

Artist: Levy Sekgapane (tenor)
Album: Giovin Fiamma - Rossini Arias

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Prima Classic: PRIMA002



Operalia's First Prize winner in 2017, the young South African tenor Levy Sekgapane releases his first album, 'Giovin Fiamma', featuring Rossini arias. He is accompanied by the Münchner Rundfunkorchester conducted by Giacomo Sagripanti (Young Conductor winner in the 2016 International Opera Awards).

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Schedule

Glyndebourne Festival - Il Barbiere di Siviglia
Salzburg Festival - Idomeneo (Arbace)
Teatro Massimo Palermo - Il Barbiere di Siviglia
Wexford Festival Opera - Adina
Opéra Royal de Wallonie Liège - La Cenerentola
Bayerische Staatsoper München - La Cenerentola
Nationaltheater Mannheim - Don Pasquale
Gran Teatre del Liceu Barcelona - Semiramide
Semperoper Dresden - Il Barbiere di Siviglia



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For more information, photos, and interviews requests please email Edgardo Vertanessian at: vertanessian@primaclassic.com

Bio

The young tenor Levy Sekgapane was born in Kroonstad, South Africa. Besides Operalia, he won the first prize at the Belvedere singing competition, and the first prize at the Montserrat Caballé competition in Spain. He debuted as Conte d'Almaviva/BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA at Deutsche Oper Berlin and at Aalto Theater Essen. He performs at major opera houses in Europe and the United Kingdom.

Prima Classic follows Marina Rebeka's *Spirito* with a recital of Rossini arias, the recording debut of rising tenor Levy Sekgapane

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Very much a rising star internationally and wonderfully suited to the Rossinian style, Levy Sekgapane brings freshness, clarity and thrilling and seductive vocal qualities to this Prima Classic recording. It combines arias from nine different Rossini operas, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *L'italiana in Algeri*, *La Cenerentola*, *Semiramide*, *Otello*, *La donna del lago*, *Zelmira*, *Il Turco in Italia* and *Elisabetta regina d'Inghilterra*. The Italian composer wrote these for three particular and very different singers: Giovanni Davide, Manuel García, and Andrea Nozzari.

Besides winning Plácido Domingo's Operalia, Levy Sekgapane has also taken the top prizes in the Belvedere Singing Competition and the Monserrat Caballé International Competition amongst others.

Following his appearances as Count Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at the Glyndebourne Festival, he will make his Salzburg Festival debut in Mozart's *Idomeneo*, a Peter Sellars' production conducted by Teodor Currentzis, in late July/August before returning once again to the Rossini role at the Teatro Massimo Palermo the following month. In October/November, he takes to the Wexford Festival Opera stage in the little-known Rossini opera, *Adina*.

Sekgapane's later schedule includes *La Cenerentola* at Opéra Royal de Wallonie Liège, and in February at the Bavarian State Opera in Munich. Next year he is also performing in *Semiramide* in Barcelona and reprising Count Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at Semperoper Dresden, in Munich and in Barcelona.

'Giovin Fiamma' – a co-production with BR Klassik recorded in Bavarian Radio's studios early in 2018 - is the second release on Prima Classic, soprano Marina Rebeka's new independent record label fuelled by a passion to produce and nurture great music. Its plans are to release a mixture of full operas and operatic recitals with world-class singers, largely recorded with orchestras in different opera houses and concert halls throughout Europe. A new studio has been built in Latvia for mixing and mastering these projects.

What Opera and Rossini mean to me

By Levy Sekgapane

I heard opera for the first time on an Italian food TV commercial when I was 10 years old, in my native Kroonstad, South Africa. Unbeknownst to me, the seed was planted right there and then.

Although I come from a musical family, we did not have a classical music background—my grandparents and parents sang in school when they were young and later on in church. One of my brothers, who is also a singer, used to bring home opera CDs and DVDs. He also had students that he trained in our home, and I would imitate them once they had finished their classes.

Later on, when I started my formal musical education, I was without a doubt inspired by the great tenors of our time, such as Luciano Pavarotti, José Carreras, and Plácido Domingo. My encounter with Rossini's music came when I was at university, where I discovered recordings of Juan Diego Flórez, and I immediately fell in love with that music and with his way of singing it. It was the first time I had ever heard the voice of a Rossini tenor. Delving deeper into the Rossinian style, I listened to other great tenors of that generation, such as Lawrence Brownlee, Gregory Kunde, and Bruce Ford. The more music I discovered from that repertoire, the more I engaged with it, and it became my passion to sing it, imbued with my own character.

Right from the beginning of my career, Rossini's music became the core of my repertoire, and I performed it at important opera houses such as Paris and Munich. Time passed, and I finally got the chance to record this album, which combines the music that Rossini wrote for three particular and very different singers: Giovanni Davide, Manuel García, and Andrea Nozzari.

Davide came from the school of the castrati and had an extremely wide range, being able to reach the tenor's top notes very easily. Rossini used to call him a "tenorino", and the arias that the Maestro wrote for him are the highest in terms of tessitura.

García was a virtuoso baritenor, meaning that he had a much darker timbre than Davide, had great coloratura, and could sing both baritone and tenor roles. However, he decided to remain in the tenor repertoire. He was a very good teacher as well—his daughter and pupil Maria Malibran became one of the most famous singers of her days.

Nozzari was a true and dark baritenor for whom Rossini created the roles of Otello, Agorante, Argirio, and Leicester. These roles have a very wide range in which the singer must be able to reach not only the high notes but also get deep into the low notes with dramatic colour.

Returning to my personal experience with Rossini, his music feels like are within me that is always active, always colourful, and with plenty of emotion. Forever young, this music fills me with joy and lifts up my spirit. I am happy to present to you this, my first album, the Rossini arias so close to my heart, sung from my heart, and with my own colours.

Track List

Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868)

WRITTEN FOR MANUEL GARCÍA (1775-1832)

1. Il barbiere di Siviglia: "Cessa di più resistere" 7:13
2. L'italiana in Algeri: "Languir per una bella" 6:50
3. La Cenerentola: "Sì, ritrovarla io giuro" 6:13
4. Semiramide: "Ah dov'è, dov'è il cimento?" 7:39

WRITTEN FOR GIOVANNI DAVIDE (1790-1864)

5. Otello: "Che ascolto?" - "Ah, come mai non senti" 6:39
6. La donna del lago: "Oh fiamma soave" 7:59
7. Zelmira: "Terra amica, ove respira" 7:51
8. Il Turco in Italia: "Intesi: ah! tutto intesi" - "Tu seconda il mio disegno" 5:38

WRITTEN FOR ANDREA NOZZARI (1776-1832)

9. Elisabetta regina d'Inghilterra: "Deh! troncate i ceppi suoi" - "Vendicar saprò l'offesa" 7:52

Total time: 63:54

Levy Sekgapane Biography

The young tenor Levy Strauss Sekgapane – winner of the First Prize of OPERALIA 2017 – was born in Kroonstad in South Africa. From childhood he sang in different choirs and formally began his music education in 2006 by singing in the Tirisano School Eisteddfod. Furthermore, he was a member of Fidentia South African Youth Choir and received a scholarship in 2007 to Stellenberg High School in Cape Town. He later studied at the South African College of Music at the University of Cape Town under Kamal Khan and Hanna van Niekerk.

During his time at the College of Music, he took solo roles in different opera performances in South Africa, amongst others LA BOHEME, THE RAKE'S PROGRESS and LES CONTES d'HOFFMANN. Additionally, he was a member of the choir of Schleswig-Holstein-Musikfestivals and attended masterclasses by Kobie van Rensburg.

In concert he sang Mozart's REQUIEM in the Cape Town City Hall and, as soloist supporting Bryn Terfel, John Stainer's CRUCIFIXION, with the Philharmonia Choir of Cape Town and Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra. From 2012 he participated as tenor at the International Choir Academy in Lübeck, Germany, where he sang the solo in Bach's JOHANNES-PASSION under Helmuth Rilling.

In operatic repertoire, he made his debut as Conte d'Almaviva/IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA and as Chevalier de la Force/DIALOGUES DES CARMÉLITES. More recently he sang SONGS OF FRIENDSHIP at Scottish Opera (2014), Graf von Libenskof/IL VIAGGIO A REIMS at Cape Town Opera, Don Ramiro/LA CENERENTOLA as well as Vierter Knappe/PARISFAL at Opera Chemnitz. At the theatre in Krefeld, he again sang Conte d'Almaviva/IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA.

Besides Operalia, Levy has won several prizes, among them First Prize at the Belvedere Singing Competition, as well as First Prize at the Montserrat Caballé Competition in Spain. During 2015-16, Levy was a member of the Young Ensemble of Semperoper Dresden.

In the 2016-17 season, Levy debuted as Conte d'Almaviva/BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA at Deutsche Oper Berlin and Aalto Theater Essen. He gave his house debut as Don Ramiro/LA CENERENTOLA at Hamburg State Opera and Munich State Opera. Levy debuted as Conte di Libenskof/IL VIAGGIO A REIMS at Copenhagen Opera and at Opera di Roma.

The 2017-18 season brought Levy for the first time to Liceu Barcelona, where he again sang Conte di Libenskof/VIAGGIO A REIMS. He made his debut with Norwegian National Opera and at Opéra National de Paris in BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA. His debut in Palermo, Italy was singing Lindoro/ITALIANA IN ALGERI and he also gave his debut at State Theatre Wiesbaden, Germany. On the concert platform, he appeared at the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, singing in the 2017 New Year's Eve Gala, together with Olga Peretyatko, under the baton of James Conlon.

Levy has performed BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA in Las Palmas, Spain and made his debut at the Rossini Festival Pesaro in Italy. Other first appearances have included the Donizetti Festival in Bergamo, Italy, as well as his South American debut in Santiago di Chile, also in BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA. In the 2018-2019 season he has returned to Hamburg for IL TURCO IN ITALIA, as well as making his debut in Bordeaux, France with BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA. In May 2019 he made his debut at Glyndebourne Festival Opera singing the role of Count Almaviva in BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA.

Future operatic performances include a 2019 Salzburg Festival debut in Peter Sellars' staging of IDOMENEO, and Selimo in Rossini's ADINA at Wexford Festival Opera this autumn, LA CENERENTOLA at Opéra Royal de Wallonie Liège, as well as returns to Palermo, Dresden, Munich and Barcelona.

More information at: www.levysekgapane.com

Press

"...first class, with the tenor's bright, slightly nasal tone running around the notes with great accuracy."

Review of *GIOVIN FIAMMA* - BBC Music Magazine

"...As her amorous suitor Count Almaviva in his many disguises, we have Levy Sekgapane, on this showing anticipated to be singing Rossini and other extrovert bel canto roles at the top level for years to come. He has genuine mastery of this florid music, allied to a bright, ringing tone. Yet he brings more reflective shades into the mix: this is a rather macho and confident Almaviva who manages his disguises well...."

Classical Source - *Il barbiere di Siviglia* - Glyndebourne Opera Festival

"...As Count Almaviva, Levy Sekgapane lit up the stage with his megawatt smile and metallic frock coat. His compact tenor is on the dry side but the sound is bright and shiny."

Bachtrack - *Il barbiere di Siviglia* - Glyndebourne Opera Festival

"... In the role of the usurper Guido, Levy Sekgapane impressed with much flexibility, security, and with all the ease of his vocal leadership, but also with the ability to make a dramatic attack"

Das Opernglas - *Enrico di Borgogna* - Donizetti Opera Festival

"Levy Sekgapane is a new name to me and he is a very exciting singer. The owner of a light and high-lying tenor, he also offered some stratospheric embellishments and effortless ease in the florid writing. A name to watch certainly."

Operatraveller – *Il viaggio a Reims* – Royal Opera Copenhagen

"Levy Sekgapane is a tenor with a very special, bright, youthful timbre. This young tenor can really seduce you with his voice."

Klassik begeistert – Silverstergala – Elbphilharmonie Hamburg