

OPERA America presents

Conversations

Susan Graham

In Conversation with
OPERA America President/CEO
Marc A. Scorca

National Opera Center
Tuesday, November 19, 2013 | 7:00 p.m.



GRAMMY Award-winner **Susan Graham** — dubbed “America’s favorite mezzo” by *Gramophone* magazine — achieved international stardom within a few years of her professional debut. Her operatic roles span four centuries, from Monteverdi’s *Poppea* to Jake Heggie’s *Sister Helen Prejean* (*Dead Man Walking*), which was written especially for her. Her recital repertoire is equally wide-ranging; her most recent release, *Virgins, Vixens, and Viragos*, features music by 14 composers from Purcell to Sondheim. As one

of today’s foremost interpreters of French vocal music, the Texas native was awarded the French government’s prestigious honorific “Chevalier dans l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.”

Graham enjoyed early success in trouser roles like Mozart’s Cherubino (*Le nozze di Figaro*), before mastering his more virtuosic parts and the title roles of Handel’s *Ariodante* and *Xerxes*. She triumphed in Richard Strauss’ iconic mezzo roles, Octavian (*Der Rosenkavalier*) and the Composer (*Ariadne auf Naxos*). These brought her to prominence with all the world’s major opera companies, including the Metropolitan Opera, Chicago, San Francisco, Covent Garden, Paris, Munich, La Scala, Salzburg and Vienna. She created the female leads in the Met’s premiere productions of John Harbison’s *The Great Gatsby* and Tobias Picker’s *An American Tragedy*. As Houston Grand Opera’s Lynn Wyatt Great Artist, she launches the new season as Prince Orlofsky (*Die Fledermaus*), before heading an all-star cast featuring Plácido Domingo in a revival of the Met’s acclaimed Baroque pastiche, *The Enchanted Island*.

It was with conquests in Berlioz’s *Béatrice et Bénédict* in Lyon and Massenet’s *Chérubin* at Covent Garden that the mezzo scored further French repertory collaborations with such preeminent conductors as Sir Colin Davis, Charles Dutoit, James Levine and Seiji Ozawa. New productions of Gluck’s *Iphigénie en Tauride*, Berlioz’s *La damnation de Faust*, Massenet’s *Werther* and Offenbach’s *La belle Hélène* and *The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein* were mounted for her in New York, London, Paris, Chicago, San Francisco, Santa Fe and elsewhere. Most recently, Graham was the stand-out star of Berlioz’s *Les Troyens* at the Met, which was broadcast to cinemas worldwide in the company’s *Live in HD* series.

Graham’s affinity for French music has led to regular appearances with the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony, Orchestre de Paris, London Symphony and more. In 2013-2014, she joins Bernard Haitink and the Boston Symphony

for Ravel's *Shéhérazade* in Boston and Carnegie Hall, besides joining Ensemble InterContemporain on a European tour. Marking her first duo recital tour, the mezzo recently teamed up with soprano Renée Fleming at six of the nation's top venues.

Her extensive and distinguished discography features oratorios and song cycles by Berlioz, Ravel and Chausson, as well as solo albums that include her GRAMMY Award-winning album of Ives songs. Among the mezzo's additional honors are *Musical America's* Vocalist of the Year and an Opera News Award.
susangraham.com



Marc A. Scorca joined OPERA America in 1990 as president/CEO. Under his leadership, OPERA America has administered landmark funding initiatives in support of the development of North American operas and opera audiences, which have awarded more than \$11 million to opera companies and their partners from a permanent endowment, *The Opera Fund*. Numerous new programs have also been introduced to support the career development of singers, composers, librettists, stage directors and scenic designers.

OPERA America's relocation from Washington, D.C., to New York City in December 2005 — the first step in the construction of a National Opera Center that opened to great acclaim in September 2012 — has increased communication and collaboration with and among members both locally and nationally. The Opera Center provides a number of unique facilities and related services for organizations and artists that have never before been available under one roof.

A strong advocate of collaboration, Scorca has led several cross-disciplinary projects, including the Performing Arts Research Coalition and the National Performing Arts Convention (2004 and 2008). He has led strategic planning retreats for opera companies and other cultural institutions internationally, and has participated on panels for federal, state and local funding agencies, as well as for numerous private organizations. He is currently a member of the U.S. delegation to UNESCO, an officer of the Performing Arts Alliance, and serves on the Curtis Institute of Music Board of Overseers, on the Music Advisory Board of Hunter College (CUNY), and on the Boards of Opera.ca (Toronto) and Opera Europa (Brussels and London). Scorca also appears frequently in the media on a variety of cultural issues.

JOIN US FOR THESE FUTURE EVENTS IN THE NATIONAL OPERA CENTER:

Creators in Concert: Live Transmission from The Dallas Opera

Sunday, February 16, 2014, 3:00 p.m.

Join us for a Live in HD transmission of the final performance of The Dallas Opera's spring production of *Death and the Powers* by Tod Machover and Robert Pinsky.

Making Connections: Don't Quit Your Day Job (Yet): How to Pay the Bills Offstage

Tuesday, February 25, 2014, 7:00 p.m.

It's something every artist needs to think about: the traditional and non-traditional ways of making ends meet while you're waiting for the phone to ring. Making an effective five-year plan and identifying other skill sets and interests that pay the bills are crucial for any creative artist. Learn from panelists who have found unusual methods of staying solvent, as well as those whose businesses' depend on creative workers.

Emerging Artists Recital Series:

Music Academy of the West's 2013 Marilyn Horne Song Competition Winners

Sunday, March 16, 2014, 2:00 p.m.

Partnering with young artist programs and competitions, OPERA America's new recital series presents the finalists and prizewinners from member organizations in recital at the National Opera Center. This recital features baritone John Brancy and pianist Mario Antonio Marra.

In Conversation with Lawrence Brownlee

Thursday, March 20, 2014, 7:00 p.m.

Lawrence Brownlee shares stories and reflections from his international performing career with Marc A. Scorca, OPERA America's president/CEO.

Creators in Concert: Music and Words with Paola Prestini

Wednesday, April 2, 2014, 7:00 p.m.

Composer Paola Prestini curates a concert of her vocal compositions, including excerpts from her operatic works. Following the performance, she will discuss her work and answer questions from the audience.

Register for future events at operaamerica.org/ForArtists

Speak to an OPERA America staff member if you are interested in purchasing any of our publications or becoming a member.