

## Ekpe Abioto

Ekpe Abioto is a native Memphite and is the youngest of 14 children, 7 girls and 7 boys. Through his family's African roots and activism, he was exposed to African music, literature, arts and culture at an early age. In 1970, at age 13, he began playing the flute and is now a multi-instrumentalist, storyteller, songwriter and cultural enrichment specialist. Ekpe has travelled the world with various ensembles and as a solo artist. He is Artistic Director of GENIUS UNLIMITED! and does cultural performances, lecture demonstrations/workshops for all educational levels, from pre-k to institutions of higher learning such as Harvard University. He does programs for libraries, faith-based organizations, museums and special events. Ekpe is the leader of Ekpe and Company, also Ekpe and Afrikan Jazz Ensemble.

He has three recordings entitled, The Spirit of African Music, I AM A GENIUS (motivational learning music for children which includes the DON'T TOUCH A GUN! song), and Black On Black Love. He has received several awards for his work as an arts educator. In 2024, he was chosen to be a James Weldon Johnson Fellow in the Arts for helping to preserve and pass on the legacy of Black music, history and culture. Ekpe believes in the saying, "To whom much is given, much is required", and that as a creative artist his responsibility is to inspire others to use their creative genius to better themselves, their family, their community and humanity. He recently finished his first book entitled, DON'T TOUCH A GUN!, which is designed to help keep children safe from guns. He has more music and literature in the works. Ekpe lives in Memphis, Tennessee.

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