

Celebrating 10 Years in Cultural Programming

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

St. Louis African Chorus "A St. Louis Treasure"

The St. Louis African Chorus was founded 1994 to foster a better understanding of Africa's culture through the musical arts. Its focus remains the programming of music by composers of African origin or descent. And our organization fills this artistic niche by training local St. Louisans to produce African choral music or presenting touring groups from Africa. Over the years we've found that more people have gained a wider access to our programs through the outreach collaborations we've formed with community groups worldwide. In the St. Louis area for example, rather than train twenty to twenty-five persons to sing in African languages, we have a smaller core of members gainfully engaged to train a larger community of singing groups and school choirs to present concerts of African music in the metro area. It might be pertinent to add that these groups would otherwise not have access to our unique programs. Through such collaborations the Equinox Chamber Players were paid to form the core orchestra for the 2000 US Premiere of Dr. Akin Euba's opera, *Chaka: an Opera in Two Chants*. The same Equinox Players, on recommendation and invitation by the St. Louis African Chorus, enhanced its visibility nationally by participating in the 2002 Festival of African & African America Music in New Orleans, LA. The University City Symphony Orchestra, directed by Dr. Leon Burke, has similarly benefited. In 2001 some of their musicians were paid to play alongside members of the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra to form the resident orchestra at the Festival of African and African American Music which was presented by the St. Louis African Chorus. This year, more St. Louis musicians and youth will benefit from another exposure facilitated by the St. Louis African Chorus. At the recent October 22-24, 2004 Festival of African and African American Music in Kansas City, the **Cameron Youth Chamber Orchestra** and the University City Symphony Orchestra (**UCSO**) presented concerts before an international audience. And in May 2005, at the International Sowande Centennial Festival, taking place in Abuja and Lagos, Nigeria's largest cities, twenty (25) members of the UCSO and other local musicians will form the core members of the 60-member orchestra that will perform at the festival. In addition, school children from the Normandy and St. Louis school districts; college students from Webster, Washington and Maryville universities; church groups from Trinity Presbyterian Church, Resurrection Lutheran Church, and youth groups from the St. Louis Children's Choirs, Herbert Hoover Boys and Girls Club, Monsanto YMCA Boys Choir, and many other community groups in the metro St. Louis area who look forward to participating in our programs annually. As accurately observed by celebrated TV News anchor Julius Hunter, the St. Louis African Chorus is "a St. Louis Treasure," a unique resource to the St. Louis arts community. The artistic vision remains guided by Fred Onovwerosuoke (FredO), the organization's founder and artistic director, who bears the responsibility of transcribing and archiving new music, conducting Africa field research, coordinating or supervising other directors to train the local ensembles, and planning and scheduling season concerts, while maintaining a busy schedule guest-conducting and promoting St. Louis worldwide as home to the world's premier group for African choral music. In the wake of post September 11 decreased arts funding, the St. Louis African Chorus, like many arts organizations, have had to explore new means of financial viability. We hope that you and your family would consider making a generous contribution to sustain this remarkable organization. Your tax-deductible donation should be made to the *St. Louis African Chorus*, and mailed to: **634 N. Grand Blvd., Suite 1143, St. Louis, MO 63103.**

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Organizational Overview of the St. Louis African Chorus

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