

Illinois State University
Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts
School of Music

Guest Artist Recital Series
Miracle Amah, *Soprano*
John Orfe, *Piano*

Kemp Recital Hall
January 23, 2024
Tuesday Evening
7:30 p.m.

Program

Please silence all electronics for the duration of the concert. Thank you.

Karami	Angelo Gabriel Ekum
These Summer Nights	Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)
from <i>La Forza del Destino</i>	Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901)
Pace, pace mio Dio	
Onye Mere Nwa na-ebe Akwa (2005)	(An Igbo folk tune) Bennett Baldwin-Anyasado
Cantata for Voice and Piano (1964)	John Carter
Prelude	
Rondo	
Recitative	
Toccata	
Two pieces from <i>Talking Drums</i>	Joshua Uzoigwe (1946-2005)
No. 6. Egwu Amala	
No. 2. Ukom	
Asuramu (2022)	Ayò Olúránti/Miracle Amah
Omo ÀgbÈ tó D'Olórin (The Farmer's Daughter becomes a Musician)	
Ìlú Bàjé o! (2010)	Ayò Olúránti
Ma gbagbe mi (2021)	Kehinde Oretimehin
Oba nla ni (1998)	Ayò Olúránti
Ise Oluwa (1999)	

This is the ninety-sixth program of the 2023-2024 season.

Biographies

A native of Nigeria, **Miracle Amah** is a librettist and a soprano presently based in the United States. She performs various genres of music which includes opera, art songs, oratorios, popular music, contemporary music, negro spirituals, jazz music, etc. Dr. Amah has played major roles in several opera productions. Her staged performances include scenes, full Opera productions and short performances in Nigeria, Canada, Germany, Russia, Dubai and in the United States.

Dr. Amah maintains a professional singing career as she writes lyrics and premieres new compositions by Nigerian and African composers. Appended to her credentials are a doctoral degree in Vocal Performance, Pedagogy and Literature from James Madison University, a Master's degree in Opera and Vocal performance from the Longy School of Music, a Licentiate with the Associated board of the royal school of music (ABRSM) in vocal performance (LRSM); which is a Bachelor of Music in vocal performance, and two associate degrees in Vocal Performance from the Mountain top Conservatory and the MUSON Diploma School of Music.

Right from the inception of her career in Nigeria and now as an international artist, Miracle has performed with different choirs, making a number of international choir trips. Some of which includes the 9th Johannes Brahms International Choral Festival in Wernigerode, Germany in July 2015, where she won a gold medal with the Mountain Top Chorale (MTC) as a member of the choir and also as a Soloist. Exactly a year after that, she won two gold laurels with the same choir at the Interkultur World Choir Games Competition that took place in Sochi, Russia.

In 2016, she was awarded four awards by the Musical Society of Nigeria: The Mrs Francesca Emmanuel Prize for Best Female Operatic singer, the Bode Emmanuel Award for best Female singer, the Dr. Mrs. Femi Akinkugbe Prize award for Voice, and the Mr. Joseph Oparamanuike Graduate Opera Award. From the fall of 2017 till the spring of 2019, she was one of the soprano soloists with the Longy Women's Chorus, Cambridge, Massachusetts. In February 2020, Miracle won first position in the VA-NATS competition in her category. Also, in February 2021, she won first place in the same competition at a higher category.

Dr. Amah has given lectures and masterclasses at colleges, institutions, schools and churches, around the world. She taught at the MountainTop Conservatory of music, Lagos, Nigeria where she was an Assistant Professor teaching vocal techniques. Included in her portfolio is working with different choirs from several locations around the world. She has also given talks in conferences that address racism and diversity issues in academia. Her presentations include discussions about African music and vocal repertoire with topics that target performance practice and diversifying classical music; this included a recital

featuring Nigerian music and highlighting several languages and genres. She recently published four short books and her dissertation titled *Decolonizing and Enriching Opera*. In November 2022, she co-wrote a book titled "Essays on Miles Davis" and this has been published and currently sold on Amazon. Presently, she is a voice professor at Illinois Central College, Peoria, Illinois.

John Orfe's music has been performed worldwide. He has fulfilled commissions from choirs, orchestras and chamber ensembles including Illinois Wesleyan University, Choral Arts Ensemble, Two Rivers Chorale, Duo Montagnard, Dez Cordas, Music Institute of Chicago, American Guild of Organists, Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra, and the Diocese of Peoria, Illinois. Ensembles that have performed his music include the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, Spokane Symphony Orchestra, Mannes American Composers Ensemble, Aspen Contemporary Ensemble, John Alexander Singers, Illinois State University Concert Choir, UIUC combined Glee Clubs, and new music ensembles at the North Carolina School of the Arts and Bowling Green State University. He is a winner of a Jacob K. Javits Fellowship, a Tanglewood Music Center Fellowship, the William Schuman and Boudleaux Bryant Prizes from BMI, fourteen Standard Awards and the Morton Gould Award from ASCAP, the Heckscher Prize from Ithaca College, the Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and first prizes in national competitions held by NACUSA, the Pacific Chorale, Choral Arts Ensemble, Eastern Trombone Workshop, and New Music Delaware. He holds undergraduate degrees from the Eastman School of Music and graduate degrees including the DMA from the Yale School of Music.

As pianist, Orfe has earned critical acclaim for his interpretations of five centuries of keyboard repertoire ranging from the canonic to the arcane. As core pianist and founding member of Alarm Will Sound, Orfe has performed in Carnegie Hall, Miller Theatre, Roulette, the World Financial Center, and Symphony Space in New York; Disney Hall, Mondavi Hall, and Hertz Hall in California; the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.; and venues in Beijing, Nanning, Seoul, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Krakow, Amsterdam, Berlin, Bremen, Bolzano, Cork, Hamburg, London, Lima, San Jose, Quito, and São Paulo. As the keyboardist for Present Music in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, he edited and premiered the organ part central to Raven Chacon's *Voiceless Mass*, which won the 2022 Pulitzer Prize in Music. He has recorded on the Cantaloupe, Nonesuch, Kairos, Parma, and Albany Records labels. Orfe serves as Organist at First United Methodist Church in Peoria, Illinois, where he also served as the Peoria Symphony Orchestra's inaugural Composer-in-Residence. He has held full-time teaching appointments at Dickinson College, Bradley University, and Illinois Wesleyan University. He was a featured composer for SIU-Carbondale's 2022 *Outside the Box* new music festival. His music appears on the Centaur, Delos, and Nonesuch labels.