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#LyricTroyens



PHOTO: Dario Acosta

Susan Graham replaces Sophie Koch as Dido in Lyric's ***Les Troyens***

CHICAGO (10/26/16) -- **Anthony Freud**, Lyric's general director, president & CEO, announced today that French mezzo-soprano Sophie Koch has withdrawn from the company premiere of Berlioz's ***Les Troyens*** for personal reasons. Stepping into the role of Dido will be American mezzo-soprano **Susan Graham**, world-renowned as an interpreter of French repertoire, in general, with a special emphasis on the music of Berlioz. "Susan is a longtime favorite of Lyric audiences," said Freud. "She has sung the role of Dido around the globe to incredible acclaim, and we are absolutely delighted that she has agreed, on such short notice, to return to the company in one of her signature roles." Graham will begin rehearsals at Lyric on Thursday.

"It is my great pleasure to return to Lyric," shared Graham. "I adore Chicago and Chicago audiences. The role of Dido is a role I cherish and I'm delighted that my schedule has allowed me to join the amazing cast of the Lyric's *Les Troyens*."

Susan Graham has been heard in seven roles at Lyric since 1989-90, most recently Marguerite/*La damnation de Faust* (2009-10), the title role/*Iphigénie en Tauride* (2006-07) and the title role/*Der Rosenkavalier* (2005-06). She also appeared onstage at the Civic Opera House in a duo recital with her frequent colleague, soprano Renée Fleming, in 2013.

Closely associated with French repertoire, Grammy-award winning Graham has triumphed as Berlioz's Dido at Paris's Theatre du Châtelet, the Metropolitan Opera, and San Francisco Opera.

Baroque roles include most recently Sycorax/*The Enchanted Island* (Met). The mezzo has made recent acclaimed role debuts as Mrs. Anna/*The King and I* (Châtelet), Countess Geschwitz/*Lulu* (Metropolitan Opera), and Orlofsky/*Die Fledermaus* and Clairon/*Capriccio* (both at The Santa Fe Opera). Among the many highlights of Graham's 2016-17 season are Mrs. De Rocher/*Dead Man Walking* (role debut, Washington National Opera), a selection of Canteloube's Chants d'Auvergne with the Philadelphia Orchestra, and an American recital tour with her regular partner, pianist Malcolm Martineau. Graham is a favorite of the world's leading orchestras and makes regular appearances with the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony, Orchestre de Paris, and London Symphony Orchestra.

In *Les Troyens* the Trojan princess and clairvoyant, Cassandra (**Christine Goerke**) accurately predicts the fall of Troy and commits suicide after predicting that the Trojan hero, Aeneas (**Brandon Jovanovich**) will one day found a new Troy in Italy – the city that will become Rome. Aeneas arrives in Carthage and falls in love with Queen Dido (**Susan Graham**). They enjoy glorious days until the ghosts of Cassandra, King Priam, and other Trojans appear, urging Aeneas to leave Carthage at once for Italy. In rage and despair at his departure, Dido prophesies the advent of the warrior Hannibal, who will avenge her. But she then stabs herself and with her last breath envisions Carthage being destroyed by Rome, as her people curse Aeneas and his descendants.

Sir Andrew Davis conducts the new production directed by **Tim Albery**, with set and costume designs by **Tobias Hoheisel**, lighting designs by **David Finn**, and projection designs by **Illuminos** (Lyric debut). **Michael Black** is chorus master and **Helen Pickett** makes her Lyric debut as choreographer. *Les Troyens* will be performed in French with projected English translations.

Please note the early performance times for *Les Troyens*: Nov. 13 and 17 and Dec. 3 at **1pm**, Nov. 21 and 26 at **5:30pm**. Performances will last approximately five hours, including two intermissions.

The opening performance of *Les Troyens* will be recorded for delayed broadcast locally on 98.7WFMT and globally on wfmt.com on Tuesday, November 15 beginning at 7:15pm.

**For information about the production and press ticketing
please contact press@lyricopera.org**

About Lyric

Lyric Opera of Chicago's mission is to express and promote the life-changing, transformational, revelatory power of great opera. Lyric exists to provide a broad, deep, and relevant cultural service to Chicago and the nation, and to advance the development of the art form.

Founded in 1954, Lyric is dedicated to producing and performing consistently thrilling, entertaining, and thought-provoking opera with a balanced repertoire of core classics, lesser-known masterpieces, and new works; to creating an innovative and wide-ranging program of community engagement and educational activities; and to developing exceptional emerging operatic talent.

Under the leadership of general director Anthony Freud, music director Sir Andrew Davis, and creative consultant Renée Fleming, Lyric strives to become The Great North American Opera Company for the 21st century: a globally significant arts organization embodying the core values of excellence, relevance, and fiscal responsibility.

To learn more about Lyric's new season, go to lyricopera.org. You can also join the conversation with @LyricOpera on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. #Lyric1617 #LongLivePassion

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