Twice Grammy-nominated composer **Shawn E. Okpebholo** doesn't just write music—he engages history, culture, and community through sound. Named the 2024 Chicagoan of the Year in Classical Music by the *Chicago Tribune* and one of *Musical America*'s Top 30 Professionals of 2023, the Nigerian American artist sees himself as a storyteller, educator, and bridge-builder, creating music that resonates globally while remaining rooted in the individual stories that shape our shared humanity.

His music has been praised as "devastatingly beautiful" (*The Washington Post*), "lyrical, complex, singular" (*The Guardian*), "dreamy, sensual" (*The Boston Globe*), and "affecting" (*The New York Times*). Rooted in tradition yet unmistakably contemporary, his work embodies what *The Washington Post* has called a voice that is "fresh and new and fearless."

Okpebholo's Grammy-nominated solo album *Lord, How Come Me Here?* reimagines Negro spirituals and American folk hymns through a deeply personal and historically grounded lens. His recording *Songs in Flight* continues that legacy of musical storytelling, earning widespread critical acclaim, including a double five-star review from *BBC Music Magazine* and a Grammy nomination for Best Contemporary Classical Composition.

Across his career, Okpebholo has received numerous honors, including two awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, as well as honors from the American Prize in Composition, the Music Publishers Association, ASCAP, and the inaugural Leslie Adams–Robert Owens Composition Award. His work has been supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, Chamber Music America, the Mellon Foundation, the Barlow Endowment, and others.

His music has been commissioned and performed by a wide range of ensembles and institutions, including the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the United States Air Force Strings, Imani Winds, WindSync, Urban Arias, Sparks & Wiry Cries, and the Copland House Ensemble, Composer-in-Residence. Okpebholo currently serves as the Jonathan Blanchard Distinguished Professor of Composition at Wheaton College Conservatory of Music.

THE 49th ANNUAL
FESTIVAL OF NEW AMERICAN MUSIC

CLOSING CONCERT

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 7:00 P.M.

Harvard Square (on a poem by Miho Nonaka) — Shawn Okpebholo (b. 1981)

Cathie Apple, flute

Bulldog (2021) — Andrea Venet

Jesse Barba, Daniel Harrison, Merrick Ohlund,
Leslie Vazquez, percussion

Rise — Shawn Okpebholo

Pan Pacific Ensemble
Sophia Tegart, flute | Keri E. McCarthy, oboe
Gabby Baffoni, clarinet | Michael Garza, bassoon
Martin D. King, horn

I N T E R M I S S I O N

Keynote Address - Shawn Okpebholo

The American Road — Shawn Okpebholo

III. He's Got the Whole World in HIs Hands (traditional)
IV. Left Foot, Peg Foot (traditional)
V. Shall We Gather at the River (text by Robert Lowry)

continued on next page

VI. Shine! (traditional)
Soloist: Ryan Fong

Sacramento State University Chorale
Dr. Brett Judson, director
Aida Elkhanzade, piano

Stellar — Shawn Okpebholo

Sacramento State Symphony Orchestra
Ryan Murray, director

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University Chorale

Sopranos
Rachel Ashlin
Lilly Crain
Allisen Fong
Kahlan Gentry
Hsuan-Lin Liang
Rebecca Kong
Yiyuan (Annie) Wu
Saxon Webster

Altos
Emi Bravo
Sky Carlos
Ellie D'Elia
Jordan Powell
Thea de Sá Campos
Dennis Saenz
Ailani Stotts

Tenors
Brandon Bagley
Ryan Fong
Ivan Villalobos

Basses
Anthony De Lise
Miyan Grasso
Kyle Saly
Aryan Singh
Marcus Teixeira

Student Assistant
Lillian Crain

Graduate Assistant
Alissa Prince

Symphony Orchestra

Violin I
Joan Shalit *
Christian Lozada
Alex Tu
Emrys Tu
Paolo Reyes

Violin II
Natalie Albano +
Jaiden Barredo
Kayla Nhoung
Shane Duncan
Adamari Guerrero
Yesenia Guerrero

Viola
Tristan Corpuz +
Orion Hernandez
Zachary Noakes
Winter Blank
Andy Brosnan
Cynthia Kallemeyn
Jayden Blattner

Harp
Darina Fauryan

Piano/Celeste
Sydnie Speer

Cello
William Masters +
Abigail Cooper
George Weis
Karl Rosaasen
Valerie Garcia Aguilera
Adelle Zamarripa

Bass
Allison Keller +
Jake Fox
Jonathan Chavez-Ulloa
Mattie Rowlands
Jesse Wells
Ari Cosato
Valerie Robles
Alejandro Giles

Flute
Jace Kim +
Long Cheng Vang
Amelia Sharpe (picc.)

Oboe
Mary Kuvakos +
Hailey Nelson

Clarinet
Mia Kawakami +
Fern Ashley Romero
Dara Vasquez (bass)

Bassoon
Olivia Nickols +
Matt Tilos

Horn
Anthony Munroe +
Trinity Tran
Matthew Anselmi
Jannessa Magalong

Trumpet
Anthony Alvarez-Chavez +
Alex Brown-Silva

Trombone
Gustavo Cano +
Michael Mencarini
Andres Franco

Tuba
Hunter Dalton +

Timpani
Jesse Barba +

Percussion
Gerald Mendez
Ryan Fong
Daniel Harrison

* concertmaster | + principal
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