SAN JOSE, CA (April 5, 2019) – On April 13th Opera San José’s 35th season will conclude with Giacomo Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly*.

Stage Director Brad Dalton (who directed last season’s *Cinderella* by Alma Deutscher and Wagner’s *The Flying Dutchman*) returns to Opera San José for our production of *Madama Butterfly*. One of Puccini’s many masterpieces, *Madama Butterfly* is as beautiful and vital today as it was at its premiere in 1904.

Performances of *Madama Butterfly* are made possible by a Cultural Affairs grant from the City of San José and a grant from REYL Overseas.

*Madama Butterfly* will be sung in Italian with English supertitles. Runtime is approximately three hours. Opera San José presents six performances of this opera, opening in San José’s California Theatre on April 13, 2019, closing April 28, 2019. The California Theatre is at 345 S. First Street in downtown San José.

**Dates:** Performances: April 13, 14m, 18, 21m, 26, and 28m.

**Time:** “m” indicates matinee at 3PM; all other performances are at 8PM

**Location:** California Theatre, 345 South 1st Street (between San Carlos and San Salvador), San José, CA

**Tickets:** Tickets are available by calling (408) 437-4450, online at OPERASJ.ORG, and at the Opera San José Box Office at 2149 Paragon Drive in San José. Prices range from $10 for students ages 25 and younger with a current student ID. Tickets are $55, $75, $95, $115, $145, $179, and $185 for adults.

**Introduction to Opera**
General Director Larry Hancock will present a free 45-minute talk to ticket holders about the opera at the California Theatre before each performance of *Madama Butterfly*. The talk begins at 6:30pm prior to evening performances and at 1:30pm prior to Sunday matinees. No reservations required.


To learn more about *Madama Butterfly*, please visit OPERASJ.ORG
Performances supported, in part, by a Cultural Affairs grant from the City of San José and REYL Overseas.

**Madama Butterfly CAST BIOGRAPHIES**

**Joseph Marcheso** is the Music Director and Principal Conductor of Opera San José. For the 2018-19 season, he served as principal conductor for the company premiere of Heggie’s *Moby-Dick* and Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly*. Mr. Marcheso has conducted twenty productions for OSJ, including Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman*, Verdi's *La traviata*, the West Coast premiere of Puts’ and Campbell’s *Silent Night*, Verdi’s *Rigoletto*, the world premiere of Mark Weiser's *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, Puccini’s *Tosca*, Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*, Puccini’s *Suor Angelica/Gianni Schicchi*, Gounod's *Faust*, Rossini’s *La Cenerentola*, Massenet’s *Manon*, Bizet’s *Carmen*, Donizetti’s *The Elixir of Love* and *Lucia di Lammermoor*.

As staff conductor and cover at the San Francisco Opera, Mr. Marcheso worked the productions of *Les Troyens*, *Jenufa*, *Show Boat*, *The Flying Dutchman*, *Die Meistersinger*, *Partenope*, the San Francisco premieres of Jake Heggie’s *Moby-Dick* and John Adams’ *Nixon in China*, and the world premieres of Mark Adamo’s *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene*, Tobias Picker’s *Dolores Claiborne*, Bright Sheng’s *The Dream of the Red Chamber* and John Adam’s *The Girls of the Golden West*. Upcoming assignments include *Die Walküre* and *Götterdämmerung* for the SFO *Ring* in Summer 2018 and Jake Heggie’s *It’s a Wonderful Life*.

In 2013 he was on the conducting staff for Washington National Opera’s *Manon Lescaut*. He has conducted Hailstork’s *Joshua’s Boots* for the young artists of Opera Theatre St. Louis and *Turandot* and *Il trovatore* for Festival Opera. Previously Mr. Marcheso was the Music Director for the Amato Opera in New York City.

**Dennis Doubin** returns to OSJ as assistant conductor and chorus master for Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly*. A member of San Francisco Opera music staff, Mr. Doubin recently conducted Puccini’s *La bohème* at the War Memorial Opera House. He has led Henderson Symphony Orchestra (Nevada) in performances, and has worked at Los Angeles Opera where he assisted Plácido Domingo on Verdi’s *Requiem* and James Conlon on two-time Grammy Award winning production of Weil’s *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*. He has also collaborated with Seattle Opera’s Young Artist Program’s tour of Tchaikovsky’s *Eugene Onegin*. At San Francisco Opera, Mr. Doubin works closely with many esteemed conductors and vocalists. A sought after pianist, Mr. Doubin has collaborated with many of opera’s luminaries that include Renée Fleming, Anna Netrebko, Diana Damrau, Leah Crocetto, Dolora Zajick, Plácido Domingo, Ramón Vargas, Brandon Jovanovich, Michael Fabiano, Stephen Costello, Bryn Terfel, George Gagnidze, Ildar Abdrazakov and others. Mr. Doubin began his musical education at the Moscow Choral Academy and graduated from San Francisco Opera’s Merola and Adler programs.
Brad Dalton returns during the 2018-19 season to direct Puccini’s Madama Butterfly. Mr. Dalton’s productions have been produced widely throughout the United States and abroad in opera houses such as Lyric Opera of Chicago, Los Angeles Opera, the Barbican in London (with the LSO), the State Opera of South Australia, Carnegie Hall, Washington National Opera, San Diego Opera, San Jose Opera, Opera Santa Barbara, New Orleans Opera, Hawaii Opera Theatre, Austin Lyric Opera and Opera Boston.

In 2003, Mr. Dalton was awarded the prestigious Helpmann Award for “Best Direction of an Opera in Australia” for his direction of the Australian premiere of Dead Man Walking. Mr. Dalton has received critical acclaim for his “ravishingly theatrical” production of A Streetcar Named Desire starring Renee Fleming, which has been seen in London, New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago.


Mr. Dalton is a graduate of Harvard University and the National Shakespeare Conservatory. He has directed numerous productions of theatre and musical theatre as well as opera.

Soprano Maria Natale made her company debut in the 2018-19 season as a member of OSJ’s resident company of principal artists appearing as Nedda (Leoncavallo’s Pagliacci) and Cio-Cio-San (Puccini’s Madama Butterfly.) Most recently, Ms. Natale made her Opera Maine début as Violetta in Verdi’s La traviata and debuted with Sarasota Opera as Liù in Puccini’s Turandot.

On the concert stage, she performed the soprano solo in Faure’s Requiem and Mozart’s Missa Solemnis with MidAmerica Productions at Carnegie Hall. Ms. Natale’s other roles include Micaëla in Bizet’s Carmen, Juliette in Gounod’s Roméo et Juliette, Marguerite in Gounod’s Faust, Fiordiligi in Mozart’s Così fan tutte, Donna Anna in Mozart’s Don Giovanni, the Countess in Mozart’s Le nozze di Figaro, Mimi and Musetta in Puccini’s La bohème, Angelica in Puccini’s Suor Angelica, Tatjana in Tchaikovsky’s Eugene Onegin, Desdemona in Verdi’s Otello, and Gilda in Verdi’s Rigoletto.

Ms. Natale is the recipient of many awards and grants from some of the most prestigious vocal competitions nationwide including as a finalist in the Loren L. Zachary Vocal Competition; grant recipient from the Licia Albanese-Puccini Foundation, Giulio Gari International Vocal Competition, and the Gerda Lissner Foundation; and the second prize winner of the Violetta Dupont Competition and the Gerda Lissner International Vocal Competition. In 2015, Ms. Natale was selected by the Metropolitan Opera Guild to sing in their masterclass with Maestro Placido Domingo in Bruno Walter Auditorium.
Ms. Natale is a recent graduate from the Manhattan School of Music, where she received a professional studies certificate.

Tenor Dane Suarez returns as a member of OSJ’s resident ensemble during the 2018-19 season appearing as Pinkerton in Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly*. Mr. Suarez made his company debut last season as Alfredo in Verdi’s *La traviata*. This season, Suarez debuts Erik in Wagner’s *Der fliegende Holländer* at Baltimore Concert Opera and reprised his Rodolfo alongside wife Kerriann Otaño in her role debut as Mimi in Puccini’s *La bohème* with Pacific Opera Project.

He sang on the stage of The Metropolitan Opera as a 2014 National Semi-Finalist of The Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and made his John F. Kennedy Center debut in 2015 with Washington National Opera as Ely Parker in Glass’s *Appomattox*. In 2016, he was pictured on the front page of The Arts section of The New York Times for his “beautiful, soaring, and moving” performance as Cavaradossi in Puccini’s *Tosca* with LoftOpera that “brought down the house.” Last season, Mr. Suarez made his New York City Opera debut in his “completely winning” performance as Joe in *La fanciulla del West* and also lent his “big, heroic voice” to Pacific Opera Project’s remount of *La bohème* as Rodolfo, where the Act I duet was described as “a transfixing moment of sublime beauty”. This past summer, he debuted the title role in Mozart’s *Idomeneo* with Opera NEO and returned to Pacific Opera Project to sing Don José in Bizet’s *Carmen* at Ford Amphitheatre.

Suarez has sung principal roles with Aspen Music Festival (Don José in *Carmen*), Opera in the Heights (Rodolfo in *La bohème*, Il Duca in *Rigoletto*), Opera Memphis (Don José in *La Tragédie de Carmen*, Beppe in *Pagliacci*, Borsa in *Rigoletto*), Crested Butte Music Festival (Rodolfo in *La bohème*), Sarasota Opera (Flaminio in Montemezzi’s *L’amore dei tre re*), Opera North (Pedrillo in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, Mr. Splinters in Copland’s *The Tender Land*, Normanno in *Lucia di Lammermoor*), Fort Worth Opera Festival (Marcellus in Thomas’s *Hamlet*), and Castleton Festival (Henrik in *A Little Night Music*).

Mr. Suarez holds a bachelor’s degree from Butler University and a master’s degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Tenor Derek Taylor returns during the 2018-19 season, appearing as Pinkerton in Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly*. Mr. Taylor made his OSJ debut as Erik in Wagner’s *The Flying Dutchman* during the 2017-18 season. During the 2018-2019 season, Mr. Taylor will make his role debut as the title role in Gounod’s *Roméo et Juliette* with the Hawaii Opera Theatre. He returns to Theater St. Gallen, Switzerland for a role debut as Poltione in Bellini’s *Norma*, and joins the roster of the Metropolitan Opera for Tchaikovsky’s *Iolanta*. Concert engagements include Cassio in Verdi’s *Otello* with Austin Lyric Opera, and Don José in Bizet’s *Carmen* with the Plano Symphony Orchestra.

In the 2017-2018 season, Mr. Taylor returned to Oper Leipzig as Calaf in *Turandot* and made his role debut as Samson in *Samson et Dalila* with Virginia Opera, before singing the role in
Vilnius, Lithuania, and joining the Vienna Staatsoper to cover Roberto Alagna in the part. Concert appearances included Verdi’s *Messa da Requiem* under the baton of Michael Francis with the Florida Orchestra, and Rodrigo in *Otello* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl.

Notable engagements of recent seasons include Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* for his house debut with Oper Leipzig, Macduff in *Macbeth* with New Orleans Opera, a return to Theater und Konzert, St. Gallen for Cavaradossi in *Tosca* and Walter in Catalani’s *Loreley*, and a role debut as Calaf in *Turandot* with Virginia Opera. Among his numerous performances with Theater St. Gallen, Switzerland, Mr. Taylor appeared there as Gustavo in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, Zamoro in Verdi’s *Alzira*, Cavardossi in *Tosca*, Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, Des Grieux in Massenet’s *Manon*, Alfredo in *La traviata*, Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Il Duca in *Rigoletto*, and Don José in *Carmen*, among other leading roles.

**Baritone Trevor Neal** returns as a member of the resident company in the 2018-19 season, appearing as Gardiner in Heggie’s *Moby-Dick* and Sharpless in Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly*. During the 2017-18 season, Mr. Neal appeared as Rambaldo in Puccini’s *La rondine* and Germont in Verdi’s *La traviata*. Other roles performed recently include Killian in *Der Freischutz* with Virginia Opera, Sciarone in Puccini’s *Tosca* with Opera North, and the Bonze in Puccini’s *Madame Butterfly* with Ash Lawn Opera.

He was member of the Herndon Foundation Emerging Artist program at Virginia Opera for the 2015/2016 season, where he covered Mars/Morpheus in *Orpheus in the Underworld* and Dutchman in *The Flying Dutchman*. Previously, he was a Young Artist at Opera North where he performed the role of Henry Davis in Kurt Weill’s *Street Scene* and covered the role of Germont in Verdi’s *La traviata*.

On the concert stage, Mr. Neal has appeared in concert with the South Arkansas Symphony Orchestra, Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra, Abilene Symphony, and numerous community orchestras performing such works as Orff’s *Carmina Burana*, Verdi’s *Requiem*, Durufle’s *Requiem*, and Handel’s *Messiah*.

Mr. Neal began his formal training at the University of North Texas where he studied with Verdi baritone Jeffrey Snider. He previously served as the Director of Strategic Planning for New York based chamber opera company, The Secret Opera.

**Mezzo-soprano Renée Rapier** returns in the 2018-19 season to perform the role of Suzuki in Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly*. Ms. Rapier made her OSJ debut during the 2016-17 season in Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville*, receiving wide-spread critical acclaim for her performance. Recent engagements for Ms. Rapier include a number of recitals and concerts at the Newport Music Festival including a performance with renowned mezzo-soprano Frederica won Stade and composer Jake Heggie. She also made her Wagnerian debut as Grimgerde in San Francisco Opera’s visionary Ring Cycle, and makes her role debut as Donna Elvira in Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* with Opera Steamboat. Other engagements during the 2018-19 season
include a new production of John Cage’s *Europeras 1&2* with the LA Phil in collaboration with The Industry and MacArthur ‘Genius’ Grant winner Yuval Sharon, and appearances with Peninsula Symphony and Mise-en-scene Studios.

Other recent performances featured Ms. Rapier as a soloist with the San Francisco Symphony in Beethoven’s *9th Symphony*, Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* at both Opera Theatre of St. Louis and Seattle Opera and Mercédès in Calixto Bieito’s provocative production of *Carmen* at San Francisco Opera. She returned to LA Opera singing Cherubino in Mozart’s *The Marriage of Figaro* and John Corigliano’s *The Ghosts of Versailles*, made a debut at Chicago’s Ravinia Festival as both the Page in Strauss’s *Salome* and Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro*, her international debut as Olga in Tchaikovsky’s *Eugene Onegin* with the Seoul Philharmonic, Cornelia in Handel’s *Giulio Cesare* with Wolf Trap Opera, and a debut with Opera San Antonio as Mrs. Fox in Tobias Picker’s *Fantastic Mr. Fox*.

After receiving degrees in both voice and viola from the University of Northern Iowa, Ms. Rapier participated in several prominent training programs including Chautauqua Opera and the Merola Opera Program. In 2011, she was chosen to join LA Opera’s Domingo-Thorton Young Artist Program where she made her professional debut as Stephano in Gounod’s *Roméo et Juliette* under the baton of Plácido Domingo. Soon after, she joined the prestigious Adler Fellowship at the San Francisco Opera where she covered and sang a number of roles including Giovanna in Verdi’s *Rigoletto* and Meg Page in Verdi’s *Falstaff*.

Ms. Rapier has received recognition from several notable competitions including the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions (national semi-finalist), Palm Springs Opera Guild Competition (first place), the Seoul International Music Competition (finalist), Plácido Domingo’s Operalia (semi-finalist) and the Brava! Opera Theater and James M. Collier Young Artist Program Vocal Competition (first place).

**Tenor Mason Gates** returns as a member of OSJ’s resident company in the 2018-19 season, appearing as Beppe in Leoncavallo’s *Pagliacci*, Flask in the company premiere of Heggie’s *Moby-Dick*, and Goro in Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly*. Last season, Mr. Gates appeared as Prunier in Puccini’s *La rondine*, the Steersman in Wagner’s *The Flying Dutchman*, and Gastone in Verdi’s *La traviata*. Other OSJ roles performed include Jonathan Dale in Puts and Campbell’s *Silent Night*, and his company debut as Don Curzio in the 2015-16 production of *The Marriage of Figaro*.

He received his Bachelor’s of Music from Brigham Young University in Utah, and his Master’s of Music from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. A two-time recipient of the encouragement award from the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, Mr. Gates was also a festival artist at Utah Festival Artist two years in a row, as well as a Vocal Fellow at the esteemed Music Academy of the West. Other roles performed recently include the title role in *Albert Herring*, El Remendado (*Carmen*), The Man with Old Luggage (*Postcard from Morocco*), Spoletta (*Tosca*), Grigori (*Boris Godunov*), Rodolfo (*La bohème*), (Ferrando (*Cosifantutte*), Monostatos (*Die Zauberflöte*), and Edwin the Defendant (*Trial by Jury*).
Bass-baritone **Ben Brady** makes his company debut during the 2018-19 season, appearing as Prince Yamadori in Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly*. Roles performed recently by Mr. Brady include Méphistophélès in Gounod’s *Faust* (2015), Zuniga in Bizet’s *Carmen* (2014) and Hundig in Wagner’s *Die Walküre* (2013), all with Verismo Opera. For the Lamplighters, he appeared as Martin in Bernstein’s *Candide* (2015) and the Pirate King in Gilbert and Sullivan’s *Pirates of Penzance* (2014), and performed the roles of Tonio in Leoncavallo’s *Pagliacci* (2015) and Nourabad in Bizet’s *The Pearl Fishers* (2014) for Pocket Opera.

Award received include Audience Favorite and First Place awards in the Tier II Category of the James Toland Vocal Arts competition in Oakland. In October he was selected as a finalist in the San Francisco District of the Met Opera Council auditions.

Originally from Denver, Colorado, Mr. Brady graduated from University of Michigan where he studied Vocal Performance. He currently resides in Oakland, California where he actively sings opera and musical theatre, performs in the rock band Suits of Steel, and teaches private voice lessons.

Bass-baritone **Philip Skinner** returns to OSJ during the 2018-19 season, appearing as The Bonze in Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly*. Most recently, Mr. Skinner was seen as Baron Douphol in the company’s 2017-18 production of Verdi’s *La traviata*. Other recent performances include a performance with Opera Parallèle as the Immigration Officer in Dove’s *Flight*, the Pacific Symphony as the King in Verdi’s *Aida*, and Charlottesville Opera as Casaubon in Shearer and Steven’s *Middlemarch in Spring*. He is currently at the Met covering Carbon in Alfano’s *Cyrano di Bergerac*.

In 2015, Mr. Skinner appeared in leading roles in two world premiere operas. First, he portrayed Fray Luis in Lisa Scola Prosek’s *The Lariat* (Winner of the NY Center for Contemporary Opera “Atelier” Award) in San Francisco. Next, he was Casaubon in Allen Shearer’s *Middlemarch in Spring* (Composers, Inc./Operasmiths) also in San Francisco. Additionally that year, he played George Benton in Heggie’s *Dead Man Walking* with Opera Parallèle, Priam in Berlioz’s *Les Troyens* with San Francisco Opera, Sharpless in Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly* with Livermore Valley Opera, Dr. Schön/Jack the Ripper in Berg’s *Lulu* with West Edge Opera, Kurtz in O’Regan’s *Heart of Darkness* with Opera Parallèle, Sparafucile in Verdi’s *Rigoletto* with West Bay Opera, and Holst’s *Death in Savitri* with Festival Opera. He also sang the bass solos in Beethoven’s *Ninth Symphony* with the Santa Rosa Symphony and was the special guest soloist in a concert with the Adler Fellows of San Francisco Opera (Skinner was an Adler Fellow in 1986-87).

Mezzo-soprano **Katharine Sanford** makes her company debut with OSJ during the 2018-19 season, appearing as Kate Pinkerton in Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly*. Recent engagements for Ms. Sanford include appearing with Nashville Opera as Dorabella in Mozart’s *Così fan tutte* and Prince Orlofsky in Strauss’ *Die Fledermaus*. For Opera Colorado, she performed the role of Kate Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* and the Second Lady in Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*. In the
autumn of 2017 she made her joint role and company debut as Nicklausse in Pacific Northwest Opera’s production of Offenbach’s *Les contes d’Hoffmann*. She immediately followed that with her New York debut on a concert program devoted to operatic trouser role characters under the aegis of the Metropolitan Opera Guild.

On the concert stage, Ms. Sanford recently appeared with the Baltimore Choral Society as alto soloist in Haydn’s *Lord Nelson Mass* and with the Fresno Master Chorale as alto soloist in Beethoven’s *Symphony No. 9*. She joined the Bakersfield Master Chorale for Handel’s *Messiah* in the winter of 2018. Ms. Sanford has fulfilled young artist residencies with such prestigious regional companies as Nashville Opera, Opera Colorado, and Des Moines Metro Opera. She earned her Masters degree at the University of Michigan and her undergraduate degree at the University of Maryland.

**Bass-baritone Karl Kaminsky** makes his company debut in Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly*, appearing as the Imperial Commissioner. A theater and film actor, in addition to opera singer, Mr. Kaminsky has performed over 35 roles in theaters around the world, including Teatro alla Scala, Teatro Real (Madrid), Royal Swedish Opera, Mariinsky Opera, Tokyo Opera, Salzburg Festival, Rotterdam Festival, Royal Festival Hall, Mikkelji Festival, Kiel Festival, Festival d’Aix-en-Provence, and Opera Baden-Baden among others. Active also as an oratorio singer, he recently performed Rachmaninoff’s *All Night Vigil* with the San Francisco Choral Society; *Carmina Burana* (Orff) with the Sacramento Choral Society and *Zigeunerlieder* (Brahms) with the New England Classical Singers.

Highlights of his operatic appearances include Benoit with South Dakota Symphony; de Beausset (*War and Peace* -Prokofiev) with Royal Swedish Opera; Prince Mikhail Ivanov (*War and Peace*) at the Salzburg Festival; a muscovite (*War and Peace*) at the Tokyo Opera and at the Teatro Real and Teatro alla Scala; Truffaldino (*The Love for Three Oranges* -Prokofiev) at the Festival Aix en Provence; and a number of roles at the Mariinsky Theater, including Shuysky (*Boris Godunov*); Tinca (*Il tabarro*); Basilio (*Le nozze di Figaro*); Pong (*Turandot*); Arturo (*Lucia*); Goro (*Madama Butterfly*); Pyotr Fedorovich (*The Nose* – Shostakovich); Grishka Kuterma (*The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh* -Rimsky-Korsakov); Don Jerome (*Betrothal in a Monastery* – Prokofiev); Scaramuccio (*Ariadne*); Spalanzani (*Les contes d’Hoffmann*) and Tsarevich Gvidon (*The Golden Cockerel* -Rimsky-Korsakov).

He holds a performance degree from the Academia Studio in Saint Petersburgh (1998), studied at Gergiev Mariinsky Academy of Young Singers between 2000 and 2005 and has performed under conductors Valerie Gergiev and Kent Nagano, among others.

Opera San José’s production of *Madama Butterfly* includes set designs by Kent Dorsey, costumes designed by Julie Engelbrecht, lighting design by Pamila Z. Gray,
movement/choreography by **Hanayagi Jumasuga (Marjorie Nakaji)**, and wig and makeup designs by **Christina Martin**.

**About Opera San José**

Opera San José, performing at the beautiful California Theatre in downtown San José, is a professional, regional opera company that is unique in the United States. Maintaining a resident company of principal artists, Opera San José specializes in showcasing the finest young professional singers in the nation. In addition to mainstage performances, Opera San José maintains extensive educational programs in schools and in the community at large, and offers preview lectures and Introduction to Opera talks for all mainstage productions.

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