INNOCENT OKECHUKWU

Composer · Pianist · Educator

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PROFILE

Nigerian composer of more than three hundred works for voices, instruments and ensembles of every size, performed across Africa, Asia, Europe, and North and South America. His music draws on the rhythms, instruments and communal music-making of his Igbo heritage and on the sacred choral tradition, and ranges from choral anthems and art songs to concertos, orchestral and band works, chamber music and graphic scores.

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Music Composition (in progress), minor in Piano Performance — University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA — 2025–present
Advisor: David Gompper. Dixon-Hibbard Scholarship, 2026–2027

Master of Music, Composition, minor in Piano Performance — Longy School of Music of Bard College, Cambridge, MA — 2023
Studied with John Howell Morrison. GPA 3.92

B.A., Music Theory and Composition, minor in Piano Performance — University of Nigeria, Nsukka — 2017
First Class Honours; Best Graduating Student, Department of Music. GPA 4.65

AWARDS, HONOURS AND SELECTIONS

1st Place, Luna Nova Pipe Organ Composition Contest	2026
Finalist, Ruth Wales du Pont Collegiate Composition Competition, with the American Pops Orchestra	2026
Dixon-Hibbard Scholarship, University of Iowa	2026–2027
Selected Composer, Texas New Music Festival – Mexico City	2027
Selected Composer, Golden Hornet String Quartet Smackdown IX, Austin, TX	2025
Winner, Call for Scores, Civic Orchestra of Baton Rouge	2025
First Prize, UCCMA 30th Anniversary Anthem Composition Competition	2023
Certified Music Practitioner Scholar and Access for Equity Scholar, Longy School of Music	2022–2023
Bronwyn and Jeffrey Lamont Artistic and Social Change Fellow, Longy School of Music	2021–2022
Best Graduating Student, Department of Music, University of Nigeria, Nsukka	2017

SELECTED PERFORMANCES, PREMIERES AND COMMISSIONS

Fanfare for a New Dawn (symphonic band): premiere, Westchester Symphonic Band, New York	Nov. 2026
De Tenebris, ad Lucem (string quartet): Red Cedar Quartet, Vienna, Austria	July 7, 2026
Ise Oluwa (string orchestra): world premiere, Iowa City Community String Orchestra	July 2026

Rolling Stone (orchestra): Brazilian Symphonic Orchestra, Brazilian Orchestra Summit, Brazil — Aug. 2025

Rise! Africa (piano trio): Minnesota — May 2025

Zig-Zag (viola and piano) — Apr. 2025

Vendetta (chamber orchestra): Civic Orchestra of Baton Rouge, LA — Mar. 22, 2025

Onu Ogene (violin and piano): Jude Umeh, Nigeria — 2025

Udara M Too (SATB and piano): Notre Dame School of Sacred Music, IN — July 2022

The River Within (string quartet): world premiere, Castle of our Skin, Boston Center for the Arts; later programmed by the Chamber Orchestra of Boston — Feb. 12, 2022

Ekpere (Prayer) (countertenor and piano): commissioned by Andrew Egbuchiem, Boston — Oct. 2021

Nwa-Nwa Ndo (soprano and piano): premiere, Agatha Ibeazor Holland (live online) — June 27, 2020

Ome n'ala (countertenor and piano): premiere, Andrew Egbuchiem with Echezonachukwu Nduka, New York — Feb. 2020

Dusk to Dawn (flute, clarinet and piano): commissioned by the Silver-Ebony-Ivory Trio, Boston

Also performed or programmed by the JACK Quartet, the Boston Gay Men's Chorus and the Akojopo Foundation

RECORDINGS AND PUBLICATIONS

Three piano works from *The Voyage* recorded by Navona Records with the Sphinx Organization on *Arise & Shine*; subsequently published by Hal Leonard — 2025

Make a Wish (SATB), TUX Peoples' Music — 2026

"Representing African Pianism: An Analysis of Akin Euba's *Scenes from Traditional Life*," Society of Composers, Inc.

Born For Us This Day: Ten Christmas Carols for SATB Choir, Piano and Chamber Orchestra (vocal score, full score and parts) — 2026

Rising Voices: A K-12 Choral Anthology — 2026

The Voyage: Music Explorer's Handbook — 2026

The Voyage 2: twenty piano pieces for young players — 2024

The Voyage: graded piano pieces, beginner to advanced (Lulu Press) — 2023

Musical Echoes: selected choral and instrumental works — 2022

CONFERENCES, FESTIVALS AND PRESENTATIONS

Presenter, Aspen Composers' Conference, Aspen Music Festival, CO — Aug. 2025

Presenter, Composers' Forum, University of Houston School of Music, TX — 2025

Participant, Brazilian Orchestra Summit, Brazil — 2025

Accepted, Mostly Modern Festival, Netherlands — 2025

Accepted, Sewanee Summer Music Festival, TN — 2025

Presenter, XII Piracicaba International Piano Festival, Brazil

Presenter, UCCMA Biannual Conference

TEACHING AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant, Musicianship and Theory I (MUS:1201) — School of Music, University of Iowa — present
Leads lab sections in musicianship, aural skills and theory

Church Pianist — United Congregational Church, Worcester, MA — Sept. 2023–July 2024
Weekly worship accompaniment and preludes

Music Teacher — Hillside School, Marlborough, MA — Aug. 2023–July 2024
General music, chorus and band; boarding dorm parent; ping-pong club leader

Music Teacher — Sacred Heart STEM School, Boston, MA — Nov. 2022–Apr. 2023
General music and chorus

Church Organist/Pianist — Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Boston, MA — Oct. 2021–Apr. 2023
Weekly Mass accompaniment

Music Teacher — The Regent School, Abuja, Nigeria — Dec. 2020–June 2021
General music, chorus and band; curated school concerts

Music Instructor — Solid Rock Music and Dance Zone, Dubai, UAE — June 2018–July 2020
Piano, keyboard, violin and voice, ages 4 to adult; ABRSM and Trinity College London examination preparation

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI)

College Music Society (CMS)

SKILLS

Composition and orchestration; piano and organ performance; church music and accompaniment; choral and ensemble direction; music theory and aural-skills teaching; notation with Dorico. Plays piano, organ and ekwe; self-taught on clarinet, violin, flute and cello.

SELECTED WORKS, 2017–2026

A full catalogue of over 300 works, with score videos, is available at www.innocentokechukwucomposer.com and youtube.com/@Innocentorum.

2026

Keep the Lantern Burning	Christmas medley for SATB choir and piano
Born For Us This Day	ten Christmas carols for SATB choir, piano and chamber orchestra
Sit With Me	SATB choir and piano
My Father's Hands	SATB choir and piano
The Song You Left in Me	SSAATTBB choir
Overheard	SATB choir (graphic score)
Let the Floods Clap Their Hands	SATB choir a cappella (Psalm 98)

The Last of the Singers	SATB choir with divisi and piano
What Help Can We Give?	SSAATTBB choir a cappella
The Light We Bring	SATB choir and piano
Until We Meet Again	SATB choir
What We Leave	TTBB choir
Non Nobis Domine	SATB choir
Peace I Leave With You	SSAATB choir and piano (also with orchestra)
A Light Still On	SSAATTBB choir
Ala: What the Ground Remembers	SSA choir and piano
Dance Me Slow	SATB jazz choir and double bass
Under the Same Old Moon	TTBB barbershop chorus
The Bells Are Ringing Us Home	TTBB barbershop chorus
Missa Pro Homine Communi (Mass for the Common Man)	choir
The Risen Lord	Easter cantata
What the Earth Knows	musical
Rising Melodies	20 songs for K-12 choirs
Where the Water Goes	song cycle for soprano and piano
Where the Roots Go	song cycle for baritone and piano
Night Songs	countertenor and piano
O Come, O Come, Emmanuel	Advent solo for tenor and piano
Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus	Advent solo for tenor and piano
Kingfisher	piano
Firewheel	piano
Across the Sahara	piano
Bell and Echo	piano
Reflets sur l'Eau Noire	piano
Eke, Orie, Afọ, Nkwọ	piano (four movements)
Ikenga and Ikenga Fantasy	piano
Toccata Surrexit	organ
Fanfare and Hosanna	organ
Fantasia Ascendit	organ
Te Deum – Festival Postlude	organ
Elegy – In Paradisum	organ
Trumpet Voluntary	organ
Wind and Flame	scherzo for organ
Stabat Mater	passacaglia for organ
Meditation	organ

Processional – The Magi	organ
Pastorale	organ
Rorate Caeli	organ prelude
Heatwave	violin
Octagram	violin
Source to Sea	viola (graphic score)
Breath of Fire	viola
Faultline Afterimage	trombone
Prelude	harp
The White Egret	harp
Chorale and Toccata	marimba
The Wooden Voice	twenty études for marimba
Murmuration	string quartet (graphic score)
Lattice	string quartet
The Fast Train	string trio
Tessera	wind quintet
HighWire	brass quintet
Night Shift	saxophone quartet
Égwú Úkwù	euphonium quintet
Reflex	tenor saxophone and piano
Ubọ	celesta and cello
Circuit	sonata for clarinet and piano
Torque	sonata for trumpet and piano
Eight Doors	cello and piano
Lament and Fury	cello and piano
Cry of Ululation	bassoon and piano
Harmattan	clarinet and cello
Fantasia Brillante	euphonium and piano
The Hollow Reed and the Silver Pipe	23 pieces for flute and oboe
Dusk to Dawn	flute, clarinet and piano; commissioned by the Silver-Ebony-Ivory Trio
Mmanwu	clarinet, cello and piano
The Alcatraz	piano trio
Dance of the Geese	flute, clarinet, bassoon and piano
Tidelines	Pierrot ensemble
Tin Lizard	electric guitar quartet
The Village Scene	marimba, steel pan, djembe and dancers
The Ringing Year	24 pieces for handbells
Clarion	fanfare for symphonic band

Fanfare for a New Dawn	symphonic band; premiere: Westchester Symphonic Band
Ever-Ringing Halls	concert band
Go-Slow	wind ensemble
Confluencia	symphonic band
In the Pocket	concert band
New Yam Festival	concert band
Unbroken	concert band
Lightward	string orchestra
Where Horizons Bend	four movements for orchestra
Wildfire	orchestra
The Hidden City	suite for orchestra
Dance Suite for Orchestra	orchestra
Nocturne for a Distant Shore	sinfonietta
The Messenger	sinfonietta
Kinetic	piano concerto no. 2
Altitude	concerto for alto saxophone and woodwind ensemble
Rain Maker	flute concerto with strings
Harmattan Light	oboe concerto
Ọ̈jà	concerto for oboe and strings

2025

Sporadic	string quartet
Vendetta	chamber orchestra; Civic Orchestra of Baton Rouge, Mar. 22, 2025
Incantation	guitar
Onu Ogene	violin and piano; performed by Jude Umeh, Nigeria
Zig-Zag	viola and piano (also cello and piano)
Twisted Dialogue	violin and piano
Obodo-Ederiwo (The City Is Still)	SATB
Busy Street	string quartet arrangement

2024

Kpú-kpúm-kpú Ogēnē	piano
Colors	French horn and piano
Ezi Nwanne (My Dear Sibling)	soprano and piano

2023

Ibu Chukwu	cello and piano; performed at Longy
Mirage	piano
Nwa Mgbe Nta	tenor and piano

Humpty-Dumpty	brass quartet
Mystique	piano
Ije Awele	flute and piano
Ihunanya (Love)	SATB and piano; commissioned by UCCMA-PA
Downtown	piano
The Cradle Song	SATB
Busy Street	piano trio
The Sailor	orchestra
On Arrival	viola and piano
Libation	string quartet and piano

2022

The River Within	string quartet; premiered by Castle of our Skin
The Beaming Light	flute and piano
Bitter-Sweet	soprano and piano
The Lamb	SATB and organ
Sneaky One	brass quartet
David's Pencil	violin sonata
Ariri	SATB and piano
The Lord's My Shepherd	SATB and piano
Heavy Sigh	cello and piano
Dance 1	piano trio
The Blue Bird	oboe and piano
When the World Is Sick	soprano and piano; SATB and piano; lyrics by David Mynott and Innocent Okechukwu
Fear	soprano and piano
The Wanderer	violin and piano
Winter Coffee	trumpet and piano
I Can Do All Things	tenor, harpsichord and cello
Streams of Light	string orchestra
Sad Puppy	piano
Mother	voices, piano and cello
Reaching Out	double string quartet
Trust in the Lord	SATB and piano
God of Hope	SATB and piano
Cantate Domino	SATB and piano
Ndubuisi	marimba concerto
Ageless Sea	organ

Be Kind	SATB and piano
Egwu Onwa	SATB, tenor and piano
Kpo Ya Chukwu	SATB and piano; commissioned by Ike Eseka
Ọjị (Kola Nut)	piano
Udara M Too	SATB and piano
Amara Chukwu	horn and piano
Always on the Ground	soprano and bassoon
The Voyage	piano trio
The Human Family	soprano and piano

2021

Hello God	voice and piano
Ekpere (Prayer)	countertenor and piano; commissioned by Andrew Egbuchiem
Sinking Sand	violin sonata
Snow-Snow	high voice and piano
Hang-out	trumpet and piano
Ave Verum Corpus	SATB

2020

Ome n'ala	countertenor and piano
Ije Uwa	countertenor, soprano and piano
Soro M Tobe Chukwu	SATB
Nwa-Nwa Ndo	soprano and piano
Survivors	soprano and piano
Mmiri Mara M	SATB and piano
Behold the Star	SATB and piano

2017

Oku Ncheghari (Easter Igbo Cantata)	SATB, piano and percussion

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