

Omékongo is a Les Brown platinum motivational speaker, life coach, and award-winning poet. He is the Founder & CEO of Free Your Mind Publishing. A first generation Congolese-American who was described by Nikki Giovanni as “outstanding, exciting, and new while being very old”, Omékongo writes and performs in English, French and Swahili, and has occasionally used Wolof in his writings. He also co-stars in the television drama series “Ya Ma’Afrika,” which airs in North America, Europe, Africa, and the West Indies. He has released 5 CDs, 3 books, and 1 DVD. The first CD, “A Young Black Man’s Anthem: Love, Afrika and Revolution Revisited,” won the 2003 Cambridge Poetry Award for “Best CD”. His second CD, “Signs of the Time,” was released in June 2003. In 2006, in response to the misogyny in rap music, he adopted the rap name “Young M.A.Y.A.” in honor of Dr. Maya Angelou. The “M.A.Y.A.” stands for “Mighty African Youth Advocate.” His two rap mixtapes CD, “Bootleg” & “Bootleg II” promote positive hip-hop with remixes of songs by Tupac, Notorious BIG, Hay-Z, Nas, Kanye West,, and others. His 4th CD, a rap & spoken word hybrid CD, “Reality Show,” was released in 2006. He has featured/lectured nationwide in universities and poetry venues from Harvard to Russell Simmons’ Hip-Hop Summit. Internationally, he has performed in South Africa, England, Congo-Kinshasa, Tanzania, France, Cuba, and Canada. His work has appeared on TV and radio from CNN, BET, ABC, BBC, NPR, Music Choice, and Voice of America in millions of homes in over 150 countries. He has shared the stage with Les Brown, Willie Jolley, Sonia Sanchez, Amiri Baraka, Dennis Brutus, The Last Poets, Awilo, Felix Wazekwa, Black Thought, OutKast, Wyclef Jean, Reverend Run, Free, Lord Finesse, Rich Medina, and Cousin Jeff. He is currently a PhD student in International Education Policy at The University of Maryland where he studies the arts as a tool for social change. He received his MA from The Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy and BSFS from Georgetown University. He has also studied at Harvard, Princeton, MIT, Morehouse College, and the University of Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar, Sénégal. His work has been globally adapted for curricula in primary, secondary, and university institutions. He has released a trilingual book of poetry and DVD, “From the Limbs of My Poetree,” which has received praise from Dr. Maya Angelou, Essence Magazine, and The Washington Times. His second book, an anthology of Maryland middle school students entitled “Poems from the Future: Poetic Reflections from the Next Generation” was published in the summer of 2005. His most recent publication, “Put Your Shoes On” by M.B. Dibinga is a step-by-step guide for youth seeking employment, A dedicated educator for over 20 years, Omékongo plans to develop programs that focus on bridge building and helping to improve cultural understanding among all races. For more information, please visit www.omekongo.com.