

THE METROPOLITAN OPERA
ERIC AND DOMINIQUE LAFFONT COMPETITION

GRAND FINALS CONCERT

CONDUCTOR
Karen Kamensek

HOST
Jamie Barton

GUEST ARTIST
Janai Brugger

Metropolitan
Opera Orchestra

Sunday, March 16, 2025
3:00PM

MARIA MANETTI SHREM
GENERAL MANAGER
Peter Gelb

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MUSIC DIRECTOR
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Throughout the 2024–25 season, the Met continues to honor Ukraine and its brave citizens as they fight to defend their country and its cultural heritage.

The Metropolitan Opera

2024–25 SEASON

THE METROPOLITAN OPERA
ERIC AND DOMINIQUE LAFFONT COMPETITION

GRAND FINALS CONCERT

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Karen Kamensek

HOST

Jamie Barton

“Largo al factotum della città” from *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*
(Rossini)

Luke Sutliff, Baritone

“Ah! quel giorno ognor rammento!” from *Semiramide*
(Rossini)

Michelle Mariposa, Mezzo-Soprano

“Morrò, ma prima in grazia” from *Un Ballo in Maschera* (Verdi)

Alissa Goretsky, Soprano

“Où va la jeune indoue” from *Lakmé* (Delibes)

Abigail Raiford, Soprano

“Weiche, Wotan! Weiche!” from *Das Rheingold* (Wagner)

Sadie Cheslak, Mezzo-Soprano

“Comme une pâle fleur” from *Hamlet* (Thomas)

Samuel Kidd, Baritone

“Giunse alfin il momento ... Deh vieni non tardar” from
Le Nozze di Figaro (Mozart)

Emma Marhefka, Soprano

“Where shall I fly?” from *Hercules* (Handel)

Lauren Randolph, Mezzo-Soprano

This performance
is being broadcast
live on the SiriusXM
app and streamed at
metopera.org.

Sunday, March 16, 2025, 3:00PM

"O muto asil del pianto ... Corriam! Voliam!"

from *Guglielmo Tell* (Rossini)

Angel Raii Gomez, Tenor

Intermission

Tatiana's Letter Scene from *Eugene Onegin* (Tchaikovsky)

Alissa Goretsky, Soprano

"Hai già vinta la causa! ... Vedrò mentr'io sospiro"

from *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Mozart)

Samuel Kidd, Baritone

"Werther! Qui m'aurait dit ... Ces lettres!" from *Werther*
(Massenet)

Michelle Mariposa, Mezzo-Soprano

"C'est moi, Carlos! ... C'est mon jour supreme ...

Carlos, écoute ... Ah, je meurs" from *Don Carlos* (Verdi)

Luke Sutliff, Baritone

"Gold is a fine thing" from *The Ballad of Baby Doe* (Moore)

Abigail Raiford, Soprano

"Re dell'abisso ... È lui, è lui ne' palpiti"

from *Un Ballo in Maschera* (Verdi)

Sadie Cheslak, Mezzo-Soprano

"Ah! non credea mirarti ... Ah! non giunge uman pensiero"

from *La Sonnambula* (Bellini)

Emma Marhefka, Soprano

"Ah! Mes amis ... Pour mon âme!" from *La Fille du Régiment*
(Donizetti)

Angel Raii Gomez, Tenor

"Sein wir wieder gut" from *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Strauss)

Lauren Randolph, Mezzo-Soprano

GUEST ARTIST

"Je dis que rien ne m'épouvante" from *Carmen* (Bizet)

"Summertime" from The Gershwins' *Porgy and Bess*
(Words and Music by George Gershwin, DuBose and
Dorothy Heyward, and Ira Gershwin)

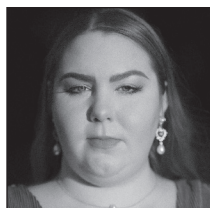
Janai Brugger, Soprano

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE GRAND FINALS WINNERS

Before the performance
begins, please switch off
any cell phones and any
other electronic devices.

Sunday, March 16, 2025, 3:00PM

Meet the Artists



Sadie Cheslak

MEZZO-SOPRANO (DULUTH, MINNESOTA)

AGE: 30

Sadie Cheslak recently won third prize, the Luana DeVol Award for the Dramatic Voice, at the 2024 SAS Performing Arts Vocal Competition, and fourth overall and Most Promising Voice of the Competition at the 2024 NATS Artist Awards. In January, she covered the role of Madame de la Haltière in *Cendrillon* as a Smith Young Artist at Cedar Rapids Opera, and this past summer, she was a studio artist at Wolf Trap Opera, where she was featured in excerpts of *Orphée et Eurydice* and covered the alto solo in Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 and Mrs. Pascal in a workshop of Kamala Sankaram's *The House of Yes*. She has also workshoped the roles of Lumee in Ellen Reid's *Prism* (winner of the 2019 Pulitzer for Music) and Jane Doe in Ilya Demutsky's *Black Square* and appeared in the title role of Sky Macklay's *The Surrogate*. Upcoming engagements include Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the Rockford Symphony Orchestra and Gwyneth Walker's *Great Lakes Cantata* with the North Shore Choral Society. This summer, she will join the Merola Opera Program. Central Region.

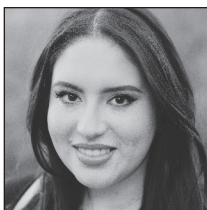


Angel Raii Gomez

TENOR (MCALLEN, TEXAS)

AGE: 26

Angel Raii Gomez is currently a fourth-year resident artist at the Academy of Vocal Arts (AVA), where this season he sings Fritz Kobus in Mascagni's *L'Amico Fritz* and the title role of *Faust*. He won first prize in the 2023 Meistersinger Competition at the American Institute of Musical Studies in Graz, earned first prize in the 2023 Giargiari Bel Canto Competition, and was a finalist in the 2024 Loren L. Zachary Competition. This past summer, he sang the Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto* and Pluton in Offenbach's *Orphée aux Enfers* at Opera North in Lebanon, New Hampshire, and Beethoven Symphony No. 9 and Orff's *Carmina Burana* with New Jersey's Ocean City Pops. In previous years at AVA, he appeared as Count Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Percy in *Anna Bolena*, Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*, Ernesto in *Don Pasquale*, Gastone in *La Traviata*, and Monsieur Triquet in *Eugene Onegin*. Elsewhere, he has also sung Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi*, Don José in *Carmen*, and Don Anchise in Mozart's *La Finta Giardiniera*. Middle Atlantic Region.



Alissa Goretsky

SOPRANO (LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA)

AGE: 25

Alissa Goretsky recently won third place in the 2024 Houston Grand Opera Concert of Arias and was the winner of the 2023 San Francisco Conservatory of Music Concerto Competition, the first and grand prize winner of the 2022 Palm Spring Opera Guild Competition, a finalist in the 2022 Orpheus Competition, and a finalist in the 2021 Burbank Philharmonic Young Artist Competition. She made her operatic debut as Gismonda in Handel's *Ottone* with San Francisco Conservatory of Music's Baroque Ensemble, and her recent roles have also included the Foreign Woman in Menotti's *The Consul*, Countess Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and Emilia in Handel's *Flavio*, as well as covering Sister Alice and Sister Catherine in *Dialogues des Carmélites* at San Francisco Opera. She is currently an Ernest and Sarah Butler Young Artist at Houston Grand Opera, where she recently made her house debut as Clorinda in *La Cenerentola* and covered Mimi in *La Bohème*. This coming summer, she will be an apprentice singer at the Santa Fe Opera, covering Helmwige in *Die Walküre* and Mimi. Midwest Region.



Samuel Kidd

BARITONE (ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN)

AGE: 29

This season, Samuel Kidd returns to the Adler Fellowship Program at San Francisco Opera, where he sings Schaunard in *La Bohème*, in addition to performances as Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte* at Opera Naples. In fall 2024, he made his San Francisco Opera debut, appearing as Silvano in *Un Ballo in Maschera* and Moralès in *Carmen*. A student of Gerald Martin Moore, he has also sung Tarquinius in Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* with the Merola Opera Program, Sgt. Belcore in *L'Elisir d'Amore* and Tarquinius at Yale Opera, and the title role of *Eugene Onegin* at the Music Academy of the West. Western Region.

Meet the Artists CONTINUED



Emma Marhefka

SOPRANO (ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA)

AGE: 25

This season, Emma Marhefka joined Arizona Opera as a Marion Roose Pullin Studio Artist, singing Musetta in *La Bohème*, the Priestess in *Aida*, and Sandrina in Mozart's *La Finta Giardiniera*, and later this year, she will sing Gretel in *Hänsel und Gretel* at Opera Montana and Musetta at the Santa Fe Opera, where she returns as an apprentice singer. She has sung Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi* at Opera Tampa, Younger Alyce in Tom Cipullo's *Glory Denied* at Knoxville Opera and Opera Roanoke, and Frasquita in *Carmen* at Des Moines Metro Opera; covered Adina in *L'Elisir d'Amore* at the Santa Fe Opera; and been a young artist at Des Moines Metro Opera and Wolf Trap Opera. At the University of Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music, she appeared as Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Mary Johnson in Gregory Spears's *Fellow Travelers*, the Vixen in *The Cunning Little Vixen*, and Sandrina, and she sang Valeria in the world premiere of Cipullo's *Mayo* at SUNY Potsdam in 2018. She is a two-time winner of the Corbett Opera Scholarship Competition and a 2023 finalist in Houston Grand Opera's Eleanor McCollum Competition. Rocky Mountain Region.



Michelle Mariposa

MEZZO-SOPRANO (QUEZON CITY, PHILIPPINES)

AGE: 30

Filipino Chinese mezzo-soprano Michelle Mariposa is a Cafritz Young Artist at Washington National Opera (WNO). She made her Kennedy Center debut as Waltraute in an excerpt of *Die Walküre* in WNO's *Gods and Mortals: A Celebration of Wagner* and returns this May as the Teacher in Mason Bates's *The R(E)volution of Steve Jobs* and as Anita in an excerpt of *West Side Story* in WNO's *American Rhapsody* concert. This summer, she will be a Gaddes Festival Artist at Opera Theater of Saint Louis (OTSL), singing Hippolyta in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and covering Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus* and Zoe in the world premiere of Ricky Ian Gordon's *This House*. Last summer, she made her OTSL debut as Maria Maddalena in Philip Glass's *Galileo Galilei* and Nirena in *Giulio Cesare*. As a Gerdine Young Artist at OTSL, she covered the title role of *Giulio Cesare* and was awarded the Richard Gaddes Career Award. She has also participated in young-artist programs with Chicago Opera Theater, the Santa Fe Opera, and Teatro Nuovo, and this summer, she will join the 2025 International Meistersinger Akademie. Middle Atlantic Region.



Abigail Raiford

SOPRANO (TULSA, OKLAHOMA)

AGE: 30

Most recently, Abigail Raiford won first place and audience favorite in Opera Tampa's D'Angelo Young Artist Vocal Competition, received the Opera Index Award from the Opera Index Vocal Competition, and debuted with the Glacier Symphony Orchestra in Handel's *Messiah*. In 2024, she received first place in the Camille Coloratura Awards and the Charles Maggio Award, was the first runner-up in Shreveport Opera's Mary Jacobs Smith Singer of the Year Competition, covered Giulietta in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* with Teatro Nuovo, and made her Lincoln Center debut in Fauré's *Requiem* with Manhattan Concert Productions at David Geffen Hall. Previous highlights include singing Elvira in *L'Italiana in Algeri* at Tulsa Opera and Narcissa in a new English-language translation of Haydn's *Jupiter's Journey to the Earth* with the little OPERA theatre of ny; concert performances of Orff's *Carmina Burana* with the Emory University Symphony Orchestra and *Messiah* with Handel Choir of Baltimore; performing a program of five new one-act operas, *Five Ways to Die*, with Experiments in Opera; and receiving an encouragement award from the Gerda Lissner International Vocal Competition. Eastern Region.



Lauren Randolph

MEZZO-SOPRANO (CHICAGO, ILLINOIS)

AGE: 24

Lauren Randolph recently debuted with the Civic Orchestra of Chicago and Chicago Symphony Chorus in the Bach's *Unser Mund sei voll Lachens* and *Darzu ist Erschienen*. Other notable concert performances include Rachmaninoff's *All-Night Vigil* and Bach's *Oster-Oratorium* at University of Chicago's Rockefeller Memorial Chapel and Duruflé's *Requiem* at Northwestern University. She has also appeared as Cornelia in *Giulio Cesare* as a guest with Ball State University, Serse in Handel's *Amastre* at Chicago Summer Opera, and Disinganno in Handel's *Il Trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno* and Calypso in the North American premiere of Porpora's *Polifemo* at Opera Neo. Currently pursuing a master's degree at the Juilliard School, where she is a Kovner Fellow, she will appear later this season as Madame de Croissy in *Dialogues des Carmélites* at Juilliard Opera and Grimgerde in *Die Walküre* at the Santa Fe Opera, where she also covers Maddalena in *Rigoletto*. Eastern Region.



Luke Sutliff

BARITONE (DENVER, COLORADO)

AGE: 28

Luke Sutliff was a second-prize winner in the 2023 Operalia competition and recipient of study and career grants from the Richard Tucker Music Foundation. This season, he returns to the Atlanta Opera as Marcello in *La Bohème* and Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte* and sings Wolfram in *Tannhäuser* at Houston Grand Opera. This summer, he will make his Central City Opera debut as Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and will debut with the Nashville Symphony in Mahler's Symphony No. 8. In 2023, he premiered the title role of Nico Muhly's version of Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* at the Santa Fe Opera; sang Silvio in *Pagliacci* at Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Figaro at Opera North Carolina and the Seattle Opera, and Demetrius in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Atlanta Opera; and appeared in Mahler's Symphony No. 8 with the NHK Symphony Orchestra. He returned to the Santa Fe Opera the following year to sing Sgt. Belcore in *L'Elisir d'Amore*. Future engagements include debuts with Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Canadian Opera Company, the Glyndebourne Festival, and the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, and a return to the Atlanta Opera Gulf Coast Region.

Meet the Special Guests



Karen Kamensek

CONDUCTOR (CHICAGO, ILLINOIS)

THIS SEASON The Eric and Dominique Laffont Grand Finals Concert and *Moby-Dick* at the Met, Poul Ruders's *The Handmaid's Tale* at San Francisco Opera, *La Bohème* at Houston Grand Opera, *Candide* in Dresden, and concerts with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Kraków Philharmonic Orchestra, Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, and Welsh National Opera Orchestra.
MET APPEARANCES *Akhnaten* (debut, 2019) and *Rigoletto*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS She served as music director and chief conductor of Staatsoper Hannover between 2011 and 2016 and music director of Theater Freiburg between 2003 and 2006. She has also held tenures as deputy music director of Staatsoper Hamburg, interim chief conductor at the Maribor Slovene National Theatre, and first kapellmeister at the Vienna Volksoper. She has led performances at Covent Garden, English National Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Royal Swedish Opera, and with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Seattle Symphony, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Oslo Philharmonic, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, and Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano Giuseppe Verdi, among many others.



Jamie Barton

MEZZO-SOPRANO (ROME, GEORGIA)

THIS SEASON Azucena in *Il Trovatore* at the Met, Marguerite in *La Damnation de Faust* in concert with the Gulbenkian Orchestra, Baba the Turk in *The Rake's Progress* at the Paris Opera, Nettie Fowler in *Carousel* at Boston Lyric Opera, and concerts with the NDR Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Munich Radio Orchestra, WDR Symphony Orchestra Cologne, and City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

MET APPEARANCES Mother Marie in *Dialogues des Carmélites*, Eboli in *Don Carlos*, Orfeo in *Orfeo ed Euridice*, Fricka in the *Ring* cycle, Adalgisa in *Norma*, Ježibaba in *Rusalka*, Fenena in *Nabucco*, Giovanna Seymour in *Anna Bolena*, and the Second Lady in *The Magic Flute* and *Die Zauberflöte* (debut, 2009).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Amneris in *Aida* at the Bavarian State Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and in Madrid; Elizabeth Van Lew in the world premiere of Jake Heggie's *Intelligence* at Houston Grand Opera; Azucena at Covent Garden; Ježibaba in concert with the Czech Philharmonic; and Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde* at the Santa Fe Opera and Bavarian State Opera. She was the 2017 recipient of the Met's Beverly Sills Award, established by Agnes Varis and Karl Leichtman.

Meet the Special Guests CONTINUED



Janai Brugger

SOPRANO (DARIEN, ILLINOIS)

THIS SEASON Pip in *Moby-Dick* at the Met, Aaron Zigman's *Émigré* with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin and Hong Kong Philharmonic, Mozart's *Requiem* with the Bozeman Symphony, Brahms's *Ein Deutsches Requiem* with the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra, and concerts with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and at the Grant Park Music Festival.

MET APPEARANCES Pamina in *The Magic Flute*, Glauce in *Medea*, Clara in *Porgy and Bess*, Micaëla in *Carmen*, Jemmy in *Guillaume Tell*, Helena in *The Enchanted Island*, and Liù in *Turandot* (debut, 2012).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Micaëla at the Glyndebourne Festival, Glauce at the Canadian Opera Company, Mary Jane Bowser in the world premiere of Jake Heggie's *Intelligence* at Houston Grand Opera, the title role of *Susannah* at Opera Theater of Saint Louis, Liù at Opera Colorado, and Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at LA Opera. She has also sung Micaëla, Susanna, and Clara at Cincinnati Opera; Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* at Palm Beach Opera; Servilia in *La Clemenza di Tito* at LA Opera; Clara and Servilia at Dutch National Opera; Ilia in *Idomeneo* and Liù at Lyric Opera of Chicago; and Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* at Covent Garden and LA Opera.

Judges

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Deputy General Manager

Gregory Henkel
San Francisco Opera
Managing Director, Artistic

Myra Huang
Metropolitan Opera
Head of Music, Lindemann Young Artist
Development Program

Karen Kamensek
Conductor

Brian Speck
Metropolitan Opera
Artistic Administrator

Melissa Wegner
Metropolitan Opera
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Artist Development Program and
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* Graduate of the Lindemann
Young Artist Development
Program



From left: Priti Gandhi, Melissa Wegner, and
Natalie Burrows

2025 National Semifinalists

Lauren Carroll
Soprano
Southeast

Midori Marsh
Soprano
Upper Midwest

Dominic Salvati
Tenor
Western

Kresley Figueroa
Soprano
Middle Atlantic

Ariana Maubach
Mezzo-Soprano
Great Lakes

Ben Strong
Bass-Baritone
Southeast

Sofia Gotch
Soprano
Eastern Region

John Mburu
Bass
Northwest

Ryan Wolfe
Baritone
Great Lakes

Giorgi Guliashvili
Tenor
New England

Jonathan Patton
Baritone
Midwest

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Grand Finals Awards

Today's concert serves as the final round of this season's competition. Those who are selected as national winners are awarded \$20,000 each, and the remaining national finalists receive \$10,000 to further assist in their careers.

The Laffont Competition is grateful to its donors for prizes at the national level and to the Tobin Endowment for the Mrs. Edgar Tobin Award, given to each first-place region winner.

\$20,000 AWARDS

American-Scandinavian Foundation
Birgit Nilsson Award

Faith P. Geier Award

Dominique Laffont Award

Fernand Lamesch Award

Patricia Misslin Award

\$10,000 AWARDS

Ellie Caulkins Award

Pamela and William Craven Award

Margaret M. Dyson Award

Judith Raskin Award

Semifinalist Awards

Those who are selected as national semifinalists are awarded \$5,000 each to further assist in their careers.

John J. Pohanka Family Foundation

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Yelena Dyachek
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Sondra Radvanovsky
Brittany Renee
Abigail Rethwisch
Gabiella Reyes
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Alexandria Shiner
Nadine Sierra

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Rachel Willis-Sørensen
Corinne Winters

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J'Nai Bridges
Maire Therese Carmack
Rihab Chaieb
Kayleigh Decker
Katherine DeYoung
Michelle DeYoung
Daryl Freedman
Margaret Gawrysiak
Eve Gigliotti
Jill Grove
Kelly Guerra
Briana Hunter
Hannah Jones
Hyona Kim
Edyta Kulczak
Stephanie Lauricella
Leia Lensing
Hannah Ludwig
Daniela Mack
Catherine Martin
Megan Moore
Sarah Saturnino
Ann Marie Stanley
Olivia Vote

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SeokJong Baek
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Ben Bliss
Zach Borichevsky
Alex Boyer
Errin Duane Brooks
Lawrence Brownlee
Bille Bruley
Piotr Buszewski
Ryan Capozzo

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Spencer Hamlin
Bernard Holcomb
Duke Kim
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Daniel O'Hearn
Jonghyun Park
Matthew Polenzani
David Portillo
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Eric Taylor
Joshua Wheeler

BARITONES

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Michael Chioldi
Eleomar Cuello
Blake Denson
Alexander Birch Elliott
Anthony Clark Evans
Thomas Glass
Theo Hoffman
Joshua Hopkins
Joo Won Kang
Quinn Kelsey
Joseph Lattanzi
Joseph Lim
Will Liverman
Malcolm MacKenzie
Andrew Manea
Donald Maxwell
Timothy McDevitt
Kyle Miller
Timothy Murray
Sean Michael Plumb
Musa Ngqungwana
Emmett O'Hanlon
Jarrett Ott
Daniel Rich

Jordan Shanahan
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Nathan Stark
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