

UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS



STAMP BRASS YEAR 3 REPORT

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CONTENTS



03

FORWARD
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

04

OVERVIEW

05

YEAR 3 FORMAT

06

METHODOLOGY

07

DATA SNAPSHOT

08

DATA SNAPSHOT

09

FINDINGS
PUPILS, TEACHERS, TUTORS

16

CONCLUSION

FORWARD

St Andrews Music Participation (StAMP Brass) is a music education project started in 2019, run through the University of St Andrews Laidlaw Music Centre in conjunction with the Fife Music Service and the Wallace Collection¹. At the turn of the 19th century, there were 130 brass bands in Fife Scotland alone. Now, there are seven^{1,2,3}. StAMP Brass aims to enliven this community and give Primary 6 pupils the opportunity to play brass instruments in schools¹. StAMP Brass further supports pupils through proven benefits of music education in schools⁴.

Through my evaluation, I have found that StAMP was successful in engaging students with music. Pupils continually gave the programme strong reports and of the number of pupils we interacted with, we only received a handful had negative reviews. StAMP is providing a strong and engaging experience that enhances the classroom at not cost to the schools and no additional workloads for the teachers or caregivers.

StAMP's impact is limited to an extent of a missing connection of the programme/school to their caregivers. While there is strong parental engagement demonstrated by consistently large numbers of parental attendance at StAMP Brass events, this could be one of the reasons for a lower takeup rate into brass bands than previous years. To continue playing their instruments and reap the education benefits of music, students need an alignment of support in school, the home, and the community . StAMP has improved in school support and community support but has not yet reached the caregivers. I will analyse this impact through the data I have collected and with the theoretical lenses of Robert Putnam and Bourdieu.

About the Author

CAMILLE RYDER

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StAMP BRASS

Year 3 Overview

BRASS BANDS

Brass bands were formed to create a community music scene across generations³. I connect Putnam's ideas of social capital to expand the understanding of brass bands as an indicator of the community cohesiveness in Fife. Social capital is the network that can bond and bridge networks people together by involving them in local organisations and engaging with their communities through bring similar and diverse people together; much like music groups bringing people together^{5, 6}. Brass bands reinforce social capital through time investment is reciprocated, trust is built within and beyond the organization, and their values are unified indicating a healthy social fabric. While brass bands' numbers have declined, they are still highly active in the Fife community². One way to grow this activity would be through increasing youth engagement to develop these social connections early on.

Bourdieu's Habitus explains how individuals develop from upbringing and rewarded behaviors⁷. Cultural capital, like winning competitions, molds people internally, building social structure^{7, 8}. Bourdieu sees an implicit power structure shaping these principles – power which, in artistic or learning contexts, influences actions in Putnam's social capital^{7, 8}. Brass bands develop people by creating a form of social reward through music involvement and thus the social capital grows. If young people are socially rewarded, then they will have more of an environmental push to join a brass band^{8, 9}.

NEED

To understand the place of StAMP Brass, one should note there is a wide variety in the level of educational resources in Scotland¹⁰. As the Music Education Partnership Group states: the provision of music lessons is determined by supply not demand¹¹. The Scottish education system has commendable standards for music education, as music education is a requirement for primary schools though brass education is rare^{11,12}. Thus, StAMP Brass provides a highly unique and unprecedented group experience of social learning. This involves creating the community experience of brass bands within the classroom to show pupils the power and potential of music. StAMP has successfully developed and fostered a unique learning system and curriculum over the past three years and has continued to extend this fostering directly in classrooms.

YEAR THREE

Year three was the first year of completely in-person full classroom teaching. This year, there were three large activity weekends, increased collaboration with Fife Council, and collaborations with composers specifically for StAMP. Further, the StAMP curriculum grew to include the History of Brass, a historically and internationally informed method of teaching. Further, there were collaborations with the University of St Andrews school of astronomy/ This was truly a year of interdisciplinary development.



YEAR 3 FORMAT

With the COVID-19 pandemic, StAMP brass adapted two out of the past three years for online delivery to primary school pupils with high enjoyments levels across all demographics^{2,14}. 2022-2023 was the first year that StAMP Brass had fully in-person and in-class delivery--involving eight primary schools with a course, Discovering Brass (DB). DB [au3] did not require any additional resources other than time allocation for the class. During the two virtual years, the take-up rate of participants to brass bands averaged at 49%, the past year it was approximately 5%^{2, 14}.

DB was structured into three blocks over 16 weeks and concluded with a group performance. Each pupil received their own natural trumpet (a trumpet without valves) and one of two trumpet tutors visited weekly to teach the entire P6 class; P6 instrumental music lessons are generally offered in small groups. Pupils and teachers received three block-corresponding and progressing books. The trumpet tutors developed an engagement-based and historically informed approach, applied through creativity-based improvisational musical exercises and hands-on historical trumpet activities.

AVG YEAR 1 PROGRESSION



AVG YEAR 2 PROGRESSION

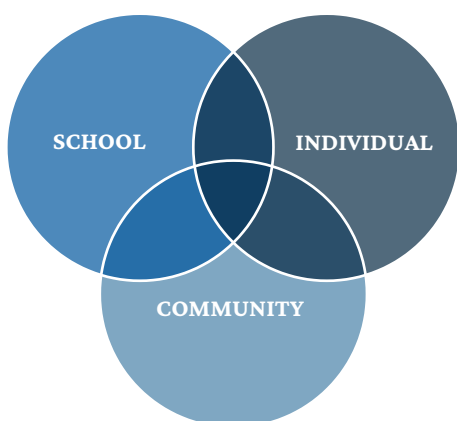


“
P6 Pupil:...if you told me that I'd be learning the trumpet before StAMP before like I started, I wouldn't have believed you but here we are!

METHODOLOGY

There were three nested planes that StAMP Brass aims to impact which we set out to understand: the pupil, the overall school, and the community-- brass bands and beyond.

The impact of Discovering Brass (DB) on the pupils was explored via two sets of randomly selected conversational focus groups and two sets of surveys. In the winter, researchers conducted surveys polling 262 pupils in DB. June surveys sampled of 44 pupils. Further, 34 pupils were sampled from the final concert.



We worked but struggled to interview and poll the teachers on their experience, interviews were selected based on availability (2 interviews, 5 survey responses). We also interviewed the two tutors of DB and three Scottish brass community representatives.

Finally, I explored previous secondary data to further contextual understanding including the previous two reports of StAMP Brass.

7 FOCUS GROUPS

7 INTERVIEWS

3 SURVEYS

298 TOTAL PUPIL OPINIONS



DATA SNAPSHOT

At the beginning of the year (Thomson and Kiely), surveys reflected high levels of excitement for the programme and specifically to learn the natural trumpet (mean of 4.17, 5 being the most excited). With 51.6 percent of students playing an instrument and 13.6% reporting musical activities outside of school, pupils were more excited to learn the trumpet if they'd already played an instrument. Further, when expressing interest levels students were interested in all potential aspects of the project; most were interested in playing in a group, a unique experience with StAMP Brass.

At the end of the year, 84% of pupils felt that they enjoyed learning the trumpet. 73% of pupils also enjoyed the history part of the curriculum (although no student was apprehensive towards the history, it was the aspect with the lowest average of anticipatory excitement). The act of learning the trumpet and performances were the most sighted favorite aspect of the programme. 43% of pupils expressed interest in continuing with a brass instrument and those that did not mostly cited busyness or lack of enjoyment.

The pupil surveys also allowed us to conduct simple correlations: there was a moderately positive correlation between programme enjoyment, enjoying the music learned, and wanting to continue. Further, there were moderately positive correlations between enjoyment and excitement for the programme (.55), enjoyment and the feeling of trumpet improvement (.45).

Data at the end of the year surveyed from the 44 participants. 84% demonstrated a drop in nerves or anxiety from the beginning to the end of the day with 70% speaking about improvement in skills and confidence increases. Of those that had positive experiences (judged by enjoyment and drops in anxiety), 90% felt they wanted to continue with a brass instrument. 60% of participants mentioned performance as their favorite part of the day. Those who felt confident from the music had an average 4.5/5 average enjoyment rating, those who did not mention confidence had a 3.8 average rating meaning that even those who were not fully engaged/enthusiastic still had a high level of enjoyment throughout the day (11 pupils).





FINDINGS: THE PUPILS

MUSICAL EXPERIENCE

Pupils had varied musical experience: some had prior lessons (funded privately, through school, or the Youth Music Initiative); most had never been involved in ensembles¹⁵. Several pupils experience music at home by learning from their caregivers or solitary learning an instrument recreationally¹⁵. Pupils mainly experience music while listening to the radio in the car and none had experience with brass instruments¹⁵.

GENERAL SENTIMENTS

Some Despite personal preferences on the trumpet, a majority felt excited, some nervous, about starting DB. After the programme started, several pupils grew to love brass more than they expected. Even those who felt nervous about trying something knew or did not know what to expect, or felt that the trumpet was not for them, consistently surprised themselves and grew to love the instrument. Students said that most engaged well with DB and felt at the end of the programme. Pupils seemed to consistently look forward to their lessons and see an improvement in mood after their experience. Many pupils shifted from not looking forward to DB but soon enjoying it and being upset about the ending of the programme. Several pupils commented on how they were more excited when they realized that the class would be learning in a group setting as well. Students said they engaged well with DB and were sad at the end of the programme.

INITIAL REACTIONS AND LEARNING BENEFITS

The pupils discussed the benefits of the classroom being a fun environment, and a calming atmosphere that allowed focus and emotional reflection; the calming nature of music is constant from the beginning to the end of year (see mid-year report). The fun environment allowed pupils to feel like they were interacting with their classmates in a different way than usual. Due to the group environment, pupils experienced higher levels of creativity through group activities.

84%

Expressed
enjoyment

43%

Interest in
continuing brass

84%

Reduced
nerves



GROUP LEARNING

According to both sets of focus groups pupils concluded that the group setting fostered further learning benefits through technique and enjoyment consistently throughout the year. Students described improving as a collective (often saying “we” or “everyone” improved). Pupils felt more support and enjoyment with each other in the group; therefore, pupils’ worries about making mistakes were often reduced.

Further, some groups of pupils cited specific events of teaching and learning from one another or practicing playing together. This is a noteworthy impact of music as the pupils not only gained emotional shifts and social bonds from the music programme, but also a feasible group learning system which benefitted the pupils. For example, a few pupils discussed how playing in a group and working to be in time with one another was an exercise of cooperation with their friends.

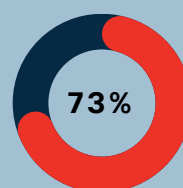
The benefits of the group setting were highly important to the pupils and seemed to be invaluable to the learning process. Several pupils found that they did not worry as much about making mistakes with the comfort of group playing. Several pupils even spoke about being inspired to play more when with their friends who also received trumpets this is a conclusion.

PERFORMANCE

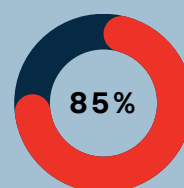
A handful of pupils participated in performances or the final performance in St Andrews. 73% of June surveys mention enjoyment from playing in concerts. Approximately 85% of pupils who performed in St Andrews experienced a positive shift from nervousness to confidence after the performance. 90% felt that performance improved their skills and 77% wanted to continue playing a brass instrument further indicating the positive impact of music especially performance.

Concert experiences seemed to be highly motivating to pupils, boosting confidence, and encouraging goal-oriented group and personal skill development; pupils could demonstrate to their peers and family members. Those who attended the concert in March or held an in-school cited it as one of their favourite parts of their experience in DB. Performing in an ensemble almost always resulted in pupils’ mood boosts and confidence increase. Approximately 75% of the pupils rated performance a 5/5 stars for enjoyment. Witnessing performances of experienced musicians, such as John Wallace, were highly motivating to students.

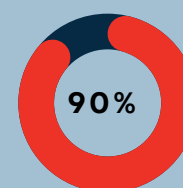
PERFORMANCE SURVEYS



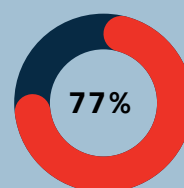
Enjoyment
in playing



Positive mindset
shift



Improvement
in skills



Wanting to
continue

“

I progressed really good. At the start I didn't even know how to blow into the trumpet and at the end I went to the concert [in St Andrews].

”



PERFORMANCE AND MINDSET SHIFT

Students navigated common musical challenges, such as the note range and muscle fatigue. Interestingly, pupils shared how they overcame challenges and gained confidence through changing their mindset: increasing practice, learning from their tutors, and developing strong work ethic habits. At least one pupil from each school spoke about defying their personal expectations of improvement for themselves and growing to enjoy the trumpet more than originally thought. . The word “learning” appeared in 56% of June survey responses with 84% saying they experienced enjoyment and learning Pupils at every level of enjoyment unanimously would recommend the programme to a peer, attributing their recommendation to valuable learning experiences. In general, pupils felt that adding the trumpet gave the school environment a fun atmosphere and often noted the importance of learning about music in the classroom; focus groups almost unanimously agreed to the importance of music education for improving on aforementioned skills and learning new things.

TECHINICAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Most pupils took great pride in discussing their development of musical skills. A large majority reported being proficient at reading music and made concrete improvements on the trumpet (ex. able to produce 3-5 notes, making articulation) and recalled specific musical concepts, terms, or exercises.

Students were consistently motivated by their positive interactions and recognition from their tutors. They consistently noted how the tutor was the biggest factor in their enjoyment, even if they didn't like the trumpet. Overcoming struggles was simplified with the tutors' demonstrations.

Pupils are consistently developing musical skills demonstrating a tangible musical impact. Further, they are having positive experiences with their tutors and developing a connection between their tutors.

TECHINICAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Most pupils said that they did not regularly practice of use the pupil book at home/ There were a handful of pupils who discussed practicing but most never used the book. If a student did practice, they were highly enthusiastic about discovering brass and often found the practice rewarding pairing their experience with coming to their trumpet lesson having improved at something. Interestingly, pupils often noted working with family members, playing for family members, or using technology and online videos to enhance their playing. Pupils also spoke to struggling to practice at home for various reasons (annoying neighbours, family members or pets).



HISTORICAL

Pupils had varied responses to the historically based curriculum; however, the majority were excited by the hands-on experiences and were able to recall specific facts about their favourite historical instruments or facts. Most students also appreciated the international perspective and discussed the importance of learning about the world.

NOT CONTINUING

Though pupils of all enjoyment levels constantly acknowledged the value of DB, being “too busy” emerged as the main reason for not moving on with trumpet. This was true even if the pupil wished to continue as 43% of June surveys expressed interest in continuing; in focus groups the most common reasons were that caregivers wouldn’t let them/weren’t able to accommodate an additional activity, the pupil had too many other activities, or logistical difficulties. These pupils enjoyed DB and many wanted to join a brass band, but simply didn’t have the time. Further, several pupils didn’t fully understand connection between DB and brass bands.

Pupils don’t see joining brass bands as a priority and the impact of StAMP struggles to reach the home. If fewer students join these groups, it becomes more difficult for pupils to establish the social connections of trust with brass bands. Further, if pupils aren’t more supported at home to practice, then they also lose another connection to the instrument all together¹⁶. Pupils enjoy their instrument and are slowly creating the network to brass bands, but not enough to see themselves in these groups or see these groups fitting into their schedule beyond the classroom.

FEEDBACK AND IMPLICATIONS

Pupils often agreed that StAMP Brass would benefit from having smaller group learning sessions in addition to the large group setting. While there were many ways that pupils expressed want for this change, there was a consensus that allowing the group to divide and letting less interested pupils opt out at some point along the curriculum would be beneficial. Some of the feedback that aligns with this point is as followed:

- While there were not many issues that pupils consistently cited, one issue that consistently came up in our focus groups was the **group setting**. While the pupils enjoyed playing with their friends and allowing everyone to have the opportunity to play the trumpet, many did not enjoy pupils “**mucking about**” **during the lessons**. Along with this, they felt that unruly classmates would be too loud or make unnecessary noise which halted some enjoyment.
- Even if students stated that they did not enjoy the programme, they still appreciated the **opportunity to learn**, indicating that a “give it a go” session would be highly beneficial.
- Some pupils also suggested having more varied activities. While StAMP Brass pupil books already include a large amount of music theory material, pupils wanted to experience **more creative aspects of music such as writing**.
- Further, pupils often wanted **more time with their tutors**. As previously stated, tutors were an invaluable aspect of the programme to many of the pupils. Pupils consistently spoke about personal experiences with their tutors,

FINDINGS: THE TEACHERS

GENERAL SENTIMENTS

“[DB gave me] confidence in my class’s ability to come together.”

Teachers felt that DB was successful (pupils were excited, engaged, and demonstrated improvement). The interviewed teachers felt the programme’s ease of implementation and the popularity of the pupils exceeded their expectations. Both teachers interviewed now work to incorporate music in their classroom more as it is calming.

Aside from texts, reports are best filled with charts, graphs and tables to present accompanying numerical data in a clear and easy-to-read manner.

Both teachers reported specific instances of struggling pupils who were deeply impacted by DB; the teachers felt that DB gave pupils an opportunity to showcase their potential in an unparalleled way.

The freedom of musical expression and improvement gave these pupils a platform to excel in the classroom where they might not have otherwise had the opportunity.

The teachers further reported a sense of pride that the pupils gained from the learning experience of the programme--one teacher spoke about students coming up to the teacher and demonstrating their skills they had practiced at home. While teachers unsure of the practicing consistency, teachers unanimously witnessed musical improvement in the pupils over the course of the 16-weeks. With this improvement, teachers also noticed increased confidence and cooperation as a group within their classroom





GENERAL SENTIMENTS CONTINUED

Teachers noted most pupils' enthusiasm at the beginning, teachers noticed more disinterested (often pupils overlooked and didn't quickly develop skills) who students disengaging by the third block. With the historical curriculum, teachers, expressed highly positive sentiments about the history but questioned the amount of history involved. Teachers seemed to appreciate the expansion of music education to an international understanding.

SUGGESTIONS

When asked why the pupils were not continuing with brass bands, teachers echoed the sentiments of their students: the pupils are extremely busy, and adding something to their schedules requires an extremely low barrier to entry for the pupils, with little strain on the caregivers. Teachers alluded to the importance of incorporating caregivers into the programme, and pointed out that formal and direct caregiver interaction didn't come until later in DB. Teachers spoke about how easy entry into a brass band would have to be, as poor accessibility would prevent students from being able to join. Teachers suggested giving caregivers an understanding earlier on (for example, an introductory video or performance).

Teachers also felt that the pupils would benefit from more performance opportunities. Some schools implemented their own performances, and the teachers noticed the benefits of having the pupils working towards a goal. They asked that the final concert in the next year be during the school day so transportation is not an issue.

Teachers also spoke to similar issues as the pupils did in the benefits and struggles of learning within the group setting. Several believed that pupils who did not engage by block three of the programme (the general falling off point for pupil engagement) did so because they did not have enough attention from tutors in the beginning due to the large class size. This speaks to the possibility of having more small group sessions for pupils.

FINDINGS: TUTORS AND BRASS REPRESENTATIVES

Both tutors this year tailored their approaches to each specific school. With the addition history, tutors brought in different historical trumpets to engage students. Tutors worked with the goal of developing a community among the classrooms.

Tutors thought Increased and streamlined communication and direct exposure to the programme would improve take-up outcomes. Both tutors and the rest of the executives in DB all witnessed improvement and enjoyment in the pupils. Even if pupils did not demonstrate concrete technical improvement, they noticed significant understanding of other musical skills such as pulse and creativity. One aspect that the tutors enjoyed was preparing the pupils for a performance. They noted, similarly to the teachers, that a common end goal was essential for developing cooperation and confidence. This developed the group environment allowing for pupils to cooperate more and support the group with their individual practice.

Tutors further enlightened the decline of brass bands. Many of the players within brass bands note the importance of these groups in developing a sense of community. Making a continual effort to meet weekly – especially in busy schedules – and be creative together, develops strong social ties. Further, with the addition of competitions, performances, and an overall time investment, brass bands develop a sense of trust between the members.

In terms of pupils, brass bands provide an avenue for further performance and music-making. The tutors, who are also highly involved in the brass band, [ZV1] highlight this as a meaningful connection based on belonging – created through making music within a social setting rather than in a solo environment – and this is highly valuable in a post-pandemic world. By extension, a sense of pride develops along with all the other benefits of music-making.

As we have seen, pupils This reflects the fact that in addition to improving pupils' musical and life skills on the individual level, StAMP is also creating a stronger classroom community. As teachers noted with students coming together to make music, tutors noting the development of pulse and performances, and students consistently speaking to the value and enjoyment of playing.

Though beyond the scope of this essay and warrants further research, brass bands highlight a class divide that is no longer a part of the music community. One should note the importance that socioeconomic class plays in this decline: once the origin of the brass band, working class people are no longer the main demographic involved.





ETHICS AND CAREGIVERS

We struggled to reach the entire community partly because the ethics paperwork that the caregivers and schools had to fill out. Caregivers and schools initially received 6 pages of consent forms per child, which often went unanswered. Furthermore, one school never responded to our requests for evaluation. The subjects who were most likely to respond were those that were more engaged with the programme and not representative of all stakeholders –a self-selection bias.

The least accessed group was the caregivers (ethics paperwork, communication outside of school, and survey responses). If we could not reach the caregivers with ethics forms or communication about StAMP Brass, this indicates necessity for improved communication. Further, pupils consistently cited not being able to practice or their caregivers not allowing them to continue. Thus, caregivers seem to be the consistent point of disengagement with brass bands, despite pupils enjoying the programme and wishing to continue; this barrier results in pupils not being able to envision themselves in these groups.

Caregivers can't encourage pupils if they do not witness the impact of DB and, therefore, may not have a connection with brass bands. When DB was delivered virtually (resulting in a higher take-up rate), caregivers were able to witness improvements within their own homes and understand the progress of their child. More direct connection allows caregivers to witness the process of DB to a brass band. Consequently, the caregivers were able to further the curiosity of the pupils. However, the programme when delivered in schools does not reach the caregivers as easily.

This is essential to understand because caregivers serve an essential role for children. they act as the "gatekeeper" of their child's activities¹⁶. If caregivers are disconnected with the school or the brass band, the child may not engage with the school in the same way. The further the divide becomes with the school, the fewer opportunities for continuing into music that a pupil might have. Thus, there is less potential interaction a pupil has with a brass band which is essential for these groups.

Further, caregivers develop the environment in which their child feels rewarded, Bourdieu's Habitus. Pupils are being rewarded by their improvement within the classroom – as is understood by their high enjoyment – but this is not furthered in their home environments. When caregivers don't have the social connection and investment of trust with brass bands, it is not built into their home environments.



CONCLUSION

Conclusion

IMPACT ON THE INDIVIDUAL

The pupils were all able to learn a great deal from the music programme. They experienced immense benefits from music education which improved the quality of the classroom, and they further recognized the benefits of participating in music. StAMP DB did a good job of creating a positive environment within the school. Pupils were able to experience growth in confidence and began developing valuable habits and skills beneficial beyond musical development. There is a desire to continue into brass bands and high levels of enjoyment

IMPACT ON THE SCHOOL

Teachers consistently see a great improvement and growth in their pupils because of the programme. Further, the group learning fosters community in the classroom and inspires pupils to get better by working with each other – highlighting the constant power of music and brass bands. Tutor, teachers, and pupils noticed the development of a positive group environment and thus a budding social network.



IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

With such a low take-up rate, there are further unexplained barriers between the pupils and furthering their curiosity. I speculate that the missing link within the pupil's 'habitus' that prohibits them from furthering the social connection to a brass band. This may be due to the divide between the caregivers and the programme and primary school.

If pupils enjoy playing and were sad about not continuing, this means that StAMP Brass was successful in creating an environment that rewarded improvement and practice. However, the divide between StAMP Brass and the caregivers prohibited the pupils from continuing. When caregivers were not encouraging pupils to practice, and pupils were not encouraged to engage with music, they did not continue. Caregivers do not have the social connection with brass bands; therefore, their children do not have the connection with brass bands, and they cannot see themselves in the group. To further support this, the main feedback we received from teachers was about reaching the caregivers more clearly and streamlining our efforts. As a result, the brass band is not considered a high priority as an activity like football even though it is equally, if not more, beneficial.

The project is reviving the local brass band community even if only by building the foundation of interest for it. Pupils are engaged and enjoying the programme through trust, time investment, and further social connection as they are now more aware of the opportunities available to them. Even if they do not carry on to a brass band, this social connection is positive and invaluable.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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