

## INTERNATIONAL SENSATION, JOSH GROBAN TO HEADLINE VAN WEZEL FOUNDATION GALA!

Internationally renowned singer, songwriter, and actor **Josh Groban** will make his Sarasota debut on **Sunday, February 28th** as the featured entertainer for the Van Wezel Foundation's 15th Annual Gala.

This year's Oscar night Gala promises to be a unique and special evening packed with plenty of that old Hollywood "glitz and glamour". Brenda Maraman will return for her fourth year as co-chair alongside a first-time chair, Wendy Merriman. We are thrilled to have them both on board and know they will do a fabulous job at making our gala a huge success!

Show- only tickets are completely sold-out through the box office and Gala tickets are selling fast. Don't wait, get yours today!

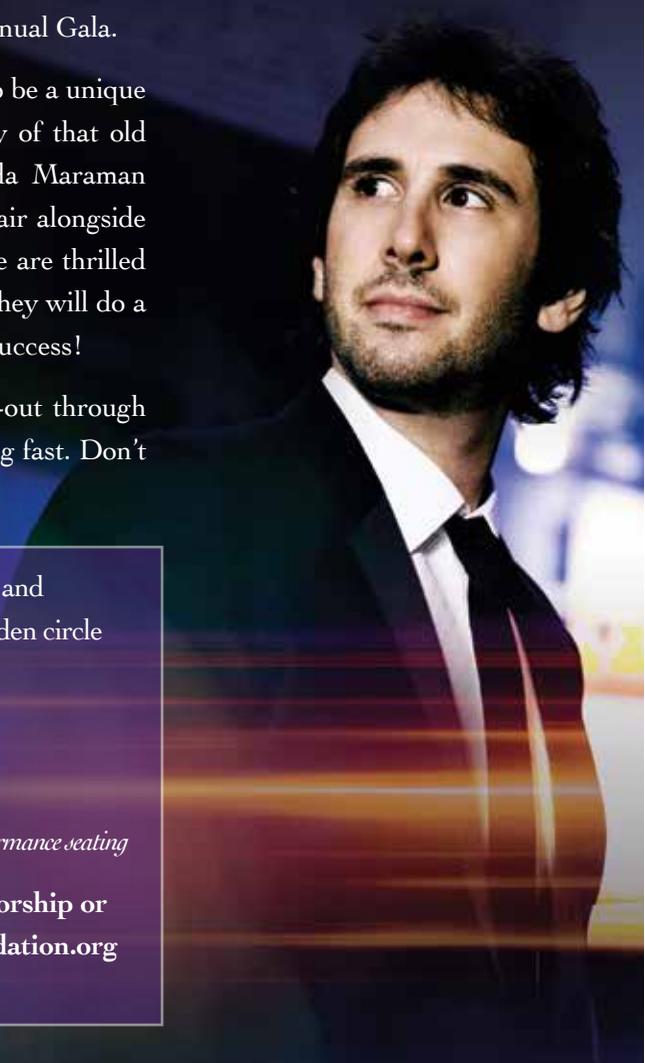
Tickets include cocktails by the bay, live and silent auction, bayside tented dinner, golden circle performance seating and after-party.

**GALA STAR - \$475PP**

**GALA PATRON - \$650PP**

*\*includes special patron recognition and better performance seating*

For additional information on sponsorship or gala reservations, visit [www.vwfoundation.org](http://www.vwfoundation.org) or contact us at 941-366-5578





## A LETTER FROM MONICA VAN BUSKIRK PRESIDENT AND CEO

Dear Friends,

With the beginning of the 2015/2016 season already upon us I'm pleased to report that the Hall is projected to have another stellar season! As always, kudos to Mary Bensel and her fine staff. We have many incredible performances lined up for this coming season with three that are special for the Foundation. The first

is an evening with Renée Fleming on January 27th. A combined effort of the Hall, Sarasota Orchestra and the Foundation, this should be a night to remember. The Van Wezel Foundation's 15th Annual Gala is scheduled for February 28th and will star internationally acclaimed singer, songwriter and actor, Josh Groban. We are working hard to make this Gala our best yet so be sure to save the date! Finally on March 1st we will have an evening with the fabulous actress Sophia Loren. This should be a season of glamour, beauty and talent we will all remember.

Remember, our Gala is a major fundraising effort to support the children's programs at the Hall. Last year our education program hit new records with student attendance. We had 9 shows with students from all four counties attending performances. I have been involved with our education programs for over ten years now and I continue to be thrilled at the Hall's efforts and the joy I feel at seeing the young students experiencing live theatre for the first time. They are attentive, playful, and respectful and it makes me proud to be a part of the program.

Last year we were awarded Sarasota Magazine Readers Choice Best Fundraising Gala of 2015! I am so proud of our Staff, Gala Chairs, Donors, Board Members and Volunteers who all help make our organization such a success year after year. I believe this year's Gala will be even better.

Finally I want to welcome all of the new members to our Board, including our new Board Chairman, Shaun Merriman and Treasurer, Ali Bahaj. Once again we have a wonderful and strong Board to support and provide thoughtful leadership to the Foundation as we move forward into the future.

Monica Van Buskirk, President and CEO



## A LETTER FROM OUR CHAIRMAN SHAUN MERRIMAN

I am just delighted and honored to serve as this year's Foundation Chairman! I greatly appreciate all the hard work and strong leadership of Mike Martella who served as Chair over the past seven years!

The upcoming program for the 2015/2016 season is truly sensational. Mary Bensel has done an amazing job once again in securing the top performing acts from around the country. I am most excited about the 2016 Gala which will feature world-renowned performing artist, Josh Groban! It will be a spectacular event!

Another important initiative that we are excited about is the Sarasota Bayfront 20:20 project led by Michael Klauber along with the City of Sarasota and a host of other organizations, who are all determined to ensure that the Van Wezel, the Sarasota Orchestra as well as other cultural and arts organizations along the Florida Suncoast flourish in the years to come. We are making strong continued progress on solidifying the beauty and preservation of our unique Bayfront while ensuring a common vision to benefit everyone.

We had a break-through performance year, thanks to you, our donors and patrons, and we are very optimistic about our upcoming season! And, a special thanks to Monica Van Buskirk and her entire staff of professionals for doing all that they do to enrich the lives of everyone, especially our children!

We look forward to another exciting and phenomenal season!

Shaun P. Merriman

Chairman, Van Wezel Foundation

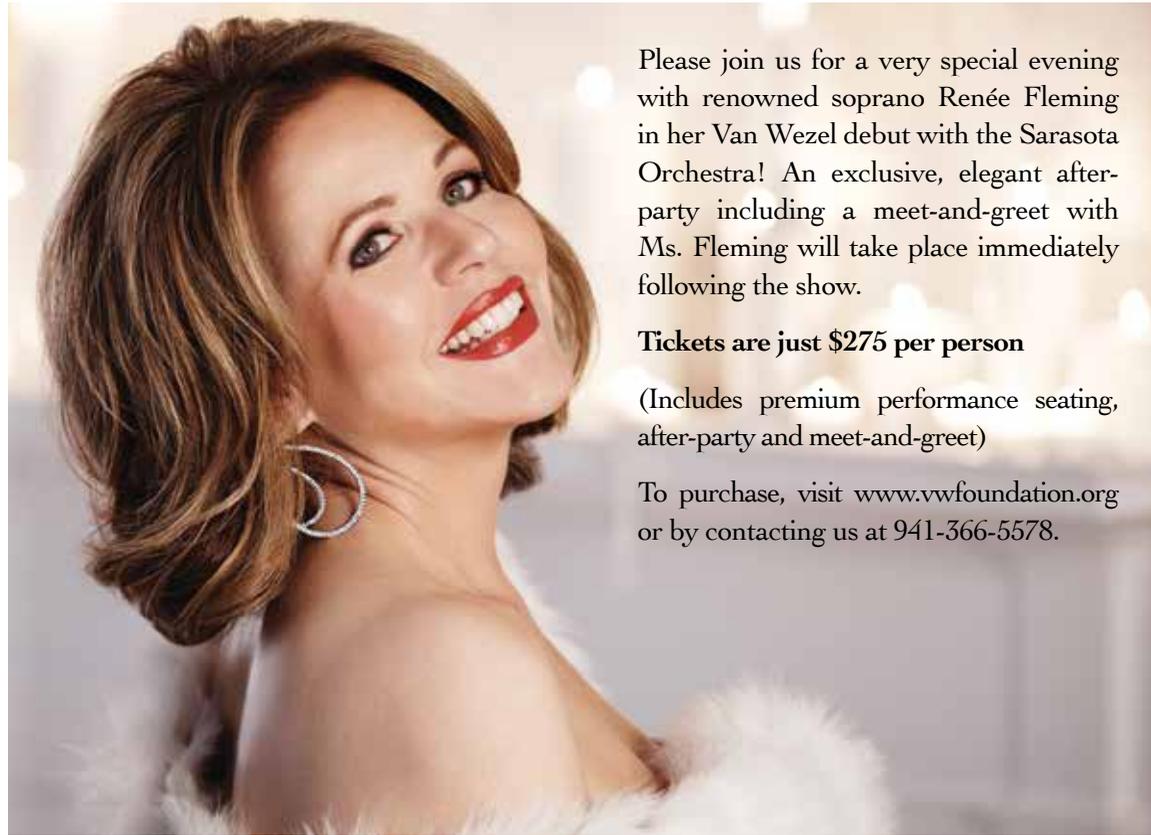
President and CEO, Gateway Bank of Southwest Florida

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## EVENT SPOTLIGHT: AN INTIMATE EVENING WITH RENÉE FLEMING



Please join us for a very special evening with renowned soprano Renée Fleming in her Van Wezel debut with the Sarasota Orchestra! An exclusive, elegant after-party including a meet-and-greet with Ms. Fleming will take place immediately following the show.

**Tickets are just \$275 per person**

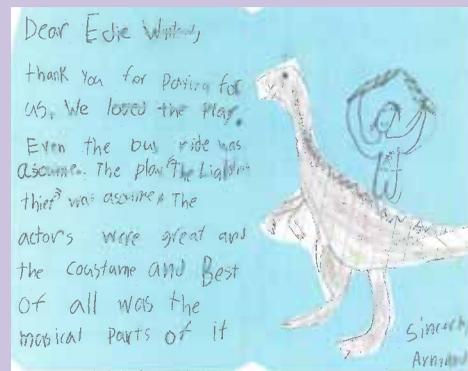
(Includes premium performance seating, after-party and meet-and-greet)

To purchase, visit [www.vwfoundation.org](http://www.vwfoundation.org) or by contacting us at 941-366-5578.

## DONOR SPOTLIGHT: EDIE WINSTON

As featured in the September Guide to Giving issue of Sarasota Magazine, every year the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall receives hundreds of letters from students who attended the Schooltime performances. These heartfelt letters illustrate how impactful the program is on these students.

With the help of longtime donors, like Edie Winston whose support made it possible for 120 Brentwood Elementary students to see *The Lightning Thief* last year- 25000 + students in Sarasota and the three surrounding counties were able to attend a Schooltime Performance. Without this program, many of these children would never have had the opportunity to see live theatre and experience the arts.



## BOARD SPOTLIGHT: NEW BOARD MEMBERS AND APPOINTMENTS

In early June, the Van Wezel Foundation announced the addition of six new board members as well as a newly appointed chairman and treasurer. Joining the board are Maryann Armour, Herta Cuneo, Andrew Hall, Dave Maraman, Elaine McClure and Joel Schleicher. In addition Shaun Merriman, formerly the treasurer has been appointed chairman of the board replacing Mike Martella. Ali Bahaj replaces Merriman as treasurer.

**SHAUN MERRIMAN** a 30 year banking veteran, is president and CEO of Gateway Bank. He opened the bank in 2008 during the most adverse banking climate seen in southwest Florida in decades. Today, Gateway successfully operates three banking centers in the area. Merriman has been involved with the Van Wezel Foundation Board since January of 2009.

**ALI BAHAJ** is a former CEO of Caterpillar Japan Ltd., a joint-venture with Mitsubishi Heavy Industries. During his tenure at Caterpillar, he negotiated a change in ownership structure from a 50-50 joint venture to a fully owned subsidiary for the company. Prior to being named Caterpillar Japan's CEO, he held other major positions within the company. Bahaj has been involved with the Van Wezel Foundation since June 2014.

**MARYANN ARMOUR**, a former teacher is a longtime supporter of the Van Wezel Foundation and an avid supporter of local community arts and education through membership and fundraising. She holds a bachelor's degree from Mercy College in Detroit.

**HERTA CUNEO** and her parents moved to Sarasota in 1950 to work with the Ringling Brothers Circus, training the animals. She retired from show business in the early

1990s and served on various philanthropic boards in Chicago, including the Stritch Annual Awards dinner. She is a longtime supporter of the Van Wezel Foundation.

**ANDREW HALL** is AT&T's regional director of external affairs for west Florida, including Hillsborough, Pinellas, and Sarasota counties. His responsibilities include all community affairs, sponsorships, grants and government relations throughout the region. He has served on several boards throughout the Tampa Bay region.

**DAVE MARAMAN** is a BMO Harris regional president for business banking for the Sun Belt region which includes the Arizona and Florida markets. A veteran of the banking industry since 1972, he has held numerous executive positions in Indiana and Florida and has also been involved in the non-profit community, including serving on several boards in each state. His wife, Brenda, has co-chaired the Van Wezel Foundation Gala for the past three years.

**ELAINE MCCLURE**, a former teacher, served on multiple boards in Newtown, CT, before moving to Sarasota. She is on the board of the Ecolint-American Foundation and supports the Gulf Coast Community Foundation.

**JOEL SCHLEICHER** has more than 30 years of senior executive experience working with private-equity-backed firms, principally in technology and telecom services. He founded and is a former chairman and CEO of Presidio Inc. Previously he was president and chief operating officer for Nextel Communications, for which he also served as chairman. Schleicher has served on the boards of numbers corporations and nonprofits.

## JOIN OUR FRIENDS SOCIETY PROGRAM AND RECEIVE EXCLUSIVE VIP BENEFITS!



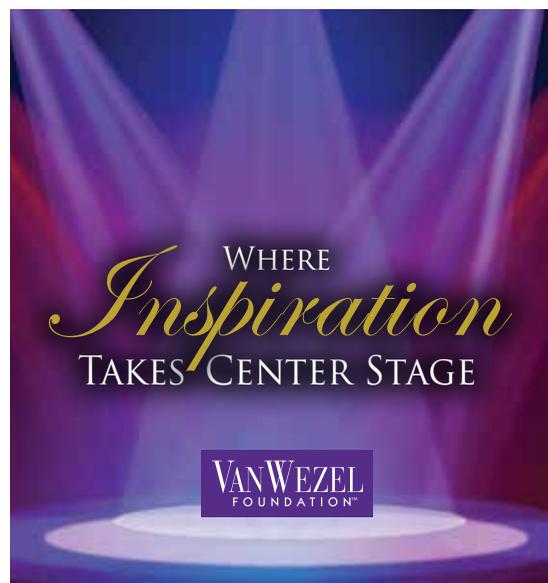
Making an annual contribution of \$3,000 or more to the Van Wezel Foundation entitles our Friends Society Program members to exclusive benefits as our way of saying “Thank You”. Some of the many benefits include:

- Best Seats: Special notice to purchase two tickets to any of the Van Wezel sponsored programs.
- Participation in the ticket return program and the ticket donation program
- Reserved parking area
- Special event invitations
- Van Wezel program book listing, approximately 100,000 distributed each season!
- Access to the Founders Lounge one hour prior to curtain and during intermission for all Van Wezel sponsored programs.

If you're not a Friends Society Program member already, why not join for the new season? With all the fabulous upcoming shows and perks – it's a great time to be a donor!

## FOUNDERS SOCIETY: WHERE INSPIRATION TAKES CENTER STAGE

For those who dare to dream about making a difference. This elite level of giving at \$25,000 or above, grants initiation into the Founders Society in perpetuity and rewards generous donors with membership benefits and recognition in many ways. Renew or begin your Annual Friends Society Program membership at this level and know that your donation will go a long way towards supporting Van Wezel Foundation initiatives including the Schooltime program. Call 941-366-5578 to learn more.



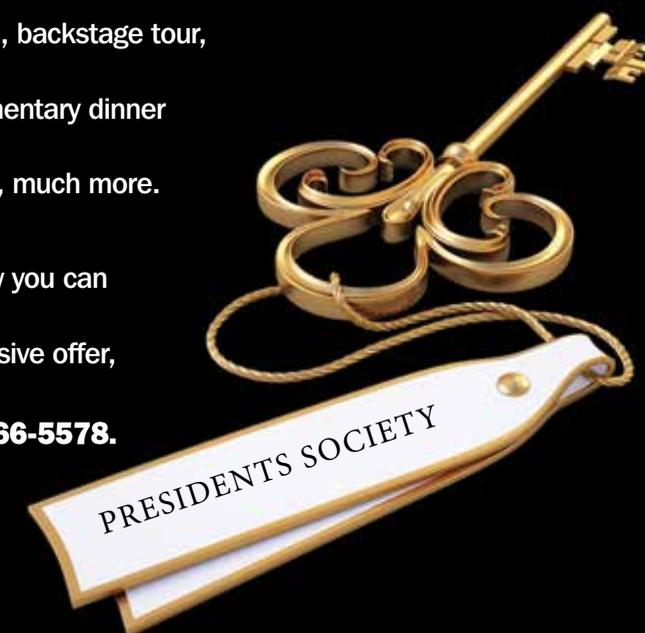
## INTRODUCING THE

# Presidents Society

In early November, the Van Wezel Foundation will launch a brand new VIP program entitled The Presidents Society. This new program has some unique perks that will be particularly appealing to the business community but is available to anyone who wishes to join at this level. This exclusive, first-time incentive offer is intended to bring in new friends to the Foundation and will only be available for a limited time. If you have been thinking about joining the Foundation, this is your perfect opportunity!

A Presidents Society membership begins at \$5,000 and will include many unique perks including: a private dinner with Monica Van Buskirk (President & CEO, Van Wezel Foundation) and Mary Bensel (Executive Director, Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall), use of the Founders Lounge for one special event rental\*, backstage tour, concierge ticketing, complimentary dinner and show tickets, and much, much more.

For additional details on how you can take advantage of this exclusive offer, please contact us at **941-366-5578**.



## REFER A FRIEND PROGRAM

This program is an easy way for friends to earn free tickets to shows at the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall and free pre-show dinners at the delicious Mattison's Bayside. During each season, for the first friend you refer that becomes a member of the Van Wezel Foundation's Friends Society, you will receive (2) tickets to the show of your choice\*. For the second friend you refer that becomes a member of the Friends Society, you will receive (2) tickets to the show of your choice and two pre-show dinners at Mattison's Bayside. Call us at 941-366-5578 for more details!

\*Tickets based on availability.



## NEW FRIENDS AT THE VWF!

We'd like to recognize new friends at the Van Wezel Foundation! All of our donors are special to us and we could not accomplish our mission without their help! They've supported us at shows, the Gala, special events and much more! Thank you to our new friends, longtime friends and all who have helped the Van Wezel Foundation in its continued success.

Micki Sellman

David and Ginger Schirmer

Paul and Sue Rudder

Melanie Gennet

Elizabeth and Tyler Stephen

Pam and Robert Swain

## SUMMER RENOVATIONS AT THE HALL

Some exciting upgrades were made this past summer at the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall. In August, a new orchestra shell was installed thanks in part to two capital improvement grants from the William G. and Marie Selby Foundation, and the Harry Sudakoff Foundation. The new shell and its flexibility will open the Hall to the opportunity to bring even larger shows to the stage in future seasons.

Additionally, all of the women's restrooms and family restrooms have been fully remodeled in a new, sophisticated style and a new private restroom has been added to the Founders Lounge. The men's restrooms will be remodeled during the summer of 2016. These new restroom designs will allow for better traffic flow during the Hall's many sold-out performances.

New carpet has been installed throughout the Hall which will help illuminate traffic patterns. The Grand Foyer has been freshly painted and the seawall off the Grand Foyer Terrace has been replenished with new rocks.



*New Carpeting In Grand Foyer*



*New Orchestra Shell*



*New Women's Restroom*

## WIN A LEXUS

Wilde Lexus of Sarasota has partnered with the Van Wezel Foundation for a chance drawing to win a 2016 Lexus NX200t. Only 1000 tickets will be sold for a donation of \$100 each -- an excellent chance to win! The drawing will be held on Sunday, February 28, 2015 at the Van Wezel Foundation's 15th Annual Gala at the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall. You need not be present to win.

Proceeds from the drawing will benefit the Van Wezel Foundation whose mission is to enrich the lives of members of the Gulf Coast Community, with an emphasis on children, through the performing arts.

To enter call us at 941-366-5578 or visit [www.vwfoundation.org](http://www.vwfoundation.org)



A *perfect* PARTNERSHIP

WHEN TWO COME TOGETHER TO CREATE SOMETHING GREAT.

The Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall and the Van Wezel Foundation, continuing to work together to deliver first class children's educational programming for our community. With the Foundation's support, more than 25,000 students from four counties are provided with programs and access to the theatre each season to experience the arts through the Schooltime Program.

Won't you show your support and help us continue to keep the children coming?



To learn more, please contact us at (941) 366-5578 or visit us at [vwfoundation.org](http://vwfoundation.org).

A Theatreworks USA Production  
Oct 27 @ Van Wezel  
Oct 28 @ North Port

**THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION**  
Nov 3

Nov 16

Dec 15

Jan 12

Jan 15

Feb 22

May 10

A Theatreworks USA Production  
April 27 @ North Port  
May 5 @ Van Wezel

Performances, Dates, and Times are subject to change without notice.



## SCHOOLTIME PERFORMANCES

The Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall and the Van Wezel Foundation are excited to kick off the 2015-16 season of Schooltime Performances on October 27th with *Skippyjon Jones Snow What*. This season is among the best yet, featuring beloved characters, exciting music and engaging science and social studies concepts. We truly believe that all children must learn in, through and about the arts as part of completing their education and we are pleased to present a season with something for every grade level, from PreK – Grade 12!

A huge thank you to our generous donors who made it possible for 25,000 students from four counties to attend the Van Wezel last year!



## MAXIMIZE YOUR GIVING WITH MATCHING GIFTS!

Many organizations sponsor matching gift programs where they will match any qualified charitable contribution made by their employees. Some companies even match gifts made by retirees and/or spouses. If your company participates, request a matching gift form from your employer, and send it completed and signed with your gift. We will take care of the rest. This is a great way to maximize your involvement and could possibly double or triple your annual gift. If you have any questions on this program, please contact our finance department at 941-366-5578.

## GIVING CHALLENGE THANK YOU



A great big THANK YOU to everyone who participated in our 2015 Giving Challenge in September. With your help, we were able to raise over \$32,000 which will help the Foundation continue its honored support of integrative arts education, support for community outreach and special needs of the hall.

Our organization is only successful because of the people like you who support us and we want all of our donors to know how much it means to us.

### VAN WEZEL FOUNDATION STAFF

**Monica Van Buskirk**, President and CEO  
**Barbara Brosius**, Chief Financial Officer  
**Erin Guzzo**, Marketing and Events Manager  
**Elsie Merrill**, Donor Relations Manager  
**Jeff Granston**, Donor Relations Assistant  
**Cathleen Mai**, Database Coordinator

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2014-2015

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**Mike Martella**, Immediate Past Chair  
**Philip Delaney**, Vice Chair  
**Karl Newkirk**, Secretary  
**Ali Bahaj**, Treasurer  
**Martin Rappaport**, Executive Committee  
**Sharyn Weiner**, Executive Committee  
**Michael J. Wilson**, Legal Counsel  
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 Herta Cuneo  
 Mark P. Famiglio  
 Andrew Hall  
 Darrell Huntley  
 Jacqueline Lewis  
 David L. Maraman  
 Elaine McClure  
 Camber Pecor, Star Student  
 Joel Schleicher  
 Delia Smith-Orth

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 John Jakes  
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777 N. TAMiami TRAIL,  
SARASOTA, FL 34236  
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