

BIOGRAPHY: Ben Okafor

A DIFFERENT KIND OF MAN - A DIFFERENT KIND OF MUSIC!

This man lends his evocative voice to ENTERTAIN, EDUCATE and INSPIRE people all over the world.

BEN OKAFOR is an internationally-acclaimed African Reggae/World-beat artist of over 25 years. His particular interest lies in the powerful use of this medium of the arts to communicate and educate. Respected and renowned among peers in his native Nigeria and beyond, Ben has a sound reputation for empowering people to use their intellect in conjunction with their artistic skills to express their views on world issues peacefully yet effectively.

BACKGROUND:

Ben was born in Enugu, eastern Nigeria in 1954. His music and early life were shaped by his experiences as a child soldier as his country was torn by the Nigeria-Biafra War of 1967-70. His earliest memories of music go back to live street performances of West African Hi-Life, street dancers and percussion bands in the market squares of eastern Nigeria. Ibo and European church music, alongside his mother's enthusiasm for Miriam Makeba, combine with the later influences of James Brown, Jimmy Cliff, The Beatles and Rolling Stones, Fela Kuti and – inevitably – The Wailers.

Ben moved to the UK in the 1980s and settled in the Midlands, quickly releasing two albums, both produced by Bob Lamb of early UB40 fame.

SINGER / SONGWRITER

By the world, Ben Okafor is considered to be a Reggae/World music artist. His music styles are:

- ? Rich lyrical **AFRICAN** heritages
- ? Classic **FOLK** protest
- ? Driving **REGGAE** beats.

Ben considers his genre to be "Socio-spiritual consciousness." This genre goes beyond entertainment and seeks to serve the betterment of all. Ben has released 10 albums, two of which were released in 2006. His new album, "Diverted Traffic" will be released in 2008. Ben is a prolific live performer and has toured in the UK, Europe, USA, Nigeria, Denmark, Sweden and South Africa.

POLITICAL ACTIVIST / HUMANITARIAN

Ben Okafor is an articulate and intelligent man who is compassionately engaged with the struggles of those least able to represent themselves. He is non-compromising in his fight for justice, peace and love. He takes his platform seriously and expects nothing less than excellence from himself. Ben is a man of stature, substance and genuine spiritual sensibilities. He is equally at ease with peasants and presidents.... grounded in the certain knowledge that Africans are fully capable of speaking for themselves, and finding the solutions to their own dilemmas. Ben is a political activist whose songs frequently address issues of human rights. He appeared in South Africa with Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu and involvement in diverse peace and justice initiatives followed, his songs reflecting a heartfelt plea for justice, truth and love. Early 2007, Ben was asked to address the Queen and Commonwealth.

ACTOR / WRITER / POET

Since 1993, Ben has developed an acting career in tandem with music. Not only acting, but writing and directing.

PRESENTLY

Ben's new CD, "Diverted Traffic" will be available in 2008. This year, he wrote and directed the music for AFRICAN SNOW and is currently performing in the play, "Rough Crossing." In July of this year, Ben starred in the play, "CHILD OF BIAFRA," a play about his life as a child soldier during the Nigerian/Biafra War. In 2008, Ben will embark on his SPIRIT OF THE ACT World Tour of universities and colleges which scrutinises the effects of slavery.

RELEVANT FACTS

As a child, Ben was a victim of the civil war in Nigeria and at the age of 13, he fought as a boy soldier. The pain and destruction he witnessed during that period soon began to influence the lyrics he wrote -- his songs reflecting a heart-felt plea for justice, truth and love. An ongoing passion for peace and justice followed as Ben began work with the "Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers," "Amnesty International" and others. In 2006, this led to Ben writing the title track for an album of African Artists focusing attention on the use of child soldiers. The album features, amongst others, Alpha Blondy, Angelique Kidjo, Youssou N'Dour and Salif Keita.

CONTACT:

Paula Bragg
International Coordinator
BEN OKAFOR
234 Highpoint Road
Statesboro, GA USA
Phone: 912.764.3584
Cell: 912.541.2531
Email: paula@benokafor.com

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