians on the contrary embraced it? 'Jazz's ability to cross borders,' writes Lewis, 'leads to its recognition as an international symbol of freedom and mobility.' While 'US jazz discourses, styles, and myths have been readily available worldwide . . .', in Europe one can apply Lewis's words: 'exchanges of myth are harder to come by, rooted as they are in national languages, dress, and sub-cultural styles': exactly the point that the present volume aims to address. Lewis's felicitous definition of jazz also applies to Europe: 'while most American popular music eventually managed to come to an accommodation with power, jazz seems to act as a tack on the seat, a banana peel under the foot, a burr under the saddle'. This volume begins to organically describe the musicians across Europe that decided to assume that difficult role.

In Europe, each national jazz scene boasted its own musicians—who, in the usual turn of phrase, could 'hold their own with American musicians'. Assimilation of an external language, perhaps inevitably, became with very few exceptions more important than original expression, at least for a longish early period, making the establishment of a direct relationship with the transatlantic source more important than a connection with neighbours, despite the natural space for blending across language and ideology that jazz offered to musicians.

Europe, and much less European jazz, is anything but a unified field, contradictions abound, and the impact of resurgent racism is heavily felt. *Blackening Europe*, the 2004 collection curated by Heike Raphael-Hernandez, provides a much-needed counter-narrative, especially relevant in Paul Gilroy's introduction, squarely facing the issues of race, migration, and African influence in Europe, popular music included.

Early European jazz commentators accepted with the music its narrative of American dominance, and the continental jazz scene has remained rigidly divided by country or language, despite early attempts at unification. The concept of a common European jazz space gained traction in the mid-1950s, concurrently with the process of Europe establishing its financial and political institutions,[1] when several jazz magazines conducted polls with a view to establishing an all-European big band. This autonomous European jazz initiative failed, but pianist and impresario George Wein managed to make it a reality for the Newport Jazz Festival in 1958, putting together an International Youth Big Band that was in fact a European orchestra, with players carefully hand-picked from different countries together with the respected American bandleader, teacher and trombonist Marshall Brown. The band was affectionately known as the Tower of Babel Big Band given the linguistic difficulties it encountered. Playing a forward-looking, challenging but all-American repertoire under American leadership, the band recorded an LP for Columbia which was also issued in Europe by Philips, and it performed at least two concerts in Europe after Newport, on stages festooned with the flags of the participating countries.

The band was fraught with problems but provided much-needed international exposure for several musicians who became key players on the European scene in the following years. It also created a network of contacts among major jazz promoters which later helped George Wein with his 'Newport in Europe' tours. Albeit uncredited, it also inspired the 1961 Berlin Jazz Festival initiative, the European Jazz All Stars, produced by Joachim Berendt with a rotating personnel and a cutting-edge repertoire including compositions by Fats Sadi, Francy Boland and Martial Solal. The group also recorded for Sonorama and Telefunken. All this networking helped give rise to the European Jazz Federation (EJF), established in Venice in 1969 and intermittently operating until the late 1980s.

The first organized attempt to break language, national and genre barriers came with the international breadth and breath of the European Free Improvisation scene, an informal but unified continental movement that started in Germany, The Netherlands and England at the end of the 1960s and quickly spread to many European cities, where it is still alive in different forms. Its musical and cultural outcomes opened a door to unprecedented freedom for all musicians on the continent, and are still widely felt today, in self-organizing collectives

1 ECSC (European Coal and Steel Community) (1951) and EEC (European Economic Community) (1957).

The Newport International Youth Band in concert in July 1958 in an agricultural auction hall in Blokker, a village in North Holland (where Benny Goodman, Louis Armstrong and the Beatles would also later perform): George Gruntz (standing by piano), Gilberto Cuppini (drums), Rudolph 'Ruud' Jacobs (bass); saxes (*from left*) Bernt Rosengren (tenor), Vladimiro Bas Zabache (alto), Hans Salomon (alto), Jan Wróblewski (tenor, partially obscured), Ronnie Ross (baritone); trombones: Christian Kellens, Kurt Järnberg, Erich Kleinschuster, Albert Mangelsdorff; trumpets: Palle Bolvig, Roger Guérin, Duško Gojković, Jose Magalhais; conductor Marshall Brown (*standing on the right*).

Wouter van Gool/Dutch Jazz Archive; courtesy Ruud Jacobs

of young improvisers and in the daily operations of the many presenters who joined forces in the Europe Jazz Network, formally established in Pisa, Italy, in 1987, on the initiative of Filippo Bianchi, John Cumming, Pierre Losio, Huub van Riel and a few others, symbolically picking up the baton from the EJF. The saxophone of Evan Parker, the guitar of Derek Bailey, the orchestrations (or lack thereof) of Misha Mengelberg, Willem Breuker and Alexander von Schlippenbach created a body of work that has yet to be historically analysed but already stands as a reference point. Before them, and inspiring them, were forgotten contributions, dots on a map that still remain unconnected, and today are at risk of disappearing, engulfed in the quicksand of history.

After Django Reinhardt, original and different concepts of jazz inspired by great American creative musicians but not imitating their style came from Joe Harriott in England, Dusko Goykovich in the Balkans, Lars Gullin in Sweden, Albert Mangelsdorff in Germany, Krzysztof Komeda in Poland, Edward Vesala in Finland, Jan Johansson in Sweden, Vagif Mustafazadeh in Azerbaijan, Pedro Iturralde in Spain and György Szabados in Hungary—to name just a few who could offer great inspiration to today's jazz students, if only they were given the opportunity to hear their music within their jazz syllabuses. The diffusion of jazz is marked by the co-existence of a market for nostalgic music, a formalized teaching style and strongly innovative tendencies. These contradictions are apparent in the wide programming spectrum of festivals and clubs which strive to keep open the borders of the field, one of the unifying characteristics of the Europe Jazz Network (EJN) membership.

What in fact emerged during the preparation of this volume, and even more during presentations of the project in widely different situations, was the importance of telling the stories of the musicians who kept the very idea of jazz—with its associations of freedom and creativity—alive through difficult times. Whenever I mention them, their stories inspire young musicians, and help them appreciate the depth of the heritage. Reading the chapters side by side, one realizes how much people speaking different languages in different societies actually shared in terms of attitude, passion or utopian ideals. Telling their stories is an act of respect. I was many times reminded of Steven Feld's words about storytelling in his book *Jazz Cosmopolitanism in Accra*, a key work in understanding jazz diffusion outside its original context:

> Listening to histories of listening is my way of shifting attention to acoustemology, to sound as a way of knowing such worlds . . . to the everyday immediacy and power of stories . . . Stories analyze by the ways they encode memorability . . . Stitching stories together is also a

The European All Stars 1961 LP recorded for Telefunken and later reissued by Sonorama. *(From the bus, left to right):* Joachim-Ernst Berendt (producer), William Schiöpffe (drums), Erik Amundsen (bass), Franco Cerri (guitar), Fats Sadi (vibes), Hans Koller (tenor sax), Monica Zetterlund (vocals), Ronnie Ross (baritone sax), Duško Gojković (trumpet), Arne Domnérus (alto sax) and Maffy Falay (trumpet). *Photo: Amber (probably by Susanne Schapowalow)*

> sense-making activity, one that signals a clear analytic awareness of the fluidity and gaps in public and private discourses. (Feld 2012: 8)

The present volume is also a 'stitching-together' of stories in a jazz quilt covering the whole of Europe.

As Umberto Eco (1993) wrote, 'Europe must become a land of translators . . . Such is the concept of Europe'. And the jazz scene is no exception. There are well-documented books and articles about jazz in Portugal and Estonia, in Finland and in Poland, each in its own language, inaccessible to most of the other countries, so that the work of connecting these dots is made difficult or even impossible, despite exceptions like the early and visionary effort of the magazine *Jazz Forum*: to this day the only attempt to give one voice to European jazz. The challenge in creating a European jazz musicology today is one of building an historical knowledge of what has been done, from the specific musicians and countries to the great spread across national and linguistic boundaries of Gypsy and Jewish music, enriching and deepening our understanding and love of African-derived American music in the process.

A realization that this book was needed grew during several EJN General Assemblies—now transformed, meaningfully, into Europe Jazz Conferences; during several editions of Jazzahead! in Bremen, a de facto meeting point of European jazz; in meeting the researchers at the Rhythm Changes conferences, a quantum leap in European jazz research; and in countless visits to festivals and educational institutions all over Europe where I had the chance to speak with musicians, promoters and listeners. I realized that the increased circulation of people and ideas within Europe does not correspond to an awareness of a shared history: jazz musicians from the different European countries in the past found themselves in positions that were sometimes analogous and sometimes opposite (think of the support given to jazz by Communist parties in the West and its rejection by Communist regimes in the East); and their strategies, as well as the quality of their artistic output, are well worth investigation. EJN promoters have been at the forefront of this work for many years, trying to valorize national jazz scenes, and so EJN is in the best position to provide an overview of a story that can serve as an inspiration for new generations of listeners and musicians. And it is a story about which these new generations on the whole know very little, owing to a market focus on American output and the marginalization of those artists that fall outside commercial strategies.

The borders of Europe are no less contested than the borders of jazz. This volume defines both in the widest possible inclusive terms, reaching places that are far from Europe's geographical borders, through the inclusion of Russia as a unified jazz scene, and encompassing specific jazz traditions that looked to Europe, such as Azerbaijan, Armenia and Turkey. The movements of national borders over the last century means that there will be inevitably some overlap, as jazz in East Germany, for example, was part of an Eastern Bloc scene for many years. But I am confident that the contributors' different points of view and sensibilities will add depth to those subjects that appear in different chapters. The length of the chapters has been established with a degree of arbitrary judgement on my part and in fact evolved along with the book and with differing availability of local material; so relative chapter length roughly represents both the relevance of the country in the scheme

of European jazz, but also the current status of research in that country. This is, in a way, a reflection of that 'history of diversity' typical of European jazz, to use the words of Wolfram Knauer, born of first-hand experience (Knauer 2009).

The contributors were asked to present the history of jazz in their countries from its inception to around the year 2000. The earlier limit differs from country to country, and depends in fact on one's definition of 'jazz'. The later one is rather arbitrary, but was chosen for its symbolic significance and because it allowed the contributors to focus on historical research instead of chasing the latest developments, about which it is more difficult to gain a perspective. These limits were not strictly enforced for a number of historical and practical reasons, but there is a clear aim of avoiding creating a book about current (2018) jazz trends in Europe. The subject is history, not the present. However, a future project might be contemplated in which this book is integrated with a website where a new generation of writers can describe the contemporary scenes: a proposal that I hereby put to EJN.

The research presented here is unprecedented in scope, but builds on the first efforts towards the construction of a European narrative which began in the second half of the 1980s. Before that, jazz in Europe had mostly been discussed in terms of visiting or expatriate American musicians and even in 1979 Chris Goddard could close his foreword to *Jazz Away from Home*, a relevant if uneven work, with the sweeping statement 'although Europeans today genuinely enjoy black music, and in a way that would not have been possible fifty years ago, the jazz experience is as foreign to them as it ever was' (Goddard 1979: 8).

The pioneering work of Armando Bausch was maybe the first to tackle seriously the issue on a continental level with his still useful book of interviews with European musicians. Ekkehard Jost, who had already been an essential voice in jazz research, followed closely with a body of critical work that continued to develop in the 2010s; he recently passed away and we would like to pay tribute here to his crucial contributions to the discussions about this book. In the 1990s the Darmstadt Jazz Institute published the first collection of articles dedicated to European jazz, and in the new millennium a heated debate ensued following the controversial essay by Stuart Nicholson (2005), bringing the discussion to a new level. Meanwhile, the work of collecting material and publishing jazz history has been proceeding at a national level country by country, accelerated by the production of monographic reissues of historical recordings, led by the Nordic countries' archives and by Dr Rainer Lotz in Germany. Today 'European jazz' is even a label for a niche market of CD—and increasingly of LP—reissues of European jazz musicians' records that over time have become highly valued collectors' items.

There are a number of themes that run across the history of European jazz, and in fact we discussed the idea of slicing the subject along different lines: jazz cities, instrumental soloists, arrangements, venues, and so forth. But, even while researching the limited amount of cross-continental articles that are actually included, we realized that no one person possesses the required knowledge of any general subject to a satisfactory level across the whole continent, precisely because what is lacking is a linear narrative covering the territory of Europe. The reader will find these themes emerging in following each national history, and this is definitely an area where we hope to encourage more research. We have, however, included short treatments of some pan-European subjects: Dr Rainer Lotz presents his research on African and African-American entertainers in European sound recordings pre-World War I; Michael Dregni and Gabriele Coen discuss the contribution to jazz in Europe by highly mobile populations of Manouche and Jewish musicians; Michael Heffley reflects on the intercontinental dialogue of the avant-gardes that took place after the late 1960s; Selwyn Harris summarizes his work on jazz and films in Europe; and George McKay addresses the idea and impact of festivals in European jazz. Key issues remain undiscussed. First and foremost is the female presence in the history of jazz in Europe, with the related gender balance problem so keenly felt even in the paucity of female contributors to this book, along with record production and jazz radio broadcasting, among other areas. Female proponents of course do surface throughout the different chapters; hopefully, this will lead to wider research in the future.

Jazz is a music of personalities, no less so regarding the people who choose to write about it, especially in those cases where the music is suppressed. Dealing with different personalities across a wide spectrum of languages and backgrounds has been fascinating, if at times fatiguing. The process of selecting contributors

The Globe Unity Orchestra in Neukirchen-Vluyn in 1975: *(clockwise from top left)* Peter Brötzmann (bass sax), Rüdiger Carl (alto sax), Michel Pilz (clarinet), Anthony Braxton (alto sax), Evan Parker (tenor sax), Gerd Dudek (soprano sax), Kenny Wheeler (trumpet), Enrico Rava (trumpet), Günter Christmann (trombone), Albert Mangelsdorff (trombone), Paul Rutherford (trombone), Peter Kowald (tuba), Paul Lovens (drums), Buschi Niebergall (double bass) and Alexander von Schlippenbach (piano). *Photo: Gérard Rouy*

was long and not easy, despite the help of all my Europe Jazz Network members and colleagues, although it must be clear that the final responsibility for the choice remains on my shoulders. In many cases, I was able to invite the author of the key book on the history of jazz in a specific country, or the person who is or has been in charge of the national jazz archive; for this project preference has been given to those that actually lived through much of the story itself. In all cases I settled on respected and acknowledged personalities in the field of jazz research, as the biographies of the contributors will amply demonstrate. While the views expressed in each chapter are those of the contributor, a lengthy process of revision, profiting from the combined knowledge of different experts, has ensured as much balance as possible. All chapters present not only a synthesis of information already available ('theoretically available' in some cases, often only in the original language or in hard-to-find publications), but also new research specifically undertaken. Many of these chapters represent the first published monographic work on the general history of jazz in its country, drawing on new interviews, newspaper archives and little-known material. We warmly thank the contributors for kindly answering the many requests for clarification and additions we made while revising the texts, way beyond the call of duty and distracting them from more financially rewarding commitments.

The book draws on the newly available resources that are the result of the extensive work done nationally by the Jazz Archives. They are currently active in Darmstadt (Germany), Siena (Italy), Amsterdam (The Netherlands), Oslo (Norway), Copenhagen (Denmark) and Stockholm (Sweden), more recent additions being the UK, with the National Jazz Archive in Loughton, and Russia, with the Jazz Research Center in Yaroslavl. We

acknowledge their efforts and invite a wider audience to use their collections and services.

This volume aspires to be a sourcebook as well as a linear narration, so each chapter contains a bibliography and a suggested listening list. Not every European jazz musician will get a mention—not even all those that we collectively consider 'important', whatever that might mean. We have made an effort to select relevant personalities, symbolic of the artistic and sociocultural milieu of each country, rather than providing long lists of names with little content attached. We anticipate much criticism saying that this person or the other is missing, or has been given a disproportionate amount of space, whether too much or too little. This is inevitable but ultimately pointless. But we hope such grievances will be partially alleviated by the range of reading and listening sources offered.

Our aim here is not to present the final picture, but just the starting point along the road, fuel for further debate and more research. It is in this spirit we offer it to you.

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The proposal I submitted to EJN is the development of a previous project initiated in the early 2000s by Wouter Turkenburg, Wolfram Knauer and James Lincoln Collier, which involved several contributors to the present volume, myself included. That managed to metamorphose into something different from its initial goal and has not yet produced a published result. However, my interest in this subject and the collection of materials began even before that, with the publication of my discographies of Evan Parker, Mario Schiano and Joëlle Léandre, and through my work at Siena Jazz, whose founder and president Franco Caroni always supported my research. Equally important were conversations within EJN: Filippo Bianchi, John Cummings, Nod Knowles, Huub van Riel, Jacques Panisset, Oliver Belopeta, Edin Zubcevic and the late lamented Mehmet Uluğ, among others, who variously inspired and supported this work. EJN's past and present boards and presidents have always been supportive of the idea, so I would like to thank Annamaja Saarela and Ros Rigby as well as all former board members. I could not have concluded the work without the support of the EJN executive team, Giambattista Tofoni, Francesca Cerretani and Stefano Zucchiatti, and without the fruitful creative relationship I immediately established with Alyn Shipton and then with Equinox, which courageously accepted the challenge to produce the first systematic overview on the subject of European jazz.

Listening guide

European Jazz: New Sounds from the Old Continent (Membran/Documents, 2012)—10 CD box; artists include Annie Ross, Monica Zetterlund, Les Double Six, Cleo Laine, Jula de Palma, Lita Roza, Alice Babs, Inge Brandenburg, Tubby Hayes, Joe Harriott, Johnny Dankworth, Stéphane Grappelli, Michel Legrand, Enrico Rava, Krzysztof Komeda and Dizzy Reece.

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