

Luvo's 2nd & 3rd quarterly newsletter

It has been a long time since I've shared any updates but that is essentially due to the many good things that have happened during these very busy last two quarters. Let me start by saying thank you to everyone for the support that I often receive, and I know that everything I've achieved thus far is in great part due to all of your help and support to my career and this incredible journey I have been on.



Operalia is a world opera competition established by one of the 3 Tenors very own Maestro, Placido Domingo, and has been run since 1993 helping to launch the careers of a number of great opera singers. In South Africa only 2 people have won this prestigious award, firstly, Pretty Yende and more recently Levy Segkapane. Both of these talented performers have gone on to build incredible international careers. Operalia is now coming to South Africa for the first time and will be held in Cape Town Artscape at the end of this month.

I am very excited to have been selected to participate in this amazing competition. When we realised that Operalia was coming to South Africa it was an opportunity not to be missed and so I made sure to produce the best possible audition video and entered the competition. Out of 800 entrants that qualified, 34 finalists were selected from around the world. When I received the email confirming my participation in this competition, I was home it was on the 17th of June the day of my departure to the US and the day of my sister's concert for the FynArts. What a special day that was. It is an honor and a privilege to be recognised amongst these world class artists.

The Tales of Hoffmaan (The Opera of the year for me in 2023)

Hoffmann is a lovelorn young man in Nuremberg who is watching his latest love, Stella, dance in the ballet. In the interval he goes to the tavern where he tells his friends the tales of the three major loves of his life. Each story forms a separate act of this magnificently staged opera. A melancholy poet reflects on three women he loved and lost in the past: a mechanical performing doll, a Venetian courtesan, and the consumptive daughter of a celebrated composer.

This year I received the invitation to sing one of the lead roles of Hoffmaan in the Tales of Hoffmaan with the Lyric Academy in partnership with Opera Carolina in the United States and again later that month in Italy. I found the role a particularly challenging role for me as it was my first title role. I was well prepared musically and my French pronunciation was good because I received coaching before I left for the US. Arriving in the US for the first time was a treat for me because I got to see and meet a lot of the people I see on TV and social media.



In curtain call - Hoffmaan

I got the chance to work with Maestro James Meena who gave me a lot of work and didn't allow me to rest one bit. I met and worked with a lot of talented individuals, and I have made good friends and connections.

In the US there was barely time to do any tourism but the small chance we got I enjoyed the museum in Charlotte.

The music itself was so challenging and yet it seemed to be easy to navigate myself through it. My understudy signing partner whom I was sharing the lead role with ended up contracting covid and so I had to step in for him and had to perform both nights in Charlotte NC, which was exhausting but very fruitful for me.



Serenading my first love Olympia

After the US we travelled to Italy for the same performance of Hoffmaan. Italy is my favorite country to visit so going back was a treat for me. By the time we arrived I was tired of flying and the jet lag got me badly. My understudy partner had still not recovered from covid and that meant I was to perform both nights again. It was very hard during the last days of Hoffmaan leading up to the final performance, I was tired and the heat in Italy this year was extreme. All I can say is that I have never worked that hard in an opera, but it was a very valuable experience and sort of prepared me for what was coming up on my return home to SA.



In Italy during the performance of Hoffmann

I arrived back home with so much fatigue, but I had no choice but to soldier on. On the day of my arrival, UCT Opera had their first rehearsal, for the same opera and the same role of Hoffmaan, together with the concept presentation. I landed at 11am in the morning and the rehearsal was at 2pm. This was hard for me as I was expected to sing immediately on the day of my arrival.

For this production, the Stage Director was Steven Stead and the conductor was Prof Jeremy Silver. The opera was performed purely by UCT students and alumni who came to assist with the big roles. This was amazing because I had the chance to learn from those before me and at least this time, sharing the role with someone who was actually going to sing and not get sick before performance was good. For the next 3 weeks I sang the entire rehearsals because my partner was in the US doing some work so by the time he arrived I was exhausted.



Singing Kleinzack the aria of Hoffmann on the 1st day of rehearsals in UCT

This time I had to make sure I do even better in this role as last time was my first and I had 4 performances I did abroad now, so it was great that I got to perform on opening night and closing night as well. There were challenges for me through these weeks of preparation, where I fell ill twice as well, but by the last week I was back on top of my game. In between I had the pleasure and honor to sing at an event that was jointly presented by Abagold Ltd and Diemersfontein, with Sue and David Sonnenberg being the most amazing hosts of this event. I also had the pleasure to share the stage with a friend and outstanding soprano Yolisa Ngwexana who is currently finishing her studies in the UK. I enjoyed this beautiful selection of music as

it gave me a lot to help in my preparation for performing at Operalia and helped me “stretch” myself as an artist.

UShaka the Opera

Before leaving for the US, I was approached to perform UShaka the Opera, a suitcase version of the full opera with the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra by Bongiwe Nakani, who is an amazing singer having worked in Vienna for a long time. I always love doing African works because it keeps me grounded and helps me promote African music. This performance was in the Cape Town City Hall.





TREASURES

DIEMERSFONTEIN
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
ABAGOLD
PRESENTS

AN AFTERNOON OF **CLASSICAL OPERA** AND
WINE TASTING, FOLLOWED BY A SPECIALITY
GOURMET DINNER FEATURING THE JEWEL OF
THE SEA, ABALONE.

PERFORMANCES BY LUVU MARANTI AND YOLISA
NGWEXANA, ACCOMPANIED BY PIANIST JOSE DIAS

26 AUGUST 2023

DIEMERSFONTEIN WINE & COUNTRY ESTATE

EVENT STARTS AT 16:00

TICKET PRICE - R550 PER PERSON

OVERNIGHT STAY IN A GARDEN ROOM
INCLUDING BREAKFAST: R1020.00 DOUBLE
& R910.00 SINGLE PER NIGHT

FOR RESERVATIONS - PLEASE EMAIL JENNIFER ON
JENNIFER@DIEMERSFONTEIN.CO.ZA OR CALL 021 8645050



During the prologue: Hoffmann drunk and sleeping in a club



Soon thereafter I sang in a concert with Dr Lisa Engelbrecht positioned as the passion of Puccini concert which we had performed in Grayton early this year. This performance was in Constantia in a church and it was amazing. Singing a duet with Siphe Kwani Baritone from La Boheme my favourite Opera

My academics are going very well. I'm passing my music theory with distinctions assignments so far. I'm very much aware I have a long road to go but I'm also praying and working hard as much as I can to ensure my future is solid for next year. Graduating this year will be a significant highlight for me after four years of hard work.

Coming back to Operalia I am really looking forward to performing in this competition and I'm working very on my repertoire to ensure it is at one with me and my voice. The more I perform the more I grow mentally because my fear for performing on stage (Yes, this happens to many of us.....but the only way is to work through it, with some help from my coaches and mentors) is getting better every time I am on stage. I feel I now enjoy being on stage more than ever.

There is a lot of media coverage also for Operalia and the Hoffmaan performances and I will attach these articles for those interested. I've been doing so many interviews for the past 2 months about my journey and how I became a participant in Operalia.

Today I attended an interview in the Artscape Theatre and was told that Markhams, the Gentleman's clothing brand, would like to sponsor me with suits for Operalia. So many opportunities and blessings.

Opera Highlights and Verdi Requiem

My next projects outside Operalia will be the Opera Highlights and Verdi requiem with the Libertas Choir in Stellenbosch. This opportunity came my way due to the ever-present mentor, Louna Stofberg, who as you all know has helped me to understand and have success with music theory. As my tutor, Louna is exceptional and I love having her to accompany me when we get the chance to perform, like our annual concert in Hermanus.



I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all again for the support you give me and everything you have done for me, I appreciate it with all my heart.

Kindest regards

Luvo

