

Dominick Argento's 'The Aspern Papers' marks 25th anniversary of TDO debut

Written by BY TERRY MATHEWS, News-Telegram Arts Editor
Friday, 19 April 2013 11:17



If you love opera – and I mean really, really love beautiful music sung by glorious voices – you have two more chances to see it in its purest form.

Dominick Argento's "The Aspern Papers" is currently celebrating its 25th anniversary of its debut at The Dallas Opera.

The new production of this atmospheric opera, based on an 1888 novella by acclaimed author Henry James (*The Turn of the Screw*, *The Bostonians*, *The Portrait of a Lady*, *Washington Square*, *The Wings of the Dove*) is conducted by Dallas Opera Music Director Graeme Jenkins in his final TDO appearances before he assumes the status "emeritus."

Forget the grand stages of "Aida," "La Traviata" or "Turandot."

This production relies on utter simplicity and near-perfect singing by a dream cast that includes Susan Graham, Texas' own mezzo-soprano sweetheart, in her TDO debut.

"While the 25th Anniversary seemed like the right time to consider a possible revival of what many feel is Dominick Argento's greatest work," explains Dallas Opera Artistic Director Jonathan Pell, "the decisive factor was the availability of a phenomenal cast of internationally acclaimed singers who could rival the incredible group of artists who originated these roles in 1988. We knew that if we didn't seize this opportunity now, it might very well take another 25 years to assemble such a glorious group of singers to bring these roles back to life."

This revival stars "the peerless American mezzo" (*New York Observer*) Susan Graham in her long-awaited Dallas Opera debut as Tina.

Born in New Mexico and raised in Midland, Miss Graham studied at Texas Tech University and the Manhattan School of Music. She was *Musical America's* "Vocalist of the Year" for 2004 and, two years later, her hometown proclaimed September 5 to be "Susan Graham Day" in perpetuity.

Recently, she made the cover of *Opera News* ("Hail to the Queen!" December 2012, published by the Metropolitan Opera Guild) reinforcing her current status as operatic superstar and "national treasure" (*Audiophile Audition*).

Miss Graham created the role of Sister Helen Prejean in Jake Heggie's "Dead Man Walking" for San Francisco Opera, and originated roles in two recent Metropolitan Opera world premieres: Tobias Picker's "An American Tragedy" and "The Great Gatsby" by John Harbison.

Dubbed "America's favorite mezzo" by *Gramophone* magazine, Graham remains one of the most beloved artists of our time.

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<http://www.talkopera.org> - examine and learn more about the Aspern Papers. ~~Some are on way, please~~