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FRED ONOVWERO SUOKE

COMPOSER ARRANGER CONDUCTOR
CHORAL CONDUCTOR AFRICAN MUSICOLOGIST

PROFILE

PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS

FRED ONOVWEROSUOKE



When Robert De Niro called, he took the call.

Born in Ghana to Nigerian parents, multiple award-winning composer Fred Onovwerosuoke, PhD, grew up in both countries before settling in the United States in 1990. Early childhood and education through college years, were spent in both Ghana and Nigeria.

He attended Principia College, Elsah, Illinois, on a full scholarship, and, while there, studied music theory and 20th Century composition techniques under Jim Dowcett. He also studied engineering science and computer programming with

David Cornell and Tom Fuller.

Although he has had wide-ranging training that spans composition, electrical and electronic engineering, information technology, management and musicology, he attributes his interest in music to his childhood as boy-soprano, and to his high-school music teacher, Sam Anyanele. It was Anyanele who instilled in him a deep love of indigenous African music. His tutelage under Dowcett at Principia, was said to unleash a creative individualism that eventually evolved into a career as a composer.

“Fred O,” as friends call him, has spent time in over 30 African countries, researching and analyzing some of Africa’s rich music traditions.

“I see hidden across Africa, a gold-mine of unlimited musical scales and modes, melodic and harmonic traditions, and, yes, rhythms—abundant yet largely untapped.”

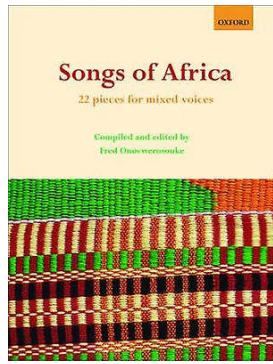
Fred has also traveled in the American Deep South, the Caribbean and South America, for comparative research in what he likes to call “traceable musical Africanisms.” Fred is considered a leading authority of African music in the world.

“My compositions are informed by my travels around the world, and each piece is harnessed and nurtured by an African sensibility that is unmistakable and genuine.”

His influences are wide and varied, and he is much at home discussing Beethoven, Debussy and Stravinsky, as well as foremost exponents of various traditional music.

In 1994, he founded the St. Louis African Chorus to help nurture African choral music as a mainstream repertoire for performance and education in America. Today, the organization's mission has broadened to include classical/art music by lesser-known composers, particularly of African descent, and has been renamed Intercultural Music Initiative. Fred presently serves as president of the organization.

While the 2005 Hurricane Katrina brought indescribable devastation to many people in New Orleans and the Gulf of Mexico, it was in the aftermath of that disaster that much of Fred's music manuscripts were discovered and salvaged by volunteers who had visited his family to help with the clean-up and rebuilding effort.



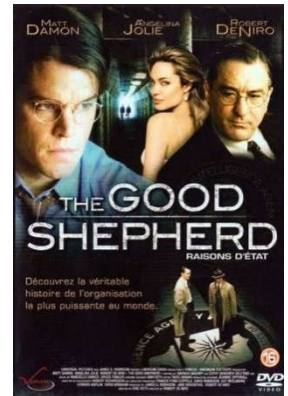
Shortly afterwards, a quick succession of works were published, including his *Twenty-Four Studies in African Rhythms: Volume I*, *Songs of Africa: 22 Pieces for Mixed Voices*. Recordings consisted of *African Arts Music for Flute* by flautist Wendy Hymes and pianist Darryl Hollister; *ASA: Piano Music by Composers from Africa and the African Diaspora* by pianist William Chapman Nyaho; and, the promotional recording *Landscapes of Africa: Music for Orchestra* by the New Horizons Studio Orchestra. Fred has a diverse compositional output that includes orchestral suites and works for various combinations of chamber groups.

Recently, the National Theatre and the British Council Auditorium in Accra, Ghana, violinist Rachel Barton Pine, flutist Wendy Hymes, pianist George François and accordionist Rodger French, led the Ghana National Symphony Orchestra in multiple premieres of Fred's works.

And, Hollywood called. Actually, New York.

It was the St. Louis African Chorus that garnered the attention of director Robert De Niro, who was searching for a particular sound—an African Chant—for his film, “The Good Shepherd.” Meeting with Fred in New York, and listening to a selection of works written for the group, the decision was made.

Fred recorded the group at the Sheldon Concert Hall, St. Louis. The work was entitled “Ofrenda de Amor (Love Offer)”. The Hall was empty of audience. The only one listening was connected by a direct line transmitted to New York—Robert De Niro. De Niro was so impressed and “deeply affected” by the Chorus, the song was in the film. Fred turned down the offer of a direct payment for the services of the Chorus, but if a donation came, he would accept it. The donation came.



Of late, a poignant piece was arranged by Fred at the request of his friend, Titus Underwood, principal oboist of the Nashville Symphony Orchestra. On June 6, 2020, it became a special moment in television.

“...in the wake of the current civil unrest, our message at the Intercultural Music Initiative was expressed through the artistic collaboration with some of the leading Black principals at America's major orchestras and music conservatories. The project was originally conceived by my friend, oboist Titus Underwood, for me to write a new piece based on a tune young, budding, Black musicians can recognize or relate. Well, in the midst of production, a string of senseless events happened, leading to the ongoing civic unrest. So, naturally, our focus had to incorporate a sliver of advocacy against oppression.”

*“For me, it was an absolute honor to write this arrangement to an illustrious African American Hymn (“Lift Every Voice”). So my gratitude really is to Nashville's Symphony Orchestra's Titus Underwood (Principal Oboe) for inviting me to participate in this historic production that is called **‘Lift Every Voice: Every Voice.’**”*



Fred resides with his wife, internationally renowned flautist, Wendy Hymes, PhD, and their two sons, Omena Benjamin and Ghenovo Gabriel, in the St. Louis suburb of Creve Coeur, Missouri.



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[FRED O]

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AFRICAN MUSICOLOGIST WORLD MUSIC JAZZ (TRADITIONAL & CONTEMPORARY)
GOSPEL POPULAR MUSIC MULTI-CULTURAL EDUCATION
NON-PROFIT ARTS MANAGEMENT
— Ph.D., M.B.A., B.A. —

www.FredOMusic.com FredO@FredOMusic.com

Citizenship: United States

Fluent in English and French

Elementary proficiency in Akan (Ghana) and several Nigerian languages

St. Louis Los Angeles

Original Music Sampler

INDUSTRY RECOGNITIONS

ASCAP Awards, Fifteen Consecutive Years thru 2020

Most Performed African Composer by an American Orchestra or Chamber Music Group

American Music Center Award

Tribute to Great African Composers for Orchestra, Mezzo Soprano and SATB Choir

Commissioned by Prof. Emeritus J. H. Kwabena Nketia

Brannen–Cooper Fund Award, in association with the National Flute Association

Landscapes of Africa: A Tone Poem for Solo Soprano Flute, Alto Flute, Piccolo and Orchestra

2014 Regional Arts Commission of St. Louis

Artist Fellow

Missouri Arts Award (The State’s highest honor in the Arts)

St. Louis African Chorus, Fred Onovwerosuoke, Founder-President

Best Chorus, Riverfront Times Best of 2000

St. Louis African Chorus, Fred Onovwerosuoke, Founder-President

Minnesota Orchestra Awards, Honorable Mention

Suite No. 3 for Orchestra – Premiere of Original Composition

Meet the Composer Award

Three African Folk Dances for School Band

Commissioned by Arts & Education–Maritz Grant for Ferguson Middle School Band

Live Performance by Ferguson Middle School Band and Professional Musicians

Meet the Composer Award

For Engagement of Urban Youth from Metro St. Louis Area in the Musical Arts

PNC Financial Services Group “Arts Alive Award”

“Sonic Safari for Schools” Program

EXCLUSIVE REPRESENTATION BY OTTO VAVRIN II

MOTION PICTURES

LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING (Arranger) IMI Artists	Titus Underwood, dir./exec. prod./performer
PENNIES FOR THE BOATMAN AI Pictures	Niyi Coker, Jr., dir. James Abernathy, Michael Murray
THE GOOD SHEPHERD (Music Consultant, Soundtrack) Universal Pictures	Robert De Niro, dir. James G. Robinson, Jane Rosenthal, prods.
YORUBA POTTERS: MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS – OGBENA COMPOUND Oklahoma State University	Ron du Bois, dir./prod.

TELEVISION – AS HIMSELF

LIVING ST. LOUIS (Featured Interview) KETC Television / PBS	Jim Kircherr, Kate Shaw, prods.
SINGSATION GOSPEL MUSIC AWARDS (Conductor, Music Director with the St. Louis African Chorus) WGN Television	Dr. Willie Wilson, exec. prod.
ART FUSION: FRED ONOVWEROSUOKE & THE ST. LOUIS AFRICAN CHORUS (Featured Interview) Regional Arts Commission of St. Louis	Patrick Murphy, dir./prod.
ST. LOUIS AFRICAN CHORUS IN CONCERT (Conductor, Music Director) Rede Global de Televisão, Brazil	Roberto Irineu Marinho, exec.
ERITREA: IN SONG AND DANCE (Conductor, Music Director with the St. Louis African Chorus) ERI Television, Eritrea, East Africa	Asmelash Abreha, exec.

CLASSICAL COMPOSITIONS

Works for Orchestra

Suites Nos. 1-5 for String Orchestra
Fantasia on "Lift Every Voice" for Orchestra, commissioned by Titus Underwood, Nashville Symphony (Used for The 2020 "Lift Every Voice" Project video production)
A Triptych of American Voices: A Cantata of the People, , commissioned by Coro Allegro of Boston, World Premiere at Sanders Theatre, Cambridge, Massachusetts
Caprice for Piano & Orchestra – Concerto for piano and chamber orchestra; by Coro Allegro of Boston, Massachusetts, Commissioned for pianist Darryl Hollister
Dance Tribute for Orchestra with Piano Obbligato
The Gathering - An Overture
Landscapes of Africa: A Tone Poem for Solo Soprano Flute, Alto Flute, Piccolo and Orchestra, Commissioned by Brannen-Cooper in association with the United States National Flute Association
Meditation for Darfur for String Orchestra, Percussion, Harp, Mezzo-Soprano & Treble Choir, with the introductory poem, *Darfur Meditation*, by Rabbi Harold Schulweis and photography by the Human Rights Watch. Commissioned by Ensemble du Monde of New York, for both the Boys Choir of Kenya and the Winneba Youth Choir of Ghana
Pennies for the Boatman Suite (Soundtrack from the Motion Picture)
Tribute to Great African Composers for Orchestra, Mezzo Soprano and SATB Choir, Commissioned by Emeritus Prof. J. H. Kwabena Nketia American Music Center Award
Warriors Dance for Orchestra (Fanfare for Orchestra)
Warriors Dance for String Orchestra (Fanfare for Strings & Percussion)

Works for Bands

African Fanfare for Band
African Folk Dances for Band, Nos. 1-4
Highlife Mass Suite for Band – Kyrie, Gloria, Acclamation, Credo, Sanctus and Agnus Dei

Sahelian Jam for Band

Three African Folk Dances for School Band, Commissioned by Arts & Education-Maritz Grant for Ferguson Middle School Band

Three Rhythmic Sketches for Band

Quintets and other Chamber Works

Fanfare for String Quartet, (Recorded by Invoke String Quartet)

Fantasia for String Quartet

Nubian Dances No. 1

String Quartets, Nos. 1-3

Works for Miscellaneous Duos

Fantasia for Violin and Piano

Fantasia for Cello and Piano

Six and Half Variations for Violin and Piano (Transcribed from the original version for Cello and Piano version)

Six Sketches for Oboes and Piano

Sonata for Two Pianos Nos. 1 and 2 for Cello and Piano

Sonata for Two Pianos No. 3, Commissioned for William C. Nyaho for the Nyaho/Garcia Duo

Three Pieces for Flute and Piano

Works for Trios

Five Sketches for Flute, Violin and Piano

Three Pieces for Woodwind Trio

Four Caprices for Woodwind Trio

Landscapes of Africa: A Tone Poem for Soprano Flute, Alto Flute, Piccolo and Piano

Meditation for Darfur for Mezzo-Soprano and Piano

Serenade for Flutes, commissioned by Dr. Marie Jureit-Beamish, for the Florida Atlantic Coast Flute Festival

Twelve African Songs for Solo Voice and Piano

Works for Solo Piano and other Solo Instruments

Twelve Miniatures for Piano, Commissioned ongoing project, dedicated in memoriam to Nigerian composer, musicologist, pianist Akin Euba (1935-2020)

The Triptych Piano Suite (A solo piano rendition of the original work for orchestra and mixed voices.)

Five Kaleidoscopes for Piano, Commissioned for Rebeca Omordia, World Premiere at St. Louis Symphony's "Live at Pulitzer"

Twenty-Four Studies in African Rhythms, Vols. 1 and 2

Variations on a Pende Tune for Solo Flute

Six and Half Variations for Solo Violin (Arranged from the original version for Violin and Piano)

Works for Choral Ensembles

Haille Mamman (Supreme Motherhood), Pan-African song for Mixed Voices, Bass Guitar (or Acoustic Bass) and Percussion

Yenu Bene (All things to You), ki-Kaounde song for Upper Voices and Percussion

Afro Caribbean Mass for SATB Choir, Soloist and Pop-Band

Songs of Africa: 22 pieces for Mixed Voices

Three African Songs for SATB Choir - I. Oluwa L'Oluso Agutan Mi (Psalm 23) with Piano or Organ accompaniment II. Barka

(Blessings/Goodwill) with Piano accompaniment; and, III. Chant for Peace with Piano, Double Bass and Conga Drums

Tuli-Tuli, arranged by Retha Hoffmeyr and Fred Onovwerosuoke for the St. Louis African Chorus, Oxford University Press

Titles not included in the collections by Oxford University Press

Chechere! Akan Vocalize for SSAA Choir and Percussion

Efuo, Urhobo "Igbe" Chant for Mixed Voices and Percussion

Ibaje, Yoruba Meditation for A Cappella Female or Mixed voices

Matshitshi Quomani, 6 Zulu/Xhosa Playsongs for SATB Choir

Oluwa l'Oluso Aguntan Mi, Yoruba Meditation on Psalm 23 for SATB Choir and Organ (Ayodele Arr. Onovwerosuoke)

Omome Chiy'o Dedede, Urhobo Initiation Chant for Female/Mixed Voices and Maracas. Pata-Pata, Zulu/Xhosa Folk Song for SATB

Choir and Percussion. Une R'Emakashe, Urhobo Carol for SATB or TTBB Choir, Percussion and Dancers. Wazobia, Nigerian

(multi-lingual) Satire for SATB Choir and Percussion. Yamoriji, Meditation Chant of the Fang "Forest" People, for Female or

Mixed Voices. Yoyoma O! Ijaw/Itsekiri Funereal Chant for Mixed Voices and percussion

DISCOGRAPHY

AENaO: The Sacred Music of Ikoli Harcourt-Whyte, African Greetings

African Art Music for Flute

Amerika Jambo by Boys Choir of Kenya, (producer-arranger) African Music Publishers

Black Lands: A Tribute to Africa, Silvia Belfiore, Andrea Morelli, Clair De Lune

Dances and Rhapsodies for Woodwind Quintet, composer-producer, African Greetings

Ekele: Piano Music by African Composers, Rebecca Omordia, Heritage Classical Recordings

Landscapes of Africa: A Tone Poem for Solo Soprano Flute, Alto Flute, Piccolo and Orchestra, New Horizon Studio Orchestra, African Music Publishers

Libera, Marlissa Hudson, soprano, with Peter Henderson, piano – works by Bonds, Hayes, Mendelssohn, Onovwerosuoke and Puccini, (composer-co-producer), AMP Records

Live at the Sheldon, St. Louis African Chorus (artistic director-producer), CDB Records

MATESO!, Muungano National Choir of Kenya, producer, African Greetings

Miriam Makeba: Mama Africa...the Musical, (co-producer), African Greetings

Ofrenda De Amor, from the film *The Good Shepherd* (Original Soundtrack), Varèse Sarabande

St. Louis African Chorus: Live at the Sheldon, African Greetings

Songs of Africa, St. Louis African Chorus and Friends, CDB Records

Studies in African Rhythms: Piano Music by Composers of African Descent, William Chapman Nyajo, MSR Classics

Three Pieces for Flute and Piano, Wendy Hymes, flautist, accompanied by Darryl Hollister, piano, with poem recited by Richard Moore

Twenty-Four Studies in African Rhythms, works for Piano by Fred Onovwerosuoke, Peter Henderson, (co-composer-co-producer) African Music Publishers

Uvumbuzi by Boys Choir of Kenya, Limited Edition, African Music Publishers

MUSIC COMPOSITION BOOKS

A Triptych of American Voices: A Cantata of the People (Reduced score for piano & choir), African Music Publishers

Afro-Caribbean Mass for Mixed Choir, Soloist and Piano, African Music Publishers

Born This Day is the Son of God, from *The Oxford Book of Flexible Carols*, edited by Alan Bullard, Oxford University Press

Five Kaleidoscopes for Piano, African Music Publishers

Five Sketches for Flute, Violin and Piano, African Music Publishers

Jesus Christ is Here, from *The Oxford Book of Flexible Carols*, *ibid.*

Six Sketches for Oboes and Piano (Six tone poems on themes of climate unrest, avarice, complacency and rousing optimism), African Music Publishers

Songs of Africa for Upper Voices Sets 1 & 2, Oxford University Press

Songs of Africa: 22 Pieces for Mixed Voices, Introduction by Prof. Emeritus J.H. Kwabena Nketia, Oxford University Press

Three Pieces for Flute and Piano, African Music Publishers

Twelve African Songs for Solo Voice & Piano, African Music Publishers

Twenty-Four Studies in African Rhythms, Volumes I&II, African Music Publishers

TREATISES ON THE ARTS

Contemplating African Choral Music: Insights for Non-Indigenes and Foreign Conductors, American Choral Directors Association Choral Journal

Toward Cultural Diversity: Issues, Remedies and the Role of Arts Education, Multicultural Perspectives, Journal of the National Association for Multicultural Education

Contemplating African Choral Music: Insights for Foreign Directors, American Choral Directors Association Choral Journal

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES IN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

USA-Africa Artists Exchange: Cultural diplomacy initiative between USA music professionals and their counterparts around Africa, promoting mutual understanding through music

Uyo, Nigeria: Partnership with the Great State of Akwa Ibom in Nigeria to help attract American choirs to the Annual Guinness Book of Records' World's Largest Christmas Carol Festival

Nairobi, Kenya / Accra, Ghana: Collaboration with Kenya's Ministry of Culture to develop the Boys Choir of Kenya Project

London, England: Collaboration with the International Society-Africa to American Music to present the *Out of Africa* festivals in Great Torrington, North Devon

Windhoek, Namibia: Collaboration with the Namibia Directorate of Culture to present professional development workshops for Namibian choral groups and their directors

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS AND PARTICIPATIONS

African Musical Arts (nee St. Louis African Chorus)

American Choral Directors' Association

American Composers Forum

African Music Conference

American Musicological Society

Composer Diversity Initiative (founding member)

Florida Atlantic Flute Festival, (commissioned work)

National Association for Music Education

Recording Academy (voting member)

Saint-Georges International Music Festival (commissioned work)

Society for Ethnomusicology

Voice of African Music (editor)

Intercultural Music Initiative (founding board member, president)

International Consortium for Music of Africa and its Diaspora (founding trustee)

International Federation for Choral Music

International Musicological Society

International Society for Music Education

EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

Doctor of Philosophy, Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences, Union Institute and University, Cincinnati, Ohio

Master of Business Administration, Information Systems and Management, Lindenwood College, St. Charles, Missouri

Bachelor of Arts, Music Enrichment Studies, Principia College, Elsau, Illinois

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF MR. ONOVWEROSUOKE'S WORK

"Even without considering the impetus for these two dozen miniatures [*Twenty-Four Studies in African Rhythms*], this recording should be high on the acquisition agenda of all music libraries, pianists, and record collectors. pianist Peter Henderson offers proof that this music can be performed by one who is neither Ghanaian nor Nigerian....nor African."—***Dominique-Rene de Lerma (musicologist-professor of music history)***

"Onovwerosuoke's rhythmic language would be worthy of analysis by students of the long process by which a common African-American language, musical and verbal, evolved out of the multiplicity of cultures of the enslaved. The overall effect is kinetic, colorful, and imposing—any symphonic programmer looking for music that will meet urban constituencies halfway, should hear this disc."—***James Manheim, Musicologist, AllMusic.com critic***

"Thanks to the St. Louis African Chorus, we have here a local window on another world, an exciting and vast place"—***Chris King, Riverfront Times, St. Louis***

"Listening to both singers and drummers interact, we witnessed the origins of the call and response tradition used in jazz, blues and earlier, slave chants..."—***Michael Renner, St. Louis Post Dispatch***

"...this production was a work of bi-racial harmony and, perhaps in a strange way, healing. We saw on stage that our histories are now inextricably combined..."—***reviewing the CHAKA Opera, Gary Scott, KDHX Radio, St. Louis***

"From OUP [Oxford University Press] under the editorship of Fred Onovwerosuoke, the west African-born conductor and composer, comes a simply terrific volume of African songs for mixed voices, many with percussion or hand clapping, as well as the occasional instrument. The editor provides essential background information to each item as well as helpfully offering performance guidelines. The volume is attractively produced, and would make a useful addition to the library of any choir looking to expand and refresh its repertory. Warmly recommended."—***Philip Reed, Choir & Organ***

"While it seems infuriating to have to reiterate these assertions in 2019, we can be thankful that all the accomplished artists in this concert are plainly committed to doing so for as long as necessary. Though Coro Allegro, Heritage Chorale of New Haven, and their directors will likely occupy a political niche for years to come, their high musical standards ensure that general audiences will flock to hear them at least as often for artistic reasons. Long may they prosper!"—***Geoffrey Wieting, Boston Musical Intelligencer***

"...Attractive, rather epigrammatic and made an immediate effect, [piano etudes from *Twenty-Four Studies in African Rhythms*] are a compelling mixture of technical challenges, memorable ideas and clever compositional working, none of which outstayed their welcome..."—***Robert Matthew-Walker, ClassicalSource, London, UK***

"FredO, your music spoke with great immediacy. I was struck by many aspects of it. Your sensitivity to these wonderful texts, the variety of your musical language, the clarity of your phrases, the economy in your choices. I had the experience that you gave each idea the time it needs, and no more. No question that the whole audience experienced this unfamiliar music as wholly relatable and captivating..."—**Christopher Wilkins, Music Director, Akron Symphony, Boston Landmarks Orchestra**

"...his [FredO's] is a fresh voice in a quagmire of sameness. Both works immediately engaged our audiences. *The Triptych* is a fascinating piece—and very powerful...."—**David Hodgkins, Artistic Director, Coro Allegro**

"...*The Gathering*, an overture by Ghanaian-American composer Fred Onovwerosuoke, was a brief, lively work propelled by rapid and aggressive African rhythms, creates a delicious sense of danger—all powerfully rendered by Marlon Daniel and his Orchestra..."—**Victor Carr, Jr., ClassicsToday**

"These kinetic pieces [*Twenty-Four Studies in African Rhythms*] easily get under one's skin, and they sound like they are fun to play."—**American Record Guide**

"The piano lines [in FredO's *12 African Songs for Solo Voice and Piano*] are lively and catchy—indeed, though their sources are more exotic than African-American spirituals or Langston Hughes, the songs have the most popular appeal of all the material on this recording [Libera, AGCD 2106]."—**Chris King, The St Louis American**

"A gem, the final movement of Fred Onovwerosuoke's (2016) *A Triptych of American Voices: A Cantata of the People—We NEED to TALK*—featuring soloists Tai Oney, countertenor and Jonas Budris, tenor, plus chorus and orchestra. This setting of the late Michael Castro's poem, which closed the first half, combines hope, freedom, justice and joy—all evident in the sound and faces of the soloists and choristers."—**Julie Ingelfinger, The Boston Musical Intelligencer**

"Fred Onovwerosuoke's brief "Fanfare for Strings and Timpani," in its world premiere, was a rousing evocation of a Nigerian war dance, complete with the clanging of machetes—fortunately only simulated."—**John von Rhein, Chicago Tribune Music Critic**

Selected reviews of Oxford University Press' *Songs of Africa: 22 Pieces for Mixed Voices*

"Now here's a really interesting book... and boy is it stimulating."—**Anon**

"Many of the arrangements or transcriptions are by Onovwerosuoke himself, and are interesting and ear-opening."—**Anon**

"A great collection for doing something different with your choir or, even better, to take to a workshop to work on properly and in depth"—**Jonathan Wikeley, Music Teacher**

"Published arrangements of songs from Africa have not been uncommon in recent years, but this is the first volume I have seen that is genuinely Pan-African in content, and compiled by someone completely immersed in Africa's diverse traditions and languages"—**Anon**

"In contrast to our predominant European mentality, what shines through again and again, is the music's simplicity, playfulness and joy—one of many reasons to celebrate this unique publication."—**Matthew Greenall, The Singer**