

biography



GIDON SAKS – BASS-BARITONE

Gidon Saks was born in Israel and brought up in South Africa, where he began his musical studies at Cape Town University. He was subsequently trained at the Royal Northern College of Music with John Cameron, and then at the Opera School at the University of Toronto with Patricia Kern.

He was a member of the Ensemble of the Canadian Opera Company where his roles included Rochefort *Anna Bolena* with Dame Joan Sutherland, Daland *Der Fliegende Holländer*, Wurm *Luisa Miller*, Bluebeard and Boris Godounov. He received a full scholarship to the Zurich Opera Studio, and was then engaged in Gelsenkirchen and Bielefeld, where he perfected his German, and added many roles from Entartete operas to his repertoire - onstage and in recording.

Since then opera engagements have included Franck's *Les Beatitudes* with Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (Berliner Festwochen under Vladimir Ashkenazy), Claggart *Billy Budd* (Scottish Opera, Geneva, Antwerp, Royal Opera House and at the Bastille) Leporello *Don Giovanni*, Achillas *Giulio Cesare*, Sarastro *The Magic Flute* (Scottish Opera), Colline *La Boheme* and Kecal *The Bartered Bride* (New Israeli Opera), Don Pizarro *Fidelio*, Count Almaviva *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Daland and Kochubei *Mazeppa* (Welsh National Opera), Sparafucile *Rigoletto*, Ashby *La Fanciulla del West* and Cadmus/Somnus *Semele* (De Vlaamse opera), Don Giovanni (Reisopera), Filippo *Don Carlo* (Geneva and Palermo), Wurm (Spoleto USA Festival and San Francisco Opera), Kaspar *Die Freischütz* (Staatsoper, Berlin), Don Pizarro (Staatsoper, Berlin, Finnish Opera, Helsinki, Piazza della Signoria) Shostakovich's *Execution of Stenka Razin* (Florence under Bychkov and the Piazza della Signoria under Robertson), König Heinrich *Lohengrin*, Fafner and Hagen *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (Seattle), Seneca *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (La Monnaie), title role in Boito's *Mefistofele* (De Nederlandse Opera), Mefisto in Spohr's *Faust* (Vienna and Cologne), Mephistopheles Gounod's *Faust* (Cape Town Opera), *The Pilgrim's Progress* (Royal Opera House) which was also recorded under Richard Hickox, Boris Godounov, Kaspar *Der Freischütz*, Nick Shadow *The Rake's Progress* and Hagen *Götterdämmerung* (English National Opera).

Gidon has created several roles including George Moscone, Stewart Wallace's *Harvey Milk* (Houston Grand Opera, New York City Opera and San Francisco Opera) which was also recorded for Teldec under Donald Runnicles, Hamilcar in Fénélon's *Salammbô* (Bastille), and the Messenger in Goehr's *Arianna* (Royal Opera House).

Recent performances have included Hunding *Die Walküre* and Daland in Washington DC, Scarpia at Bregenz Festival, Bluebeard at the Concertgebouw under Peter Eotvos, in Nantes and for the opening of a new theatre in Angers, and a critically acclaimed concert performance of Claggart for the LSO.

Future plans include Don Pizzaro for Canadian Opera Company, Claggart for Teatro Colon, Buenos Aires, 4 Villains *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Covent Garden, a return to DC to sing Fasolt, Hunding and Hagen in their new production of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, Hagen *Götterdämmerung* La Fenice and an invitation to Santa Fe.

Recordings include Abbot *Curlew River* (Philips) with Sir Neville Marriner, the Gravedigger in Weill's *Silbersee* (BMG), which also marked his Prom debut, the title role in Handel's *Hercules* under Minkowski (Deutsche Grammophon) and Saul with Rene Jacobs, which won a Gramophone Award.

Gidon Saks is also active as a director/designer and is visiting Professor of Voice at the Conservatoire of Ghent in Belgium. He also frequently gives masterclasses internationally.

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