WAYS OF FORMING PERFORMING STYLISTICS IN THE HISTORICAL DYNAMICS OF CHINESE PIANO ART

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Abstract. The article is devoted to the understanding of the problems faced by the performer of the works of Chinese composers. The lack of performance analysis of such works complicates their understanding and full implementation on stage. The purpose of this study is to identify the universal mechanism of piano interpretation of program pieces by Chinese composers, which functions in the entire variety of author's styles. At the same time, the issue of performance stylistics of piano works by Chinese composers appears in all its problem complexity: from understanding the figurative sphere, issues of pianistic implementation to the stylistic authenticity of performance. The process of formation of performance style in the works laid down by composers during the development of piano art in China is considered. A key role in the formation of the performance style of Chinese pianists was played by the activities of luminaries - musicians who demonstrated the universality of musical creativity. The creative-aesthetic and didactic principles acquired by these musicians in different schools affected the manner of their individual writing, which, in turn, influenced the performance style of their works. Specific performance formulas of playing, uncharacteristic for European art sound coloristic techniques on the piano require the pianist to be able to choose a fingering that provides pianistic comfort and contributes to actual intonation and construction of melodic lines. The constant updating of the musical language of many piano works by Chinese authors shows talking about the continuous process of evolution of the national performing style.

Keywords: piano art; performing stylistics; pianism; historical dynamics; composer creativity.

1 Introduction

Contemporary Chinese piano music is a unique example of the fruitful interaction of musical traditions of Europe and the East. Many composer innovations in the field of piano music attract the attention of musicians and listeners not only in China, but also beyond it. However, the lack of performance analysis of such works complicates their understanding and full implementation on stage. Today, the performance activity of Chinese pianists is very successful, they win prestigious international competitions, and the works of composers Ding Shande, Wang Lisan, Li Yinghua, Jiang Wenyi, He Luting, in particular, their piano opuses, are very famous. Music education in China is now at a high professional level, including, piano classes are successfully operating in most conservatories and other special educational institutions of the country; piano music concerts attract many listeners, are recorded and reproduced in the mass media, and large editions of compact discs are published.

The process of national piano music popularization by Chinese composers and performers reveals to a huge audience of listeners from different countries the image of the Celestial - a country with the oldest cultural traditions, however, today quite closed to the rest of the world. Interest in this repertoire, on the one hand, attracts musicians with its oriental beauty and sophistication, on the other hand, the interest of pianists - representatives of other nationalities in these works today can be called “rather cautious”.

The purpose of this study is to identify the universal mechanism of piano interpretation of program pieces by Chinese composers, which functions in the entire variety of author's styles. At the same time, the issue of performance stylistics of piano works by Chinese composers appears in all its problem complexity: from understanding the figurative sphere, issues of pianistic implementation to the stylistic authenticity of performance.

2 Literature Review

It is natural that the phenomenon of Chinese piano art arouses the interest of both Chinese researchers and representatives of other national schools of musicology. Dissertations, articles, and scientific works dealing with various aspects of Chinese piano art are published in many countries. To date, there is a huge amount of research devoted to this bright phenomenon. A sufficient number of fundamental studies in Chinese, English, Ukrainian, and Russian languages are devoted to the piano music of China.

The central problem attracting the attention of researchers is the preservation and development of Chinese national musical traditions under the influence of Western compositional methods. As a rule, the subject of such studies is the works of the most talented composers, and musicologists focus on their analysis [15; 22; 30]. Also, musicology works of historical plane predominate [1; 2; 11], some information can be found in studies on individual outstanding performers such as Lan Lan [4], on educational institutions, for example, about the Beijing Central Conservatory [7]; it is possible to get information about the development of a certain stage of piano performance [31]. Nevertheless, the activities of most Chinese pianists, educational and concert institutions in China are not covered enough. Thus, the study and evaluation of the general historical dynamics of the development of piano performance art and pedagogy in China deserves more attention.

The issues of the interaction of compositional and performing creativity in China, which directly affect the formation of performing stylistics, deserve special consideration. In order to reveal this important topic, studies should be involved that cover the specifics of the figurative sphere of piano works [16; 21], ways of performing piano works, etc. Without this, it is almost impossible to penetrate into the depths of the content of the piano works of outstanding Chinese composers. A large part of the piano works written recently in China is not sufficiently studied. Many interesting compositional innovations in the field of piano creativity, which require specific performance solutions, have not been summarized. Examining the piano works of Chinese composers of various genres from the perspective of performing issues, subordinated to the practical task of realizing the composer's idea, is relevant.

Since Chinese piano music reflects almost all the processes taking place in world art in an original way, it is necessary to take into account the entire complex of musical creativity in research - concert activity, pedagogical work, research, composer school, etc. The work of Feng Yizhan [9] is dedicated to the process of formation and development of the piano performing and pedagogical school of China in the projection of the dialogue of cultures. The researcher defines the piano performance school of China as “a valuable cultural phenomenon and a holistic phenomenon of Chinese musical art, containing features of typological unity with other national schools; a system of knowledge, views, teachings, and leading principles applied in the practical activities of teachers and their students; it is the unity of performing and pedagogical traditions, the sum of aesthetic and stylistic views that are preserved and translated in the performing practice of subsequent generations” [9, p. 170]. However, in this work, the “national” aspect of the formation of performing stylistics is least covered.

The interest of researchers and performers in studying the regularities of the performance process requires the development of a methodology that would be able to reveal the typological features of solving performance problems faced by interpreters. However, this range of problems requires additional efforts. One of the paragraphs of Xu Bo’s thesis [31, p. 24-27], where the author focused on comparing Lan Lan with a performer from another country, can be considered the first step towards investigating the topic related to performance style in the creative work of modern Chinese pianists. Meanwhile, the author confirms the need for further research into “piano performance as a multi-meaning cultural symbol that can bring new aspects of the interpretation of national traditions into modern consciousness and cognition” [31, p. 27]. The researcher expresses an interesting opinion, proposing the perspective of studying “the interpretation of Chinese pianists, for whom
copying recordings is the most powerful educational tool, puts forward an interesting topic for science: “deciphering” the sources of learning the performing style and identifying individuality with an obvious orientation to a specific sample” [31].

The study of performance stylistics is impossible without the involvement of additional literature devoted to the problems of interpretation, individual performance technique and style of the pianist, analysis of the texture of a musical piece, intonation, etc. [8; 10; 12-14; 17-19; 26].

3 Materials and Method

For revealing the content of the stated topic, a complex of general scientific and special methods of cognition, including historical-genetic, deductive, comparative, genre and style analysis were used. The methodological basis of the study was the historical method, which allows considering the phenomenon under study in the process of its formation and within the general artistic context of the era. The article employs approaches to the analysis of performing stylistics in modern music science.

4 Results and Discussion

The issue of piano performance stylistics in the piano music of Chinese composers concerns not only famous personalities - how to achieve the authentic sound of Chinese instruments on the piano - but also how to pronounce the musical text, since in this music, as in the Chinese language, “intonation serves not as an emotional, but as a sensorial distinction tasks” [31, p. 26-27]. To do this, we will consider the process of performance style formation in works laid down by composers during the development of piano art in China.

It is known that almost all Chinese pianists perform the works of composers of their country. The first interpreters of such works were the authors themselves - composers-pianists He Luting, Ding Shande, Wang Lisan, and others. Many Chinese pianists and teachers also found themselves in the field of composing. For example, Zhou Guangren, a professor at the Beijing Conservatory who headed the piano department from 1986 to 1992, became the first Chinese pianist to win international piano competitions, including the World Youth Festival in Berlin and the R. Schumann competition in Zwickau. Zhou Guangren is the author of a number of piano works, the most famous of which is “Variations on a Folk Theme”.

In November 1934, the Russian composer and pianist Alexander Cherepnin, who was the director of the Shanghai Conservatory at the time, organized a competition for the best piano piece by a Chinese composer. For this event, He Luting wrote the works “Flute of the Young Shepherd” and “Lullaby” and performed them at the competition. He was awarded two prizes for these works. This event is considered in China as a reference point in the development of national piano music, and He Luting is considered one of its founders.

The Russian composer and pianist O. Cherepnin, who organized a competition for the best Chinese piece for the piano, soon began to independently perform He Luting's “Flute of a Young Shepherd” abroad. Thus, this piece became one of the first piano works by a Chinese composer to be performed on the international stage. Later, this work was performed with great success by many Chinese pianists. In 1951-1952, pianist Zhou Guangren played it in Moscow during concerts of artists of the People's Republic of China.

Pianist and composer Ding Shande is also considered one of the founders of national piano music in China. His early creativity fell on the 20s and 30s of the 20th century - the time when China was introduced to European musical culture, and composers began to turn to European methods of composition. From 1928 to 1933, the young musician studied at the Shanghai Conservatory as a pianist and composer. He performed his first work, the piano cycle “Spring Journey”, created in 1945. In 1947, Ding Shande went to France to the Paris Conservatory to study composition under the leadership of the most outstanding representative of the modern musical avant-garde, the outstanding French composer, conductor, and pianist P. Boulez. Communication with A. Honegger and N. Gallon also had a great influence on the creative development of the Chinese composer. Two years spent in France allowed the young Chinese musician to become familiarized with the best examples of classical and modern culture. The musical education acquired in Europe allowed Ding Shande to bring to Chinese music a new culture related to the achievements of the musical art of other countries. The works of young Chinese musician are distinguished by brilliant compositional technique, the use of post-romantic and impressionistic techniques, which gave a new expressiveness to Chinese melos.

In 1949, the composer returned to China and continued his work as a professor and rector of the Shanghai Conservatory. Ding Shande's compositional heritage includes works of various genres. The musician was the first performer of his Piano Concerto and many piano pieces. He is considered one of the leading figures in the musical art of modern China. Being a talented pianist and composer, he is especially known as the author and performer of his own piano works, which are rightly considered to be the most valuable contribution to the development of Chinese piano art.

In 1948, the musician began studying at the Sichuan Art Institute as a pianist, and in 1951 continued to improve his skills at the Shanghai Conservatory in the composition class. Wang Lisan never left the piano performance activity. In addition to him, his works were performed in Berlin by pianists Zhou Guangren and Ni Hongj, recordings of works in China were made by Wu Lei.

The play “La Hua Hua”, created in 1953, became a kind of “watershed”, symbolizing the next stage of development of compositional and performing style. In this piece, the national features of the folk song of Northern China were embodied - a lyrical song, where the story of a village girl's love and her choice unfolds. In the piece, not only the intonations of song folklore sound, but also folk instrumental music. In combination, these elements form a multi-layered fabric, and harmonious verticals embody a sense of spaciousness of sound. In general, the musical picture is imbued with pastoral contemplation, a sense of a fleeting moment; the principles of sound imitation are a means of highlighting the sound variability of light and shade. It is not for nothing that the work was included in the collections of piano music, which were repeatedly published in China.

In the 1960s, a whole galaxy of professional performers appeared in China, who won a number of international competitions - Liu Shikun, Yin Chengzong, Eileen Huang, and others. They presented Chinese piano works on the international stage. The successes of Chinese pianists and composers, who have achieved significant success on the world concert stage, allow drawing a conclusion about the “crystallization, at the current stage, of the Chinese pianistic tradition, which occupies a worthy place in the panorama of performing arts of the 20th - early 21st centuries. Naturally, the question arises about the repertoire on which creative professionalism is formed in this country, since, as it is known, its orientation and quality characteristics largely determine the degree of technical equipment of the pianist, the degree of development of his auditory perception, emotional and figurative world, artistic taste, communicative skills” [11, p. 4].

Liu Shikun is a world-renowned pianist who was one of the first to receive the highest international awards in China. The musician's playing attracted with refined technique, a deep understanding of music. In 1956, he won a special prize at the F.
Liszt International Piano Competition, and in 1958 he won the second prize at the First P. Tchaikovsky Piano Competition. The foreign media enthusiastically covered this event and called Liu Shikun the most outstanding pianist in China, the first-class pianist of the world. He toured in many countries, was invited as a member of the jury to many prestigious competitions, gave master classes. His records, which are called “golden”, are very popular in China, the USA, Japan, and other countries [24].

Liu Shikun devoted his whole life to piano music. His life’s ups and downs were also connected to music. In the 1960s, during the Cultural Revolution, he spent five years in jail. It was surprising that after imprisonment, when he did not have the opportunity to practice music, he, after gaining freedom, very quickly restored his former skill. Since the 1990s, the musician devoted himself entirely to teaching activities and became the founder of his own piano school in China, which has more than forty branches.

Prominent Chinese pianist Yin Chengzong was such a gifted child that he was accepted into the Shanghai Conservatory as a boy, graduating with a degree in piano and vocals. He continued his further education at the Moscow Conservatory. In 1959, Yin Chengzong became the laureate of the first prize at the World Youth Festival in Vienna, and in 1962 - the laureate of the second prize at the competition named after P. Tchaikovsky.

Like other Chinese musicians, Yin Chengzong fell on hard times during the Cultural Revolution. But the pianist was lucky, because he was not sent to labor camps or mandatory works, but was forced to play Chinese melodies on the piano in many cities. Since it was forbidden to perform Western music in China during the Cultural Revolution, the pianist was required to create an “ideologically correct” piece - the piano concerto “Yellow River” based on the cantata of the same name by Xi Xinghai. Despite the fact that several other musicians participated in this project, the main work related to the piano part was done namely by Yin Chengzong. The music turned out to be brilliant, vividly emotional, and extremely difficult to perform. Thanks to this, he performed the part of the soloist many times in different cities of China.

In 1973, the Philadelphia Orchestra, performed for the first time in China, giving concerts in Beijing and Shanghai. Conductor Eugene Ormandy was very keen to include Chinese music in his program. But in view of the fact that the restrictions of the Cultural Revolution still continued, it was decided to turn again to the “Yellow River” concert, the popularity of which has not faded for many years. The American musician asked Yin Chengzong to perform the piano part because it was very difficult to find a pianist who could play such a complex part of the piece so beautifully.

Since 1983, the pianist has been living in the USA, being considered an icon in the musical art of the 20th and early 21st centuries. He has significant world-scale achievements: for 60 years of continuous concert activity, he received many prestigious international awards. Yin Chengzong’s repertoire is huge - it includes more than 300 works. Currently, the musician continues to tour all over the world, impressing with the scale of his performing activities and the “geography” of his tours, which covers all five continents of the planet. In addition to extensive concert activity, he devotes a lot of time to piano translations of symphonic and opera works by Chinese composers. In his homeland, Yin Chengzong is considered a representative of romantic traditions in piano music.

Chinese pianist Eileen Huang graduated the Central Conservatory in Beijing. Like many other Chinese musicians, her career was put on hold for seven years during the Cultural Revolution. In 1979, she went to the USA and in 1982 she received a Master of Arts degree from California College. She also interned in Portugal, at the “Mozarteum” in Salzburg, took lessons from Alfred Cortot and Edwin Fischer. Since 1990, Eileen Huang has lived in Austria, Switzerland, and Italy. The pianist toured America, Europe, and Asia, gave many master classes. Eileen Huang has recorded many CDs of Chinese piano music and written several books in Chinese. She currently teaches music in Italy and France.

As we can see, some Chinese pianists and composers, who were isolated from the world for several decades, appeared able to leave China at the end of the 20th century and were completely influenced by Western musical ideas. New compositional techniques captured their creative aspirations, which also affected their individual author's style and, therefore, there were changes in the performance style of these works. However, despite creative experiments and fascination with some modern methods of avant-garde, Chinese musicians never lose touch with their national roots. This makes the piano repertoire unique, opening up wide possibilities for the application of modern compositional writing techniques based on national traditions.

Chinese composers of the older generation, such as Chou Wen-chung, Shen Yi, and Bright Sheng [3], and from the younger generation, Huang Ru, Lei Liang, and Gao Ping, live in the United States today [29]. Mainly, the influence of avant-garde is manifested in their work due to the use of atonal thinking and serial technique, as well as signs of minimalism. In some of her works, composer Chen Yi attempted to update the piano sound by combining it with the sound of electronic instruments [15; 29]. Performances of works by contemporary Chinese composers can be heard on the page of the Contemporary Chinese Piano+ online resource [8], performed by pianist Elaine Chew, Ph.D. from the University of Southern California (USC), who has been popularizing Chinese music at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology for several years. The pianist's repertoire includes works by various Chinese composers. For example, in July 2001, she presented an essay on the piano work of the composer Wang Lisan at the 7th International Congress on Musical Signification in Finland (Imatra).

Today, among modern Chinese pianists-performers who widely promote the national repertoire, Du-Ning-Wu, Emi Giaki Jang, Lan Lan, Yuja Wang, Haosu Liang, etc., update the piano sound in particular. Many of them record piano works by Chinese composers. For example, the 1997 disc of the talented young Chinese pianist Wu Qian, a student of Zhou Guangren, who performs pieces by He Luting, Du Monxin, Chen Peixun, Wang Jiangzhong, Chu Wanghua, and other Chinese composers, is particularly popular in China and abroad.

Wu Qian began learning to play the piano at the age of six. Her first teacher was the talented Chinese pianist and teacher Zhou Guangren. Wu Qian made many tremendous successes in early childhood and in 1980, when she was eight, she was invited to perform in concerts at the Beijing Philharmonic, Shen Zhen, Qing Dao, and other concert halls. She also played in other cities in China. At the age of eleven, she went to study in Switzerland, where she recorded all the Chinese works from her repertoire.

Du-Ning-Wu is known in China and beyond as a brilliant pianist and composer. He is a performer of his own works, thereby promoting the music of his country. At the age of sixteen, the young man won the Second International Music Competition in Tokyo. Among his many awards, there is First Prize at the Third Sydney International Piano Competition in Australia, which he won at the age of eighteen. Du-Ning-Wu perfected his piano skills at the Juilliard School in New York with pianists Russell Sherman and Oksana Vablonska. He has performed all over the world as a soloist and with an orchestra, including in China, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Singapore, Australia, Holland, England, France, Germany, Canada, and the USA. As a composer, Du-Ning-Wu created many solo piano and chamber works.

The young Chinese pianist Emi Giaki Jang is promoting the piano music of Chinese composers on the international stage with great success. Emi is the winner of numerous first prizes in many national and international piano competitions in many cities of the United States of America and Europe. She graduated from the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia with a bachelor degree. Then Emi studied at the Juilliard School, where
she received a higher musical education. Emi Giaki Jang's achievements in piano competitions are extensive and include numerous awards.

The Chinese Lan Lan is considered one of the most famous pianists in the world today. He began his education in China and then continued in Philadelphia with Gary Graffman. Lan Lan has been seen by millions of viewers around the world. His artistry and ability to blend in with the audience have made him an international sensation and one of the most interesting and sought-after musicians of our time. Lan Lan likes to participate in grandiose and large-scale spectacles. The geography of the pianist's performances includes concerts in New York and Philadelphia, in China and Japan, Korea and Singapore, Malaysia and Taiwan. Many of Lan Lan's programs feature works by Chinese composers. The pianist impresses the public with an unrivaled brilliant performance, extraordinary freedom and artistry, giving many national piano works a new "ultra-romantic" interpretation. Such an interpretation is perceived by the audience with great interest, since the huge energetic musical message evokes the same response in the audience.

Recently, pianists Yuja Wang with her bright technique and scale of playing, and Haiou Zhang who performs at all the prestigious music venues of the world and is the face of the Bechstein company, have brightly 'declared' their talent in the world.

Thus, we can observe the historical dynamics of the development of Chinese piano performance art, which was formed under the influence of the concert and teaching activities of pianists from different countries and continents. Through their own activities in China, each of them brings the most valuable knowledge gained from their foreign mentors into own performance style and teaching methodology. The training of many Chinese pianists in the world's leading conservatories became a unique link that combined the achievements of Chinese piano with modern world piano culture. Many highly qualified Chinese pianists, having left China, continued their activities on concert stages and in educational institutions of other countries (USA, Canada, England, France, Italy). Each of them, with their concert performance and pedagogical successes, confirms the high professionalism and high-quality level of musical education obtained in the international educational institutions, the talent, experience and pedagogical talent of their mentors.

Such a complex intertwining of different schools and traditions confirms the multifaceted nature of principles of Chinese piano works performance style. The task becomes more complicated if the performer is a representative of another nationality, since the representative of another country will have to master the principles of national intonation nature, timbre palette of Chinese instruments, etc. This will influence the choice of performance means of expressiveness, dynamics and agogic nuances, articulation, pedals. Meanwhile, the requirements for high professional training and the need to reproduce the composer's idea as accurately as possible remain the same for everyone.

For performers of the Chinese repertoire who wish to get closer to a more authentic piano sound, researcher Chen Xi (2012) offers the following recommendations that can help in mastering the Chinese piano repertoire: "(1) the importance of understanding the title and the historical or cultural background of each piece; (2) the importance of understanding differences between the notation and an authentic-sounding performance, since, as with Western music, inaccurate or unclear notation is sometimes found in Chinese piano music; and (3) the importance of understanding the different philosophical ideas influencing Chinese music in order to achieve a more creative and imaginative performance" [5, p. 84].

In turn, F. Kouwenhoven states: "In nearly all Chinese traditional music, much importance is attached to the programmatic and the aesthetic purpose of musical pieces, while in practice" [14, p. 53]. Only after adopting the musical image, the pianist will be able to reflect it qualitatively in the sound of the instrument, choosing the right touch and tone of performance, which will help convey the specifics of the means of expression in the game, reflecting them through the texture and sound capabilities of the piano.

5 Conclusion
Chinese piano art, composer heritage and pedagogy have presented a unique artistic direction of national musical creativity for more than a hundred years. Its basis was various genres of folk art and Chinese traditional music. The historical dynamics of Chinese piano art is related to the professionalization of performance and composer creativity. This process is provided by the largest higher music educational institutions in China - Sichuan, Harbin, Shenyang, and Xinbei Conservatories. Many Chinese pianists, who returned to China after studying abroad and gaining performance experience, joined the teaching staff of higher music educational institutions in China. Some of the musicians, returning from abroad, start new musical educational institutions. Such enthusiasts opened the Shanghai, Tianjin, and Beijing conservatories, as well as music departments in several universities.

A key role in the formation of the performance style of Chinese pianists was played by the activities of luminaries - musicians who demonstrated the universality of musical creativity. Among them, we will name famous Chinese performers, composers, and teachers - Ding Shande, Zhou Guangren, Wang Lisan, etc., who laid the foundations of performance style. The creative-aesthetic and didactic principles acquired by these musicians in different schools affected the manner of their individual writing, which, in turn, influenced the performance style of their works. For example, Ding Shande was educated in France by the leading composers of this country, so the influence of modern European modernism, and especially French impressionism, on him is quite understandable.

The influence of the Austro-German school of composers on some Chinese musicians is very noticeable. So, in the work of Wang Lisan, elements of atonal writing were reflected, which speaks of the influence of A. Schonberg, who trained the teacher of Wang Lisan - Sang Tong.

The pianism of Chinese luminaries was based on general European playing skills, but was adapted to the national specifics of Chinese music, which gave rise to specific performance tasks that require the ability to achieve on the piano the sound embodiment of the flexibility of instrumental melos, the reproduction of ancient timbres. As a result, many sound and textural innovations dictated by the national content of Chinese music significantly enriched the piano music of the 20th century.

Analyzing the innovations that are most often encountered, highlighting certain regularities, it is possible to reveal the structure, functions, system of relationships that arise between the field of ideas, listening to musical material and motor-movement laws. These specific performance formulas of playing, uncharacteristic for European art sound coloristic techniques for the piano require a great skill from the pianist: to choose fingering that ensures pianistic convenience and reflects the intonation construction of melodic lines.

The constant updating of the musical language of many piano works by Chinese authors allows talking about the continuous process of national performing style evolution. Younger Chinese composers living outside China, such as Chen Yi, Bright Sheng, Huang An-Lun, Tan Dun, Chen Qigang, Lei Liang, etc. enriched Chinese piano music with innovative technical and sound techniques. First of all, let us mention the use of serial technique, the basis of which is Chinese musical material of Chinese folk song, the most complex rhythmic combinations, cluster consonances with elements of the pentatonic scale, the use of the principle of musical minimalism and techniques of playing Chinese traditional instruments.
Thus, the understanding of the problems faced by the performer of piano works allows talking about certain approaches that open up ways of authentic interpretation of the work. Performance stylistics is the result of the pianist's colossal creative activity: work on the musical text, complex pianistic skills, implementation of his auditory ideas, intellectual musicological research and awareness of philosophical and worldviews truths.

All of the above allows stating the fact that Chinese piano art - compositional creativity, performance and pedagogy - have achieved significant success in the general context of world piano art, forming a national performance style in this country, and not abroad.

Literature:


Primary Paper Section: A

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