

Legendary Sesotho balladeer Steve Kekana dies

Legendary Sesotho balladeer Steve Kekana has died. He was 62.

Kekana is survived by his wife and two children.



Source: Supplied

For years, Kekana's falsetto wafted and glided beautifully over his melodic compositions and gave generations soundtracks of their youth. His name became synonymous with Afro-pop/soul thanks to tracks like "Abuti Thabiso" about a wayward breadwinner who abandoned his family and "Kodua Ea Maseru", a touching tribute to the citizens of Lesotho following the killing of several Basotho at a concert.

His most famous song, the groovy and infectious break up hit, "Take Your Love" with the late Nana Coyote Motijoane, cemented his place in the music pecking order and remains a South African classic.

His collaborations, particularly “Feel So Strong” with PJ Powers and the wedding anthem “Sebabatso” with Nana Coyote enriched the South African songbook. His influences ranged from pop and R&B to mbaqanga, jazz and gospel. He released over 40 albums in 40 years and was decorated with more than 70 gold disc awards.

Kekana was born in Zebediela, Limpopo on 4 August 1958. He lost his eyesight as a young boy and went to a school for the visually impaired in Polokwane. He belonged to music bands by the time he was a teenager. The *Sowetan* reported that when his first song titled “Mamsy” hit the airwaves in 1978, teenagers from his village of Sekgophokgophong in Zebediela ran out of their school to jive to it in the neighbouring shebeen. But it was his breakout hit, “Raising My Family” that reached Europe and made him an international star.

Kekana conquered his visual disability and inspired many when he completed his law studies and was admitted as an advocate. He also taught labour law at Unisa between 2011 and 2013.

He is a recipient of an honorary doctorate from the Unisa. Kekana was also honoured with a Lifetime Achievement Award at Sama24 in 2018 for his remarkable career.



#MusicExchange: Steve Kekana

Martin Myers 3 Dec 2019



RiSA CEO Nhlanhla Sibisi expressed sympathy on behalf of Sama and RiSA: “We send our condolences to the family of Steve Kekana, friends and fans. Kekana was a personification of persistence and determination. We, at the Sama, have been privileged enough to celebrate his achievements while he was still alive when we presented him with the Lifetime Achievement Award. May his accomplishments inspire all of us to do our best with whatever life throws at us, he conquered his disability and reached the heights of the legal and music fields. His legacy will live on.”

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