



**December 31, 2008, 8:00pm on PBS  
New York Philharmonic New Year's Eve Concert with Susan Graham**

Along with the annual Gala Opening in September of the new season of the New York Philharmonic, Live From Lincoln Center has developed another, though sporadic, tradition: the Philharmonic's New Year's Eve "bash". Our cameras and microphones have been in Avery Fisher Hall in recent New Year's Eves for performances with the Philharmonic by Joshua Bell, Audra McDonald, Angela Gheorghiu and Renée Fleming.

New Year's Eve, 2008 finds us once again in Avery Fisher Hall with Lorin Maazel and the New York Philharmonic, joined this year by the renowned mezzo-soprano, Susan Graham, in "a glamorous evening of opera favorites". We last met Susan Graham on Live From Lincoln Center in March, when she hosted the New York City Opera's production of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*. An alternate title for the evening's entertainment could be "Opera's Greatest Hits" because in essence that is exactly what we'll be watching and hearing.

Susan Graham is a native of Roswell, New Mexico, but she spent her growing-up years in Midland, Texas. By her own admission she was a tomboy whose musical interest was rooted in the pop music of the time. She sang in the alto section of her high school chorale and was also a pianist, but it was not until she was 15 that she began serious vocal study. She came to New York to attend the Manhattan School of Music because, in her words, "It was important to me to be a part of a more personal one-on-one environment than a bigger conservatory could provide".

A harbinger of one of her later concentrations came with her professional debut: an appearance in 1988 in Samuel Barber's "Vanessa" with the St. Louis Opera. From that point on new operas have been prominent in Susan Graham's career: she created principal roles in the world premiers of John Harbison's *The Great Gatsby*, Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking*, and Tobias Picker's *An American Tragedy*. She has made a specialty of French repertoire, and is generally considered to be the outstanding exponent of French art songs. Thus it is only to be expected that on New Year's Eve she will sing, among other items, the two principal arias of Carmen, the Habanera and Seguidilla, from Bizet's *Carmen*.

For their part Maestro Maazel and the Philharmonic will offer some sparkling items from the orchestral repertoire, beginning with the Overture to Verdi's *La Forza del Destino* and ending with the Ritual Fire Dance from Manuel de Falla's *El Amor Brujo*. About midway through the program will come a special treat. We'll hear selections from a work that enjoyed enormous popularity in the middle of the 20th century but that has now fallen into near-obscure: *Gaite Parisienne*, a Ballet created for the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo with a score assembled and orchestrated by Manuel Rosenthal from music by Offenbach.

So start your New Year's Eve celebration off in fine style by watching Lorin Maazel, the New York Philharmonic and Susan Graham on Live From Lincoln Center. In concluding, let me again urge you to check the schedule of your local PBS station for the exact day and time of the telecast in your area.

Happy New Year!!

By MARTIN BOOKSPAN