

Austin C. Okigbo (Public Vita)

Austin Okigbo is associate professor at the University of Colorado Boulder, College of Music, and interim director of the American Music Research Center. He is affiliate faculty in Africana Studies, and Global Health, and the Center for African and African American Studies.

His work on global health has generated national and international interests since the pandemic leading to several lectures on music and health at various research institutions and as guest at several national and international media as contributor on the social dimensions of global epidemics. He was selected to co-teach an Institute of the European Research Council on Global Epidemics in Vienna in the summer of 2023. In March 2023, at the anniversary of the declaration of the COVID-19 a global pandemic by the WHO, he co-hosted an international symposium on music in global epidemics. In April 2022, He gave a Ted Talk titled “What popular music can teach us about epidemics.” The talk was selected and published on the main Ted Conference and shared on several other media platforms.

Okigbo features regularly in a number of local and international radio and television programs including BBC, Channels TV Lagos, Nigeria, and Black Radio Consortium as contributor and analyst on the entertainment industry, and cultural education and policy. He is the author of *Music, Culture, and the Politics of Health: Ethnography of a South African AIDS Choir* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), and co-editor of *Ubuntu: A Comparative Study of an African Concept of Justice* (Leuven University Press, 2024). His has published articles in *Africa Today*, *Du Bois Review*, *Ethnomusicology*, *Journal of Folklore Research*, and *The Journal of the International Library of African Music*. He is the editor of the *World of Music* (Verlag, Berlin, Germany 2015) on the New African Musical Diasporas. Professor Okigbo’s current work includes book projects on music and cultural imaginations in African Christianity; and new African musical diasporas. He also has an on-going project on World Music of the Front Range, Colorado.

He has given several lectures on music and health and been a regular guest at several national and international media as an expert contributor on the social dimensions of global epidemics and the role of music and the arts. In April 2022, he gave a Ted Talk titled “What popular music can teach us about epidemics,” which explored lessons that could be learned from the history of music by juxtaposing the social fallouts of the current coronavirus pandemic and other outbreaks of epidemics going back to medieval times. This year, in March at the anniversary of the declaration of the COVID-19 a global pandemic by the WHO, he co-hosts an international symposium on music in global epidemics.

Okigbo directs the CU World Vocal Ensemble, which has featured with the world famous South African vocal group, The Ladysmith Black Mambazo, and the multi-award winning popular musician and activist Johnny Clegg. He has conducted college, church, and community choirs in the United States, South Africa, and Nigeria. He served as the co-chair of the African Music Section of the Society for Ethnomusicology (SEM) between 2014 and 2017 in addition to serving on several committees in the organization and the African Studies Association

Selected Courses Taught at CU Boulder

Graduate Seminars: *Music of Disease & Death*, *Ethnomusicology Proseminar*, *World Music Pedagogy*, *Black Atlantic*, *Black American Music*, *Music in African Life*, *Music Ethnography*.

Undergraduate Seminars: *Sounding Epidemic*, *Music and Global Health*, *Music and Politics in Africa*, *Art Music of Africa*, *Music in African Religious Experience*, and *Ethnomusicology Senior Seminar*.

Selected Publications

- Okigbo, Austin C. "Liturgy and Musical Inculturation in a Post-apartheid South African Catholicism." *Yale Journal of Music and Religion*. Vol. 7, No. 2 (2021).
- Nnodim, Paul, and Austin C. Okigbo. "Justice as Fairness and "Ubuntu": Conceptualizing Justice through Human Dignity." *Ethical Perspectives* 27, no. 1 (2020): 69-91.
- Okigbo, Austin C. 2019. "Medical Ethnomusicology." *The Sage International Encyclopedia of Music and Culture*. Janet Sturman, Ed. New York and London: Sage Publications.
- Okigbo, Austin C. 2018. "Art and National Development: The Nigerian Experience in Perspective." In *Mentoring Grace: Exploring the Confluence of the Arts and the Humanities*. Alaribe, Gilbert N. and Okwuosa, Lawrence N. (Eds.), Owerri, Imo State: DFDC, pp.122-132.
- Okigbo, Austin C. "South African Music in the History of Epidemics." *JFR, The International Journal of Folklore and Ethnomusicology*, Vol. 54, no. 1-2, pp.87-118, (2017).
- Okigbo, Austin C. *Music, Culture, and the Politics of Health: Ethnography of a South African AIDS Choir*. New York and London: Rowman and Littlefield (2016).

Selected Newspaper Articles

- Okigbo, Austin C. "Burning History and Heritage: The Problem of Africans' Cultural Self-immolation." *Afrik Digest Magazine*, Denver, CO (December. 2021).
- Okigbo, Austin C. "Unknown Gunmen, Unknown Soldier: A Familiar Language in the History of State-Sponsored Violence in Nigeria." *AfrikDigest Magazine*, Denver Colorado (October 2021).
- Okigbo, Austin C. "Africans and Black Lives Matter: Exhibitions of Naiveté and Ignorance of History." *Pointblank News*, Abuja, Nigeria (July 29, 2020).