

Playing  
Time:  
**78:46**

Nkeiru  
**OKOYE**  
(b. 1972)



AMERICAN CLASSICS

**When the Caged Bird Sings (2023–24)**

- |              |   |              |
|--------------|---|--------------|
| <b>11–14</b> | <b>Part I: Gather Together in My Name</b> | <b>19:32</b> |
| <b>15–18</b> | <b>Part II: Now Sheba Sings the Song</b>  | <b>20:46</b> |
| <b>19–20</b> | <b>Part III: And Still I Rise</b>         | <b>11:49</b> |
| <b>21–22</b> | <b>Part IV: I Shall Not Be Moved</b>      | <b>12:07</b> |
| <b>23–27</b> | <b>Part V: A Song Flung up to Heaven</b>  | <b>14:22</b> |

**Celebrant** ..... Rita Coburn  
**Mother** ..... Angela Brown, Soprano  
**Cerise** ..... Christie Dashiell, Mezzo-soprano  
**Guidance Counselor** ..... Issachah Savage, Tenor  
**Father** ..... Jubilant Sykes, Baritone  
**Minister of Music** ..... Cyrus Chestnut, Piano

**EXIGENCE**

**A Sphinx Vocal Ensemble**

**University of Michigan Choirs**

**Chamber Choir • Orpheus Singers • University Choir**  
(Eugene Rogers, Chorus Master)

**University of Michigan Symphony Orchestra**

**Kenneth Kiesler**

A full track list and recording details can be found inside the booklet • The libretto is included in the booklet, and may also be accessed at [www.naxos.com/libretti/559953.htm](http://www.naxos.com/libretti/559953.htm)

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Nkeiru Okoye's *When the Caged Bird Sings* is a 'musical celebration' whose compositional voice, though rooted in the African American church, also embraces minimalism and improvisational elements. Delivering a message of adversity turned to triumph, it celebrates the transformative ability of African American women, partly evoking the experiences of the author and activist Maya Angelou. The work functions as a communal ritual that, like oratorio, opera and theatre, brings together vocal soloists, chorus and orchestra, in an experience that both commemorates and celebrates hope and possibility.

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