



Percussionist

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FALL, 1971

PERCUSSIVE ARTS SOCIETY, INC.
(PAS)

PURPOSE--To elevate the level of musical percussion performance and teaching; to expand understanding of the needs and responsibilities of the percussion student, teacher, and performer; and to promote a greater communication between all areas of the percussion arts.

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MILITARY DRUMMING DURING THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION 1775-1783

by Donald K. Gilbert
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When the British troops under Major Pitcairn were within a half mile of Lexington, Captain Parker, commander of the Lexington company of militia, ordered the drummer William Dinman, to beat **To Arms**. At the sound of the drum the company rapidly gathered and formed between the meeting house and Buckman's tavern.¹

The Revolutionary Army depended upon the drummer and fifer for numerous activities. It was the duty of the drummer and fifer to announce the routine of daily life, salute visiting military dignitaries, sustain the marching ranks, and direct the vital operations of battle.² When the drummer put his drum away, his duties were not finished, for he was often called upon to perform extra tasks such as administering discipline.

The Revolutionary Army had no precedent of its own from which it could pattern its military operations, consequently, it took as its model the British Army. The complete set of signals used by the American drummers and fifers was, for the most part, a direct imitation of its British counterpart. The drummer's signal was the prime means of communication in the field. Indeed, the course of battle often depended upon the drummer's signal. The basic signal was a drum beat, but often a lively tune was added by a fifer. The separate signal was known as a duty call, the collective group of signals as duty music or camp duty. The common soldier knew his duty music well, for his life often depended upon it.³

In the seventeenth century, the chief beats of the drum were a **Call**, a **Troop**, a **Preparative**, a **March**, a **Battaile**, and a **Retreat**. By the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the assorted signals had been grouped into a standard system of communication.⁴

One of the first references to drummers and their duties in the Revolutionary Army is found in Baron von Steuben's manual, **Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States**. This manual, adopted by Congress on March 29, 1779, as the official manual for the American forces contains one entire chapter which is devoted to the drummer and his duties.

The different daily beats shall begin on the right, and be instantly followed by the whole army; to facilitate which, the drummer's call shall be beat by the drums of the police a quarter of an hour before the time of the beating, when the drummers will assemble before the colours of their respective battalions, and as soon as the beat begins on the right, it is to be immediately taken up by the whole army, the drummers beating along the front of their respective battalions, from the center to the right, from thence to the left, and back again to the center, where they finish.⁵

Some of the signals listed in Steuben's manual call for various drum rudiments by name:

1st Sergeant's Call -- One roll and three flams.

All non-commissioned officer's call -- two rolls and five flams.

To go for wood -- poing stroke and ten stroke roll.⁶

To go for water -- two strokes and a flam

Front to halt -- two flams from right to left, and a full drag, with the right, a left hand flam and a right hand full drag.⁷

There are no instructions at all for the fifers in Steuben's manual. As Anderson states, Steuben's manual clearly shows that the fundamental signal was a drum beat. The fifer added various tunes for melodic interest. Any number of tunes might have been played over a basic drum beat, although in actual practice, certain tunes attended certain beat patterns.

To date, no American sources directly from the Revolutionary period are known to contain both beat patterns and fife tunes. The separate items must be gathered from contemporaneous European sources and from American sources written shortly after the War. The existence of several variations of the signals and of different tunes and beats under the same title suggests that each camp may have had its own interpretation of Steuben's system.⁸

Even during the Revolution, rank had its privileges. Steuben's manual gives the following instructions for honor guards:

To the commander in chief: All guards turn out with presented arms, and beat two ruffles.⁹

To brigadier generals: They turn out with presented arms, and beat one ruffle.

To officers of the day: They turn out with presented arms, and beat according to their rank.

The president of Congress, all governors in their own states, and committees of Congress at the army, shall have the same honors paid them as the commander in chief.¹⁰

This tradition of drummers playing in honor guards still exists today. As stated in the Marine Corps Manual for Drummers, Trumpeters, and Fifers dated 1935, the number of ruffles played depends on the rank of the official.

The training of drummers and fifers was somewhat of a problem. Each regiment was permitted to have a Fife Major and a Drum Major whose duties were to organize and train the drummers and fifers, but war conditions often seriously hampered this work. In 1778, Lieutenant Hiwell of the Third Continental Artillery was appointed inspector and superintendent of music. Lieutenant Hiwell established throughout the army a uniform method of playing the drum beats and fife tunes. Furthermore, he required the Fife Majors and Drum Majors to assemble daily for instruction in their duties.¹²

In the early days of the war, the practice periods of drummers caused much annoyance among the troops because it was often impossible to distinguish between practice beating and the regular routine drum signals. In 1776, a general order forbidding drumming except in the line of duty was issued. Later, regular practice hours were authorized for drummers with the stipulation that practice at any other time would call for disciplinary action.¹³

One of the earliest drum instruction books printed in America was written by Charles Stewart Ashworth. Records of the United States Marine Corps reveal that Ashworth's civilian occupation was that of a drummer and that his birthplace was England. Ashworth enlisted in the Marine Corps on December 13, 1802 in Boston, as a drummer. At the time of his enlistment, he was twenty-five years old. In 1804, he was promoted to Drum Major. His enlistment expired on December 7, 1805, and on December 8, 1805, he re-enlisted for another three years. He re-enlisted in 1808, and again in 1811, finishing his military service in 1816.¹⁴

Bradley Spinney notes that Ashworth was the conductor of the United States Marine Band from 1804 until 1816. The Marine Corps manual, printed in 1935, states that in 1798 by order of President John Quincy Adams, the Marine Corps was authorized to enlist a Drum Major, a Fife Major, and thirty-two drummers and fifers. A number of these drummers and fifers were retained in Philadelphia under Drum Major William Fair to form a military band of marines. This organization was the nucleus of the present United States Marine Band.

In January 1812, Ashworth deposited in the Washington District Court his famous drum method book, *A New, Usefull and Complete System of Drum Beating, including the Reveille, Troop, Officers Calls, Signals, Salutes and the Whole of the Camp Duty as Practised at Headquarters, Washington City; intended Particularly for the Use of the United States Army and Navy*.¹⁶

To a certain extent, the format followed in many modern rudimental drum method books is the same as that used in the Ashworth method. Ashworth's first instructions concern the proper method of holding the sticks. The first rudiment to be learned is the double stroke roll.¹⁷ The method of learning to play the double

stroke roll has changed only slightly since Ashworth's method was published. Ashworth's emphasis on the double stroke roll has changed only slightly since his method was published. Ashworth's emphasis on the double stroke roll suggests that he regarded it as the most important rudiment.

Ashworth lists twenty-eight rudiments in his method book. Twenty-six of these rudiments are the same as those listed in N.A.R.D. publications today. The notation used in the Ashworth method differs from that used today in several respects. First, the notes played with the left hand are written with the stems going up, those played with the right hand appear with the stems going down. Second, all musical examples are written in treble clef. Third, all rolls are written out. Fourth, the customary grace note indication for a flam is not used.

Ashworth's list of rudiments is followed by examples of the various calls and signals in use at the time. Due to the fact that by the end of the eighteenth century, English Duty contained signals which originated in several European countries, American drummers, copying the methods of English drummers stationed in New England, acquired these same European signals. These foreign elements are quite evident in the reveille ceremony.

In many regiments of the Continental Army, the reveille ceremony under ordinary camp life conditions was a long drawn out affair requiring the concerted action of all the drums and fifes of the regiment, and the use of several tunes.¹⁸

According to Ashworth, the reveille ceremony always began with a complete performance of a piece called **Three Camps**, which was divided into three parts, and ended with a repetition of the first part. In addition, parts of the **Three Camps** were used for other purposes. The **Three Camps** is unique in the fact that except for the first note, the entire piece consists of a series of rolls of various lengths. Between the initial performance of **Three Camps** and its repeat at the end of the reveille ceremony, several other beatings were played. A series of pieces beginning with **The Scotch**, followed by **The Austrian**, **The Hessian** and **The Scotch Repeat** seems to have been the standard order for this middle section of the reveille ceremony. Ashworth explains the lone single stroke at the beginning of **Three Camps** as being the last note of **The Scotch Repeat**.¹⁹ Usually fife tunes were added to the drum beatings in the reveille ceremony.

Today, the ability to play the **Three Camps** well has become something of a status symbol among rudimental drummers. **Three Camps** is also a favorite piece for rudimental drum contests.

A comparison of the first part of the **Three Camps** from Ashworth with the **Three Camps** in Sanford Moeller's method, which was published by the Ludwig Drum Company in 1925, shows that the method of playing the **Three Camps** has changed little in 123 years.

Although they are not included in Spinney's reproduction of the Ashworth method, the fife tunes used to accompany the various drum signals were included in the last part of the original Ashworth method.

For the most part, Ashworth's method enjoyed wide use until the Civil War. The only other method book known to have been published during the early part of the eighteenth century was **The Drummer's Assistant**, written in 1818 by Lovering.²⁰

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- 2 Simon Vance Anderson, "American Music During the War for Independence, 1775-1783," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of Music, University of Michigan), p. 1.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 40.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 2.
- 5 Baron von Steuben, **Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States**, (Hartford: Hudson and Goodwin, 1782), pp. 83-93. (Clements Library, University of Michigan.)
- 6 Anderson describes the poing stroke as a flam, striking each stick upon the head, touching the hoop at the same time--a rim shot (Anderson, p. 196.).
- 7 Baron von Steuben, pp. 48-49.
- 8 Anderson, p. 3.
- 9 A ruffle is a roll on the drum played when giving honors to a designated person. (U.S. Marine Corps, **Manual for Drummers, Trumpeters, and Fifers**, Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1935, p. 127).
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PERCUSSION EDUCATION IN THE FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADES

by Sheldon Elias

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Mr. Elias has to his credit several published percussion ensembles and has done some composing for the World Book Encyclopedia films. His bachelor's degree was completed at the American Conservatory of Music and he is presently working on his master's degree at Northwestern University. Mr. Elias has taught percussion in many of the Chicago area high schools and he is now the percussion instructor at Triton College, River Grove, Illinois. As a performer his recent credits are with Petula Clark, Billy May, Johnny Mathis, Trini Lopez, Ralph Marterie, Anthony Newley, and the off Broadway show "Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris".

Percussion education and performance for fifth and sixth graders seems to be a topic which is pushed aside by our most active authors and composers. Many teachers of percussion just do not know what to expect from these young people. There are two opposing factions among the private and the school percussion teachers. Some of the teachers feel that these students are too young to study percussion (in the traditional ways, which include method books and the learning of the twenty-six rudiments). The other teachers feel that these nine and ten-year-olds are capable of learning about percussion, but through different methods. These methods would include more of a sensual training than an academic one.

Today there is much more emphasis placed on percussion than ever before. This emphasis places a greater demand on the performer. The percussionist of today has to be equipped with a highly sensual and academic understanding of percussion to accomplish his tasks.

Private Lessons & Percussion Ensembles

When teachers first begin giving private lessons they often receive a great majority of grammar school students. If these teachers have not had any previous teaching experience, they most likely will rely on the method by which they were taught. Many times these teachers expect the same routine to take place with their students that took place with their own study. These teachers are often disappointed when they find the attention span of these young students to be very short. A strict adherence to the lesson plan is sooner or later found to be impractical. Some teachers become very disenchanted and drop many of their students. Some teachers' reaction is to take an extra firm attitude. This kind of ap-

proach usually spoils the student's enjoyment of learning music. When the enjoyment is missing, the student usually stops taking lessons.

Different Approaches

By explaining the role of percussion instruments, with pictures and recordings of various drums, mallet instruments, different types of bands, orchestras, percussion ensembles etc., the student can picture in his mind the many tonal colors. Playing steady beats along with records, keeps youngsters at this level interested. It also accomplishes the development of time keeping. The use of method books as a basis (but only as a portion) of the lesson makes the nine and ten-year-olds feel that they are having fun.

In the fifth and sixth grade the organization of a percussion ensemble can be very rewarding because it creates a sense of belonging to a group. This ensemble usually decreases the drop-out ratio. Students gain confidence by having to play their particular part while the other members of the ensemble are depending on them. They also learn, early in their development, good rehearsal procedures. In using printed ensemble music the student's reading skills and musical discipline develop almost naturally. Also, having an ensemble at this age level gives the teacher a chance to continue development of expression and creativity. When the student relates his ensemble experience to his private lessons, they both seem more meaningful.

In parts of Africa, percussion instruments are used as an inherent part of the culture. There are special combinations of rhythms for religious activities and other essential daily events. There is practically no notation for this music, but in many ways it accomplishes the same goals as our Western-Culture music. I have found that applying some of these African musical techniques in teaching fifth and sixth graders creates a media for musical expression and creativity in a most natural manner. I have adopted those techniques in this manner: the ensemble plays a "Ceremony," in which each player has a definite and distinct pattern he must play. When all the rhythms are played at once, the result is an extremely interesting polyrhythmic ostinato. There are certain devices used to allow each player a solo. Some of the instruments used are conga drums, cowbells, claves, regular wooden chairs, guiros, rattlers of all kinds, hand clapping, timbales, bass drums, cymbals, and voices. From this type of activity the student learns the basic techniques of these various Latin instruments and commonly-associated rhythms that correspond with them. The student can also have a chance to improvise, in a real situation, and express his originality through his playing. Students seem to leave their ensemble classes with much enthusiasm. If the reader is interested in some of these techniques, a pamphlet is available.* The basic patterns for

these "ceremonies" are easy to teach, and with a little imagination on the teacher's part, an exciting addition to the percussion ensemble can be obtained.

The Student's Previous Musical Training

The student's acquaintance with rhythm begins many years before the fifth grade. In the pre-school years a child is subjected to picking up rhythms in words and child-like poem-sayings (This lit-tle pig-gy went to mar-ket). In kindergarten, rhythm band instruments are used along with certain dance steps that match the corresponding instrument pulses. This gives the student a knowledge of the names of the instruments and also a channel to express himself. Playing, dancing, and keeping time with his hands and feet develops some basic muscular abilities. Children at this age are heavily indoctrinated with television and radio, so they remember melodies and catchy rhythms much more easily than the children of ten years ago. It is important to be aware of these things if one is going to teach a nine or ten-year-old child. This information can be used to expand upon and develop his studies. The importance of taking advantage of the student's musical knowledge, and knowing how to use it, can be seen when one takes a fifth-grader and starts him in an elementary drum method book. If one follows most of these method books exclusively, he will find that the student will lose interest and the excitement of learning about music. With a completely academic approach many of these young people find music too much work.

Building on Previous Training

It is true that in fifth grade a more serious approach can be taken than in the earlier grades. This is the time when youngsters first become acquainted with the school band and its various activities. This is also the most crucial period for creating a lasting relationship. The attitude which is formed at this time is usually the attitude which is carried through life. Whether a student is being taught privately or in a school situation, there are three main segments of learning which should be continued in order to form an all-round sensitive percussionist, and not a machine.

First, the **sense of hearing** and **association with symbols** can be obtained by showing pictures of the instruments along with pre-recorded sound on a tape. A very excellent book to use to illustrate the pictures is **Drums of the America's** by Howard, or an ordinary drum catalog. Another method used is to show the pictures to the students and have them recreate the sound with their voices. By playing compositions in different meters while the students keep the main pulse on a percussion instrument will help the student to hear the important downbeats, which are often disguised.

The second segment is muscular development, which can be shown by demonstrating the various grips used in the percussion family (rudimental, matched, vibraphone grip, marimba grip, etc.). Whatever media of percussion in which the student begins whether it be concert, military, or drum set, he will realize how what he is doing, fits into the whole picture. Learning the rudiments is very important in developing muscular co-ordination.

The third segment includes **building the student's own creativity and expression**. During these various segments the student should become fairly well acquainted with the quarter note, eighth note, and their corresponding rests. Using these acquired tools the student will find much pleasure and sense of accomplishment by writing his own composition. If the teacher uses these compositions as a basis, he can then demonstrate how to write a piece for multiple percussion instruments. This is also a good opportunity to explain the importance of building a piece to a climax.

If the student continues with the doors of sensitivity open from these three segments of learning he will more readily be able to bring life to the music he will play, no matter what his stage of learning.

There are quite a few good beginning method books that are suitable for fifth and sixth graders. The Haskell Harr Book I and the Roy Burnes Elementary book are both concert and rudimentally orientated. These types of books are fine for preparing the student for the kind of playing he will have to do in the grammar school band. However, these essential method books should be used only as a device to teach basic reading knowledge, along with other additional exercises in expression.

One method of helping the student develop musical feeling and expression is to play a familiar song on a piano or record, and have him work out some accompanimental rhythms either on a drum set or an accessory instrument. The student does not have to use conventional rhythm patterns on the drum set. It is often surprising to see what kind of patterns he comes up with.

Summary

It is this authors opinion that the percussion instructor should be acquainted with children's musical training which they acquire previous to the fifth grade. He should then incorporate that learning into this percussion instruction, because it makes that instruction much more meaningful and real to the student. When the more comprehensive skills of reading music and group playing are taught, children must be made to see that they are part of their total percussion education. This can be done through the use of method books, rudiments, pictures, and recorded sounds. The private lesson at this age can be very rewarding to the student if he is given a

chance to interpret the material as he sees it. Percussion ensembles seem to raise the levels of creativity, expression and musical discipline, while they also unite the students into a group and cause their musical activities to take on a realistic approach. **Musical Growth in the Elementary School** by Bergethon and Boardman has excellent charts on the development of the student from kindergarten thru eighth grade in the areas of listening, singing, playing, moving, creating, and reading. If the percussion teachers of these primary grades were to use the type of system which this book recommends, the students would gain a better academic understanding of music, and they would also be able to get truly involved with music sensually.

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The Challenge

We wish to draw your attention to the "Letters to the Editor" column found on pages 31-32 of this issue of PERCUSSIONIST. Communication and discussion among members of PAS is a vital part of the total function of the organization. It is only through open and frank opinion being expressed about any phase of our total art that open minds may have an opportunity to grow.

We do not wish, at this time, to take a particular stand on either side of debatable issues, but only to encourage more opinions expressing all phases of musical percussion.

We congratulate those who are willing to express their true feelings, knowledge, and experience in the form of an article about a given subject, as well as, those brave enough to respond pro or con to an expressed philosophy.

It is in this way that all members can receive a greater insight to our expanding field of knowledge and grow educationally and professionally.

We wish to challenge our entire membership to express themselves in the form of an article for one of our publications or as a response to an article found in our publications.

ORCHESTRAL TIMPANI PARTS: TO CHANGE OR NOT TO CHANGE

by Harold J. Brown, Jr.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Harold J. Brown, Jr., 23 year old native of Birmingham, Alabama, is presently completing work on his Ph.D. in French Literature at the University of Rochester. He studied with John Beck at the Eastman School of Music, has taught percussion, and has performed professionally on timpani and percussion. A percussion quartet, *Four times Three*, is being published by Kendor Music, and a major work, *Technical Exercises for Timpani*, will appear next year. An article in the May, 1970 issue of *Percussionist* was entitled "Percussion in Paris".

There is a widely-used and little-discussed practice of timpanists, that of altering orchestral timpani parts, which raises important musical and aesthetic issues. The purpose of this article is not so much to illustrate as to analyze and attempt to defend this practice. Hopefully, other viewpoints will find their way into the pages of this magazine.

The desire to change or update the parts of the classical repertoire no doubt originates in the disproportion between the capabilities of the modern set of four pedal timpani and the level of parts written in the last two centuries for the instrument. The 20th century has seen such a widening of the technical possibilities of the timpani that it is literally possible to play any given tunings. The

challenges presented by contemporary music contrast greatly with the technical simplicity of the majority of parts in the literature. This is not to say that a Mozart or Beethoven symphony is easy to play -- obviously, this is far from true. The subject here is the tuning of the drums, and the use of these tonalities in the total orchestral framework. Modern composers are able to demand constantly changing tunings, knowing that such parts are feasible. Our ancestors were limited to hand drums or crude pedal mechanisms, and the most composers could usually ask for were pitch changes between movements.

The temptation naturally comes, then, to alter the older parts, to "flush them out". The timpanist has more to do, and often a stronger base to the orchestra will be gained. Despite the danger of "over-playing", parts are constantly being edited by some of the most distinguished timpanists--the evidence is on record, as well as live in concert. In many cases, conductors change parts as well. By the time the Symphony No. 3 of Robert Schumann passes through Mahler's orchestration, a conductor's wishes, and the timpanist's private interpretation, it certainly is not pure Schumann. Whether this is desirable is another matter. Before analyzing the validity of such changes, a few examples will be given:

Parts may be changed outright by adding notes, or substituting new pitches where possible. The third movement (Rondo: vivace) of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4 has tunings of G and C; a D, added on certain chords, fits well into the orchestral context. Example #1 comes in the first *tutti* of the movement:

Ex. #1

original

changed

Example #2 is found in the bars preceding the cadenza in the same movement. The timpani note on the cadenza chord is a G, yet the orchestra is playing D; again, a change seems desirable:

Ex. #2

Original 

changed 

A similar addition may be made in the last movement (Allegro energico) of Brahms' Symphony No. 4. An added triplet on D in the measure rest not only fits in with the orchestra, but fills a definite "gap" when the timpani does not play:

Ex. #3

original 

changed 

Another way of changing a part, to a lesser degree, is by doubling one note on two drums, to fill out the sound. Two examples are given here, again from Brahms; the opening bars of the first movement (Un poco sostenuto) of his Symphony No. 1, and the closing bars of the first movement (Allegro non troppo) of his Symphony No. 4:

Ex. #4

original 

changed 

Ex. #5

(Occasionally, an octave may be added for emphasis without detracting from the original sound; a high F may be desirable with the low F in certain passages in the last movement of Tschaikowsky's Symphony No. 4, for example.)

These possibilities are admittedly conservative, in contrast to what is often done. The question is not one of degree, but of the reasons to change a part at all. What justification do we have in altering to the slightest degree what the composer wanted? Most opinion is polarized around the two extremes that go from the fundamentalist or purist viewpoint ("Don't change a single note") to a more progressive, if anachronistic, philosophy ("The composer would have wanted this, if he had had pedal timpani available.") Perhaps, as is true in most cases of polarized opinions, the best path lies between the two extremes.

It would seem that we are justified in changing parts, without being accused of sacrilege. This is done with every instrument from the beginning brass student who plays difficult notes an octave down, to the concert violinist who writes his own cadenzas. More basically, every rendition of music is by definition an adaptation or interpretation. What the composer noted down is only the closest approximation possible to what he heard in his mind. The notes on the page are but a starting point for the musical sounds, just as a page of poetry is but a guideline to the sounds made by the human voice while reciting it. The piece of music has a life of its own; if faithful to the original spirit of the piece, changes are justified and in some cases necessary, since definitive scores of many works are still not available. Any orchestration or arrangement would have to be condemned if the purist viewpoint is accepted.

The aesthetic justification for changing timpani parts seems, therefore to exist. These changes are but a step further in the individual interpretation of the musician, no more reprehensible than any other means of musical interpretation. The timpanist who "hears" extra notes in the part, checks the score, consults the conductor and decides to play them, is certainly within his rights. In moderation, based on sound musical judgment, such changes are valid; they should be considered with an open mind.

President's Corner

It is a great pleasure for your President to welcome you back to another academic year which may prove to be the greatest in the Percussive Arts Society's history. In the first two months of this academic year, the membership of the Percussive Arts Society, Inc. has continued to grow at a fast pace. New concepts, related to electing Board members and the internal running of the organization, will allow for more participation by the membership in major decisions of the organization. It is your President's goal to develop this concept as much as possible. Although it is difficult, since our membership is so widely diverse, it can be achieved, if all members respond to those articles and questionnaires which will be periodically printed in the PERCUSSIVE NOTES publication. Your opinions regarding Board membership, suggestions for governing principals, and comments regarding the projects of the Society, will help in reaching this goal of complete participation.

At this year's December meeting, we will begin to pursue this concept even further by having our general membership meeting before the Board of Directors meeting. In the past, the Board Meeting has been first and the members have been told what occurred during that meeting. From now on the membership meeting will be first so that things to be considered in the Board meeting may first be discussed by the complete membership, allowing the Board to react to the total membership's feeling.

Also this December we will be having a complete day of percussion. This will be on Saturday following the regular meeting and Board meeting, and it should prove to be a very exciting day, as well as a step in the direction of a Percussion Conference, which we hope to schedule in the near future. More information about this is found in the "Time and Place" section of this issue.

It is my sincere hope that the entire membership will become more actively involved in the decision-making of the Percussive Arts Society, Inc.

A STUDY OF SELECTED PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE MUSIC OF THE 20TH CENTURY

by Ronald Keezer

Professor of Percussion
Wisconsin State University
Eau Claire, Wisconsin

(Continued from p. 136, Summer 1971 *Percussionist*—Vol. VIII, No. 4)

EDGAR VARESE and “IONISATION”

Edgar, later Edgard, Varese was the first well-known composer to write successfully for the percussion ensemble. His composition “Ionisation” written in 1931¹ for percussion ensemble is an historic “first” in that it is one of the earliest examples of serious music for the medium. Due to Varese’s creative and highly innovative ideas, this work commands more attention than that which might be accorded a simple progenitor.

Edgar Varese was born on December 22, 1885 in Paris, France. He studied mathematics and the sciences at his father’s request until his entrance into college. With his mind set on music, he turned to studies at the Schola Cantorum with d’Indy and Roussel. In 1907, he entered Charles Widor’s master class at the Paris Conservatory. Varese was also a protege of Busoni who undoubtedly influenced him in his experimental concepts.²

Varese arrived in the United States in 1915 after serving honorably with the French Army. In 1919 he formed the New Symphony Orchestra, a “little appreciated”³ group devoted to new works. Varese and Carlos Salzedo collaborated to form the International Composers Guild in 1921 and it was through this organization that modern music was introduced to America with a degree of consistency.⁴

Edgar Varese was not a prolific composer, producing only thirteen compositions during the fifty years between 1915 and 1965.⁵ Compositions dating before 1915 were either lost or destroyed by the composer himself.⁶ Varese, after enjoying some degree of success in the 1920’s and early 30’s dropped out of the field of composition entirely until 1954. He first gained large scale recogni-

tion with his "Poeme Electronique" at the Brussels World Fair in 1958.⁷ Edgard Varese died on November 6, 1965 in New York City.⁸

The music of Edgar Varese has been compared to that of Webern. Both Varese and Webern were pioneers; both experienced very little acceptance of their music during their lifetime; both men pursued the ultimate. Varese and Webern had an identity of opposites in that they worked at opposite ends of the musical spectrum. (e.g., Webern worked with small numbers while Varese dealt with large groups.) The music of both men has, of late been recognized as important and innovative, and it has been studied with great interest.⁹

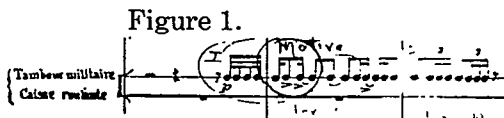
Varese's concepts of music varied greatly with the traditional ideals. He exploited rhythm and dynamics to their fullest while many times completely eliminating melody and/or harmony. The function of timbre was considered all-important to Varese.¹⁰ "In creating his music Varese broke no rules of ordinary harmony; they simply did not come into consideration at all, as they did not pertain to that different art which was his aim."¹¹ Of all the men who were important to the development of the percussion ensemble Varese is the most difficult to categorize or date. His music was and still is quite new. Edgar Varese was a pioneer and a revolutionary. . . he was both a father and child of his time.¹²

AN ANALYSIS OF "IONISATION"

"Ionisation" was written for thirteen players. There are thirty-seven indefinite and three definite pitch percussion instruments called for in the score. The pianist, player #13, "doubles" on the whip (Slapstick), triangle and sleigh bells of player #6, #7 and #10 respectively.

John T. Howard in *Our American Music*¹³ analyzed the form of "Ionisation" as that of a sonata; with an exposition, a development, an abridged recapitulation, and a coda. This writer prefers to categorize the composition more freely in the A B C (plus Coda) form. The C section (Howard's recapitulation) refers to some of the material of the A or exposition section, but entirely too briefly to term the section a recapitulation.

The A section (bars 1-37) is basically polyphonic. It is built upon a three note rhythmic motive. (See Figure 1. below).



The B section (bars 38-50) is built upon a combination of the three and five note motive, but it is homophonic and concerted in nature. (See Figure 2. below)

Figure 2.

Musical score for Figure 2, showing percussion parts for Bongsos, Caisse Roulante, and Tambour militaire. The score is divided into two systems. The first system shows the Bongsos (2 parts: clair and grave), Caisse Roulante (2 parts: clair and grave), and Tambour militaire (2 parts: clair and grave). The second system shows the Caisse Roulante (2 parts: clair and grave) and Tambour militaire (2 parts: clair and grave). The score includes dynamic markings such as *ff* and *mf*, and articulation marks like accents and slurs.

The C section (bars 51-91) returns to the polyphonic triplet-like texture of the A section, but the material is somewhat varied. (See Figure 3. below)

Figure 3.

Musical score for Figure 3, showing a vocal line with triplets. The score is divided into two systems. The first system shows a vocal line with a triplet of eighth notes. The second system shows a vocal line with a triplet of eighth notes. The score includes dynamic markings such as *ff* and *mf*, and articulation marks like accents and slurs.

The three definite-pitch percussion instruments are introduced in this (C) section. (See Figure 4. below)

Figure 4.

Musical score for Figure 4, showing percussion parts for Cloches, Glockenspiel à claviers, Grand Tam-tam, and Piano. The score is divided into three systems. The first system shows the Cloches (10 parts), Glockenspiel à claviers (11 parts), and Grand Tam-tam (12 parts). The second system shows the Glockenspiel à claviers (11 parts) and Grand Tam-tam (12 parts). The third system shows the Piano (13 parts). The score includes dynamic markings such as *ff*, *mf*, and *pp*, and articulation marks like accents and slurs.

Varese was one of the first composers to employ dynamics as an integral formal element.¹⁴ The sections within "Ionisation" are delineated by a use of obvious dynamic changes. The A section is basically soft or on a low dynamic level. (See Figure 5. below)

Figure 5.

Musical score for Figure 5, showing percussion parts for Bongsos, Caisse Roulante, Tambour militaire, and Caisse claire. The score is divided into three systems. The first system shows the Bongsos (2 parts: clair and grave), Caisse Roulante (2 parts: clair and grave), and Tambour militaire (2 parts: clair and grave). The second system shows the Caisse claire (2 parts: clair and grave) and Tambour militaire (2 parts: clair and grave). The third system shows the Caisse claire (2 parts: clair and grave) and Tambour militaire (2 parts: clair and grave). The score includes dynamic markings such as *ff*, *mf*, and *pp*, and articulation marks like accents and slurs.

The B section turns to a loud dynamic level, (See Figure 6. below)

Figure 6.

Musical score for Figure 6, featuring four staves of percussion instruments. The notation includes dynamic markings such as *mf* and *ff*, and articulation like accents. The instruments listed are:

- 1. *A dir mstick* (in the right hand), *Cencerro* (1/2 ball), *Grosse Caisse* (grave)
- 2. *A dir mstick* (in the left hand), *Tan-tan clair*, *Tan-tan grave*
- 3. 2 *Bongos* (clair), *Caisse Rouante* (grave), 2 *Grosses Caisse* (grave)
- 4. *Tambour militaire*, *Caisse rouante*

and the C section returns to the soft level of A. (See Figure 7. below)

Figure 7.

Musical score for Figure 7, featuring six staves of percussion instruments. The notation includes dynamic markings such as *mf* and *ff*, and articulation like accents. The instruments listed are:

- 9. *Grande Cymbale Chinoise*
- Gong* (bar 51, bar 52)
- Small Tam Tam
- Large Tam Tam
- Small siren
- Large siren
- Suspended cymbal
- Cymbales

After a grand pause (bar 65) the coda section retruns with loud level ending. (See Figure 8. below)

Figure 8.

Musical score for Figure 8, featuring four staves of percussion instruments. The notation includes dynamic markings such as *ff* and *p*, and articulation like accents. The instruments listed are:

- 2 *Grosses Caisse*
- Tambour Militaire*, *Caisse rouante*
- Castagnettes*
- Tambour de Basque*

“Ionisation” has an entirely different harmonic concept. The majority of the “chords” are composed of percussion timbres of indefinite pitch. After bar 74 definite pitch percussion instruments make their appearance, but they are utilized by Varese so that they serve as thickening in the overall sound level. (See Figure 9. below)

Figure 9.

Figure 9 is a musical score for three percussion parts. The top staff is for '10... Clashes' with the instruction 'Toujours à clavier'. The middle staff is for '11.. Glockenspiel à clavier' with the instruction 'à clavier'. The bottom staff is for '12. Grand Tam-tam (très profond)'. A circled section of the score is labeled '... Piano' and includes the instruction 'Pédale jusqu'à la fin'. The score includes various musical notations such as '4/4', 'ff', 'attaque sèche (percutee) laissez vibrer', and '87 basse'. Bar numbers 75, 76, and 77 are indicated at the top.

The actual pitches do not set up any tonal center or centers, instead they are heard as an increase in the density of the whole composition.

The distinctions between these groups or timbre chords are cleverly employed by Varese. Measures 9-10 and 21-22 contain a good example of the concern Varese had for the harmonization of tone or sound qualities. The motive in bars 9-10 is performed by player #4 on the military drum. The important accompanying figure or chord is played by player #3 on the bongoes and player #8 on the maracas. (See Figure 10 below)

Figure 10.

Figure 10 is a musical score for three percussion parts. The top staff is for '4... Tambour militaire / Caisse roulante'. The middle staff is for '2 Bongos / Caisse roulante' with sub-instructions 'clair / grave' and 'Bourles Timbales en feutre?'. The bottom staff is for '8... Caisse claire / 2 Maracas' with sub-instructions 'clair / grave'. The score includes musical notations such as 'b. m. 9', 'b. m. 10', and 'ff'.

In measures 21-22 the same motive is stated by player #4 on the military drum, but at a different dynamic level and with a different (softer) type of stick. The same accompanying figure is used, but player #3 performs on the medium and low pitched bass drums with wooden timpani mallets to match the timbres produced by the different sticks and dynamics of player #4. (See Figure 11. next page)

Figure 11.

4. Tambour militaire
Caisse roulante

3. 2 Bongos (clair
grave)
Caisse Roulante
2 grosses caisses (moyenne
grave)

8. Caisse claire
2 Maracas (Clair
Grave)

Many of these timbre "chords" are very distinctive. In bars 50-51 the ear can hardly mistake the chord group that appears in bar 50 from that in bar 51. (See Figure 12. below)

Figure 12.

B → 50

2 Bongos (clair
grave)

Tambour militaire.
Caisse roulante

3 Blocs Chinois (clair
moyen
grave)

2 Maracas (Clair
Grave)

Tarole
Caisse claire

B → 51

Cencerro } Grande Cymbale Claire
Grosse Caisse (très grave)

Cencerro } Gong
Taux-taux clair }
Taux-taux grave }
Sirene grave

Cymbale suspendue

(Cymbales)

The rhythmic complexity of "Ionisation" is another factor or key element that Varese used to add variety. There are very few instances in measures (bars 68-71) where more than one part plays one rhythmic line. In this composition Varese almost reached the point of serialization of the perimeter of rhythm. There is no evidence of the fact, but it seems as though he might have applied the theory of permutations to arrive at the wide variety of rhythmic combinations.

Edgar Varese occupies a curious position in the field of the percussion ensemble. He was one of the founding fathers of the genre and, yet, because of his radically different concepts of composition, he still remains one of the avant garde in the field.

SUMMARY

The past series of articles was conceived as a study of a selected number of composers and their music for the percussion ensemble. The composers and compositions were chosen for their innovative originality and content.

Each of the composers have made major contributions to the medium. They have greatly influenced their contemporaries in the rudimental and commercial percussion ensemble areas as well as those in the art music or "serious" percussion ensemble field.

The composers chosen were and are innovators of the first order.

No attempt was made to outline the development of the percussion ensemble or to include all of the composers and/or compositions that spurred the percussion awakening in the 20th century.

This study has led the author to conclude that three distinctly different ideals or streams of thought run as one to form the "serious" percussion ensemble medium. Varese and Cage/Harrison represent the left, or avant garde. The works of these men hold an intellectual appeal. Cowell and Hovhaness represent the right or ethnic approach. Russell and Childs act the role of an assimilator. Both Russell and "left-learning" Childs have drawn from each of the other two categories, yet their work is original and their third, or buffer zone category is meaningful.

FOOTNOTES

1 Due to the many conflicting and confusing dates reported in a variety of books and periodicals I have made it a point to, in a sense, triangulate the correct date by referring to three reputable sources. (i.e. *Groves Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Vol. 8, p. 670; *International Cyclopedia of Music and Musicians*, 1965, p. 2288; and Henry Cowell in *American Composers on American Music*, New York, 1962, p. 217.

2 John T. Howard, *Our American Music*, New York, 1965, p. 412.

3 *Time*, May 12, 1961, p. 51.

4 Cowell, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

5 Groves, *loc. cit.* and *Intn'l. Cycl. loc. cit.*

6 Howard, *loc. cit.*

7 *Time*, *loc. cit.*

8 *Nation*, November 29, 1964, pp. 426-27.

9 *Saturday Review of Literature*, December 30, 1960, pp. 34-35.

10 Marc Wilkinson, *The Score*, March, 1957.

11 Cowell, *loc. cit.*

12 *Newsweek*, November 22, 1965, p. 944.

13 Howard, *op. cit.*, p. 413

14 Igor Stravinsky, *Musical America*, June, 1962, p. 11

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Practical Drum Set Studies

by Bob Tilles
Professor of Percussion
DePaul University

In the last issue of "Percussionist", "Kick Beats" and "Charleston Beats" were studied and played in unison and independent form.

The drummer also has an opportunity to embellish these accents with solo fills.

EXAMPLE A "Kick Beat" as written.

Cym.

or the "Kick Beat" might be written as a cue

Cym.

EXAMPLE B "Kick Beats" with fills

Cym.

ADDITIONAL
FILLS

EXAMPLE C "Charleston Beat" as written

Cym.

OR

EXAMPLE D "Charleston Beat" with fills

Cym.

Additional Fills

Here is a typical jazz chart for the drummer. Some of the fills have been written and some are left open for improvisation.

MODERATE JAZZ FEEL

A

cym

B

C

D

E

Percussion Material Review

by Mervin Britton
Professor of Percussion
Arizona State University

DOUBLE CONCERTO FOR TWO PERCUSSION AND ORCHESTRA, Anthony J. Cirone; \$30; Cirone Publications.

This composition is not difficult for a college orchestra and percussionists. The orchestra instrumentation is standard strings and winds. The solo parts use percussion instruments common to any school program. There is a piano reduction arrangement available. The price is \$5.

ORCHESTRAL TECHNIQUES OF THE STANDARD PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTS, Anthony J. Cirone 20 p. \$2.50.

The author presents his view regarding basic performance of orchestral techniques. Clarity of the illustrations vary a great deal.

PONNAHDUSLAUDALLA (ON THE SPRINGBOARD), Antero Hytinkoski; Virusmaentie 4; Turku 9; Suomi, Finland.

This solo for snare drum and medium tom tom would be of interest to the intermediate student. It is approximately 60 measures of 4/4, 3/4 and 12/8 meter.

POITA KAHDELLE (WORK FOR TWO), Antero Hytinkoski; Turku, Finland.

Player one of this duet uses triangle, tambourine, wood block, susp. cymbal, sleigh bells, two temple blocks, finger cymbals and castanets. Player two uses a basic set of snare drum, bass drum and high hat cymbals. The work is rather short in duration with easy rhythms. There is ample time to change instruments.

MUSTA JA VALKOISTA (BLACK & WHITE), Antero Hytinkoski; Turku, Finland

This duet would be a challenge because of its extensive use of fast 7/8. Player one uses three toms or timpani pitches. Player two uses ride cymbal, high-hat, snare drum and bass drum. These latter two compositions should be of interest to those looking for performance material using drum set.

FOUR BAGATELLES FOR SOLO VIBRAPHONE, Gitta Steiner; \$4; Seesaw Music Corp.; 177 East 87th Street, New York. 10028.

These four short pieces are unmetered, but three have slow set tempo markings. The notation is clearly marked and easy to read. Some four mallet work is required.

FANTASY ON A RAGA, Ron Keezer; \$4.50; Ron Keezer; Music Dept.; Wisconsin State University; Eau Clair, Wisconsin.

This is an interesting five minute composition for seven percussionists and bass trombone. Instrumentation is orchestra bells, xylophone, two marimbas, vibraphone, gong, bass drum, roto drums and finger cymbals.

CAPRICCIO FOR SCHLAGZEUG UND KAMMERORCHESTER (PIANO REDUCTION) Friedrich Zehm; \$5; Edition Schott 6124 Associated Music Publishers

Duration of this composition is approximately 15 minutes. The solo part is not technically difficult for anyone familiar with multiple percussion performance. Notation, including choice of sticks, is clearly printed. The solo instrumentation is bass and snare drum, crash cymbals, three toms, hi-hat, tambourine, triangle, xylophone or marimba.

CANTATA PARA AMERICA MAGICA (For dramatic soprano and percussion orchestra), Alberto Ginastera; Score \$12.50, parts on rental; Boosey Hawkes, Inc. sole selling agent.

This is an extensive work in six movements with a 110 page score. The orchestra requires 16 performers including two pianos and celesta. However, except for the xylophone, marimba, glockenspiel and two sets of timpani (3 each) many of the other parts can be performed by musicians who are not percussionists. There is rapid meter change and complicated rhythms. The balance of instruments are standard or easy to obtain.

ASSIMILATION, Anthony J. Cirone; \$2.50; Cirone Publications 3512 Glenwood Avenue; Redwood City, Cal. 94062.

This is an intermediate elementary level or easy secondary school, six score page sextet. The instrumentation is three snare drums, susp. cymbal, triangle and bass drum.

TRIPTYCH, Anthony J. Cirone; \$12; Cirone Publications.

Meter changes and instrumental technique puts this exciting quartet in the college level of performance. Instrumentation covers crash cymbals, snare, tom and tenor drum, bass drum, four timpani, xylophone, timbales, orchestra bells, chimes, vibes, cow bell and finger cymbals.

JAPANESE IMPRESSIONS FOR PERCUSSION QUINTET, Anthony J. Cirone; \$5; Cirone Publications.

As the title implies, the composition depicts Japanese impressions using four timpani, orchestra bells, two temple blocks, susp. cymbal, snare, tom, tenor drum, bongos, bass drum, bamboo wind chimes, two wood blocks and xylophone. While there is one section of rapid meter change, a college ensemble should find this work easy to perform.

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Time and Place

The times and places for our annual meeting in Chicago are as follows:

Friday, December 17, 1971

Sherman House

8:00 A.M.--Executive Board and Commercial Members breakfast--
Crystal Room.

6:00 P.M.--PAS Membership Meeting--Louis XVI Room.

7:00 P.M.--PAS Board of Directors Meeting-- Polo Room 102.

“Day Of Percussion”

Saturday--December 18, 1971

DePaul University--Chicago

A schedule of activities for the P.A.S. “Day of Percussion” to be held on Saturday, December 18th at DePaul University School of Music (Jackson & Wabash Avenues in Chicago’s Loop) is now being developed. A full day of percussion events is planned (9:00 A.M.--5:30 P.M.) in the hopes that many PAS members and guests will be able to attend all or some of the wide variety of events.

The tentative list of performing groups include:

AMERICAN CONSERVATORY PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE--James Dutton, Director (including premiere performance of a new work: **Song of Hugh Glass** by Arthur Lauer)

CHICAGO CAVALIERS DRUM AND BUGLE CORPS--Larry McCormick, Director

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE--George Allan O'Connor, Director

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY MARIMBA ENSEMBLE--Terry Applebaum, Director.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE--Thomas Siwe, Director.

GUEST SPEAKER: RALPH SHAPEY--Composer of contemporary music, Professor of Music at the University of Chicago, and Musical Director of the Contemporary Chamber Players

A coffee mixer in the morning and ample time for lunch are also included in the activities for this significant event sponsored by the PERCUSSIVE ARTS SOCIETY, INC. with the cooperation of the DePaul University School of Music and with special assistance in planning by the Illinois Chapter of P.A.S. Put this date: **Saturday, December 18th** on your calendar, and plan to attend this "Day of Percussion", a significant event of national importance in the continued growth in the scope of activities of your PERCUSSIVE ARTS SOCIETY.

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TEXT AND REFERENCE MATERIAL

SOLO AND ENSEMBLE LITERATURE FOR PERCUSSION, a 56 page booklet under the sponsorship of the Percussive Arts Society (PAS) is now available — Send \$1.00 which includes postage and handling costs direct to: F. Michael Combs, Department of Music, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tenn. 37916. Mike and his committee have prepared a document, representing many hours of work, that should be of great value to all percussionists, libraries, and music dealers.

It is also requested as you use this booklet, that any errors, corrections, and especially additions be reported to Mike Combs. Yearly supplements and a new edition every five years are planned. Like any list it is "out-of-date" practically as soon as it leaves the press, and only with the cooperation of the publisher and the members of PAS can it continue to be a valuable document.

Letters to The Editor

To the Editor:

I was appalled to read the article in the last issue of the Percussionist concerning the 'Rites Of Spring' by Stravinsky. This sort of fear mongering can only scare the young rising generation of percussionists. This composition no longer presents any problem to the "Now" generation.

When the great Winston Churchill delivered his memorable address as a guest of the United States Congress in 1942, when we were at war with Germany, he said concerning Hitlers derogatory remarks against the English and American peoples, "And what kind of people does he think we are".

I can say this about Mr. White's scare remarks concerning the 'Rites of Spring'. In my thirty five years of teaching percussion I have never experienced a young student, with any degree of talent, who could not learn to play this composition as written without any kind of revision.

The manner in which the Avant Garde composers are writing today makes Stravinsky's score seem like a Mozart symphony. One has only to drop in at the percussion classes at the Juilliard School, the Manhattan School of Music and the Mannes School in New York to observe what a wealth of understanding and expertise exists with the young people of today. I am always fascinated how quickly they learn and absorb the modern idiom of playing and reading.

Sincerely,

Saul Goodman

To the Editor:

How about launching a campaign to get percussionists, teachers, orchestras, bands, publishers, and manufacturers to spell the word **TIMPANI correctly**. Since Timpani is an Italian word and the letter "y" is not in that language's alphabet, let's do away with tympani, (or what is even more horrendous--tympany--Gads!!!!))See **Grove's Dictionary, Harvard Dictionary, MGG, etc.)**

Sincerely,

Richard Anshutz
305 Moreton Bay Lane, Apt. #4
Goleta, California 93017

We would like to express our appreciation to these outstanding organizations in the music industry for their support of Percussive Arts Society, Inc. and hope they will continue to consider PAS as a worthwhile and stimulating force in the percussion world.

MANUFACTURERS

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Percussive Arts Society, Inc.

PURPOSES OF THE PERCUSSIVE ARTS SOCIETY, INC. — To raise the level of musical percussion performance and teaching; to expand understanding of the needs and responsibilities of the percussion student, teacher, and performer; and to promote a greater communication between all areas of the percussion arts.

OFFICER REPRESENTATION CATEGORIES — Professional, College Education, High School, Elementary School, Private Teacher, Composer, Drum Corps, Dealer, Publisher, Manufacturer, Distributor, and Members at Large.

PUBLICATIONS — All members receive the journal *PERCUSSIONIST* (four issues per year) and the magazine *PERCUSSIVE NOTES* (three issues per academic year). Part of the membership dues collected from each member is allocated for a subscription to each of the publications. These publications contain articles and research studies of importance to all in the percussion field, and serve to keep all members informed of current news, trends, programs, and happenings of interest.

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