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William Onyeabor : *The Enigma Who Shook The Music World.*

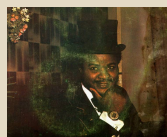
By Maduagwu Nzubechi

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FEATURE
IMAGE

William-Onyeabor-PAM

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WILLIAM ONYEABOR

William Onyeabor : The Enigma Who Shook The Music World.

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Born in the vibrant city of Enugu on 26 march 1946, Williams “Ezechukwu” Onyeabor is one of the well known but misunderstood musical icons of the 20th century. A lot is not known about the earlier days of Williams even about his university education, some accounts suggest that he schooled in oxford, others insist that he schooled in Moscow. But the main allure of Williams comes from from his musical prowess, he released nine (9) albums between 1977-1985 and also his biggest hit the biggest of which was Atomic Bomb in 1978 through his own record label “wilifilms” which also housed his own pressing plant located in Enugu, southeast Nigeria. The plant is also credited for pressing Livy Ekemezie’s 1983 funk set Friday Night.



William-Onyeabor-Photo credit-PAM

In addition to his musical genius, “chief” like his people in Enugu love to call him displayed typical characteristics of an Igbo man in several ways. An Igbo Adage says” akurulo amaru onye kpatara ya” which means “when wealth comes back home, you would know who made it” and Williams embodied this, in addition to his music pressing plants, he opened a flour processing plant and food processing business in Enugu which provided a lot of jobs in his locality and he went on to win the West African Industrialist Of The Year award in 1987.

To add to his mysticism, Williams left the music industry in the 80s after becoming born-again and giving his life to Christ, from then on he shunned all attention that came with being a well admired musician and multi-instrumentalist. It also caused a stir when Onyeabor’s devotion to the ministry of late prophet T.B. Joshua made it to the public. It remained that way until a compilation his songs dropped in 2001 which was titled Nigeria 70: The Definitive Story of 1970s Funky Lagos and very recently in 2013 Luaka Bop, a New York

record label owned by David Byrne, released the reissue album 'Who Is William Onyeabor' which resurrected discussions about funk and disco musical culture in Nigeria and across the world.

Williams Onyeabor died in his home in Enugu state in 2017 after a brief illness.

SOURCES

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Nzubechi is a history, political enthusiast who dabbles into social commentary once in a while



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