

BLACK SWAN STATE THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH PERTH FESTIVAL

THE POOL

BY STEVE RODGERS

9 – 25 FEBRUARY 2024
BOLD PARK AQUATIC CENTRE





Black Swan State Theatre Company of Western Australia acknowledges the Whadjuk people of the Nyoongar Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live.

First Nations People have been telling stories on this country for many thousands of years, and we acknowledge their incredible contribution to the cultural and environmental landscape we reside in. In addition, we acknowledge and recognise all First Nations People with whom we work and whose lands we travel to in Western Australia. We pay our respects to all Elders past and present, and their ancestors that walked this country before them, as we stand united towards a shared future.

Total running time

1 hour 45 minutes (no interval)

Content warnings

The Pool contains mature themes and coarse language. Recommended age 15+

Hero Image Photography

Simon Westlake

Rehearsal Image Photography

Daniel J Grant

Design

Troy Barbitta

The World Premiere of *The Pool* has been supported by the Town of Cambridge & Bold Park Aquatic Centre.





WRITER'S NOTE STEVE RODGERS

I FEEL LIKE I'VE BEEN WAITING TO WRITE THIS PLAY MY WHOLE LIFE. A PLAY THAT COMBINES TWO GREAT LOVES: SWIMMING, AND STORYTELLING. THEATRE, THAT MAKES A SPLASH.

The idea began in earnest; people watching. Sitting in the stands at my local pool, I was struck by the variety of people sharing the space. Mums and bubs, teenagers flirting, the elderly doing water aerobics, a militant lifeguard, an adult learning to swim. I started to imagine all these people's interactions, glimpsing snatches of their lives, each with their own story to tell.

Then I got lucky. Talking to Kate Champion about the idea (I was still imagining a theatre with silk cloth as water in a wash of blue light – very early 90s), Kate suggested we do it at a real public swimming pool, honouring the original idea of peeking into the lives of these characters through headsets, voyeuristically, and through prerecorded monologues, exploring their memories, histories, and relationships.

After interviewing countless people in and around swimming pools in both Perth and Sydney, what eventuated was a celebration of community. An ensemble piece capturing characters who represent all of us. Loveable, flawed, trying their best, gathering at the pool, looking to be a part of something, running to and from family.

As I wrote, exploring what *The Pool* was trying to teach me, concerns around parenting, intimacy, addiction, and breath, all kept bubbling to the surface. The work kept asking how tightly people hold onto each other, and how and when do we gently let go? But mostly *The Pool* reminded me of the healing powers of water. Its ability to restore and renew. Where we all come together, despite our differences, and jump in.





DIRECTOR'S NOTE

KATE CHAMPION

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN DRAWN TO ART THAT RECREATES A SENSE OF AUTHENTICITY;

a medium through which we can recognise ourselves, our family, and our neighbours, but also a way for us to see, hear and, hopefully, come to understand and appreciate those we know less intimately, those we sometimes judge at face value.

Steve Rodgers' writing achieves this with great compassion for all aspects of humanity. He lovingly embraces our complex flaws along with our universal ability for tenderness and care. Steve's heroes are our parents, our school friends, and our community workers.

Theatre is often perceived as elitist. Now, with the advancement of audio technology, we have the ability to bring theatre to the people, to a place where a wide range of society naturally gathers together in surroundings, we are familiar with, and where a sense of egalitarianism is all pervasive - the public swimming pool, our pool, The Pool.



THEATRE LIKE YOU'VE NEVER SEEN – OR HEARD! – BEFORE

A Q&A WITH COMPOSER & SOUND DESIGNER TIM COLLINS



Q: What were your initial thoughts when you were asked to work on a show set at a real-life swimming pool?

The project was both intriguing and daunting. My early thoughts were focussed on what the writer and director may be imagining, and how I could best support that. It's easy to get overly concerned with technical challenges to overcome and forget about the bigger picture, so I tried not to dwell on the finer details too early in the process.

Q: What were the biggest challenges you have faced in the creative process?

Amplifying the cast was a creative process in and of itself. The show relies heavily on tech and the unusual set, so the rehearsal process was vastly different from most theatre. And it can be difficult composing for theatre: underscoring text is a delicate process. You need to support the emotion in each moment but not pull the focus.

Q: Has there been any unusual sound factors to consider with using the headphones?

Every set and venue is different and can have limitations on speaker placement and type, which has an effect on creative decisions in many ways. The use of headphones eradicates a lot of those limitations but is a huge restriction in the depth of field for a sound designer, something we rely on a lot in theatre.

Q: What has been the best part about working on *The Pool*?

Kate's movement direction really gave me a sense of calm in the midst of it all. It's a truly unique setting to experience theatre in, created by an incredible team of people!



CAST

Kylie Bracknell	SANDRA
Anna Gray	QUINN
Edyll Ismail	SAFIYAH
Emma Jackson	JONI
Joel Jackson	KIRK
Geoff Kelso	ROY
Polly Low	GRETA
Julia Moody	VAL
Tobias Muhafidin	ANANDA
Carys Munks	MORGAN

CHORUS Kate Bischof, Sebastian Boyd, Amanda Corrie, Alex Franklin, Henry Freeman-Dick, Georgia Goff, Laura Goodlet, Emma Leadon, Daniel Motearefi, Trevor Ryan





CREATIVES

WRITER	Steve Rodgers
DIRECTOR	Kate Champion
COMPOSER & SOUND DESIGNER	Tim Collins
COSTUME & PROPS DESIGNER	Amalia Lambert
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR	Rachel McMurray
STAGE MANAGER	Izzy Taylor
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER	Shannen Moulton
AUDIO SUPERVISOR	Declan Barber
AUDIO TECHNICIAN	Megan Coles
ASM/AUDIO ASSISTANT	Kira Feeney
LOGISTICS & VOLUNTEER LIAISON	Hayley Neil



KYLIE BRACKNELL SANDRA

Kylie is an accomplished actress, voice-over artist, television presenter, public speaker, writer, director and producer from the south-west of Western Australia. Passionate about language revival, Kylie has developed innovative works completely in Noongar language, including the reimagining of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* titled *Hecate* (2020), performance of Shakespearean sonnets at Shakespeare's Globe in London (2012), two re-voiced episodes of the award-winning animation series *Little J & Big Cuz*, and *Fist of Fury Noongar Daa*, the first feature film to be dubbed in an Australian language. Kylie hosts the children's television program *Waabiny Time* (NITV) and has raised awareness of Indigenous languages via platforms including TEDx (2014) and ABC television's Q&A program (2016). As an actor, Kylie has featured in television programs such as *Irreverent* (Netflix), *Little J & Big Cuz* (NITV and ABC), *The Gods of Wheat Street* (ABC) and *Redfern Now* (ABC), films including *I Met a Girl* (2020), *Ace of Spades* (2012) and *Stone Bros* (2009), and theatre productions including *Black is the New White* (STC 2017-19) and *The Sapphires* (Belvoir 2010). She has over two decades experience working in Australia's creative industries and was a 2020 recipient of Australia's prestigious Sydney Myer Performing Arts Award.



ANNA GRAY QUINN

Anna loves the arts, singing and dancing, and has been swimming in pools since she was a baby. Weekly squad swimming with the Superfins, a swim club for people with disabilities, culminated in swimming the Rottnest channel swim in 2021 in a team of four. Anna was featured in an episode of the 2019 ABC TV series *The Recording Studio*, where she and a friend recorded a song, and the album from the series won an ARIA award for Best Original Soundtrack category in the same year. Ballroom dancing is a passion and Anna is a Special Olympics WA medal winner in this artistic pursuit. Anna has performed in Christmas pantomimes and was recently featured as a swimmer in the promotional video for the Perth bid to host the 2027 World Special Olympics.



CAST



EDYLL ISMAIL SAFIYAH

Edyll is a 2023 graduate from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA), with a Bachelor of Arts. Prior to this, Edyll completed a diploma of Screen as well as a diploma in Acting, also at WAAPA. Edyll was cast in the recurring role of 'Leyla' in the upcoming season 3 of the NBC series *La Brea*. Edyll appeared in the Last Great Hunt's production of *Whistleblower*. Including several acclaimed productions during her time at WAAPA: *Wise Children* (Nora), *Much Ado About Nothing* (Beatrice), *Samovila* (Stana) and *Orestes* (Hermione).

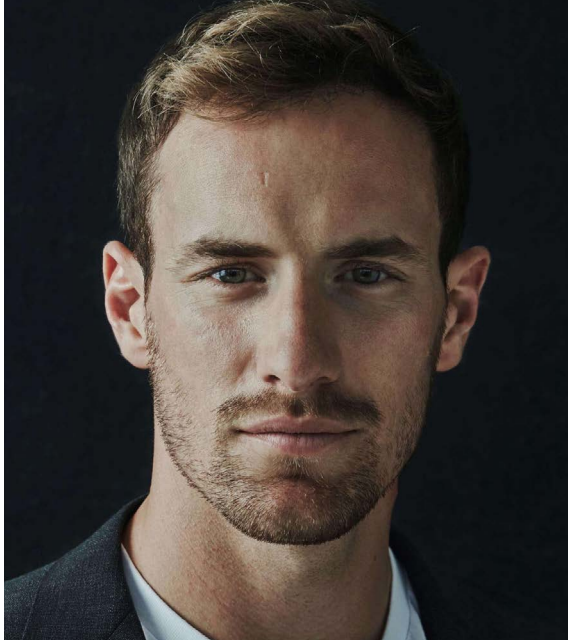


EMMA JACKSON JONI

Emma's career has spanned theatre, film and TV since her graduation from NIDA. Theatre credits include: *Things I Know To Be True* (Black Swan), *Jesus Wants Me For A Sunbeam*, (National Theatre of Parramatta and return season for Belvoir); *The Effect* (Red Line Productions); *Vale* (STCSA); *Sunset Strip* (including a national tour) & *Stoning Mary* (Griffin Theatre Company); *Once In Royal David's City* (QTC/ Black Swan); *The Blind Giant is Dancing*, *Food* (3 seasons, including National Tour, Belvoir), and *Fool for Love* (B Sharp/Savage Productions); *The Long Way Home* (Sydney Theatre Company); *Nothing Personal and Let the Sunshine* (Ensemble Theatre); and *Dead Man's Cellphone* (Melbourne Theatre Company). She also performed in *Reasonable Doubt* (Theatre Tours international) in London and at the Edinburgh Festival

Emma won the Marten Bequest Travelling Scholarship in 2006 and relocated to New York to train with Anne Bogart and the SITi Co and intern with The Wooster Group.

Recent screen credits include: *The Claremont Murders* (ESA Productions), *How To Please A Woman* (Feisty Dame Productions), and *True Colours* (Bunya Productions). Emma has completed her Master in Screen Studies at WA Screen Academy.



JOEL JACKSON KIRK

Joel is a Logie and Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts award winning actor, musician and writer. Best known for his TV role in *Peter Allen; Not the Boy Next Door*, Joel's numbering TV credits include *Deadline Gallipoli*, *Hyde & Seek*, *The Wrong Girl*, *Safe Harbour*, *Mystery Road 2*, *The Claremont Murders* and *Ms Fisher's Modern Murder Mysteries*. Joel's feature film credits include *I Met A Girl*, *H is for Happiness*, *Jungle* and the soon to be released *Kangaroo Island*, *Just A Farmer* and the adaption of Craig Silvey's award winning book *Runt*.

As a writer, Joel's short film *Stranger* has won multiple short film awards internationally and screened at Flickerfest and the St Kilda Film Festivals. His podcast *Journey by Joel Jackson* features original fictional short stories and short stoic gems, listened to in over 50 countries. For the stage, Joel has appeared in *Barracking for the Umpire*, *The Glass Menagerie* (Black Swan), *Cyrano* (Black Swan & MTC).



GEOFF KELSO ROY

After graduating from NIDA Geoff played Tsar Ivan in Louis Nowra's *Inner Voices* for the Hole In The Wall Theatre and won a National Theatre Best Actor Award. He spent the 1980s in Sydney & Melbourne working as a comedian and writer with fellow humourists Doug Mulray, Flacco, Shane Bourne, Max Gillies and the late great John Clarke. Returning to Perth he played Malvolio in Black Swan's first production *Twelfth Night* and won the Swan Gold Best Actor Award. For Sydney Theatre Company Geoff played opposite Philip Quast in Michael Frayn's *Democracy* and in 2007 combined his comic and dramatic skills to play Spike Milligan in *Ying Tong - A Walk With Goons* which toured nationally to great acclaim.

Geoff has appeared in more than 20 plays for Black Swan and most recently played Azdak in *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, Hamm in *Endgame* and Sam Byck in the Sondheim musical *Assassins*.



POLLY LOW GRETA

Polly is a long-standing member of Perth's acting community. She has performed for Black Swan in: *Oil, National Interest, The Damned, Closer, One Destiny, Blackrock*. She also worked as Black Swan's Literary Director for many years, having dramaturgical input into multiple Black Swan productions. Other acting credits include: *The Season at Sarsaparilla, Orpheus Descending, The Country Wife, Antony and Cleopatra, Seasons Greetings* (State Theatre Company of WA); *Mourning Becomes Electra, Fool For Love, Grass Widow, A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Cherry Orchard, The Importance of Being Earnest, Pax Americana, Gladbags, Juno and the Paycock, Fen* (Hole in the Wall Theatre Company). Some other companies with which she also has acting credits include: MTC, Deckchair Theatre, Perth Theatre Company, Handzon, Agelink Theatre, Winter Theatre, National Theatre Company at the Playhouse.

She is looking forward to diving into *The Pool*.



JULIA MOODY VAL

Julia has appeared for Black Swan in *When The Rain Stops Falling, The Memory of Water*. Onward Productions: *The Deep Blue Sea*. Melbourne Theatre Company: *Educating Rita*. Company B: *Pallas, Walking Long Country*. Deckchair Theatre: *The Removalists*. Theatre South: *Europe, Daylight Savings*. Perth Theatre Company: *The Mule's Foal, Soul Mates*. Extensive Film, TV and Voice-over work over many years. Positions: Associate teacher of Fitzmaurice Voicework, Lecturer then Head of Voice in the Acting Department at WAAPA (1995-2017), Voice Lecturer RADA (UK) (2017-19). Board of Australian Voice Association (2010-12), Board then Chair Blue Room Theatre (2005-09). Other: Voice Consultant for SBS, ABC and many other corporations, organisations, theatre companies and individuals. Training: Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, and NIDA (Grad Dip in Voice Studies).



CAST



TOBIAS MUHAFIDIN ANANDA

Tobias is a WAAPA Acting diploma graduate who most recently was cast in *Bali 2002*. He was the winner of Outstanding Newcomer and Outstanding Performer in a Support Role at WA Performing Arts awards 2022 for his role in *Minneapolis*. As well as being an incredible emerging actor, Tobias is one of Perth's premiere Hip Hop/Pop musicians and has amassed well over half a million streams on all major streaming platforms for his self-produced songs.



CARYS MUNKS MORGAN

Carys was born and raised in Perth and currently lives in Floreat. She has a life-long disability, a muscle weakness affecting the left side of her body. Although this presents some special challenges, Carys is determined to lead a fulfilling life. She enjoys expressing herself creatively and has experimented with various forms of visual art. She also enjoys singing, having previously been a member of the Variety Youth Choir. Carys is a long-term member of Superfins, a swimming club for people living with disabilities. She commenced with Superfins seventeen years ago and is still an active member, training three times a week at HBF Stadium. She also swims competitively in Masters competitions both in Perth and at a national level. Superfins also produces an annual Christmas pantomime with performances at Taryn Fiebig Concert Hall in Churchlands. As the narrator Carys loves the opportunity of performing before an audience.



STEVE RODGERS WRITER

Steve was born in Newcastle, grew up in Tasmania, and trained as an actor at Theatre Nepean at Western Sydney University. He has worked as an actor in film, theatre, and television for the last thirty years.

Steve's first play *Ray's Tempest* was shortlisted for the Patrick White Playwrights' Award and nominated in the Best New Australian Work category at the Sydney Theatre Awards following productions at both Belvoir St and Melbourne Theatre Company.

Steve's other work for the stage includes *Savage River*, which played at the Griffin Theatre Company, Melbourne Theatre Company, and the Tasmanian Theatre Company, and was also nominated for Best New Australian Work at the Sydney Theatre Awards; *Food*, a co-production between Belvoir St and Force Majeure, which toured nationally over a two-year period including at La Boite; an adaption of Peter Goldsworthy's novel *Jesus Wants Me for a Sunbeam* for The National Theatre of Parramatta and Belvoir St, which won the inaugural Griffin Lysicrates Prize in 2015; *King of Pigs*, which premiered at The Old Fitz Theatre, and then toured NSW courtesy of Redline Productions and Critical Stages; and most recently *Kenny*, an adaption of the Clayton brothers' feature film (as a one man show) which premiered in 2021 at the Ensemble to critical acclaim. Steve wrote serial television for *Rush*, an action-based police procedural for season two, produced by John Edwards for Network Ten.

Steve produced, co-wrote, and starred in *The Land*, a feature film that has played at festivals across Europe and the US, including The Berlin Cinema Awards and The New York Cinema Awards, and was recently screened in Sydney at the Randwick Ritz.

Steve co-wrote the feature film *Sweet As* with Jub Clerc for Liz Kearney (Arena Media). The film premiered in Australia at MIFF in 2022 and won the NETPAC Award for Best Film from the Asia Pacific region following its international premiere at TIFF. It played at the 73rd Berlin International Film Festival in 2023 and was awarded the Crystal Bear in the Generation Kplus competition.



KATE CHAMPION DIRECTOR

Kate has decades of experience working in theatre, dance-theatre, opera, musicals, film and circus - in genres ranging from devised original work, new Australian plays, classics, comedy, multi-art form work, interactive and physical theatre. Kate was the founding artistic director of Force Majeure, an influential dance theatre company based in Sydney, premiering five original main stage works for major festivals and touring regionally, nationally, and internationally.

Kate works extensively on large-scale projects, and for major theatre companies as well as in the small-to-medium and independent theatre scene. Kate had a 26-year career as a performer and dancer with companies both nationally and internationally and created two acclaimed solo shows.

Kate is a multi-award winning artist, winning the Helpmann Award Best Visual or Physical Theatre Production for *Same, Same But Different* (Sydney Festival), Most Outstanding Performance by a Company at the Australian Dance Awards for *Already Elsewhere* (Sydney Festival and Biennale de la Danse in Lyon), the 2012 Helpmann Award for Best Visual or Physical Theatre Production for *Not In A Million Years*, and Most Outstanding Performance by a Company at the Australian Dance Awards for *The Age I'm In* (Sydney and Adelaide Festivals, touring to Dublin, Montreal and Seoul).



TIM COLLINS COMPOSER & SOUND DESIGNER

Tim Collins is a sound designer, composer, technician, musician, and tour manager. He has worked in the entertainment industry since 2001 involved in performance and logistics for theatre, festivals, concert and studio production, musical theatre and live broadcast. Tim has mentored and a lectured at the West Australian Academy of Performing Arts and Curtin University. He won the 2022 Performing Arts WA Award for Outstanding Sound Design for his work on Barking Gecko Theatre's *Cicada*.

Sound Design/Composer credits include: *Black Brass*, *Xenides*, *Oklahoma*, *Fully Sikh*, *Cicada*, *The Great Un-Wondering of Wilbur Whitaker*, *The Snow*, *Fearless*.

Technician show credits include: *Things I Know To Be True*, *Cyrano*, *Black Brass*, *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, *Boundary Street*, *Next To Normal*, *Clinton The Musical*, *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, *Let The Right One In*, *Xenides*, *Our Town*, *The Torrents*, *Cloudstreet*, *The Rabbits*, *House*, *The Great Un-Wondering of Wilbur Whitaker*, *A Ghost In My Suitcase*, *My Robot*, *Fully Sikh*, *The Journey Down*.



AMALIA LAMBERT COSTUME & PROPS DESIGNER

Amalia Lambert is an emerging set and costume designer. Graduating from WAAPA in 2019, she was awarded The David Hough Award for Outstanding Achievement in Design. Amalia and Bruce McKinven's outstanding designs for *Mary Stuart* (Perth Festival 2022) earned them The Performing Arts WA 2022 awards for Outstanding Costume design and Outstanding Stage Design. Amalia's exquisite costume designs for *The Adventures of Snugglespot and Cuddlepup* (2020) earned her the Performing Arts WA Best Costume Design Award in 2021.

Most recently her work includes designing the set and costumes for *Wonderbox* with Sensorium Theatre at the 2023 Perth Festival. Amalia has collaborated with theatre companies including Barking Gecko, Performing Lines WA, The Last Great Hunt, Kabuki Drop, Sensorium Theatre, and LINK Dance Company.



RACHEL MCMURRAY ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Rachel McMurray is a theatre director based in Boorloo/Perth. Previously, Rachel worked in the UK as a freelance director and Artistic Director of Fine Comb Theatre from 2013 - 2022, who were associate artists at Oldham Coliseum Theatre.

Theatre Directing credits include: *Beryl* (Oldham Coliseum Theatre, AD); *Antigone* (Performance Centre, Staffordshire); *Perspective* (Hope Studios, Manchester); *Aleiah's Adventures* (Z-Arts, Manchester and Tour); *No Such Thing As Ordinary* (Rehearsed Reading) (Royal Exchange Theatre); *Aladdin* (Oldham Coliseum Theatre, AD); *Creep*; *Sexpectations* and *The Good Hope* (53Two Manchester); *Woyzeck* (Performance Centre, Staffordshire); *I Would Walk at Night* (Fine Comb Theatre, Online); *Not Yours, Mine* (Hope Studios, Oldham Coliseum Theatre); *There's a Fly in My Room (Scratch)* (Halifax Square Chapel); *Lost & Found* (The Lowry Theatre Studio); *Matchsticks* (53Two, Theatre Arrlechino, The Kings Arms); *Untrained Hero* (Theatre Arrlechino); *Discernment* (The Lowry Theatre); *Fat Penguins and Chubby Polar Bears* (The Adelphi Studio and Theatre Arrlechino).



IZZY TAYLOR STAGE MANAGER

A graduate of WAAPA's BA of Performing Arts in Stage Management, Izzy engages across many theatrical disciplines from plays, musicals, ballet, events, and devised works. Recently Izzy has been working with Black Swan State Theatre Company on *Things I Know to be True* (2023) and *Toast* (2022) as Stage Manager and *City of Gold* (2022) as Assistant Stage Manager.

Other projects include Company Stage Manager for *The Gruffalo* (Melbourne Tour 2023, CDP Theatre Producers), Stage Manager & Technical Mentor on *Project 10*, (2022-23, West Australian Ballet), Stage Manager for the premieres of both *Unheimlich* (2021, Performing Lines WA and PICA) and *Minneapolis* (2021, Performing Lines WA). Outside of stage managing, Izzy also works as a stage technician in props, lighting, mechanist and wardrobe teams.



SHANNEN MOULTON ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

Shannen is a recent WAAPA graduate from the Bachelor of Performing Arts, specialising in stage management. She has worked with a variety of genres including musical theatre, plays, movement projects and dance.

Highlight production roles from WAAPA include Stage Manager for *Sweeney Todd*, Production Manager for *CATS*, and Production Stage Manager for *Between Us: Vei Keda*.

THANK YOU!



Black Swan would like to thank Tamara Sanders and all of the incredible staff at Bold Park Aquatic Centre and Town of Cambridge for their generous support and unwavering commitment to ensuring the success of *The Pool*. We are so grateful to be working with such a wonderful group of people!

Special thanks to Hybrid Warehouse and the Collective Effect for providing bar service for this season of *The Pool*. The Collective Effect helps employees and small business owners get their finance lives in order to make space to do more of the things they love! Along with your own personal Finance Wellbeing Consultant, they help coordinate the necessary Finance Professions in your life to fully understand exactly where your money and time is being spent. Reason being, that only then can you REALLY see how your life is being lived to make any changes as needed. Then, in conjunction with [@hybridwarehouse](#) they run events to bring people together, have fun and do their best to encourage all of their clients to "Live Hybridly".





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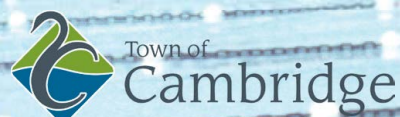


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