

## CITATION FOR PROF. LAZ EDWARD NNANYELU EKWUEME

Mr. President,

I have the honour to present Professor Laz Edward Nnanyelu Ekwueme, holder of the degrees of Bachelor of Music of the University of Durham, Master of Music of the Royal College of Music, London, Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy, both of the prestigious Yale University.

Professor Ekwueme attained national and international acclaim on account of his theoretical and practical contributions to music - his life-long preoccupation. His "*Essays on the Theory of African Music*" is one of the key references in the field. Another of his publications entitled "Choir Training and Choral Conducting for Africans" is also popularly regarded as the "bible" for the African Choirmasters and Choral Conductors. These and his other eleven books are used as standard texts for both undergraduates and postgraduate courses in Music within and outside the Nigerian University system. He has also authored over 80 journal articles and papers.

Apart from the scholarly pursuits, Prof. Ekwueme, as a leading African Composer, has enriched the repertoire of Nigerian music through his original compositions as well as the imaginative arrangement of existing African melodies. In this area, he has uniquely built on the heritage of Igbo music and made available to a wider global audience a variety of classical and folk songs. His most notable achievements include the final arrangement of and the authorship of the lyrics of the ECOW AS Anthem.

As a Performer, Prof. Ekwueme founded, and for 31 years, directed and continues to direct, the Laz Ekwueme Chorale; a large choir that has made notable appearances at international events, both within and outside Nigeria. Three of his more recent high profile appearances include the training and conducting of the Nigerian National Choir for FEST AG 77, and directing of the Choral Music of COJA 2003 and CHOGM 2003. In addition, his Dance Drama "IHopes for a Better World" was featured in Abuja in 1995 at the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the United Nations.

As a bridge-builder between "town and gown", Prof. Ekwueme, Nigeria's first Professor of Music, has richly enhanced the standard of the budding NOLL YWOOD home video industry in Nigeria, having taken on leading roles in over 10 videos in many of which he played the role of royalty.

As if to convince the world of his royal breed, this distinguished son of Nigeria, retired from full academic life and ascended the throne of his ancestors. He took, in 2003, the title of His Royal Highness, Professor Laz Edward Nnanyelu Ekwueme IV, Eze Ijikala II, Igwe of Oko in Orumba North LGA of Anambra State. Prof. Ekwueme is a devoted family man. He is married to Dr. Lucy Ekwueme, an academic educator in her own rights. Both are blessed with three children.

Mr. President Sir, it is with honour and great privilege that I present to you this Royal Father, a distinguished academician, singer, conductor, composer, and arranger, and "ambassador" for Nigeria in Theatre Arts for the conferment of the Nigerian National Order of Merit for Year 2005.