

HIGH NOTES

THE ANNUAL REPORT OF

2012/2013 SEASON

THE ACADEMY OF VOCAL ARTS



Chrystal E. Williams and ensemble in *Don Quichotte*.

Photo credit: Paul Sirochman

THE ACADEMY OF VOCAL ARTS

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The mission of the Academy of Vocal Arts is to be the world's premier institution for training young artists as international opera soloists. Through rigorous instruction and coaching, and by presentations of Resident Artists in concerts, oratorios, public programs, and fully staged professional opera productions, the Academy trains artists with the highest potential for career success while enriching lives in Philadelphia and beyond.

Formed in 1933, The Academy of Vocal Arts is the only tuition-free institution dedicated exclusively to the study of voice. When singers leave AVA, they are prepared to share their gifts with audiences of the world, fulfilling not only their own hopes and dreams, but those of AVA's wise and generous founder.

Gifted singers come from throughout the world to seek the exceptional guidance and training that The Academy of Vocal Arts offers. Admission to the tuition-free program is determined by competitive annual auditions. While hundreds apply, only 8-10 are annually accepted into the 4-year program. AVA's student body is comprised of approximately 25 artists whose training is equivalent to more than \$100,000 per year.

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Philadelphia, PA 19103
215.735.1685
www.avaopera.org

WELCOME

Letter from the President and Artistic Director



Dear friends,

It is my pleasure to present to you *High Notes*, the annual report of the Academy of Vocal Arts. The report covers our most recent fiscal year, from July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013. It represents a concise and accurate picture of AVA during the past year. Aside from the four professional operas and numerous concerts, recitals, lectures, and informal gatherings, the Resident Artists were hard at work training and preparing, not only for the Opera Theater season, but also for their future professional careers. The Resident Artists each receive an hour of vocal training each week in addition to many hours of vocal coaching, language lessons, stage combat lessons, and stage interpretation. Behind the success of each AVA artist stands the outstanding AVA faculty, who guide the Resident Artists through their advanced vocal training.

This has been another successful year of accomplishment at AVA. We graduated seven Resident Artists to promising careers in the field. We had two current Resident Artists, second-year soprano Sydney Mancasola and third-year bass-baritone Musa Ngqungwana, win the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions in New York. We presented a seldom heard opera by Massenet, *Don Quichotte*, with the generous support of the Pew Center for Arts and Heritage through the Philadelphia Music Project. *Don Quichotte* not only brought legendary stage director Tito Capobianco and alumnus Burak Bilgili back to the AVA stage, but it also was the first time the opera has been performed in Philadelphia since 1926. And, in the middle of all of this, we announced that we are beginning a capital campaign, *Raising Our Voices*, which will significantly expand the AVA facilities and increase the endowment, thereby solidifying AVA's place as the pre-eminent opera training institution in the U.S.

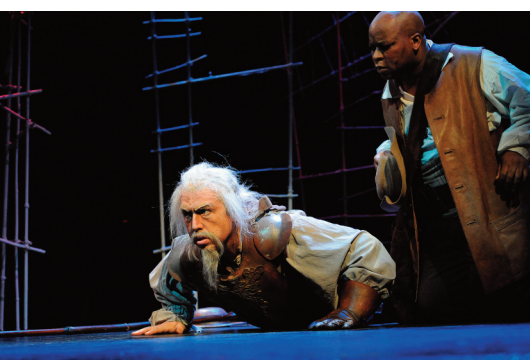
We hope that you had the opportunity to join us this season to see our Resident Artists in action. We also hope that you might consider supporting us in the upcoming season, both by attending AVA performances, and supporting the tuition-free training of these outstanding young artists. Thank you for being such a valuable member of the AVA family. It is through your support that the Resident Artists and The Academy of Vocal Arts continue to enjoy great success.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "K. James McDowell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

K. James McDowell

THE YEAR IN REVIEW: THE SEASON



During the 2012/2013 Season, AVA presented over thirty concerts and performances with approximately 10,000 attendees. The Opera Theater Season featured a fall production of Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. The winter production of Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, was semi-staged and featured piano accompaniment by Russian vocal coach Ghenady Meirson. In the spring, AVA was presented with a unique opportunity to stage Massenet's rarely performed *Don Quichotte*. The opera was last performed in Philadelphia in 1926 and offered AVA alumnus Burak Bilgili the opportunity to return to his alma mater singing the title role alongside second-year bass Patrick Guetti. Legendary stage director Tito Capobianco returned to AVA to direct the production. This project was generously supported by the Pew Center for Arts and Heritage through the Philadelphia Music Project.

The spring opera was Verdi's dramatic *Un ballo in maschera*. Also directed by Tito Capobianco, the production was well received by audiences and critics alike. It offered a great opportunity to first-year soprano Marina Costa-Jackson, who sang the principal role of Amelia in all of the evening performances. The AVA concert season was rounded out with the popular Giargiari Bel Canto Competition, Jubilate! A Concert of Sacred Music and Oratorio Masterpieces, and the New Artist and Farewell Recitals. Additionally, AVA presented a series of pre-production lectures on each of its operas. These lectures, meant to give patrons an inside look at the production and rehearsal process, were wildly popular—over 500 people took advantage of the free series.

The Opera Outreach program had one of its most successful seasons as three AVA productions were presented to area students in Wednesday matinee productions. *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Don Quichotte*, and *Un ballo in maschera* were all presented in special performances, which over 1,700 students attended. In addition to performances, comprehensive study guides were prepared for students and teachers to learn more about the history of the specific opera as well as more general information on opera as an art form. Following each student matinee, the Resident Artists remained on stage to take questions from the eager audience members. AVA Resident Artists made a special appearance at The Baldwin School's Arts Day, and Opera Outreach Coordinator, Rebecca Carr, attended Career Day at William Cramp Elementary School to discuss career opportunities in opera.

To learn more about the Academy of Vocal Arts' Opera Outreach program or to help Opera Outreach come to a school near you, contact Rebecca Carr at 215.735.1685 or at rcarr@avaopera.org.

Top-Bottom: Steven LaBrie, Sydney Mancasola, Patrick Guetti, Musa Ngqungwana, and Diego Silva in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*; Marina Costa-Jackson and Dominick Chenes in *Un ballo in maschera*; Burak Bilgili (AVA '04) and Musa Ngqungwana in *Don Quichotte*; Shelley Jackson in *Eugene Onegin*
Photo credits: Paul Sirochman

THE YEAR IN REVIEW: CLASS OF 2013

AVA bids a fond farewell to seven graduating artists. We will miss these talented Resident Artists and look forward to following their promising careers around the world.



CHRISTIAN BOWERS, baritone

Memorable AVA roles: Renato in *Un ballo in maschera*, Figaro in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Belcore in *L'elisir d'amore*, Shepherd in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Hermann in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, and Count Lamoral and Count Dominik in *Arabella*. **Recent:** Masetto in *Don Giovanni* with Opera Colorado. **Upcoming:** Joining the Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program at Washington National Opera.



MO EL ZEIN, tenor

Memorable AVA roles: Riccardo in *Un ballo in maschera*, Un Notario in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Riccardo in the concert version of *Oberto*, Djura in *Arabella*, and Luigi in a concert version of *Il tabarro*.



WES MASON, baritone

Memorable AVA roles: Title role in *Eugene Onegin*, Figaro in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Belcore in *L'elisir d'amore*, Pelléas in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Luther in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Count Lamoral and Count Dominik in *Arabella*, and Captain in *The Scarlet Letter*. **Recent:** Marcello in *La bohème* with Fort Worth Opera. **Upcoming:** Süleyman in *The Cloth Peddler* with the Los Angeles Opera Orchestra, Masetto in *Don Giovanni* with Opera Philadelphia, and Escamillo in *La tragédie de Carmen* with Syracuse Opera.



ALEXANDRA MAXIMOVA, soprano

Memorable AVA roles: Oscar in *Un ballo in maschera*, Giulietta in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, and Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*.

MARGARET MEZZACAPPA, mezzo-soprano

Memorable AVA roles: Ulrica in *Un ballo in maschera*, Geneviève in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Filipievna in *Eugene Onegin*, Berta in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Cuniza in a concert version of *Oberto*, La Principessa in a concert version of *Suor Angelica*, Adelaide in *Arabella*, and Mistress Quickly in *Falstaff*. **Recent:** Antonia's Mother in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* with San Francisco Opera. **Upcoming:** Soloist in San Francisco Opera's Verdi Requiem and Fenena in *Nabucco* with Opera Philadelphia.



ZACHARY NELSON, baritone

Memorable AVA roles: Renato in *Un ballo in maschera*, Sancho in *Don Quichotte*, Belcore in *L'elisir d'amore*, Golaud in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Masetto in *Don Giovanni*, title role in *Falstaff*. **Recent:** Sang the title role in *Le nozze di Figaro* at Santa Fe Opera in summer 2013. **Upcoming:** Joining the ensemble of the Dresden Staatsoper performing the Count in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Figaro in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*, and Marcello in *La bohème*. Will join Santa Fe Opera again in summer 2014 to sing Malatesta in *Don Pasquale*.



JOHN VISCARDI, tenor

Memorable AVA roles: Juan in *Don Quichotte*; Lensky in *Eugene Onegin*; Pelléas in *Pelléas et Mélisande*; Nathanaël, Spalanzani, and Schlémil in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*, Waiter in *Arabella*, Fenton in *Falstaff*, and Count Almaviva in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. **Recent:** Apprentice Program with Santa Fe Opera. **Upcoming:** Abdello in *Nabucco* with Opera Philadelphia.



THE ACADEMY OF VOCAL ARTS

VIVA LA VOCE!

SATURDAY,
APRIL 6, 2013

PENN MUSEUM

Over 300 attendees joined the faculty, staff, and Resident Artists of the Academy of Vocal Arts at the annual fund-raising gala, *Viva la Voce!* This year's event, held at the beautiful Penn Museum, was one of the most successful galas in the Academy's history. After a lovely cocktail hour and silent auction in the Upper Egyptian Room, the AVA Resident Artists serenaded our patrons with selected arias in the Museum's intimate auditorium. During the concert, AVA Board Chairman B.A. (Mackie) MacLean, Jr. announced *Raising Our Voices*, the \$10 million campaign for AVA's future. He was joined by President and Artistic Director, K. James McDowell; alum Richard Troxell; current Resident Artist Musa Ngqungwana; and founding family member William G. Warden IV. Each spoke about AVA's impact on their lives and on the future of opera. After the concert, guests journeyed to the Chinese Rotunda for a sumptuous dinner, wine, dessert, and an enthusiastic live auction!

The Gala Committee of the AVA Board of Directors would like to thank everyone who attended for making the event such a spectacular success! Over \$150,000 was raised for the AVA Scholarship Fund.

AVA would like to extend a special thank you to our corporate and foundation sponsors: Diversified Search, Donnelly Marketing Services Associates, LLC., Independence Foundation, KDI, Leon L. Levy and Associates, Merrill Lynch, Owner's Rep Inc., PECO, Pitcairn, PricewaterhouseCoopers, The Rose Group, Seiler+Drury Architecture, Stradley Ronon Stevens & Young, Wells Fargo, and WRTI 90.1FM.

Mark your calendars! Gala Co-Chairs Drs. Emmeline and Romeo Abella and Pat and John Conte invite you to join the fun at the 2014 *Viva la Voce!* on March 29, 2014 at the Union League of Philadelphia.



Left-Right:
Gala Co-Chairs: Drs. Romeo and Emmeline Abella, Ms. Barbara Donnelly and Dr. Lamberto Bentivoglio
Todd and Jessica Strine and Walter and Alice Strine, Esqs.
William Warden III, Derek Warden, Lee and William Warden IV, and Caroline and Warren Claytor
celebrating at AVA's 78th annual *Viva la Voce!*

RESIDENT ARTISTS/ALUMNI NEWS



CORINNE WINTERS starred in English National Opera's new production of *La traviata*.

BRYAN HYMEL made his Metropolitan Opera debut in the Berlioz epic *Les Troyens*. He stepped in at the last-minute to sing *Aeneas* in the final four performances, which also included a Met Live in HD broadcast shown in theaters worldwide.

MUSA NGQUNGWANA and **SYDNEY MANCASOLA** were named National Winners of the 2013 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. Sydney also won the Top Prize in the Gerda Lissner Foundation International Vocal Competition. In the spring, she made her company debut with Fort Worth Opera as Young Alyce in *Glory Denied*, which was recorded live and released by Albany records later in the year.

JOYCE DIDONATO triumphed in the title role of *Maria Stuarda* at the Metropolitan Opera. She also released the first crowd-sourced classical music album, *ReJOYCE!*

The roster of Santa Fe Opera's 2013 Festival was full of Academy of Vocal Arts' Resident Artists and alumni. **JOYCE DIDONATO** reprised the role of Elena in *La donna del Lago*. **MICHAEL FABIANO** sang Alfredo in *La traviata*. **ZACHARY NELSON**—whose last Santa Fe Opera appearance was as an apprentice—performed the title role in *Le nozze di Figaro* to great acclaim. The apprentice singers included **SHELLEY JACKSON**, **ANDRÉ COURVILLE**, **JARED BYBEE**, **JOHN VISCARDI**, and **PATRICK GUETTI**.

Winner of the 2012 Richard Tucker Award, **AILYN PÉREZ** performed at the gala concert in November. She also sang alongside husband and 2009 Richard Tucker Award winner Stephen Costello. The gala concert was televised on PBS after a five-year absence. Ailyn released her debut album, *Poème d'un jour*.

STEPHEN COSTELLO reprised the role of Greenhorn (Ishmael) in Jack Haggie's *Moby-Dick* at San Francisco Opera. He originated the role in the world premiere at the Dallas Opera.

BURAK BILGILI returned to AVA to sing the title role in *Don Quichotte*.

At Caramoor, **ANGELA MEADE** and **BURAK BILGILI** were featured in a concert performance of Verdi's French opera *Les Vêpres Siciliennes*. Also at Caramoor, James Valenti appeared in the title role of Verdi's *Don Carlos* opposite Jennifer Check as Elisabeth.

INDRA THOMAS performed Senta in Wagner's *Der fliegende Holländer* at the Princeton Music Festival. The following month she stepped in to sing her second production in Croatia with the Split Summer Festival.

RICHARD TROXELL had great success in the role of Des Grieux in *Manon* at Opéra de Montréal.

JOYCE EL-KHOURY made her recording debut as Antonina in Donizetti's *Belisario* with OPERA RARA and the BBC Symphony Orchestra with Sir Mark Elder conducting.

Since making her Metropolitan Opera debut in the title role of *Aida*, a performance that was also broadcast on live radio, **LATONIA MOORE** has been in high demand. She appeared at the Ravinia Festival in Chicago, San Diego Opera, and Cincinnati Opera, and the Dallas Opera in her signature role.

LUIS LEDESMA returned to Mexico City to sing the role of Conte di Luna in *Il trovatore*.

AVA

RAISING OUR VOICES

THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE ACADEMY OF VOCAL ARTS



(above) Warren and Caroline Claytor, Chairman B.A. (Mackie) MacLean, Jr., and President and Artistic Director K. James McDowell unveil the Sally Paxson Davis building.

(right) Presser Foundation representative Robert Capanna breaks into a wall in the Sally Paxson Davis building

All photo credits: Sarah Lyon

At the 2013 *Viva la Voce!* gala, we formally announced the *Raising Our Voices* campaign, which represents an exciting, new chapter in the history of the Academy of Vocal Arts. In 2008, AVA was presented with a unique opportunity to purchase 1916 Spruce Street. The purchase of 1916 Spruce Street enlarged the AVA facility to three brownstones and presented the special opportunity to combine those three building into one dedicated training complex. With the economic downturn, thoughts of renovating the three buildings into one complex had to be put on hold. Now, with a stronger economy and the support of our generous donors, the Academy of Vocal Arts is ready to complete the renovation process.

The goals of *Raising Our Voices* are two-fold: to renovate and expand upon AVA's existing historic facilities to better serve both our artists and our audiences, and to increase AVA's endowment to ensure financial stability in the years to come.

The *Raising Our Voices* campaign has a total goal of \$10 million, an achievable number thanks to the many generous donors who have contributed leadership gifts to the renovations. The total goal is divided into two parts: \$6 million to strengthen the AVA endowment and \$4 million for the capital expansion and facility enhancement.



AVA RAISING OUR VOICES

THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE ACADEMY OF VOCAL ARTS

Thanks to our many generous donors, more than
\$8 million has been raised for this vital campaign.
Thank you to all our campaign donors!



If you are interested in learning more about *Raising Our Voices*, please contact Robert Lyon, Director of Institutional Advancement at 215-735-1685 ext. 16 or by email at rlyon@avaopera.org. We are pleased to share the full details of the campaign and discuss with you the ways in which you can see yourself becoming involved in this important project.



(top left) A captive audience watches as President and Artistic Director K. James McDowell details the plans for the Sally Paxson Davis building

(above) Fran Levy, John McCarthy, and Leon L. Levy enjoy the *Raising Our Voices* Groundbreaking Ceremony

(left) The crowd eagerly awaits the *Raising Our Voices* ribbon cutting ceremony

SUPPORTING AVA

AVA would not exist without the valuable support of its many donors and patrons. If you love opera, a gift to AVA is a wonderful way to invest in this vital art form. You can take pride in knowing that you are doing your part to ensure the success of the art form by supporting the Resident Artists who are the voice of opera's future. There are a number of ways that you can support the AVA Resident Artists and the future of opera.

ANNUAL GIVING THROUGH THE FRIENDS OF AVA

The Friends of AVA are a dedicated group of supporters who by investing in AVA's mission through annual gifts, nurture and launch the world's most promising vocal artists. Donors are offered the rare opportunity to get to know the Resident Artists and artistic team personally through the Friends of AVA's exclusive parties, concerts, and opera trips.

FELLOWSHIPS

AVA is the only tuition-free school in America devoted solely to operatic training. All AVA Resident Artists receive the equivalent of more than \$100,000 in vocal training for each of the four years of the program. While the program has always been tuition free, AVA began providing fellowships to assist with the cost of living during the Resident Artists' duration of training in Philadelphia. Resident Artist fellowships can be endowed or funded on a yearly basis, beginning at \$5,000 per student annually.

THE HELEN CORNING WARDEN SOCIETY- PLANNED GIVING

The Helen Corning Warden Society acknowledges the generosity of those who have included the Academy of Vocal Arts in their estate plans. Gifts can be made in a variety of ways and permit donors to make meaningful contributions that they might not otherwise be able to commit to currently. In addition to bequests, AVA accepts: charitable remainder trusts, charitable lead trusts, charitable gift annuities, life insurance, and retirement plan designations. The AVA Development Department will work with you to identify the best planned giving option for your needs.



John Viscardi (AVA '13), Shelley Jackson, Board Member Jim McClelland, and Michael Fabiano (AVA '09) in Santa Fe, NM

CORPORATE SPONSORSHIPS

Many visibility opportunities are available to corporations through AVA opera and concert sponsorships, and through sponsorship of the annual gala, Viva la Voce! The AVA Development Office can tailor your sponsorship package to meet the unique philanthropic and marketing objectives of your business.

MATCHING GIFTS

Your employer may match your gift to AVA, either entirely or in some portion. In some instances, this may double or even triple the benefit of your gift to the Academy of Vocal Arts and its Resident Artists! Check with your employer's benefits office to determine their matching gift requirements. Donors who arrange a match for their gift will be recognized for the total combined value.

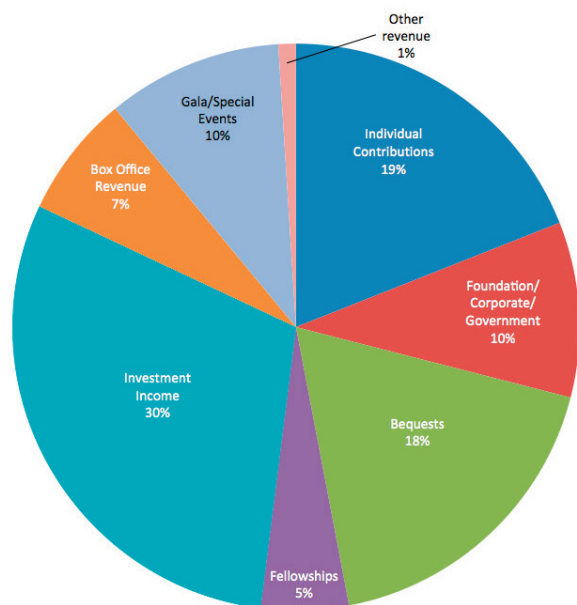
THE UNITED WAY

AVA's Opera Outreach program is eligible to receive individual contributions made through the United Way Specific Care Program. All you need to do is complete the top portion of your United Way form, and then find the line for SPECIFIC CARE and enter AVA's code #3164, the amount of your gift, and the eligible agency name: the Academy of Vocal Arts Opera Outreach.



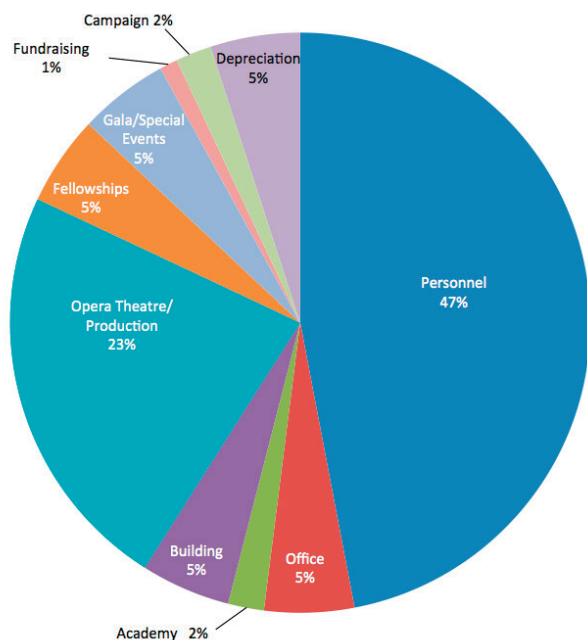
Cynthia Cook (AVA '11) and Dr. Emmeline P. Abella at an AVA event

FINANCIALS 2012/2013



OPERATING INCOME \$3,808,910

Operating income consists of revenue from a variety of sources. Like many schools, the largest single revenue source for AVA is the investment income from its endowment, as provided by a spending rule that is approved each year by the AVA Board of Directors. Other sources of revenue are individual contributions, box office ticket sales, fellowships, and special events, such as the annual gala, among other sources. The biggest sources of the AVA revenue all stem from one commonality: they are all greatly influenced by the generous supporters and donors like you! AVA was also the recipient of several large bequests from generous donors over the fiscal year that may receive a special designation to the capital campaign.



OPERATING EXPENSES \$3,490,496

The two largest expenditures that AVA has, personnel and opera theatre/production expenses, are directly related to the training program. Personnel expenses include salaries for top faculty and teachers, as well as administrative staff. The opera theatre expenses include costs for three full-scale, professionally staged opera productions, in addition to any costs associated with other recitals, concerts, and piano productions.

Please note: The operating income and expense percentages reflect unaudited financial statements for the 2012-2013 fiscal year. The AVA audit will be available on the website and at www.guidestar.org

A SPECIAL THANK YOU

We would like to extend thanks to all of our donors and contributors who made a contribution between July 1, 2012 and June 30, 2013. No matter the size of the donation, you are doing your part to ensure the future of opera by donating to The Academy of Vocal Arts and supporting talented Resident Artists.

**We would like to extend a special thank
you to our generous
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