

Manhattan School of Music Chamber Music and Ensembles Handbook

Why Chamber Music?

As personal assistant to Isaac Stern, I learned much about his world of music. Central to this was chamber music, a powerful influence throughout Mr. Stern's life. During his teenage years, he delighted in playing string quartets with his friends. Through his love for chamber music as a young man, he played with one of his most cherished chamber music mentors, Pablo Casals. Although Mr. Stern was a famous soloist, he broke tradition by forming the legendary Stern/Rose/Istomin Trio, which toured the country for a decade. At the time of his death at 81, Mr. Stern was involved in teaching chamber music to students like you at Carnegie Hall, in Jerusalem, and in Japan.

This handbook will help you to understand how chamber music is organized at Manhattan School of Music, and it will give you hints on how to get the most out of it. We expect a full commitment from you as the professional musicians you are becoming. You will have responsibilities towards your colleagues to play your best. You'll disagree. You'll compromise. You'll learn. Just like Mr. Stern.

Lynne Normandia
Manager of Chamber Music and Ensembles

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I. Introduction

Collaborative artistry is a vital part of study and performance at Manhattan School of Music. Almost every classical instrumentalist and vocalist is required to take part in chamber music and ensembles at some point in their degree program. There is a fixed band of time reserved in the school's daily schedule for chamber music and ensembles, during which most classes cease and the whole school participates in instrumental and vocal ensembles.

Every semester, nearly 100 chamber ensembles ranging from duos to octets are coached. Chamber music faculty includes 50 of the school's most experienced chamber musicians including players from the Juilliard, Emerson, Guarneri and Mendelssohn string quartets, the Meridian Brass Ensemble, Orfeus, Chamber Music at Lincoln Center, the New York Philharmonic and other acclaimed concert artists. Our prestigious resident ensembles, the world renowned American String Quartet and woodwind quintet Windscape coach and give frequent performances. In addition to studies with our expert chamber faculty, students are provided opportunities to play for and observe world-famous guest artists. Mr. Robert Mann, founder of the Juilliard String Quartet, gives a series of master classes every year.

In addition to traditional ensembles, the contemporary groups TACTUS and The Claremont Ensemble provide opportunities for the performance of new music. For singers there are ensembles as well as performance classes which include Opera Studio, American Musical Theater, Baroque Aria Ensemble, opera workshops with Mignon Dunn and Catherine Malfitano among many others. Pianists are able to earn chamber music through regular chamber groups (two-piano duos are popular), through instrumental studio accompanying or in vocal accompanying ensembles.

Students are placed into instrumental and vocal ensembles by their department chairpersons in collaboration with the manager of chamber music. Students are encouraged to submit individual requests to participate in a specific type of ensemble, as well as request a particular chamber coach. Groups that are already in formation may also make a request to study together.

Performance is an important element of the chamber music program. A final performance of each chamber group and ensemble is required. Toward the end of each semester, the manager of chamber music holds auditions for the Lillian Fuchs Chamber Music Winners Concert. Coaches recommend groups who audition for this gala public event. Vocal ensembles perform in school and off campus. Chamber Music Festivals – weekend-long celebrations featuring string, piano, woodwind, brass, guitar and vocal ensembles --- take place each winter and spring.

II. Who is Required to Take Chamber Music and Ensembles?

- **All undergraduate and graduate classical instrumentalists: The number of semesters required varies with instrument (see chart on page 15).**
- **All undergraduate pianists beginning with their junior year**
- **All graduate pianists in their 2nd year only**
- **Instrumental accompanists in their 1st year only**
- **All graduate voice students**
- **Professional Studies students may elect chamber music.**
- **DMA students may elect chamber in their second year.**

For further information, see the chart listing yearly requirements on page 15 of this handbook or consult the School catalogue.

Special note: Violists and cellists are always in demand; therefore, they may elect to take chamber music in their freshman year with their private teacher's approval.

If you are NOT required to take chamber music this year but would like to participate, please see Lynne in Room 201. She will gladly put your name on the waiting list.

III. Procedures and Guidelines for Instrumentalists

Students enrolled in chamber music are placed into instrumental and vocal ensembles by their department chairs in collaboration with the manager of chamber music and ensembles. Group assignments are posted in the first week of the semester. Chamber music coachings begin a few weeks into each semester to enable groups to get to know each other before their first coaching.

At the end of each semester students may submit their future ensemble preferences for consideration. Groups that are already in formation or students who wish to study together may request to do so by submitting a request form for the following semester. Individuals are encouraged to submit requests for their preferred type of ensemble. Students may also request a particular coach. We do consider your requests seriously and try to honor them whenever possible, however final decisions are made by the department chairs.

1. Guidelines for a Successful Chamber Music Experience

Any professional musician will tell you that success depends on a combination of talent, hard work, friends, and luck. Commitment to your chamber colleagues will

help to establish many of the necessary work habits and strategies that will guide you in your future careers. The guidelines below will enable you to achieve that goal:

- ✓ **Read this Handbook.**
- ✓ **Check the bulletin board near Room 201 at the beginning of the semester for group assignments that list your colleagues, your coach, and the day and time assigned to your group. IMPORTANT: Be sure to write your phone number and e-mail address next to your name on the list. If you do not see your name listed, it is your responsibility to ask the chamber music manager about your status.**
- ✓ **Call the members of your group immediately and meet with them to discuss repertoire and a group schedule and to prepare for your first coaching.**
- ✓ **Call the coach (contact information is available from Room 201) to introduce yourselves; it will be much appreciated by them.**
- ✓ **Coachings begin the second or third full week of each semester and continue for 11 weeks. (11 hours are required for accreditation.)**
- ✓ **Time bands—Chamber music takes place on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4:00–7:00, and Fridays from 5:00–7:00. Students are required to keep these hours free until they are informed of their chamber music coaching times.**
- ✓ **Practice rooms—Chamber groups get VIP treatment from the scheduling department. Your name is on their chamber list, and you may sign out a room for your group for the entire semester.**
- ✓ **Rehearsals—Set a regular weekly rehearsal time that works for all members. You are expected to rehearse at least 3 hours a week with your group. Learn your own part before you rehearse together. Be on time; this is a sign of respect for your colleagues. If you are delayed, you must phone them before you are late.**
- ✓ **Lateness/attendance—Your promptness and good attendance constitute a part of your grade. Remember: you are already building your reputation.**
- ✓ **Attendance is REQUIRED at all of the below:**
 - **The General Meeting**
 - **11 regularly scheduled coachings**
 - **A final performance**

Note: If your coaching session runs back-to-back with an orchestra rehearsal, you are permitted to arrive 5 minutes late to orchestra.

- ✓ **Absences—An absence from a coaching is acceptable only in a personal emergency. If possible, give your coach at least 24 hours' notice; faculty are sometimes able to reschedule a canceled chamber coaching, although they are not required to do so.**

You may send a sub if you cannot make one coaching. See “Grading” for specific ramifications of unexcused absences.

- ✓ **Extended absence—If a professional commitment will cause your absence for more than two weeks of classes, a leave of absence must be granted by the dean of students, and your coach and ensemble must be notified. It is YOUR responsibility to:**
 - Find a substitute or
 - Arrange make-up lessons with your coach or
 - With the permission of your coach, it is sometimes possible for the remainder of your group to study different repertoire while you are away. For example, if you are part of a piano trio, the other two colleagues might be able to play sonatas in your absence.
- ✓ **Necessary materials - Bring a pencil and eraser. You must bring a score for your coach, and you should mark it with letters or bar numbers like your own parts. Get to your classroom early to help set up stands and chairs. It will be appreciated.**
- ✓ **Grading—Your coach will inform you of her or his grading policy. Preparedness from each individual and from the group is the most important element of a satisfying session for everyone. A lack of commitment to your coach and colleagues will most definitely be reflected in your grade. An unexcused absence will reduce your grade by one letter.**
- ✓ **Behavior—You are expected to act professionally, which means using common sense and common courtesy.**
- ✓ **Personnel conflicts—In life, no two people think or play alike. That’s what makes us all unique. Chamber music helps train you to understand your fellow musicians’ uniqueness. In any professional situation, you may not like everyone you play with but you will have to work with them. Learn how to deal by listening carefully to what they have to say. You are in school to learn ideas other than your own. If you really can’t handle a situation, end the rehearsal quietly and come talk to Lynne in Room 201.**
- ✓ **E-mail news updates – Lynne lets you know about upcoming events and performance opportunities electronically. Please let us know if your address changes!**
- ✓ **News from the Bulletin Board at Room 201—Not only does the chamber music bulletin board post your initial assignment for the semester, it also gives you updates on your personnel (there are always additions, deletions, schedule changes, etc.). Also posted are upcoming events and national chamber music competition announcements. One of our groups won 2nd prize in a Boston competition they found listed on our bulletin board! So check the board weekly.**
- ✓ **General Meeting—REQUIRED. Every year we will hold a meeting for all students enrolled in Chamber Music and Ensembles to discuss the information in this handbook. You’ll also hear about the latest programs and concert opportunities.**

- ✓ **Final Performance – REQUIRED.** Every chamber music participant must play a final performance. It is your group’s responsibility to schedule one. See Page 9 “Performance Opportunities” for interesting ideas. Other possibilities to fulfill the requirement may be: student recitals, outside engagements or class concerts (some coaches hold their own).
- ✓ **COME TO CONCERTS—**Remember to support your chamber music colleagues by attending concerts and master classes!

2. How to Make Future Group Requests

Fill out a **FORM** at the end of the semester - If you are required to take chamber music, at the end of every semester (December and May) pick up a **Group Request or Individual Request Form**:

GROUP Request Form (yellow) = If you have a group or a partial list of colleagues assembled,

or

INDIVIDUAL Request Form (green) = If you have a specific kind of group you would like to play in or a coach you prefer but have no preference as to its members. Please understand that ensembles are formed according to the numbers of instrumentalists available.

3. Rules of Group Formation

- 1. Check to make sure that each individual in your ensemble IS REQUIRED TO TAKE CHAMBER MUSIC** or may take chamber music as an elective (see page 15 for Required Credit Chart.)
- 2. Choose colleagues with LIKE LEVELS OF ABILITY.** The group selection committee, comprising the chairs of each department, assesses every request for a balance in the level of playing ability. It is for your own benefit, experience, and enjoyment that you choose colleagues with skill levels compatible with your own.
- 3. For instrumentalists, your ensemble must be AT LEAST A TRIO in size.** For pianists: two-piano or four-hands is acceptable.
- 4. EACH STUDENT will be assigned ONE group.*** Request forms listing identical names will be substituted or redistributed.
- 5. Groups that have played together in the PREVIOUS SEMESTER will be given special consideration if they wish to continue their collaboration.**
- 6. Students can request up to three COACH choices** (see page 13-14 for complete list). The coaches you list must be on the chamber music faculty and not the private teacher of any in the group. One of your group’s instruments must be the same as your coach.

* Due to high demand for string quartets, violists and cellists may play in two groups with the approval of their private teacher.

Deadlines: Request Form deadlines must be strictly observed. Upcoming deadlines are posted on the bulletin board and e-mailed to participants in mid-May and

December. Request forms for the next semester must be submitted by the end of each present semester.

IV. The Possibilities

1. Coaches

As discussed earlier, students may choose their chamber music coaches from over 50 faculty members. The chamber music faculty at Manhattan School of Music are some of the most distinguished artists in their fields and among the most sought-after musicians in the City. The American String Quartet* and Windscape, our prestigious artists in residence chamber groups, are available to coach students, hold concerts, and give master classes. (See complete list of faculty on page 13-14. Biographies are available on the school Web site.)

*The ASQ is opens their preconcert rehearsals to students interested in seeing how a professional quartet works. The final results can be heard at their three concerts (see calendar for dates).

2. Repertoire

Before your first coaching, discuss with your group what pieces you'd like to study. Your coach will then help you to select the appropriate repertoire for the group's playing level.

3. Types of Groups from Which to Choose

FOR INSTRUMENTALISTS:

Trios, (no duos), quartets, etc.

Baroque Aria*

The Claremont Ensemble**

Jazz chamber ensemble

TACTUS***

Trombone Choir (all trombonists)

Percussion, Guitar, and Sax Ensembles

*Baroque Aria—The Baroque Aria Ensemble offers instrumentalists and vocalists a unique opportunity to work together, exploring the repertoire of 18th-century opera, cantata, oratorio, concerto, and chamber music. In addition to vocal and instrumental coaching, Dr. Kenneth Cooper provides instruction in diction and acting and guidance in performance practices of the Baroque and Classical styles and improvisation, ornamentation, and ensemble skills in preparation for professional work in this field. Pianists have the opportunity to study harpsichord with this world-renowned musician.

**Claremont Ensemble—(standard contemporary music) Now available for chamber music credit for select self-motivated students. Specific modern repertoire will be performed on the prestigious Claremont series.

***TACTUS—Students wishing to participate for chamber music credit in this unique new music performing ensemble must contact Dan Grabois ASAP at dgrabois@msmnyc.edu.

FOR PIANISTS:

4-hands or 2 pianos

Piano trios (any mix), quartets, quintets

Baroque Aria (harpsichord)

Claremont Ensemble

Instrumental Studio Accompanying*

String Accompanying Program**

Vocal Accompanying***

***Instrumental Studio Accompanying (ISA)—skilled pianists are assigned to a private studio to accompany students during private lessons; generally 5–10 lessons on chamber music repertoire such as sonatas.**

****String Accompanying Program (SAP) – selected pianists learn accompanying skills and repertoire for one semester through seminars, private lessons, and experience. If they succeed, they receive hourly stipends accompanying string players in their private lessons.**

*****Vocal accompanying—*All undergraduate pianists are required to take one semester of vocal accompanying. Possibilities include Vocal Chamber Music, Vocal Accompanying and Baroque Aria (learn harpsichord!).***

4. Performance Opportunities for All Instrumentalists

Present your own chamber music concert in Pforzheimer—Every Tuesday, the chamber music department offers one hour in Pforzheimer Hall for deserving groups who want to plan their own concerts. This is your opportunity to learn every aspect of concert planning firsthand. Simply submit 1) The date you would like to perform, 2) An interesting 50-minute program, 3) An eye-catching poster, 4) An advertising plan for how you intend to attract your audience.

The Community Engagement Department can help you discover performance opportunities in the metropolitan area. Contact Rsmith@msmnc.edu.

Master Classes—Mr. ROBERT MANN will be holding one master class each semester for strings and piano (see calendar for details.) Groups are chosen to participate through faculty recommendations. Woodwind and Brass departments hold separate master classes.

Verbier Festival – Those students who win the auditions and participate in this prestigious summer engagement may receive 1 credit towards chamber music in the Fall semester.

B A C K B Y P O P U L A R D E M A N D !

Winter and Spring Chamber Music Festivals – To provide every worthy ensemble performance opportunities and generate excitement for chamber music throughout the School and the community, each semester will culminate in a marathon weekend of chamber music concerts. The four-day winter and spring festivals will combine the

chamber music of piano, strings, woodwinds, brass, guitar, harp, and voice plus gala concerts for Fuchs Competition winners. **NEWS!** We are delighted to extend the CM Festivals to a fourth day to welcome our **BRASS** chamber groups.

RECORDINGS: If you want recordings of your performances, most chamber music concerts and master classes are recorded by the Myers Recording Studio. Copies of the recordings are available in the library and may be ordered directly from the Studio at Room 234.

5. Competitions at School

The Lillian Fuchs Chamber Music Competition takes place each semester (see this year's dates on page 12-13). Outstanding chamber groups are nominated by faculty and compete to perform in Fuchs concerts. Members of the chamber music faculty judge the auditions and select the ensembles that will perform at the winners' concert in Greenfield Hall. All groups that participate in the auditions may request judges' comments after the competition date. See "Highlights 2007-08" for the list of winners and their coaches.

Eisenberg-Fried Concerto Competition auditions are held each February/March by the department chairs of strings, piano, woodwind and voice; brass auditions alternate years with harp/percussion/guitar. 2008-09 is a harp/percussion/guitar year. Participants must have their entire concerto prepared by memory and bring their own accompanist. Winners are assigned concert dates for the next school year, performing with one of the three school orchestras. Applications, guidelines and a list of concerti NOT permitted are available at Room 201.

Artur Balsam Competition for Duos takes place in the Spring and includes preliminary and final rounds. Repertoire encompasses three complete sonatas from varying periods including one specified sonata for each type of instrument. The winning duo performs on a concert during the academic year. Applications and detailed guidelines are available from Room 202.

6. Highlights from Past Year 2007-08

Last year, we were able to offer our chamber music students these exciting opportunities:

- Masterclasses by Robert Mann. Mr. Mann held a series of 8 classes which were open to the public and very popular.
- Dido and Aeneas – A chamber orchestra was assembled to accompany performances.

We're particularly proud of the winners of the Fuchs Competition and their coaches and would like to give them the credit they deserve. To be nominated and selected from almost 100 ensembles signifies a superior commitment and understanding of chamber music. The winning students were:

Fuchs Winners Fall 2007

- ❖ Soichi Muraji, guitar and Matt Aiello, flute (coached by Linda Chesis)
- ❖ Tallie Brunfelt and Anna Williams, violins; Carmela Federman, viola; Jillian Bloom, violoncello (coached by Wolfram Koessel)

- ❖ **Jesus Reina, violin; Anna Margrethe Nilsen, violins; Tobias Roth, viola; Fanny Nemeth, violoncello (Coached by Nicholas Mann)**
- ❖ **Ulrike Schmitz, violin Leonhard Straumer, violoncello; Huang Pham, piano (Coached by Sylvia Rosenberg)**
- ❖ **Christopher Allen and Nathaniel LaNasa, piano (Coached by Marc Silverman)
Fuchs Winners Spring 2008**
- ❖ **Alexander Hamilton, flute; Alexander Winter, oboe; Stephanie, piano (Coached by Linda Chesis)**
- ❖ **Anna Margrethe Nilsen and Jesus Reina, violins; Tobias Roth, viola; Fanny Nemeth, cello (2nd time winners! Coached by Nicholas Mann)**
- ❖ **Ye-Jin Han, violin; Hung-Lin Lin, cello; Surry Lee, piano (2nd time winners! Coached by Laurie Carnie)**
- ❖ **Joshua Modney, violin; Evan Geiger, horn; Nathaniel LaNasa. Piano (Tactus performers)**
- ❖ **Georgiy Borisov, clarinet; Pavel Gintov, piano (Coached by Marc Silverman)**
- ❖ **Matthew Melore, Brian Reese, Anna Lindvall, trombones; James Roger, bass trombone (Coached by David Finlayson)**

Artur Balsam Winners

Tied for 2nd place:

- Erin Svoboda, clarinet; Charity Wicks, piano
- Regi Papa, violin; Jae Youn Yoo, piano

V. Stage Etiquette

This is show business! How you look and act onstage is an important part of your performance. It is your job to create the right environment to enhance your audience's appreciation.

- 🎭 **Dress—Coordinate your concert clothing with your group members. Casual attire is not appropriate.**
- 🎭 **Tuning—Get your “A” before you walk onstage so that adjustments onstage are minimal.**
- 🎭 **Stage entry—Enter with confidence. Your entry and exit line-up orders should be planned ahead of time.**
- 🎭 **Onstage – Stand and sit proudly. Your stage persona should command an audience to listen. (This is advice from Isaac Stern.)**
- 🎭 **Stage bows should be choreographed beforehand; one musician leads with the others acting in unison.**
- 🎭 **SMILE! Connect with your audience.**

VI. Student Evaluations

Evaluation forms are distributed at the end of each semester so that students can speak frankly about their experiences. They are done anonymously so that you can be honest in their responses. Copies of these evaluations are given to the department chairpersons and the faculty involved. The originals are filed in the teachers' permanent files. We take these evaluations and their suggestions seriously.

We also enjoy reading evaluations and wish we could respond to some in person. What follows are a few of your comments with responses from the CM manager:

REAL COMMENTS from Student Evaluations

Question #1: *Please add comments that might enhance the chamber music program.*

Student Comment: "It would help to hear and see other groups."

The CM Manager Responds: Sure would! **MASTER CLASSES** and **CONCERTS** are about listening to other groups. We have plenty of both. Did I see you at any of them last semester?

Question #2: *What was missing from your chamber music experience?*

Student Comment: More concerts with more people listening!

The CM Manager Responds: In response to this past demand, I founded the **CM Festivals** to give you more stage presence. FYI, advertising our chamber music concerts is a priority at Manhattan School of Music; we are featured in the performance calendar brochure, which is mailed to a huge audience list. We are usually listed for concert attendance. We hope that the chamber music festivals will give even more visibility to our concerts. But it's also up to **YOU**: If you go to more people's concerts, they will come to yours. If you tell more friends about yours, they will come. How many concerts did **YOU** attend last year?

VII. Chamber Music Calendar 2008-09

FALL 2008

Sept. 8 Posting of CM assignments at Room 201

Sept. 10 11:30 am **REQUIRED** Chamber music General Meeting for all enrolled students, Borden Auditorium

Windscape concert

Sept. 22 Chamber music classes and ensembles begin this week

Sept. 28 American String Quartet (ASQ) concert

Nov. 12 5-9 pm Fuchs CM Competition

Nov. 13 4-6:00 Robert Mann Master Class, Miller Theater

Dec. 8 Request forms due for spring 2009

Winter Chamber Music Festival

Dec. 4 7:30 Brass and Woodwind CM concert

Dec. 5 5:00 Piano CM concert
 7:30 Fuchs Winners' concert
 Dec. 6 7:00 Strings & Friends CM concert
 Dec. 7 3:00 Woodwind and Brass CM concert
 5:30 Vocal CM concert

SPRING 2009

Jan. 12 Posting of CM assignments at Room 201
 Jan. 19 Windscape concert
 Jan. 26 CM classes and ensembles begin this week
 March 29 ASQ concert
 April 8 5–9:00 Fuchs CM Competition
 April 16 4-6:00 Robert Mann Master Class, Miller Theater

Spring Chamber Music Festival

April 23 7:30 Brass CM concert
 April 24 5:00 Piano CM concert
 8:00 Fuchs winners' concert
 April 25 7:00 Vocal CM concert*
 April 26 3:00 Woodwind CM concert
 5:30 Strings & Friends CM concert*

* = change of order

May 1 Request forms due for fall 2009

VIII. Faculty List

Coaches

Accompanying—Vocal/Piano

Raymond Beegle

American Musical Theater & American Theater Workshop

Carolyn Marlow

Baroque Aria Ensemble

Kenneth Cooper

Brass

Per Brevig, *trombone*

Daniel Grabois, *horn*

David Finlayson, *trombone*

Mark Gould, *trumpet* (dept. chair)

Thomas Smith, *trumpet*

David Taylor, *trombone*

Claremont Ensemble/TACTUS
Contemporary Ensembles

Daniel Grabois, director

Guitar

Bradley Colten, doctoral teaching
assistant

Mark Delpriora (dept. co-chair)

Oren Fader

David Leisner (dept. co-chair)

Harp

Susan Jolles

Jazz Chamber Ensemble

Justin DiCioccio

Percussion Ensemble

Jeffrey Milarsky

Strings and Piano

Daniel Avshalomov*, *viola*

Laurie Carney*, *violin*

Jeffrey Cohen, *piano*

Karen Dreyfus, *viola*

Lawrence Dutton, *viola*

David Geber, *cello*

Wolfram Koessel*, *cello*

Curtis Macomber, *violin*

Nicholas Mann, *violin* (string dept.
chair)

Robert Mann, *violin*

Linda McKnight, *double bass*

Heasook Rhee, *piano*

Gerald Robbins, *piano*

Lucie Robert, *violin*

Sylvia Rosenberg, *violin*

André-Michel Schub, *piano*

Marc Silverman, *piano* (dept. chair)

Laurie Smukler, *violin*

David Soyer, *cello*

Peter Winograd*, *violin*

Vocal

Raymond Beegle

Mignon Dunn

Cynthia Hoffmann

Catherine Malfitano

Carolyn Marlow

Thomas Muraco

Gordon Ostrowski

Maitland Peters (dept. chair)

Gait Sirguyey

Dona D. Vaughn

Woodwinds

Linda Chesis, *flute* (dept. chair)

Paul Cohen, *saxophone*

Alan Kay**, *clarinet*

David Krakauer, *clarinet*

Kim Laskowski, *bassoon*

Marya Martin, *flute*

Frank Morelli**, *bassoon*

Thomas Stacy, *double reeds*

Stephen Taylor, *oboe*

Artists in Residence:

***American String Quartet**

****Windscape**

Questions?

**Contact: Lynne Normandia
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Lnormandia@msmny.edu
917-493-4433
Room 201**

or

**Jeeyoung Hong
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917-493-4432**