



# Johns Creek Orchestra Newsletter

## The New Normal: A Look at Orchestra During Covid-19

By Radhika Uchil

These times are unprecedented. This pandemic has changed a lot of what we are used to and has brought a new perspective on our daily lives, including orchestra. The normal day of showing up to a full class with students and being able to sit next to your friends and play your favorite music is no longer a reality. For the safety of everyone around, our orchestra is dedicated to making sure that there are new measures in place to keep students who are coming to school safe and healthy. Wearing masks, staying socially distant, and constantly sanitizing yourself and your surroundings and now a must. The JCHS Orchestra wants to make sure students are getting the same learning experience while being safe. The new addition of online music applications such as Smart Music and UpBeat has also brought some of the same playing experiences that one would have while being in a regular classroom environment. These applications are used on a constant basis for the classroom and even for virtual recitals. Although the future of orchestra may be a little different, we enjoy discovering new ways to communicate and learn through the joy of music.

## Upcoming Events

November 23rd-27th- Thanksgiving  
Break

December 1st- Annual JCHS Orchestra  
Winter Concert

December 18th- Last Day of First  
Semester

December 21st-January 4th- Winter  
Break

**\*\*Disclaimer regarding Winter  
concert\*\***- Due to COVID restrictions,  
we must limit the number of people  
that can attend. Email  
[jchsorchestra@gmail.com](mailto:jchsorchestra@gmail.com) or visit the  
orchestra website with any questions

### Anything to Add?

If you have any questions or  
suggestions for the newsletter, contact  
the chief editors, Abigail Gan and  
Radhika Uchil through their emails:  
[abbyjgan@gmail.com](mailto:abbyjgan@gmail.com) and  
[radhikauchil8@gmail.com](mailto:radhikauchil8@gmail.com)

## What is your favorite application that we have used so far?

"Upbeat is very cool  
because it's closest to  
an actual orchestra"-  
Manuel Mateo

"My favorite was Smart  
Music. I liked that the  
feature allowed you to  
play with an  
accompaniment"- Laura  
Lee

"Flipgrid because it is the  
most established application  
so far"- Aidan Hong

# Behind the Curtain: Meeting with the Developers of UpBeat



COVID-19 has introduced a new world of learning all across the world. For many teachers, this transition was quite simple, but the same could not be said for the fine arts department. Having to teach and hear students perform was a challenge unlike any other. However, the UpBeat Music app has made the daunting task seem much easier. The app works to allow musicians to record and play with each other, combining videos to hear the final product of beautiful music. In an effort to understand and learn more about the process and creation of the app, chief editors, Abby Gan and Radhika Uchil, sat down for a virtual interview with the developers of the app, Seth Radman (pictured above on left) and Sudarshan Muralidhar (pictured above on right) to learn more about the app that brought so many talented musicians together and made the virtual learning experience much easier for all.

**Similar to a lot of students, you participated in fine arts during your high school career. How do you think that has impacted your endeavors and played a part in your lives?**

Seth Radman: The arts is a big hobby and passion that you can't separate from your life. It's difficult to remove our personal identities without music. Music is source of connections and has helped me develop good discipline and practice habits"

Sudarshan Muralidhar: Seth and I wouldn't be friends without music. Band brought us together and has been a relaxing and fun experience for me.

**What was your inspiration for starting UpBeat music?**

Sudarshan Muralidhar: I used to practice with a choir but that eventually got shut down due to lock down and I tried to find other ways to involve music in my life. In addition, I found that many friends were struggling mentally and emotionally without music in their lives. Watching my friends in music go through that really inspired me to help others play music together.

Seth Radman: There was also a self-serving side where Sudarshan and I wanted to play music together and with our friends, but we found that this product could help so many others and we decided to bring that technology to others.

**Who is the audience you wanted to reach with UpBeat?**

Sudarshan Muralidhar: When we started this product we had no original intent to bring it to the classroom until we met with Mr. Kim. He was able to see a vision behind it that we hadn't really considered. We wouldn't be where we are without him because he saw so much potential and he did so much marketing for us, helping us network and talk to many different groups of people.

**When did you start planning for UpBeat and what was the process for creating the final product seen today?**

Sudarshan Muralidhar: We started in March, taking us about a month to have a working product. In about early July when we realized this could be used for a bigger purpose but we needed a new version. On about August 1st, we launched the version you see.

Seth Radman: People may see the end result and only see a linear process. It was more of a zig-zag process as it is all based on the feedback we receive from our customers.

**How did you come up with the name UpBeat?**

Seth Radman: It was a short process. We had about six names in the running and we chose UpBeat because it was easy and understandable.

Sudarshan Muralidhar: We also were thinking about the name "DownBeat", but it was a back and forth process to choose the best name.

**What were some obstacles you went through when creating the application?**

Seth Radman: The biggest continuous obstacle is the pressure of time. We are in a pandemic where teachers consistently need these features as soon as possible. The biggest challenge is trying to work as fast as we can. Another challenge we faced was being able to get a video chat server and finding a pricing point that works for all schools. In the end, Sudarshan was able to build his own video chat server that we use today.

**What do you hope to see in your efforts of combining music with modern day technology?**

Sudarshan Muralidhar: Connection. We care about connecting people through music and the idea that it's a language that everyone can speak in: technology and music.

**Do you have future plans with UpBeat?**

Sudarshan Muralidhar: We have a new feature coming out called UpBeat Perform. You will be allowed to create multiple videos with yourself and you can create videos that people can later add to and join without having to be a part of the live session. We also have small plans like being able to schedule rooms and calibrating to keep the application smooth

**What were some memories that you remember with Mr. Kim?**

Seth Radman: When I took AP Music Theory with Mr. Kim, I learned that you couldn't have parallel fifths. I was looking through a piece with Frank Ticheli and found that he had parallel fifths in his song. I told Mr. Kim and he ended up meeting Frank Ticheli at MidWest and he asked him why and Frank Ticheli just responded with "once you know the rules, you can break them" and that's something I have always kept in my mind when starting a business and just in life.

**As people who have used music in their career, what would your advice be to people who love music but want to focus on their passion?**

Sudarshan Muralidhar: It is important to step back but it's always great to be able to take some time and get back into music. Music is great to connect with others and is fun for so many people.



# Student Spotlight

## Abbi Kim

by Abigail Gan

### **When did you start playing your instrument? Do you play any other instruments?**

I started playing violin around 6 years old, I have never played any other instruments other than violin.

### **Have you participated/are you participating in any other music groups (orchestral or other), competitions, or other music-related activities outside of school?**

I have participated in Michigan All State Orchestra (2017-2018), Honors Performance - Carnegie Hall (2018-2019), Georgia All State Orchestra (2019-2020), Fulton County Honor Orchestra (2019-2020), Notes of Joy, Chamber Strings, Atlanta Symphony Youth Orchestra

### **Do you have a favorite memory about orchestra? What is your favorite part of orchestra?**

My favorite memory was when we performed at GMEA last year. During the trip I made so many new friends and got much closer to a lot of my friends as well. Getting 4 hours of sleep before was also a plus. My favorite part of orchestra is getting to make music with my friends. Knowing everyone and being close to a lot of people in the orchestra, makes playing the music more fun. The orchestra is very tight like a family.

### **How has it been transitioning between the different phases and dealing with the new "normal"?**

Transitioning between online school and the new "normal" has been pretty challenging. Especially because I have a few harder classes sophomore year so adjusting to the new norm has been hard. Learning alongside teachers to figure out what is most efficient can be challenging at times, but it's nice to finally be able to see some of my friends and teachers at school.

### **What advice do you have for the current freshmen after just finishing your freshman year?**

Don't be afraid to try new things and talk to new people in high school even if it seems scary because no one cares, and most of the time upperclassmen are really nice if you just talk to them and get to know them.

### **What inspired you to start using upbeat and forming the first "upbeat group"?**

When Mr. Kim first talked about upbeat and how you can easily play with others without being face to face, I was interested and decided to ask a few of my close friends Sung-lin, Jason, and Cal to play Eine Kleine Nachtmusik. We played more songs like Schubert Death and the Maiden and Beethoven String Quartet No. 7 and it went off from there.

### **What are your interests outside of music?**

I love to play tennis. I was on the school team last year. I love playing with my friends or playing in tournaments. Playing tennis gets my mind off of anything that might stress me out, and clears my head while I play.







# Student Spotlight

## Zoe Gotlin

by Abigail Gan

**How long have you been playing your instrument? Do you play any other instruments?**

I've been playing violin for 12 years. I don't really play any other instruments, unless ukulele counts!

**Have you participated/are you participating in any other music groups (orchestral or other), competitions, or other music-related activities outside of school?**

Yes; I do Emory Youth Symphony Orchestra. I did a summer program at NYU for chamber music two summers in a row and it was a really good experience. I also have done Allstate for all of high school and some of middle school. I do masterclasses frequently which is fun. Also, this past summer I was supposed to go to GHP and Bowdoin but it got canceled :,(

**Do you have a favorite memory about orchestra? What is your favorite part of orchestra?**

My favorite memory from orchestra is going to Midwest. It was so much fun and we got so much closer. My favorite part of orchestra is the concerts because it brings so much joy to people listening as well as to us and Mr. Kim. My favorite concert of the year is the winter concert!

**How has it been dealing with senior year online?**

Senior year online was ok. I think there could be much worse things than having to do school online! Now I go to school face to face and I appreciate it much more than I used to.

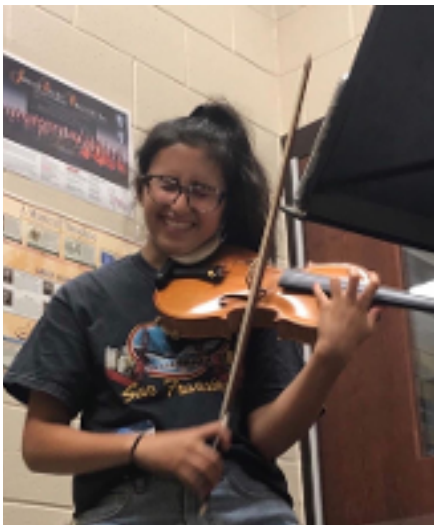
**Do you know what your goals for the future are? Do you plan to keep playing music in the future?**

I am applying to college this year as a music major. I want to pursue music but I also might double major in something else. However, I am certain music will always be a part of my life whether it's my career or not.

**As a senior, what advice do you have for underclassmen? Is there something that you regret/wish you had done in your earlier years?** Stay in orchestra!!! For something I regret, I regret not having as much fun in high school, sophomore year in particular haha. I was too stressed out when in reality I shouldn't have been. Definitely challenge yourself and have a fun social life too; you will be able to do it all.

**What are your interests outside of music?**

I do cross country and track for school and I also love to go shopping. I hang out with my family a lot and my friends too, and I love to travel.



In the midst of this covid pandemic, it's important to social distance and always take necessary precautions to ensure your safety and the safety of others. Whether it's wearing your mask, or washing your hands that extra time before eating, it's important to stay safe. The way we interact with others is also changing. At school we wear masks and leave classrooms in chunks, at the store we must keep a certain distance between ourselves and other shoppers. Even seeing our best friends has become a challenge at times. So how can we safely hangout during this covid-filled time? Here are some tips to keep you and your friends safe when you spend time together.

First off, WEAR A MASK! I know it sounds like common sense, but the number of people who take their masks off as soon as they are with their friends is alarming. Also, wear your mask like it is meant to be worn; make sure to keep both your nose AND mouth covered! Another tip is to always have your hands either washed or sanitized (preferably washed with soap and warm water) before you touch any of the holes in your face. This will ensure you do not accidentally take in germs. Gone are the days of sharing drinks and food. I wouldn't recommend putting your mouth on the same drink as your friend, but if you absolutely must share a plate of food with your friend because you can't finish a whole meal, ask the waiter if they can split the meal before it's brought out, if not wash your hands and split it yourself, BEFORE you eat.

This is a lot better than repeatedly reaching back into the plate for food and possibly spreading germs. Lastly, go outside! Ahh the great outdoors. You can have a small picnic, go on a hike, or just walk around Avalon. When you're outside, there's more open air and space to spread out than if you were at an indoor mall or a house party.

These tips, along with hanging out in small groups of ten or less people will allow you to have some radical times with your friends while also staying safe and covid-free.

## Best Ways to Hangout During Covid

by Keneh Nwizugbo



**Chamber Orchestra at their first after-school rehearsal of the school year!**

## What's your favorite upcoming time of year?

"Holiday Season" - Laura Lee, Ananya Shetty, Dubem Nwizugbo, Arya Sheth,

"Christmas" - Abbi Kim, Zoe Gotlin, Pooja Nagamohan, Ansh Shah, Adhya Singh, Keneh Nwizubo

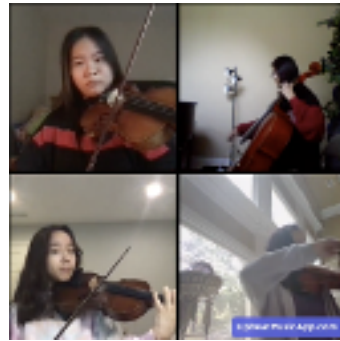
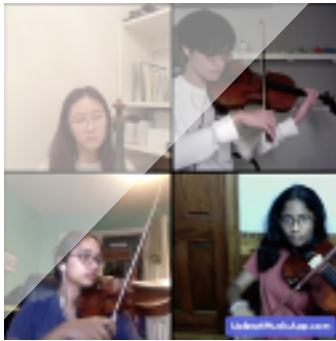
"Love the weather of Halloween but the vibes for Christmas is unmatched" - Aidan Hong

"Christmas or Halloween" - Irene Ha

"Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter!" - Ivy Wang

"Halloween is by far the best holiday" - Ethan Crook

"Halloween! I love the decorations and the movies for the season!" - Radhika Uchil



# JCHS FALL STUDENT RECITAL

BY NAYA PATEL

This year, our annual Fall Concert has taken a new form. Despite not being able to have a live performance as we have done in years past, students have put together a recital to showcase the hard work and energy that is still being pumped into music. This *virtual* recital was an optional event in which students could record themselves, in groups or alone, playing their favorite pieces using our new favorite application: Upbeat Music App. Even though we didn't have a concert, this recital was special in its own way because each student could play whatever they wanted. A variety of music was played, ranging from plucky tunes by Koji Kondo to melodic selections from Mozart and Schubert. Every participant brought something beautiful and made the best out of the situation.

The students that were showcased in the recital were:

**Miles Jones:** Stone Tower Temple by Koji Kondo

**Naya Patel, Pooja Nagamohan, and Kavitha Kuppaswamy:** Si Bheag Si Mhor by O'Carolan

**Laura Lee and Jeniffer Kim:** The Flower Duet by Delibes

Madeline Summers

**Adhya Singh, Laura Lee, Jason Seo, and Kavitha Kuppaswamy:** Divertimento No. 3 in F Major by W.A. Mozart

**Katie Chong, Charles Kim, Jason Seo, and Kai Lee:** Divertimento No. 1 in D Major by W.A. Mozart

**Sunglin Hsieh, Isabella Lin, Ethan Loy, and Kai Lee:** Mozart's Symphony No.25 in G Minor

**Amie Wang, Katie Chong, Jessica Tang, and Chelsea Young:** String Quartet in F Major, Op. 96 "American" by Antonín Dvořák

**Sunglin Hsieh, Abbi Kim, Cal Walrath, and Jason Seo:** String Quartet No. 14 in D Minor "Death and the Maiden" by Franz Schubert

**JT Oh and Chelsea Young:** Comet Observatory by Koji Kondo

If you haven't already, make sure to check out the performances on the orchestra website. Congratulations to all participants and thank you for sharing your talent with our community!

## What hobby/hobbies have you developed over the pandemic?

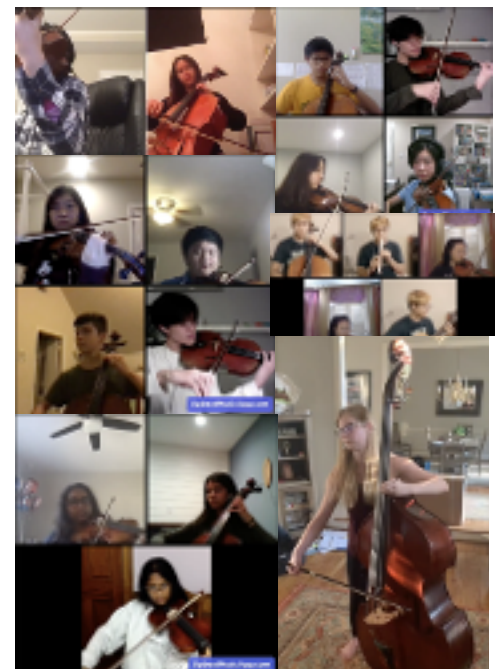
"Puzzles" - Radhika Uchil

"Writing Music" - Pooja Nagamohan

"Hiking" - Ananya Shetty

"Practicing Violin" - Zoe Gotlin

"Looking at walls" - Brian Woo



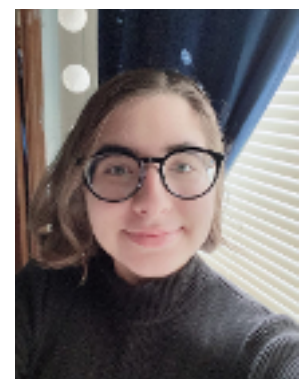
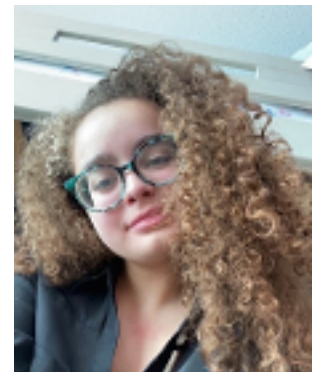
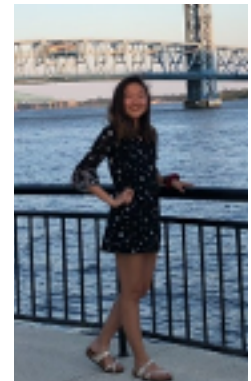


# THE SENIOR EXPERIENCE

BY ANUSHKA SHARMA

This year, the Class of 2021 had to face the fact that their senior year would be very different than what they had expected it to be. However, even without being able to have the full senior year experience, our seniors have had plenty of experiences throughout their four years that have shaped them and brought them to where they are. Our current seniors gave advice and insight into their experiences in orchestra and school over their 4 years and spoke on topics such as college applications, mentors, and time management.

- Chelsea Young:
  - Advice: "There is always a bigger fish. even if you find yourself on top of the world in your small pond, if you swim through the rivers and reach the sea, you will find yourself as a small fish in the vast ocean. there's always room to grow and see the bigger picture"
  - College App: "SAT was cancelled a total of 3 times before I was able to finally take it, so the uncertainty due to the constant changes of the pandemic has definitely caused stress among many struggling to get a score. Many colleges are using a "test optional" policy and even a "test blind" admission for the upcoming years"
- Gaby Ardila:
  - Experience: "In orchestra I have learned how to manage my time wisely and about the importance of having self-discipline. Mr. Kim has helped my flourish as a student because he was not only my teacher, he was also a mentor who sat down and helped me figure out high school"
  - College App: "Covid has made the college app process more technology based. You have to request for teacher recommendations online rather than asking teachers in person. Requesting for recommendations and transcripts can be nerve racking. Since everything is up in the air right now, this can lead to a lot of anxiety"
- Elizabeth Pitter:
  - Experience: "Being in orchestra over the years has taught me how important hard work and dedication are to improving. If you want to get better, you have to be willing to put the practice in. After all, "excellence is not an act, but a habit.""
  - Advice: "Some advice I'd have to give freshmen is to find some mentors in orchestra. Having upperclassmen friends really help out in getting comfortable in a new environment"





# COVID SUMMER EXPERIENCE

BY CLARA KIM

As we all know, this summer was very different than expected due to the corona virus. However, that didn't stop people from making the most of their break! We asked people from each grade level what they did during the summer.

## Freshman:

- "My family and I did go visit Brasstown Bald and Cloudland Canyon over this summer." - YouYou Zhu
- "Just stayed at home and tried a new sport over the summer." - Diane Han

## Sophomores:

- "Went to Lake Lanier" -Isabella Lin
- "Went on hikes & spent time w family -Abbi Kim

## Juniors:

- "Went to Yellowstone National Park and admired America's beautiful scenery"- Ethan Loy
- "Visited Korea" - JJ Choi

## Seniors:

- "Weekend getaway to the beach" -Emma Surbrook
- "Learned how to skateboard"- Chelsea Young

## What is your favorite part of orchestra/what do you miss about orchestra?

"I love how we all come together and play!" - Pooja Nagamohan

"Seeing everyone" - Ansh Shah

"I like/miss being able to socialize and talk w friends" - Christine Park

"Making music" - Ethan Loy

"Chatting before class starts" - Adhya Singh

"My favorite part is when we're able to play the concert, and I miss the gatherings" - Brian Woo

"Movie nights, concerts, etc" - Ananya Shetty

"Concerts" - Sachith Kodur

"Movie nights" - Dubem Nwizugbo

"Potlucks/banquets" - Laura Lee

# The Freshman Experience

By Kelly Feng

Given that many freshman students were not able to experience the reality of high school, they were asked about their experience with virtual school and how they felt about it.

As a freshman, I feel like the virtual experience was really interesting; all my teachers seem really nice! Although online school differs a lot from face-to-face learning, it taught me some virtual communication skills that'll probably help me in the future. I think that this year has been less stressful because I got more time to sleep than I did in eighth grade, and I had more free time. As much as I love virtual school, I'd still like to go back to in-person learning as soon as possible because I miss seeing my friends." –YouYou Zhu

"I was really excited but also scared to be a freshman at JCHS. I was excited to meet new people other than people in my grade, but I also heard that high school is way harder than middle school and people don't like freshmen. In the beginning of online learning, I thought it was wonderful, because I could wake up 5 minutes before the class starts and the classes would be easy because it's online. After few weeks, I realized that it is actually way harder to learn on online, because online school made me harder to ask questions when I didn't fully understand the lesson and there were lots of internet connection problems. I tried not to get distracted during classes as hard as I could and ask questions when I didn't understand. All of my teachers are wonderful and I participated harder in classes to get to know my teachers. I hope COVID-19 ends soon so I could enjoy the freshman year at JCHS." – Andrew Han

## What is your favorite piece that has been played in class?

"Concerto for 4 violins by Vivaldi"-  
Adhya Singh

"The Minotaur"- Pooja Nagamohan

"Si Bhag"- Clara Kim

"Sound of Music Ensemble"- Jeffrey Xu

"Tchaikovsky Serenade"- Ethan Loy

## What is your favorite memory from orchestra?

"Movie Night"- Brian Woo

"Potluck"- Ananya Shetty

"Food at the All-State Trip"- Charles Kim

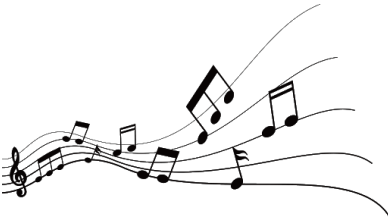
"Everyday because orchestra is so  
amazing"-Christine Park

"LGPE 2018 and 2019"- Dubem Nwizugbo"

# Orchestra Polls

Students were asked poll questions on the orchestra Instagram, here are the results:

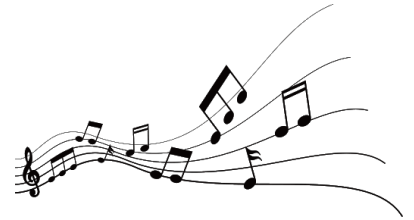
- **Movies during class vs. After school?**
  - 25 (56%) in class - 20 (44%) movie nights
- **Poke bar vs. Maji?**
  - 17 (43%) poke - 23 (57%) maji
- **LGPE vs. Orchestra Trips**
  - 3 (7%) LGPE - 43 (97%) Orchestra Trips
- **In school vs Online learning**
  - 21 (64%) in school - 12 (36%) online learning
- **Band jokes vs. Viola jokes**
  - 9 (26%) band jokes - 25 (74%) viola jokes
- **After school rehearsal vs. Evening rehearsal**
  - 15 (45%) after school - 18 (55%) evening rehearsal



## Upcoming Birthdays

Be sure to wish your fellow students!

- Justin Chen- November 8th
- Clara Kim- November 14th
- Emma Newton- November 23rd
- Eylene Kingsly- November 24th
- Tyler Luo- November 26th
- Abigail Kim- December 4th
- Alyssa Baban- December 22nd
- Aidan Anchaya- January 3rd
- Youyou Zhu- January 5th
- Alexis Layer- January 23rd
- Philip Yoon and Zoe Boddie- January 31st



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Orchestra

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