



NOON AT DUSK
A C H A M B E R O P E R A

MAY 11, 13, 14, 2016 @ 7PM
CONRAD PREBYS MUSIC CENTER
EXPERIMENTAL THEATER

STEPHEN LEWIS composer

YI HONG SIM librettist

kallisti

SUSAN NARUCKI artistic director

DANA SADAVA guest music director

kallisti

Susan Narucki, artistic director

NOON AT DUSK

A chamber opera by Stephen Lewis

May 11, 13, & 14, 2016 – 7:00 p.m.

Conrad Prebys Music Center – Experimental Theater

CAST

Annelise – Ashley Cutright

Daniela – Kirsten Ashley Wiest

Eliot – Jonathan Nussman

Maya – Tiffany Du Mouchelle

Eliot's Boss – Philip Larson

Lisha – Hillary Jean Young

Composer – Stephen Lewis

Librettist – Yi Hong Sim

Director/Producer – Susan Narucki

Conductor – Dana Sadava

Musical Preparation – Kyle Adam Blair

Lighting & Scenic Designer – Jessica C. Flores

Costume Designer – Annie Le

Video Graphics Designer – Jason Ponce

ORCHESTRA

Rachel Beetz & Michael Matsuno, flutes

Ariana Warren & Madison Greenstone, clarinets

Fiona Digney, percussion

Ran Duan, piano

Batya MacAdam-Somer & Kimberly Hain, violins

Travis Maril & Päivikki Nykter, violas

Eric Moore, cello

Matthew Kline & Tommy Babin, double bass

PRODUCTION

Public Events Manager – Daniel Ross

Chief Recording Engineer – Joe Kucera

Light Board Operator – Chenyu Wang

Scenic Construction – Jeremy Olson

Assistant Costume Designer – Evan Kwong

Recording Assistants: Daniel McFarland, Ulysses Nieto

Nicholas Serafini, Forest Reid, Kevin Di Bella

Promotions Manager – Meghan Roos

Poster Design – Jennifer Bewerse

Program Design – Rachel Beetz

Scene One: Annelise, an architect, and Daniela, a librarian, have been living together for two years. They discuss their plans for an upcoming celebratory dinner after the successful completion of Annelise's first major project. The second half of the scene, a duet set to Rossetti's "Song," is a reaffirmation of their love.

Scene Two, Part One: Eliot and Lisha stroll through the park on their first date. They describe the small town where they both went to college and marvel at the fact that they never met. Lisha speaks of her fearlessness and Eliot is amazed. The next morning, as he gets ready for work, he wonders about their relationship, speculating about whether or not it will last.

Scene Two, Part Two: Eliot, who works as a product tester, is confronted by his boss, who says that Eliot is going to be transferred to the company's headquarters, across the country.

Scene Three: Annelise has invited Maya, her mentor, to her home. Maya tells Annelise of an exciting opportunity to develop a major architectural project in Arizona, and asks Annelise to join her team. While excited about the opportunity, Annelise expresses concern about leaving Daniela for an extended period of time.

Scene Four: Annelise, distracted, walks through the park, wondering what to do. She encounters Eliot, who is there to test a physiognotrace, a device that, supposedly, captures people's shadows and "their essence, distilled" and invites her to try it out, for free. While Annelise thinks it over, Lisha appears. She reminds Eliot that he has missed their lunch date. Eliot first replies that he got held up at the office, but then says that that was not true, that he had a choice. Lisha asks him about his job and is surprised to find that someone can make a living from capturing shadows. She tells him that she hopes they will have another date, but his response is vague. Eliot's boss, who is invading Eliot's thoughts, challenges him to decide what it is he really wants. Eliot and Annelise are uncertain about their respective situations. (Rossetti: "Memory") Annelise undergoes the procedure and is disturbed by what she sees. Eliot asks her survey questions, including "Would you have liked more options?" She replies that she did not wish to choose.

Scene Five, Part One: Annelise and Daniela's bedroom. Annelise is finishing packing for her trip; Daniela expresses sorrow at their parting. Annelise gives her the living shadow and tells her that she is leaving the best part of herself behind. They sing a duet (Rossetti: "Mirage") about the vanishing of hope and dreams. Annelise leaves and Daniela sings a wordless vocalise, surrounded by her memories.

Scene Five, Part Two: Maya enters, looking for Annelise. She observes how upset Daniela is. Maya sings about Annelise's talent and the "power, wealth and liaisons" it will bring to her life. She tells Daniela that she also possesses Annelise's shadow but that she is on "Daniela's side." Annelise enters, apologizes to Maya for being late. Annelise and Maya leave together to discuss the project.

Scene Six: Eliot is in his bedroom, finishing packing. Lisha has sent him a text, wondering if she can see him on Friday. He wonders whether or not he should tell her that he is leaving town. He decides to say nothing.

FROM THE PRODUCER/DIRECTOR

Noon at Dusk is *kallisti's* seventh chamber opera production, and the first time that we have chosen to present a new opera of a recent graduate of UC San Diego's renowned program in composition. Stephen Lewis and Yi Hong Sim have given us a glimpse into the concerns of their generation in a poignant and expressive work, and have written at length about the genesis of the work in the note below.

Bringing a new opera to life is risky; it requires extraordinary commitment from everyone involved. I am fortunate to be surrounded by a group of remarkable people who made the collaborative process fruitful and satisfying. Cast, musical team, production team - everyone who has extended support to this undertaking, in ways large and small - I salute you and thank you.

– Susan Narucki

ABOUT THE COLLABORATION

The idea for the libretto of *Noon at Dusk* came about when we disagreed on the significance of Haruki Murakami's *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*. In the novel, a man's brain has been technologically bifurcated to allow him to function as a secure human computer, processing large quantities of data in one part of his brain while keeping the data contents hidden from his consciousness. However, the technology is gradually killing him, and the novel takes extended trips into the man's tormented mind. There, in a strangely mythical setting, a faceless human shadow embodies the man's consciousness and willpower while the body to whom the shadow belongs retains only the man's physical solidity in torpid, unthinking form.

Steve was intrigued by this bifurcation of a person into active shadow and inert body, and envisioned an abstract operatic plot built around interactions between shadows and bodies. Yi Hong, on the other hand, had recently been swept away by the poeticism of Karl Marx's "Estranged Labor," and could not help but read the shadow/body storyline as a tragic commentary on the man's alienation of a vital humanity within himself when he sacrificed part of his mind to an employment opportunity. The libretto plot that we conceived together combines elements of both our readings. In *Noon at Dusk*, Annelise and Eliot are confronted by a seductive alien power that both stems from their own participation in the working world and also has a much larger life of its own. This power manifests differently through each of the characters in the opera, as well as through the abstraction of the shadow. The not-quite-parallelism of Annelise and Eliot's decisions and their respective relationships with Daniela and Lisha are inspired by the mirrored plotlines of *Hard-Boiled Wonderland's* shadow/body world and its protagonist's actual life, where both the shadow and the man were, to the last, hopeful of gaining a soulmate.

– Stephen Lewis and Yi Hong Sim

Noon at Dusk combines two historical strands of opera that are often thought to be at odds - *bel canto* opera, which above all else makes the singers' voices the main event; and Wagnerian music dramas, which set aside formal conventions in opera in favor of an organic musical development that is, ideally, more psychologically realistic than earlier operas (including *bel canto*). From my 21st-century perspective, it makes the most sense to embrace both of these operatic ideals. My opera does focus on the voices, first and foremost, but it also allows its musical structure to develop naturally with the narrative of the libretto. I am hardly the first composer to have realized these two approaches can be mutually beneficial - *Pelléas et Mélisandre* and *Wozzeck*, among many other 20th century operas, do this (in their own fashion).

By featuring the voices of the singers as the most important element, I also helped myself overcome another major hurdle: how would I make my modern atonal musical language express the full range of emotions required, from contented happiness and positive sensuality to quirky dread to mounting anxiety to heightened sadness? The exact manner in which the voices sing the libretto's moving words was key. I often found myself experiencing the very feelings the characters were as I imagined the best pitches, the best rhythms for them to sing. In support of the vocal lines, I allowed myself a very free hand in writing accompanying harmonies and textures—there was no system that locked me into a specific, narrow range of choices. And yet the music of the opera feels unified, nothing intruding from another, alien universe. All along I asked myself only what the opera needed at each point, and how to improve what was there. It took the complete range of my imagination and technique to do so, and yet the process felt invigorating rather than draining. Despite its tragic nature, I hope *Noon at Dusk* leaves you with a similar feeling as well.

– Stephen Lewis

FROM THE LIBRETTIST

My crafting of the libretto was informed by my experiences singing and composing music for both prose and poetry. Vaughan Williams' "Valiant-for-Truth," a setting of Bunyan's allegorical novel *The Pilgrim's Progress*, inspired much of the prose dialogue in the libretto. Eliot's final aria, also the final scene of the opera, takes the form of a Spenserian sonnet. Most importantly, I cast three poems by nineteenth-century English poet, Christina Rossetti, as the emotional centerpieces of three different scenes in the opera. A book of Rossetti's poems was the muse I used to get myself writing each day. In the end, I found some of her poems so pitch-perfect, so lovely and touching in their simplicity and lyricism, that I decided to build particular scenes around them. That Rossetti's poetry at times explored love for women made her work especially appealing to me for scenes between Annelise and Daniela. Her verse had the uncanny quality of sounding both modern and antique at once, which suited the nature of the social and personal dilemmas facing the two couples in our opera.

- Yi Hong Sim

BIOGRAPHIES

kallisti Established by soprano Susan Narucki at the University of California, San Diego in 2009, *kallisti* brings singers from UC San Diego's graduate program in Contemporary Music Performance and distinguished guest artists together in exceptional collaborations. *kallisti* has presented chamber operas, vocal chamber music and newly commissioned works in critically acclaimed performances, including the world premiere of Anthony Davis' *Lear on the Second Floor* (2013) and the San Diego premiere of Viktor Ullmann's *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* (2012); the latter has been viewed over 3,700 times in more than 20 countries on the group's Vimeo channel.

STEPHEN LEWIS (Composer) is a composer, pianist, and conductor originally from Western Massachusetts. *Noon at Dusk*, written for *kallisti*, is Stephen's first opera. In addition, he has been commissioned by or written works for the Wellesley Composers Conference, UC San Diego's Palimpsest, the Diagenesis Duo, ensemble et cetera, Downbeat Means Attack, Trio Kobayashi, and a number of individuals. Stephen has performed contemporary and classical music in solo and ensemble concerts at Miller Theater in New York, Severance Hall in Cleveland, the Walt Disney and Zipper Halls in Los Angeles, as well as at smaller venues throughout the United States. An outstanding collaborative pianist, Stephen is in demand as a professional accompanist and vocal coach. Stephen completed the PhD in Composition at UC San Diego in 2015, where he studied with Rand Steiger. He is now earning his DMA in Contemporary Piano Performance, studying with Aleck Karis. Lewis is the first student to pursue both the PhD and the DMA in UC San Diego's graduate program. Stephen is a graduate of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, where he majored in both Composition and Piano Performance.

YI HONG SIM (Librettist) is a poet, scholar, and creative non-fiction writer from Singapore. She spent her formative years in Beijing, China, where she attended the International School of Beijing, and has been a resident of the United States since 2001. A former (and perhaps future) librarian, Yi Hong completed her M.A. in Library and Information Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2011. She received her B.A. in English and B.M. in Music History from Oberlin College and Conservatory in 2006, where she was initially a student in the music composition program. Currently, Yi Hong is pursuing a Ph.D. in Communication at the UC San Diego. She studies class and ideologies of work in American society, investigating how classical musicians interact with the work ethics of liberal capitalism. Her research was awarded the UC San Diego Frontiers of Innovation Scholars Program (FISP) Project Fellowship in 2016. *Noon at Dusk* is Yi Hong's first libretto.

Grammy award winning soprano **SUSAN NARUCKI** (Director/Producer) has appeared with the Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Netherlands Opera, San Francisco Symphony, MET Chamber Ensemble, on the Great Performers Series at Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall with conductors such as Boulez, Levine, Salonen, Tilson Thomas, de Leeuw and Knussen. A dedicated advocate of the music of our time, Ms. Narucki has given over one hundred world premieres in opera, concert and recording. Ms. Narucki's creative projects have earned major grants from the Creative Capital Foundation, the MAP Fund for the Performing Arts/Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, UC MEXUS and the National Endowment for the Arts. Her most recent is the critically acclaimed *Cuatro Corridos* (2013), a chamber opera that addresses human trafficking across the U.S.-Mexican border. Ms. Narucki was appointed Professor of Music at the University of California, San Diego in 2008. She served as director for *kallisti's* production of Ullmann's *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* (2012).

DANA SADAVA (Conductor) is happy to work on the campus where her parents met as grad students in the 1960s! Ms. Sadava is Artistic Director of Pasadena Opera, where sold-out houses have inspired an expanded third season, and Music Director of the Community Women's Orchestra (Oakland), which plays more music written by women than any ensemble in the country. This fall she will make her conducting debut at Opera San Jose (*Lucia di Lammermoor*). She has worked as a conductor and vocal coach at Wexford Festival Opera, Banff Opera as Theatre, Indianapolis Opera, Pensacola Opera, San Francisco Opera on Tap, Napa Music Festival, BASOTI, and the College of Marin. She trained as a pianist with Sanford Margolis at the Oberlin Conservatory and studied conducting with Kenneth Kiesler at the University of Michigan, where she earned her Master's degree. Before delving into musical life, Ms. Sadava earned her undergraduate degree in engineering from Caltech and worked at NASA on a research fellowship.

KYLE ADAM BLAIR (Musical Preparation) is an active pianist, vocal coach, composer, and music director in the San Diego area, specializing in the performance of American contemporary music including new works in collaboration with composers as well as works from the middle-to-late 20th century (e.g. Copland, Ruggles, Crumb, Carter, etc.). Blair also actively pursues collaborations within theatrical mediums. In 2015 he served as music director for Susan Narucki/*kallisti's* production of the Marc Blitzstein adaptation of Kurt Weill's and Bertholt Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera*. He has been tremendously active within the UC San Diego Theatre and Dance Department as well, acting as music director for the Sharif Abu-Hamdeh's *Casagemas* (2013), composer for Bennett Fisher's *Borealis* (2015), composer/music director for Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* (2015), and music director for Deborah Stein and Suli Holum's *Movers and Shakers* (2016). Blair is currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Contemporary Music Performance from UC San Diego.

BIOGRAPHIES

JESSICA C. FLORES (Lighting & Scenic Designer) has worked extensively as a production professional for a variety of artists and companies including Oregon Ballet Theatre, Northwest Dance Project, Tulsa Ballet, Pilobolus, the Liz Lerman Dance Exchange, the Oregon Symphony, Eugene Symphony, international touring with principal artists from New York City Ballet and American Ballet Theatre, as well as Harvard University where she served as production supervisor and resident lighting designer to the Dance Program for the Office for the Arts. While in Cambridge, she was the professional stage manager for Hasty Pudding Theatricals 159 & 160 and designed the lighting for the opening performances of the New College Theatre (now named Farkas Hall). As an AGMA Stage Manager, Jessica has called productions for the Martha Graham Dance Company, the Joffrey Ballet, and the Opera Company of Philadelphia, among others. She has served as the Production Manager for UC San Diego's Department of Music since 2011.

JASON PONCE (Projections Designer) is a multimedia artist, musician, and interactive arts researcher. As a musician, his creative practice embraces composition, improvisation, acousmatics, noise, and microsound. His work in interactive sound and video installation targets the many intersections between art and science, especially emergent processes, group dynamics, and distributed cognition. His work has been presented at numerous festivals and residencies throughout the States, Europe and Asia, including Issue Project Room, Roulette, Förderband, the Studio for Electro-Acoustic Music Bauhaus Universität, STEIM, the Spark Festival of Electronic Music and Art and the Kraton Yogyakarta.

ANNIE LE (Costume Designer) is a first year MFA Costume Design student. Design Credits: College of the Holy Cross - *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, *Spring Awakening the Musical*; Worcester Hanover Theatre - *Oklahoma!*, *Footloose*; Ballet Arts Worcester - *Mother Ginger (The Nutcracker)*, *Peter and the Wolf*. She has previously worked with The Huntington Theatre (Boston), Richard Fisher Performance Arts Center (Bard College) and has gone on tour with *I Made Bandem* (Balinese Art Festival).

ASHLEY CUTRIGHT (Annelise), mezzo soprano, is enjoying her first year in the doctoral program in the music department at UC San Diego under the tutelage of Susan Narucki. Ashley made her Enid Symphony debut just last month in the title role of *Carmen*. This is quickly becoming a signature role, as she also played the famous Gypsy woman in a production with Opera Neo in San Diego last summer. Other roles include Stephano in *Romeo et Juliet*, Tisbe in *La Cenerentola*, Catherine Wright in *Shining Brow*, Chief Elder in *The Giver*, Jordan Baker in *The Great Gatsby* (Tulsa Opera); Florence Pike in *Albert Herring* (Opera on the Avalon); Sister Mathilde in *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, Olga in *Eugene Onegin* (Des Moines Metro Opera); Cecilia March in *Little Women*, Alisa in *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Opera North); Katisha in *The Mikado* (Skylark Opera); Ottavia in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, Berta in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Pensacola Opera).

Praised for her musical versatility, an electric stage presence and exceptional dramatic sensibilities, soprano **TIFFANY DU MOUCHELLE** (Maya) is most recognized for her fearlessness in exploring new and challenging repertoire. Recipient of the Richard F. Gold Career Grant for American Opera Singers, recent collaborations include the Australian premiere of Stockhausen's *Sirius* with Bendigo International Festival of Exploratory Music, the west coast premier of Roger Reynolds' *Justice* (Clytemnestra), and the world premiere of *Lear on the Second Floor* (Tara) by Anthony Davis. She is the co-founder of *Aurora Borealis*, a voice and percussion duo with Stephen Solook, and a frequent collaborator with the cultural diplomacy organization Cultures in Harmony, having performed for projects in Cameroon, Tunisia, Egypt and Papua New Guinea. An alumna of UC San Diego (D.M.A. 2015) and *kallisti* (2010-2014), Du Mouchelle now resides in New York, where she is the director of the voice program at University at Buffalo.

Bass-baritone **PHILIP LARSON** (Eliot's Boss) studied at the University of Illinois. In 1977 Larson, along with Edwin Harkins, founded [THE], a composing/performing duo that performed at Music Today in Tokyo, Paris Autumn Festival, the Darmstadt Ferienkurse, the Inter-Society for the Electronic Arts in Rotterdam, the Suzuki Theater Festival in Japan, the New Music America Festival in Chicago and PICA in Perth, Australia. They have collaborated with John Cage, Toru Takemitsu, Anthony Braxton and media artist Vibeke Sorenson. As a concert soloist Larson has performed in New York, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Paris, Tokyo, Munich, Lisbon, Cleveland, Bukarest and Warsaw appearing with Ensemble Intercontemporain, Cleveland Chamber Symphony, Handel and Haydn Society, Metropolitan Chamber Orchestra, Pomerium Musices, red fish blue fish percussion ensemble, and Speculum Musicae under the direction of such conductors as David Atherton, James Levine, and David Robertson. Larson is a professor of music at UC San Diego.

Baritone **JONATHAN NUSSMAN** (Eliot) is a specialist in contemporary music and opera who has performed extensively on both the East and West Coasts. Appearances include Cape Cod Opera, Opera Boston, Guerilla Opera, Juventas New Music Ensemble and Boston Modern Orchestra Project, as well as featured performances with the Cambridge Symphony Orchestra and the soundSCAPE New Music Festival in Maccagno, Italy. As a performer of contemporary works, he has premiered new pieces by such composers as Nicholas Vines, Andy Vores, Marti Epstein, Brian Hulse, Alla Cohen, Rudolph Rojahn, John Bavicchi and Harold Farberman. Notable operatic roles in his repertoire include Papageno (*Die Zauberflöte*), Count Almaviva (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Larry Foreman (*The Cradle Will Rock*), John Brooke (*Little Women*) and Sid (*Albert Herring*) and Mack (*The Threepenny Opera*). Originally from Charlotte, North Carolina, he is now pursuing a doctoral degree in contemporary music performance at UC San Diego, where he studies under Philip Larson.

BIOGRAPHIES

Soprano **KIRSTEN ASHLEY WIEST** (Daniela) is “a new music natural” (Jeffrey Holmes, composer) committed to the continuous evolution of classical vocal music. Her “wonderful voice, not like anyone else” (American Composers Forum) has captured the attention of many composers, resulting in numerous world premiere performances. Kirsten has sung as a soloist with the Grammy-winning Partch ensemble, the Industry opera company, YMF Debut Orchestra, La Jolla Symphony and Chorus, wild Up new music collective, UC Los Angeles John Cage Symposium, UCSD’s Palimpsest, CalArts New Century Players Ensemble, and Chapman University’s New Music Ensemble. She has also performed with Bang on a Can All-Stars, red fish blue fish, San Diego Pro Arte Voices, the Metroplex Opera Company in Dallas, and the Texas ‘Lone Star’ Ambassadors of Music. Currently a DMA student at UC San Diego under the instruction of Susan Narucki, Kirsten holds an MFA from CalArts and a BM cum laude from Chapman University’s Conservatory of Music.

Soprano **HILLARY JEAN YOUNG** (Lisha) was born in Grand Forks, British Columbia. From the studio of Nancy Hermiston, Young received their Masters of Music in Opera from the University of British Columbia in May, 2014. Young has received several prestigious scholarships and awards, including the Roberto and Mary Wood Scholarship, the San Diego District Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions Encouragement Award 2015, and the LA Songfest New Music Fellowship. Young’s operatic experience includes roles such as First Wood Sprite in Dvořák’s *Rusalka*, the title role in Janáček’s *Přibody lišky Bystroušky*, and La Modista in Rota’s *Il cappello di paglia di Firenze*. In addition, their interpretation of Jenny in Weill’s *The Threepenny Opera* was hailed as “showing both the acidity and the humanity at the core of this work” (San Diego Union-Tribune). Young is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in contemporary music performance at the UC San Diego under the tutelage of Susan Narucki.

Noon at Dusk was made possible through the generous support of:

The Department of Music, UC San Diego – Lei Liang, Acting Chair, Barbara Jackson, MSO

The Division of Arts and Humanities, UC San Diego

Christina Della Coletta, Dean, Alma Palazzolo, Assistant Dean

The Academic Senate of the University of California

Anonymous

Ms. Julia Falk

Ms. Susan Narucki and Mr. David Rutherford

In addition, we would like to thank the following individuals:

Yi Qing Sim, Ee Hian Sim, Puay Hua Ang, Matthew Ozawa, Stephanie Aston, Matt Kline, Rand Steiger, Aleck Karis, Chinary Ung, Shahrokh Yadegari, Michael Davidson, Ed and Sue Lewis, Henry Lewis, Libby Porada, Ryoko Gugeun

Song

Two doves upon the selfsame branch,
 Two lilies on a single stem,
 Two butterflies upon one flower:--
 O happy they who look on them.

Who look upon them hand in hand
 Flushed in the rosy summer light;
 Who look upon them hand in hand
 And never give a thought to night.

Memory (excerpted)

I nursed it in my [breast] while it lived,
 I hid it in my heart when it was dead;
 In joy I sat alone, even so I grieved
 Alone and nothing said.

I shut the door to face the naked truth,
 I stood alone,--I faced the truth alone,
 Stripped bare of self-regard or forms or ruth
 Till first and last were shown.

...

I have a room whereinto no one enters
 Save I myself alone:

Mirage

The hope I dreamed of was a dream,
 Was but a dream; and now I wake
 Exceeding comfortless, and worn, and old,
 For a dream's sake.

I hang my harp upon a tree,
 A weeping willow in a lake;
 I hang my silenced harp there, wrung and snapt
 For a dream's sake.

Lie still, lie still, my breaking heart;
 My silent heart, lie still and break:
 Life, and the world, and mine own self, are
 changed
 For a dream's sake.

A black and white photograph of a city skyline at night, with numerous skyscrapers illuminated and their lights reflecting on the water in the foreground. The sky is dark, and the water shows a soft, blurred reflection of the city lights.

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