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## **CHAPTER ONE**

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### **BIOGRAPHY OF SIR PROFESSOR CHUKWUEMEKA ELEAZAR MBANUGO**

Obinna Onyebuchi Mbanugo

#### **1. Introduction**

*Sir Professor Chukwuemeka Eleazar Mbanugo is a consummate pedagogue and a renowned academic. His love for education especially teaching and learning stood him out among his peers, little wonder the choice of the title for this Festschrift, the Pedagogue. Despite his astute nature and resilience for the acquisition of knowledge, he has a humorous make-up that never goes unnoticed whenever anyone gets close to him. In fact, Emeka Mbanugo is a perfect blend of seriousness and humour encapsulated in a nest of excellence and perfection. He is metaphorically speaking; that old wine that tastes better. He is such a refined teacher, whose life and career may not easily be completely captured in words. With a lowly background, he still rose to the peak of his chosen profession and vocation. In the succeeding headings, an attempt is made to present in print the life, times, childhood, education, academic pursuit and career of Emymbas as he is fondly called by friends and colleagues.*

#### **2. His Birth and Childhood**

The life of Emymbas began on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November 1944 when he was born into the Christian, a devout and lowly family of a church teacher, the Late Samuel Nwankwo Mbah, as his father and the Late Madam Seraphine Uchenyenwa Mbah, as his mother, both of Enuagu village in the small town of Ukwulu in Dunukofia Local Government Area of Anambra State. Owing to the fact that his father was a mere church teacher in the Anglican Church, his childhood was meek and humble, spending most times within church premises. Emymbas as the first of nine children, namely, Eunice, Late Jonathan, Grace, Late Victoria, Samuel, Felix, Chinyere and Christian, was saddled with the task of assisting his mother in raising his younger ones. Particularly as his father was just an ordinary church teacher, he found it very difficult to actualize his academic dreams and aspirations. Not minding his lowly background, Emymbas was undaunted in his quest for education and academic excellence. His father being a church teacher moved around a great deal. Emymbas grew up in Port-Harcourt, precisely in Elelenwa/Okporoworo where he had his primary education. When church work brought his father back to Anambra State, Emymbas continued his education in Enugwu-Ukwu where his father was posted for service. His parents barely managed to pay his fees up to Standard six, and his father had to acquire a loan from a distant relative in order to send him to the Secondary School. Emymbas however, refused to have his father train him with resources obtained from loan and thus he left the house and started doing menial jobs to fend for himself. As a result of the lowliness of his parents and lack of funds, he missed admission into the prestigious St. Augustine Nkwere in Imo State although he sat for the entry exams and passed in flying colours. Since he couldn't proceed to Secondary school, Emymbas began teaching as a pupil-teacher in secondary schools around the town.

#### **3. His Education**

While being a pupil-teacher and struggling to raise funds with which to train himself

academically, he took entry examination into the Teacher Training College (TCII), Irete. It was while in Irete that he wrote the A-Level entry examinations into the University. Again due to apparent impecuniosities of himself and of his parents, Emymbas got stuck when he could not afford the Regular Programme in the University of Nigeria Nsukka which was his dream university. Still unrelenting, he opted to undergo the 3-year diploma programme in Music in the Faculty of Arts of the same University. With distinction, he was automatically admitted as a direct entry student into the regular programme. Instead of completing the normal 2-year direct entry programme, Emymbas as one of the pioneer diploma students was forced to undergo a 3-year programme making it a total of 6 years spent in the University.

In June 1977, Emymbas graduated from the University of Nigeria Nsukka with First Class Honours Degree in Music with specialization in Music Pedagogy i.e. Music Teaching and Learning, majoring in voice and piano. He was immediately employed as a Principal Lecturer in the Music Department of the Anambra State College of Education in 1978. Because he made a First Class, the first in the department, he was given the Federal Government of Nigeria Scholarship award to study abroad at the State University of New York, Buffalo, NY, USA and in June 1982 Emymbas bagged the award of Masters in Music Education. He proceeded for his Doctorate Degree in the Music Department of the same State University of New York, Buffalo, NY, USA and in June 1986 he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

#### **4. His Academic Career**

Upon his return to Nigeria, Emymbas continued his lecturing job at the College of Education, Awka and was appointed Head, of the Music Department from 1988 to 1990. From the Rank of Principal Lecturer in the College of Education Awka, Emymbas later converted to the Anambra State University of Technology, the now Nnamdi Azikiwe University (UNIZIK), Awka in 1992. He became the pioneer Head, Sub-Department of Music, Unizik, Awka from 1992 to 1998. In 1998 he was appointed the Head, Department of Arts, Unizik, Awka in which capacity he served from 1998 to 1999. He was again appointed the Head of Music Department and served in that capacity from the year 1999 to 2000 and 2002 to 2004. He was a Senior Lecturer from 1992 to 1996, Associate Professor from 1996 to 2001. In the year 2005, Emymbas was pronounced a Professor of Music by the Senate of Nnamdi Azikiwe University with effect from the year 2001. Emymbas, although retired in 2009, was not tired and upon invitation by his friend and brother Prof. Fidelis Okafor, the then Vice-Chancellor of Anambra State University, now Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, (COOU) Awka, he went and founded the Music Department of COOU and was the pioneer Head of Department from 2009 to 2017.

#### **5. His Students**

Emymbas while in active service was involved in the supervision and mentorship of quite a number of students. He had supervised students both at the post-graduate and undergraduate levels. He was supervising undergraduate and postgraduate students at both masters and doctoral classes. Some of his students particularly postgraduate students over the years

include:

1. Dr. Achu, Alice
2. Agbasiere, Chisom Silverline
3. Agwaga, Christy
4. Alom, Patrice Winner
5. Dr. Aninwene, Emmanuel
6. Dr. Anya-Njoku, Mary Vivian Chiadikobi
7. Chukwu, Edith Nkiru
8. Donald, Ekumen Doreen
9. Dr. Ekong, Grace
10. Finapiri, Ikechukwu
11. Ibeagwa, Cynthia
12. Igwe, Amaka
13. Lawrence, Esther Chinasa
14. Mbachu. Chibunwanne Benita
15. Nebechi, Ifunanya Chiamaka
16. Nwobu, Princess Uchechi
17. Dr. Nnamani, Ndubisi
18. Dr. Nnamani, Sunday
19. Nwachukwu, Mathias Chidi
20. Obeleagu, Nnaemeka Chukwuma
21. Obi, Gerald Chinaru
22. Dr. Ojukwu, Ebele Veronica
23. Dr. Esimone Chinyere Celestina
24. Okonkwo, Ogechukwu
25. Okonkwo, Ifeoma Grace
26. Okoye, MaryJane Ifeoma
27. Dr. Onuora-Oguno, Nnamdi
28. Onyekomelu, Lucy K.
29. Dr. Onyiuke, Young Sook
30. Uche, Augustine
31. Dr. Ugochukwu, Bernadaette Chinedu
32. Uyanwune, Precious Oluchukwu
33. Uzoka, Esomchukwu Peace, etc These men and women are today doing very well in their various works of life.

## **6. His Awards and Honours**

Emymbas had numerous awards and honours including

1. Best Graduating Student (the first to make a 1<sup>st</sup> Class Honours) Music Department, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 1977;
2. Best Graduating Student Faculty of Arts, University of Nigeria Nsukka, 1977;
3. Nigeria Arts Council Annual Award for the Best, Overall in Music and Arts, UNN 1976/77;

4. Federal Government of Nigeria Scholarship Award for Masters/Ph.D 1982 to 1986;
5. Best Choral Conductor Awka Diocesan Music Festival, 1989.

### **7. His Works and Publication**

Emymbas is an all-round academic and has over the years engaged in the acting and direction of original drama series and plays. He has published over 20 scholarly articles, edited more than 5 journals and attended several conferences within and outside Nigeria with more than 30 original compositions and quite a number of concert shows. Some of his scholarly articles are as follows:

1. Songs Children Sing: An Ethnography of an Igbo (Nigeria) Primary School Recess published in *Interlink: A Journal of Research in Music*, 2. 95-111.
2. Effects of Western and Nigerian Keyboard Accompaniments on Pleasingness of Igbo Folk Songs published in *Unizik Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 5. 1-13.
3. The Playing of Arpeggios of Major Keys: An Instructional Design for Music in *Awka Journal of Music in the Arts*, 2. 102-113.
4. Choral Music Adjudication in Nigeria: Towards a Model of Specificity and Objectivity in *Awka Journal of Research in Music and the Arts*, 1. 79-90.
5. Minstrelsy Music as a Mobilizer for Socio-cultural Development: A study of Selected Minstrels from Anambra State, Nigeria in *Ogirisi: A New Journal of African Studies*, 1, (1), 151-159.
6. A Comparison of Two Explanations for Aesthetic Response in Music and Their Relevance for Music Pedagogy in Nigeria in *Interlink: A Journal of Research in Music*, 1. 59-76.
7. Transmission of Tradition through Choral Music: A Study of Selected Nigerian Church Cultures in *Unizik Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 2. 53-63.
8. Evaluative Study of Achievement of Music Performance Objectives as a Human Behaviour in *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 1, (1). 78-83.
9. National Consciousness Role Models for Nigerian Youths: Language Effectiveness of Okosun's Music Examined in *Unizik Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 1, (1). 198-206.
10. Towards a Philosophy of Music Education in Nigeria in *Unizik Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 1, (1), 234-242.
11. The Relationship Between Continuous Assessment Scores and Junior Secondary School Examination Grades in Music of Some Selected Students in Anambra State in *Oriental Journal of Educational Research*, 1. 107-112.
12. Rising Cost and Diminishing Education Funding in Nigeria: Exploring the Way Out for Secondary School Music Education in Nigeria in Romy O. Okoye and H.O.N Bosah (eds) *Nigerian Education At Crossroads*, pp.98-105. Onitsha: Hybrid Publishers Ltd.

For want of space and for the avoidance of weariness of reading, the above capture a summary of the scholarly articles of Emymbas. That notwithstanding, it is pertinent to also mention that Emymbas has over 30 original music compositions and which comprise of Igbo Anthems suitable for Church and School Choirs, Thanksgiving and Ceremony Anthems in Igbo, Igbo Lamentation Anthems on themes of Death, Sorrow and Insecurity, Folk song

arrangements for Voice and Piano/Other Orchestral instruments. He has been a director/producer of major concerts and shows particularly the Lost Finger. He had been a member of four professional bodies, the Musicological Society of Nigeria, the International Society for Music Education, UK, American Choral Directors Association and the Association for Psychology of Music and Music Education of USA. He had been a music adjudicator at festivals and competitions organized by various religious denominations and local and state governments. He had been at the chairmanship and membership of various committees within and outside the Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, e.g. convocation, missing scripts, cultural committees, local and State Education committees.

### **7. His Life and Faith**

Because of Emymbas' numerous contributions, commitment and dedication to the church and the society at large, Emymbas was in the year 2005 inducted into the Knighthood Investiture of the Order of St. Paul of the Diocese of Awka Anglican Communion by the then Rtd Archbishop of the Province of the Niger and the Bishop of Awka Diocese, His Grace the Most Rev'd M.S.C Anikwenwa. He is a good family man and was married to the Late Lady Betty Isiaku Mbanugo who had 3 children for him, Late Mr. Chukwuemeka Nnamdi Mbanugo, Late Barr. Nonyelum Ogechukwu Isiuwe (nee Mbanugo) and Barr. Obinna Onyebuchi Mbanugo. Today, he is blessed with a daughter-in-law Mrs. Comfort Mbanugo, and four grandchildren – Chiagoziem Isiuwe, Ruby Chiamaka Mbanugo, Alma Chikanyima Mbanugo and Naetochukwu Jesse Mbanugo.

### **Conclusion**

A time has come to articulate in writing the teaching techniques, philosophies, thoughts and contributions of this giant Professor of music educator, a born actor, comedian and a humanist who has mentored uncounted music professionals in various fields of music and has in one way or the other touched the life of many in positive ways.

Chukwuemeka Eleazar Mbanugo, a Professor of music pedagogy, is a true pedagogue not only to music students under his tutelage but to everyone who comes across him. His vast experience in music education is capable of shaping the future being a source of what is true, beautiful and good, if it is allowed to exist in one's world view.

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## *CHAPTER TWO*

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### **PROF. CHUKWUEMEKA ELEAZAR MBANUGO: LESSONS FROM A MUSIC PEDAGOGUE**

Ikedimma Nwabufo Okeke

#### **Abstract**

*This paper does not attempt a biography of Professor Chukwuemeka Mbanugo but rather a short testimony of my encounter with him. This testimony embodies the lessons I learnt from him as a teacher, mentor, humorist, and an academic.*

**Keywords:** Professor Chukwuemeka Mbanugo, Teacher, Mentor, humorist and An academic.

#### **Introduction**

My encounter with Professor Chukwuemeka Mbanugo, emeritus professor of Music Pedagogy, was an exciting one and the experience was during my stay as a postgraduate student of music at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Many music pedagogues have traversed the musical cosmos but only a few have well-set their footprints like Prof. Mbanugo. A man with an indefatigable passion to teach, brilliant but not belligerent; tall and handsome but not assertive nor egocentric, interspersing every lecture with didactic humour and detailed in his approach to every topic. He is a first-class graduate of music from the renowned University of Nigeria, Nsukka with a doctorate degree in Music Pedagogy from the prestigious New York University, Buffalo. It is amazing that a man of such achievements and standing would humbly submit to teaching and this attests to the many lessons to learn from his person.

#### **Professor Chukwuemeka Mbanugo the Teacher**

The date was January 2009 in his office at the old Department of Music Building, Garba Square, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. It was a lecture on Music Research methods for Post-graduate Diploma in Music. We were three postgraduate students admitted that year and we all reported in time to his office. He welcomed us and inquired to know the particular Postgraduate Program we came for. When we mentioned Postgraduate Diploma in Music, he repeated and reechoed it to our hearing and amazement: "PGD! PGD! PGD! PGD!" Even though we got worried and nervous but the tone of his voice quickly alerted us on the import of his reiterations. It was not a condescending interjection, rather, he was metaphorically warning us about the depth of our program and the level of commitment required of us.

The lecture continued with expositions on the tenets of research: research problems, research design, research methodology, research findings, and research report writing. He advised on the need for research to be problem-oriented; that problem should be the basis of research. We were also warned against what he called "armchair research" which so many people have settled for but which was a lazy man's way of reaching conclusions in serious academic matters. According to him, "the pains of going into the field to source first-hand data on a

problem is worthwhile."

Professor Chukwuemeka Mbanugo would never complete any lecture without drawing a lesson from the shelf of his life experiences. One occasion was very vivid as he expatiated on the demerits of pride and 'superiority syndrome' peculiar to musicians and musicologists. His post-graduate studies in music in University at Buffalo, New York took him to a nursery/primary school in New York for his teaching practice. He narrated how he was humbled by a pupil who asked him, during a piano session: "what are you doing on that piano"? and gently pushed his hands away and took over and played perfectly well the piece he was supposed to be taught.

Professor Mbanugo is imbued with an indefatigable passion to teach; handling the bulk of Diploma, Undergraduate, and Post-graduate courses with incredible finesse. A man that is knowledgeable in virtually all orthodox and modern teaching techniques and methods but prefers engaging his students through some unorthodox techniques such as jesting, jokes, unrelated discussions, topical societal issues, etc, but realizing the objectives of the lecture thereafter.

- **Amentor**

Professor Mbanugo has contributed immensely to the business of academic mentoring having nurtured many musicologists, academics, professors, scholars, and many more.

- **An Academic**

Professor Mbanugo is a highly-published academic. His publications have traversed local, national and international shores. Though a prolific writer, he was never part of the 'publish or perish' syndicate who, en masse, churn out 'publications' for the sake of promotion and cheap acclaim. He always writes to address a problem, getting to the root of the situation, sourcing first-hand data, subjecting such to thorough analysis, and always arriving at a meaningful end. The high citation index of his publications is a testimony of the resourcefulness and significance of his works in academia.

His publication titled: "Rising Costs and Diminishing Educational Funding in Nigeria: Exploring the way out for secondary school music education" (1991), was a sensitive and timely one as it came when music educators in Nigeria were bordered about the future of musicology in the face of musical philistinism and poor funding.

The paper was resourceful during my Master's Degree research on "Towards the Resuscitation of Music Education in Primary Schools of Anambra State" (2010). Prof. recommended in his paper, amongst other things, that in the face of rising costs and diminishing educational funding that music educators should source for available and affordable materials to sustain music education. I drew on that recommendation and explored the utility of the recorder in resuscitating music education in primary schools and the idea was successful.

- **A Humorist**

Behind the image of erudite music scholar is a man whose sense of humour is irresistible and contagious. A master of comic relief; manoeuvring his way out of every contention with an ameliorating joke. Even with his numerous students, he was never sarcastic nor ever heard raising his voice against any. He could say and communicate the most difficult message with a jest. But even amid all the humour, he was sagacious and careful with words.

The popular banter and greeting among musicologists, “I greet you well, well” originated from him. This was his way of exchanging greetings with his colleagues and students and the emphatic 'well, well’ gives the receiver a warm sense of belonging and acceptance. Sometimes he even decorates the greeting with a bow or the duffing of his black hat that always adorns his regalia. He is a man that starts greeting you even before you are aware of his presence, always extending his hand for a warm handshake. He does not believe in the purported line of divide between professors and students; between professors and non-professors. He is simply reachable to everyone. Professor Chukwuemeka Mbanugo is an approachable man.

The popular slang amongst musicologists and music students, “*itili obodo*” (shaking the town) also came from him. It was his humoristic way of demystifying (IPS exams) amongst students. It was coined from his narrative about his undergraduate days at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka when individual Performance Studies Examination (IPS) was a nightmare to students because the examination required that students showcased their various abilities in singing, playing musical instruments, playing piano scales and pieces, and performing many genres of music.

In one of the sessions, Prof., as a student, pranced up and down the corridor, stretching his fingers, warming up his entire body and waiting for his turn to be called in. When it got to his turn he quickly mounted the piano seat and bamboozled the panel by playing the piano scale with so much energy and dexterity, sight-singing and performing all of his set-pieces with remarkable effusion of musicality that threw the panel into applause. The prancing up and down the corridor, stretching of the fingers, energetic and articulate playing of the piano and proper interpretation of the set pieces are regarded in his parlance as “*itili obodo*”.

As funny as this narrative might sound, it works some magic on students who have ever listened to him, or heard it, as it generally spurs them, particularly those who face various challenges in their IPS examinations.

The slang has become a motivational tool in the hands of IPS instructors and a source of motivation for students during IPS exams. Just tell a student, “*jee tilie obodo*” (move into the panel and 'shake the tables') he or she gets prepped up for action and excellence.

## **Conclusion**

Professor Chukwuemeka Eleazar Mbanugo has distinguished himself in academia and has set a mark for all to emulate. He has carefully set on his track many lessons for all to learn.

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