

Playing
Time:
78:46

Nkeiru
OKOYE
(b. 1972)



AMERICAN CLASSICS

When the Caged Bird Sings (2023–24)

- | | | |
|--------------|---|--------------|
| 1–4 | Part I: Gather Together in My Name | 19:32 |
| 5–8 | Part II: Now Sheba Sings the Song | 20:46 |
| 9–10 | Part III: And Still I Rise | 11:49 |
| 11–12 | Part IV: I Shall Not Be Moved | 12:07 |
| 13–17 | Part V: A Song Flung up to Heaven | 14:22 |

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

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Nkeiru Okoye's *When the Caged Bird Sings* is a large-scale contemporary concert work that follows the journey of Cerise, whose story weaves together personal and collective aspects of Black experience. Through movements such as *The Beatitudes* and *Sometimes Life Gets Ugly*, the piece explores adversity, resilience, and transformation with a musical language rooted in classical and operatic traditions and enriched with African American folk-music influences and minimalist processes. Scored for vocal soloists, chorus, and orchestra, the work blends elements of oratorio, opera, and communal expression to create an expansive, emotionally resonant narrative inspired in part by themes found in the life and writings of Maya Angelou.

WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING



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MUSIC, THEATRE & DANCE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



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