

Article

Contemplating the Contributions of Richard Chijioke Okafor to Nigerian Music Discourse: A Tribute

Christian Onyeji¹, Elizabeth Onyeji²

¹christian.onyeji@unn.edu.ng, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0332-3302>, ²elizabeth.onyeji@unn.edu.ng, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6065-6488>

Correspondence: elizabeth.onyeji@unn.edu.ng, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6065-6488>

Abstract

A constraint in Nigerian music historiography and scholarly discourses at the moment is the unavailability of literature on Nigerian music scholars, composers, educators, performers, and exponents. Very few attempts have been directed at filling this gap, resulting in targeted presentations on some notable Nigerian scholars who made valuable contributions to music education, composition, performance, and scholarship. Available contributions are on Meki Nzewi, Mosunmola Omibiyi-Obidike, Dan Agu, Godwin Idolor, Olayemi Olaniyan, Emeka Mbanugo, Femi Adediji, Isaac Idamoyibo, Young-Sook Onyiuke, and Arua Ogisi. These dedicated works provide access to various aspects of the life and contributions of the musicologists. This leaves a wide gap in the literature, requiring deliberate efforts to document and disseminate more information on the large number of Nigerians who have made significant contributions to the growth and development of formal and literary music activities, education, and discourses in Nigeria. Compared to their international counterparts, it is evident that scholars such as William Wilberforce Chukwudinka Echezona, Akin Euba, Ayo Bankole, Samuel Akpabot, Richard Okafor, Joshua Uzoigwe, Bode Omojola, Onyee Nwankpa, etc., are outstanding contributors who have little or nothing about them in Nigerian music literature. While a few lines are dedicated to some of them in more general discourses, it is quite compelling to generate rich literature as a necessity and complement to music studies within and outside Nigeria. Thus, this is an attempt that presents a summary of the place and contributions of Richard Chijioke Okafor to Nigerian music discourse. Using descriptive, historical, and analytical methods, the paper validates and presents Richard Chijioke Okafor as one of the unequivocal and significant contributors who shaped the trajectory of Nigerian music discourse within and outside Nigeria in research, scholarship, and pedagogy.

Keywords: Richard Chijioke Okafor, Musicology, Scholarship, Pedagogy, Nigerian Music

Introduction

The dearth of literature on Nigerian musicologists has created a knowledge gap in Nigerian music studies. Till the present, music studies in Nigeria have fairly bypassed focused scholarly discourses on the art musicians and musicologists of Nigerian origin, with more emphasis laid on the concrete music itself. This resulted in a fair knowledge of Nigerian music (traditional, art, and popular), without comparable knowledge of the musicologists who engage in the studies, documentation, composition, teaching, performance, and education in Nigeria. Available information is very little/scant through some short bios on compositions and scholarly works of some writers, while some are known within their localities through conference participations. Many of the Nigerian musicologists are unknown beyond the shores of the country, while the few that have gained international standing achieved it through the dissemination of their works, creative and scholarly. This also implies that the few do not have detailed literature on them since no one has paid attention to the need to document and present adequate data on the scholars as a complement to music studies in Nigeria. This gap compels urgent attention to change the status quo.

With more attention focused on the study and documentation of Nigerian music in recent times, appropriate and adequate studies of Nigerian musicologists are perforce following the bi-cultural stance of music studies in Nigeria at the tertiary level. While adequate, relevant, and rich literature exists on Western musicologists, composers, and others, as part of Western music art, Nigeria suffers from a lack of such data, constraining the works in this presentation. At the moment, very few Nigerian musicologists have been written about in books dedicated to them. These include Meki Nzewi (2011), Mosunmola Omibiyi-Obidike (2014), Godwin Idolor (2016), Dan C.C. Agu (2017), Femi Adededeji (2018), Emeka Mbanugo (2020), Arua Ogisi (2020), Olayemi Olaniyan (2020), Isaac Idamoyibo (2021), and Young-Sook Onyiuke (2022). Considering the large number of musicologists from Nigeria, this leaves a huge gap.

The need for literature on Nigerian musicologists is predicated on the necessity of history, relevance, and contributions of outstanding practitioners and professionals in Nigeria. Documentation of contributions and the relevance of individual musicologists serves a motivational role as well as presents historical data on such persons for the younger generations. It also presents data on personalities whose contributions shaped the trajectory of art music in Nigeria over time, while putting on record their lines of thought, creative activities, and scholarly engagements in the contexts of their operation. With many Nigerian musicologists engaged in teaching at the tertiary institutions, resulting in the retirement of many of the frontline contributors due to age, it seems there is an urgent need to speed up the process of documenting literature on them not only for its sake but for the enrichment of the younger generations who may not have had the opportunity of direct contact with such musicologists. Sadly, though, some have already been lost through death. Whatever the case may be, it is necessary to change the narrative that seems to suggest that creative personalities gain value in death rather than when they are alive. Such a narrative promotes some level of speculations about such people than they draw from facts provided by them while still alive. The writers are of the view that Nigerian scholars have not given themselves enough presence in literature to enable proper inclusion in music pedagogy. Even if students of music are interested in learning about the musicologists, the fact remains that there is no available literature on most musicologists at the moment.

While different schools may argue for or against this position, with some preferring not to have the creative person influence information on him or her while still alive, the other school may prefer direct contact with the person(s). The fact remains that it is significant to have balanced literature on Nigerian musicologists with adequate and correct facts to rely on. Data constructions on Nigerian musicologists, to our mind, could benefit from facts provided by the persons themselves and from other sources possible to ensure balance and rigorous study. While the argument is not that all musicologists must have books written on them, it is a necessary part of music pedagogy to have studies on the musicians as much as they exist on the music itself.

For many years of formal music education in Nigeria, discourses on composers and musicologists have remained focused on Western musicologists and composers

drawn from books written outside Nigeria. Nigerian music students fervently study and grasp details about Western art musicians and exponents of various styles without comparable knowledge of the Nigerian or African counterparts. This has been maintained in secondary and even primary schools, where the same Western musicians and musicologists have been repeatedly taught over the years. The tragedy is the seeming celebration of such people/names at the expense of Nigerian musicologists who have also dedicated themselves to high-quality contributions without similar endorsements or pedagogical presence. At the moment, there seems to be an underlying acceptance of such musicians as the real professionals, while the Nigerian counterparts are seen as amateurs or not worthy of a similar presence in literature or dedicated books. It is also worrisome that the names of many pioneer musicologists are simply mentioned in books, while the libraries are filled with books on their Western exponents. The argument is that deliberate efforts must be made to counter or erase the exclusionary and non-inclusivity of Nigerian experts in the mainstream discourses in the teaching and learning of music through the provision of relevant literature by Nigerians. It requires concerted contributions to counter the narrative while stimulating a new discourse that values and represents Nigerian musicologists as major contributors to art music development in the country. Nigerian composers, performers, educators, historians, etc., require fair and adequate representation in studies and dedicated literature to stimulate comparable discourses on them in music pedagogies.

Some Nigerian musicologists and composers whose names are waiting to be captured in rigorous study and documentation from within Nigeria are William Wilberforce Chukwudinka Echezona, Akin Euba, Ayo Bankole, Samuel Akpabot, Tunji Vidal, Azubuike Ifionu, Achinivu Kanu Achinivu, Richard Chijioke Okafor, Joshua Uzoigwe, Bode Omojola, Okechukwu Ndubuisi, Anthony Mereni, Onyee Nwankpa, among others.

In this discourse, focus is given to Richard Chijioke Okafor, whose contributions span the whole gamut of art music research, studies, and scholarship in Nigeria, with a strong tilt on Nigerian/African music research and scholarship. Within the larger context of possible studies and presentations that could be dedicated to him in the future, this article draws attention to and focuses on short biographic information on him and his contributions to Nigerian music discourse as a leading researcher, educator, and scholar.

Short Bio on Richard Chijioke Okafor

With this article not strictly a biography of Richard Okafor, an effort is made to present a short summary of his biography to put in perspective the subject of this discourse. Thus, readers are referred to three publications by Richard Okafor (2005; 2019a; 2019b) for a fairly detailed summary of his biography while we await a proper study/biography on this musicologist. It is gratifying that, as a musicologist and writer, he was able to put in print relevant information about himself to secure his place in history.

Richard Chijioke Okafor was a native of Amofia, Ogwofia Owa Autonomous Community in Ezeagu Local Government Area of Enugu State. Born in 1938, he was

the second son of his parents, Late Ogbueshu James Onwuameze Okafor and Madam-Gold, Veronica Akanene Okafor. He studied music at the formal level at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka from 1972 to 1976, where he obtained his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Music, and at the Department of Social Anthropology in Queens University, Belfast, where he obtained his Doctor of Philosophy in Social Anthropology, specializing in Ethnomusicology, from 1977 to 1980. His brilliance earned him scholarships with which he completed his studies in Belfast. With the burgeoning formal music education in the country, Richard was tutored by several Western scholars who contributed immensely to shaping his direction and focus in research and scholarship on Nigerian Music.

Returning to Nigeria in 1980, Richard immersed himself in academic, scholarly, and administrative duties and pursuits that strongly rooted and ignited his drive for self and institutional development in various parts of Nigeria and beyond. Working through different levels of University positions and engagements, he rose to become a Professor of Music Education and Ethnomusicology in 1991 at Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT). He was also honoured with the Emeritus Professor of the University on retirement. In his capacity as the Director and later Dean of the School of General Studies in the institution for many years, Richard made remarkable efforts to redirect the attention of non-arts students and colleagues to the benefits of music as a cultural heritage, which was firmly integrated in the General Studies Programme. He significantly re-conceptualized the university's General Studies programme and changed the perception of non-music people to give unwavering attention to the study and preservation of music, art, and other aspects of Nigerian cultural heritage. Charting the new course of integrating music in a science and technology institution was a remarkable achievement in the development of the study of music in the country. While music is not formally studied in the institution, it, at least achieved some presence in institutions outside institutions where music is formally studied. His efforts retained music as a core part of General Studies in the institution. His feat at the ESUT University remains unparalleled in many institutions where music does not exist as a programme.

Beyond scholarly activities and engagements through conferences, workshops, seminars, etc., Richard was also steeped in creative activities in music through choral activities in choirs and groups within and around Enugu in particular. Engaging in choral festivals, adjudications, and music commissions in the Catholic Church mainly, Richard Okafor became a well-known person in the choral circles in his areas of operation. It is not surprising that he received, to his honour, the 'Golden Treasure of Liturgical Music (GTLM)' Merit Award bestowed on him by the Enugu Liturgical Music Commission in collaboration with People's Creative Empowerment International (PCEI), on 2nd April 2016. This was in clear recognition of his special contributions.

Richard Okafor remained a dedicated teacher, mentor, writer, and a community man till his passing in 2022. While his social and community life earned him several accolades, recognitions, and awards within and outside his immediate community, his academic engagements spanned several institutions within and outside Nigeria,

where he visited with the Departments of Music with significant contributions. He maintained strong ties with scholars within and outside Nigeria through involvement in conferences, workshops, seminars and teaching assignments, examinations, and external assessments spanning many years. His membership in several societies and associations ensured his close interaction with his peers as well as close evaluation of his contributions to formal music research and pedagogy over time within the art music field and industry. Having been admitted into the prestigious Nigerian Academy of Letters (NAL), Richard Okafor is undoubtedly one of the leading spokespersons for Nigeria in music. Without equivocation, his overall contributions stand out for strong recognition within and outside Nigeria. His prolific writings also affirmed his strong commitment to the development and preservation as well as meritorious scholarship on Nigerian music, particularly from an indigenous Igbo music standpoint.

Richard Chijioke Okafor was a family man blessed with children and very good health till his departure from this earth. He was married to Dr. Cecilia Unoma Okafor, who is a retired Senior Lecturer at ESUT.

His contributions to Nigerian Music Studies (Indigenous music, Music education, and Popular music)

Belonging to the third generation of Nigerian musicologists, Richard Okafor will continue to be a prominent and respected name in Nigerian music research, scholarship, and education. Coming after W.W.C. Echezona, Ayo Bankole, and Akin Euba in the second generation, Okafor had such contemporaries as Azubuike Ifionu, Meki Nzewi, Dan Agu, Achinivu Kanu Achinivu, Yemi Olaniyan, Sir Sam Ojukwu, and Okechukwu Ndubuisi. As a leading spokesperson and significant contributor to art music development in Nigeria, Okafor diversified his expertise and focus to accommodate various aspects of music studies. With his fairly eclectic view of music studies in Nigeria, he will continue to be noted for making significant contributions to African music research and scholarship (1978; 1989a; 1994; 2000; 2001; 2017; etc.), music education (1983; 1987; 1988; 1989b; 1991; etc.), popular music and performance (1987; 1998a; 2019; etc.). His writings continue to provide students and scholars with informed definitions, concepts, analysis, and interpretations instructively utilized in music discourses in Nigeria and beyond. His well-rooted understanding of cultural practices and relative confinement within the Southeastern part of Nigeria after his doctoral studies in Belfast armed him with a deeper and reflective perception of culture-based musical practices within the Igbo area primarily, while spreading his research to other possible areas.

Okafor's professional engagements spanned many institutions in Nigeria where he taught full-time and also part-time. He also visited Kenyatta University in Kenya on Sabbatical Leave. His teaching career brought him face to face with the challenges and scholarship gaps in Nigeria, prompting him to dedicate his time and energy to the search for their solutions. This resulted in his continuous writing of books for teaching and learning even after turning 80. With many students and professionals passing through his tutelage till his passing, Okafor has remained a voice to reckon with regarding proper and adequate understanding of indigenous, cultural, and art

music terrains in Nigeria. His extensive travels within the country gave him a very reliable advantage in first-hand analysis of the situation of music in higher institutions and music practice in general within the country.

While Okafor's contributions are extensive, touching on almost all ramifications of music practice and creativity in Nigeria, this article limits its attention to the discourse and evaluation of his contributions in African (indigenous) music, music education, and popular music discourses in the Nigerian context. This discourse acknowledges the overlap in the highlighted areas in his outputs.

Indigenous Music: With a thesis on Igbo minstrels (1980) at Queen's University in Belfast, Okafor seems *ab initio* dedicated to and concerned with the need to document and re-present indigenous Igbo music in the world scholarly discourse to illuminate its facets for significant recognition and appreciation. His continued and unequivocal extensive documentation, analysis and scholarly interpretations of several aspects of indigenous music from the Igbo cultural standpoint particularly, evidenced the notion of his restless desire to convey to the wider public the essence and spirit of Igbo music and argue for their proper recognition, acceptance and respect as a body of creative arts with enormous value and potential for research, creativity, education and performance. Richard's vast research and scholarly output on Indigenous music of Nigeria and Africa in general, point to a rare and consistent contribution to the evolution of techniques and principles of discourse comparable to Western forms, enabling simplification, absorption and thorough understanding of concepts, terminologies, aesthetic principles, values and norms of African indigenous music practice and creativity. In our view, Okafor was burdened and bothered by the seeming neglect of Igbo indigenous music in global discourses, constraining him to focus greater attention on its representation. His drive for Igbo music representation can only be comparable to the efforts of William Wilberforce C. Echezona, Meki Nzewi, Joshua Uzoigwe, and Dan Agu, whose works focus more on the musical traditions of the Igbo of Nigeria.

Collaborating with some scholars in some instances, Okafor diligently co-edited and authored several books, articles, and monographs on many aspects of Nigerian/African music, musicians, and Igbo life. His monograph on Celestine Ukwu (1999), for instance, bequeaths readers, researchers, and students of Nigerian music with first-hand data on the life and works of this Nigerian "indigenous" musician who was well-known in the early 70s. His historical and analytical discourses on the musical and performance presentations revealed his understanding of the philosophical underpinnings of the late Igbo musician's songs. The textual and musical transcriptions provided in the study are relevant and poignant data that stimulate general interest and study on the outputs of the man in his heyday of musicianship and performances.

Similarly, his monograph on Ezeagu *Atilogwu* (1998b) provides informative discourse on the critical issue of ethnography and ethnomusicological analysis of a music troupe among the Igbo from an Ezeagu example. The depth of his presentation covers ethnographic issues of membership, group structures, resources, etc, while also presenting their performance norms, dance styles, and techniques as well as issues of continuity and change in the unique music group.

This study is supported by appropriate musical and textual transcriptions with relevant analytical discourses beneficial to readers. His insights on the cultural, social, and musical components of the group's presentations are significant to the overall understanding of the place and value of *Atilogwu* in Ezeagu and Igbo land in general.

Considered quite resourceful and relevant to Igbo music studies is his compilation and study of Igbo folk Songs (2017), in which, according to him,

Ethnomusicology can be seen as a combination of theories and methods of Anthropology and Musicology. This is a way of looking at music not so much as a system of organized sound, but as a system in which, through sound, certain concepts and values which are central to the culture of a people are expressed. My study of Igbo folk songs shows the link between a society and its music. (viii)

The transcriptions and discourses on 145 folk songs present rich data and research material as well as creative texts for scholarly and creative interpretations. The accompanying translations and staff/tonic solfa transcriptions grant access to various types of readers, researchers, and performers who may desire to utilize the documented works. In this book, he succeeded in reaffirming the value placed on the Igbo musical and cultural heritage as well as providing his perspective on the songs. Okafor thus contributed to stemming the tide of continuous extinction of Igbo folk songs due to a lack of deliberate transcription and documentation, which has been echoed by many writers. He also provided access to the songs and supported their dissemination in print form for use beyond their Igbo locality. The possibility of deploying the songs to various ends in new contexts and locations as veritable Igbo cultural products is, undoubtedly, guaranteed through the compilation.

Okafor's folkloric surveys gave rise to such texts on the meanings of Igbo personal and title names (2008) and *Mbe* stories among the Igbo of Nigeria (2019a), which again point to his relentless desire to showcase Igbo culture and traditions for critical discourses and philosophical interpretations. The book on Igbo personal names shows the capacity of the contributors to the book to undertake a very tedious task of gathering and compiling for study various possible Igbo names, to ensure a robust presentation. Okafor's interest in extra-musical or non-musical studies of this nature reveals his relentless desire to extensively cover various aspects of Igbo cultural life for the proper orientation of the younger generation. Dissemination of the values, aesthetic principles, underlying/philosophical implications, as well as adequate understanding of the sense and meanings from the Igbo context and perspective has, understandably, been his primary concern.

Okafor's scholarly discourses on indigenous music presented in various articles in peer reviewed journals and books lay emphasis on its definitions, nature and structural issues, performance and presentational practices, cultural relevance, ethics and values, aesthetic principles, training and education, instrumental resources, contemporary and developmental issues, utilitarian and contextual practices, social dynamics, music exponents and practitioners. According to him,

“traditional or folk music, as is easily understood, springs from the cultural womb and can develop or grow through the years, mutating, enlarging, shedding, but always maintaining its original gene”. (2005a: 4). He insists that “the whole point about music in Igbo culture is that it is integral with life and closely related with other art forms” (2005b: 26). Speaking about indigenous music in Africa, he concludes that “in the African culture, music is an entity rather than a mere mental creation or conception” (88). In these positions, Okafor reveals his perceptions, arguments, and convictions on indigenous musical expressions as cultural facts tied to life rites, events, and the well-being of the people. He perceived music as a combination of physical and spiritual expressions, having much deeper meanings and connotations. The depth of his reflections on indigenous music of Nigeria and Africa reveals his first-hand cum critical involvement as a culture-owner concluding from within. Okafor’s extensive and lucid reflections, interpretations, and documentations on indigenous music point to his rigorous research and knowledge of the practices of many exponents and performance groups in Nigeria. It is safe to recommend readers to his contributions, which, to our minds, illuminate various aspects of Igbo/Nigerian/African culture, musical practices, and creative presentations.

Popular Music: Okafor also waded into the sticky issues of popular music studies that were fairly ignored by many Nigerian musicologists, arising from various arguments advanced by some to discourage scholarly interest in it in the past. At best, popular music studies would be described as trudging behind other musical genres in scholarly attention. With evident and palpable economic benefits of popular music genre owing to its commercial tilt and focus, early Nigerian musicologists paid little or no attention to its mainstreaming in research and scholarship until recently. Some arguments were advanced by scholars of music to endorse the exclusion. For instance, Onwuegbuna (2012) reports that,

Ekwueme (2004) dismisses the possibility of the cultural relevance of the Nigerian popular music, accusing the musician of having no professional musical and little general education, he also contends that Nigerian pop musicians lack the discipline to play or sing in tune, harmonize imaginatively, articulate distinctively, vocalize artistically, vary their basic structures, or even move in properly choreographed, spectacular, pleasing and artistic forms. (154-155)

While Ekwueme verbalized his reservations on popular music as bereft of scholarly benefit to musicologists, some scholars muted their views but did not support the inclusion of popular music as part of the curriculum of music studies in institutions. Thus, while the bi-cultural stance of music studies in Nigeria focused on indigenous and Western art music studies, congruent attention was not paid to popular music, including those emanating from Nigerian/African artistes. Though fairly relegated to the background and unrecognized by institutions of higher learning, popular musicians did not relent in their drive for entertainment value, social acceptance, influence and commercial cum economic values of popular music.

In addition to the prejudice of scholars, Okafor (2005b: 339-340), noted that “in the past, there was folk prejudice against popular music, particularly against the guitar.

Any young man who carried the guitar was virtually written off by his family". He went further to note that "access to wealth and titles has not wiped out all folk reservations" (340).

Such societal discontent could also be linked to the lack of interest towards popular music by scholars to avoid social stigma and association with the promotion of a genre that is seen as more negative than from a positive perspective by society. Whatever the case may be, popular music did not receive the required attention as a musical genre till the latter part of the 20th century.

The obvious race or hurry to assimilate and incorporate popular music into the study programmes of institutions in recent times seems to stem from a remorseful realization of musicologists that there was a huge gap and unnecessary denial of the values of an eloquent and highly potent musical component due to the bias or discontent of a few scholars. Clear realization and turnaround by contemporary Nigerian scholars and researchers on popular music studies reveal the recognition of inherent values in the musical contents and practice that should have been given the required attention. To this end, many musicologists have risen to the occasion and made very relevant contributions to the blossoming of the study of popular music in Nigerian institutions. Notable contributions in Nigeria are those of Emielu (2013), Onwuegbuna (2015 and Okafor (2019, whose studies culminated in published books.

Okafor's contributions to popular music studies, documented in articles and books, stand on his conviction in the potency of the genre and its educational values that are of benefit to music educators, researchers, composers, and performers. According to him,

Schools of Music in Nigeria should recognize the necessity of freeing music education from its restricted and almost elitist approach, whereby students have been presented with more classical music than anything else. Furthermore, popular music should be recognized as a valid musical form (2005b: 343).

His unequivocal stance on this is supported by his book on popular music in which, in addition to the general discourses on popular music types, education, and presentational features, has sections devoted to profiling selected popular musicians engaged in different types of popular music specialization. The value of such a study hinges on the need to know and categorize the exponents and distinguish their lines of creativity, style, and performance norms by students and professionals. Okafor's contributions to the study of popular music in Nigeria are set to elevate and endorse the artistic, creative, and musicological values of popular music for the benefit of everyone. It could be validly argued that while some earlier Nigerian musicologists did not see much in popular music to warrant focused scholarly attention, Okafor, on the other hand, through insightful perception and understanding, saw the relevance and value of popular music to scholarship. While popular music study is inchoate in tertiary institutions in Nigeria at the moment, the initial step has been taken to ensure the pursuance of the scholarly and educational values as advocated by Okafor.

Music Education: With Richard Okafor's primary assignment being teaching at the tertiary level of education, spanning different Colleges of Education and Universities, his outputs have targeted the production of teaching resources at that level essentially. His focus also did not waver from his dedication to the solution of evolving teething problems associated with music education in higher institutions in Nigeria. Engaged with nurturing young minds and developing skills and capacity of students and younger/junior colleagues over time, Okafor, though no more, remains well-known in Nigeria as a former insightful mentor, examiner, and a pedagogue of high repute. His clear knowledge and understanding of the educational needs for music teaching and learning in institutions were stimulated and shaped by his rigorous and first-hand observations in various contexts of his teaching and examinations across the country. Okafor was thus a strong and reliable human resource in the discourse of music education in Nigeria. Seeking solutions rather than presenting excuses, Okafor endeavoured to cover existing knowledge gaps and re-directed attention to various resources that could enhance teaching and learning in the country. Drawing from his first-hand and informed position in various institutions, Okafor significantly expressed his views, thoughts, arguments, and positions on music education issues, which he significantly documented in very important national and international fields and venues with far-reaching impact and motivation to scholars and students of music. His extensive writings have been well-researched at various levels of learning and research. Viewing music education as a significant part of human life, Okafor (2005b) is of the view that "music education in Nigeria should be made an important and compulsory part of Nigerian curriculum in our educational system" (189).

His thoughts indeed resonate with the views of many scholars who believe in the efficacy of music in human development. Despite Okafor's desire to have music education well promoted in institutions, he decried the seeming negative trends and growing anomalies observable. He says,

Something seems to have gone wrong with our history. The practice these days is that music education has taken a back seat in the educational system in primary schools, such a back seat that it is not even a voluntary subject. It is something that could be taught at the discretion of the local school authorities (Ibid., 230).

Okafor also noted that "schools are poorly staffed with people of the right caliber to teach music" (Ibid: 231). His worries over the nature and quality of teaching personnel, resources, poor attention, and capacity of learners in music are strong concerns of many musicologists who have also echoed the growing anomaly in schools and colleges in different scholarly contexts. As a strong believer and promoter of music as art and science, Okafor spent a greater part of his teaching career teaching music as part of General Studies in a science and technology institution, thus stressing the value of music beyond the arts domain. In his writings and discourses, Okafor addressed issues on formal, semiformal, and informal music education as they affect the Nigerian teaching and learning situation while also attempting to proffer solutions for the benefit of the discipline. Okafor's direct involvement in examinations across many institutions enabled him to personally discuss and present suggestions on critical issues relating to music education in Nigeria, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Such practical engagements

also provided him with facts that stimulated his conversations and arguments in written form for the improvement of the learning process. In general, no one can bypass Okafor's contributions in the discourse of music education in Nigeria, be it on the history of music education, contemporary developments, structural issues, policy interpretations, advocacy, analysis, and issues relating to pedagogical challenges and aesthetic principles. His contributions remain relevant, current, stimulating, and significant.

Conclusion

Richard Okafor's place in the Nigerian music discourse is certainly affirmed and marked. This did not arise from mere recognition from colleagues based on comradeship or pedestrian associations, but by resolute and unequivocal appreciation of his numerous contributions spanning many decades in the music field. He is well represented in discourses of many facets of Western and African music and has regularly ensured clearer access to and illumination of concepts, views, and practices of the forms he engaged with. It must be acknowledged that this presentation cannot claim to have attempted an exhaustive presentation of this musicologist's efforts in the field of music. At best, this serves as a deliberate scratch on the surface to stimulate interest and a deeper search into the works of this mentor by interested readers and scholars. Okafor was noted not to have attempted to be overly pretentious about his style of writing. His use of simple and "readable" English language in his writings is quite significant and noted. Even when it is evident from the writings of his peers that their deliberate need to showcase psychedelic and highfaluting choice of words and grammatical expressions seemingly to endorse their international exposure and educational attainments; it is quite remarkable that Okafor remained at the level of use of English language accessible to students, enthusiasts and music teachers. Overall, there is a need to dedicate more time and energy to the study of the wide array of discourses and engagements of Richard Chijioke Okafor. Such a study, we believe, bears the potential to reveal his insights, value, and significant conclusions on different aspects of music studies. Richard Chijioke Okafor is strongly acknowledged and underlined by the authors as an unmistakable spokesperson for music in Nigeria while he was still alive. His contributions to Nigerian music discourse provide reliable evidence and unmistakable resources.

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