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**In Focus**

# **ADEGOKE STEVE COLSON & IQUA COLSON**

**50th Anniversary Event  
“A Soundtrack for Our Times”**

**The National Jazz Museum in Harlem | May 9**



**T**HE JAZZ COMMUNITY WILL COME TOGETHER on May 9 to celebrate the monumental 50th anniversary of the creative partnership and marriage of Adegoke Steve Colson and Iqua Colson, two distinguished and influential artists who have shaped the genre through their dynamic artistry and political activism. Their anniversary coincides with the debut of their new collaborative work, *"Glow: Music for Trio ... Add Voice"*, a collection of thought-provoking compositions that reflect the couple's unique ability to channel cultural and social currents into music of profound depth and meaning.

#### **About Adegoke Steve Colson**

Adegoke Steve Colson, a jazz pianist, composer, and educator, hails from East Orange, NJ, and is celebrated as a Steinway Artist. Over the years, Colson's compositions have earned him GRAMMY Award nominations, attesting to his deep musical and cultural contributions. His music often explores themes of social and political consciousness, reflecting his lifelong commitment to activism and advocacy.

Colson played a pivotal role in the historic 1968 student takeover of Northwestern University's Bursar's Office, an iconic moment detailed in the documentary film *The Takeover*. This event marked a turning point in the fight to secure Black student rights on university campuses. Early in his career, Colson further established himself as part of the groundbreaking nonprofit collective, the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM), whose mission was to foster originality and innovation in jazz.

Ade draws inspiration not only from his musical heroes but also from his sense of justice and equity, noting, "I started buying jazz albums when I was 10 years old, and would always read the liner notes. I guess at some point, realizing that musicians were not getting what they deserved, made me political." This insight shaped his career, leading him to champion independent artists and craft compositions with a social conscience. His wide-ranging collaborations include sharing the stage with jazz royalty such as Dizzy Gillespie, Pharoah Sanders, Wallace Roney, and Art Blakey. His compositions evoke comparisons to luminaries like Thelonious Monk, Duke Ellington, Charles Ives, and Igor Stravinsky, as well as reflecting his work with poet and activist Amiri Baraka.

#### **About Iqua Colson**

Iqua Colson, a gifted vocalist, lyricist, and educator, grew up in Chicago and met Ade while they were both students at Northwestern University. Praised by *DownBeat Magazine* as "a vocalist deserving of wider recognition", Iqua's soulful voice and artistic vision are central to the pair's shared creative output. She is known for her ability to blend sensitive lyricism with incisive commentary on the state of society. Alongside Ade, Iqua has been a key advocate of self-reliance in the music industry, empowering independent musicians to take control of their creative destinies. "We developed a philosophy of self-reliance. That was the mindset that we always worked on," she explains.

**"Five decades of music, activism, and boundary-breaking creativity — Ade and Iqua Colson give us a soundtrack for our times."**

#### **About the Collaboration**

Together, Ade and Iqua Colson are musical storytellers whose work transcends entertainment to engage deeply with profound issues of society, politics, and humanity. Their latest project, *"Glow: Music for Trio ... Add Voice"*, continues this tradition with both newly composed works and reinterpretations of older pieces. The couple will perform highlights from "Glow" at the National Jazz Museum in Harlem, joined by legendary drummer Andrew Cyrille and bassist Mark Helias, both of whom are celebrated figures in the jazz world who bring decades of expertise to the collaboration.

One of the standout compositions on the program is "Atrocity," written by Iqua as a response to the erratic and tumultuous state of contemporary politics. "What's going on politically in this country right now is so erratic that it's become a key influence for us in our latest music," Iqua shares. This sentiment reflects the Colsons' long-standing tradition of addressing societal challenges through their art. Their work often serves as a "canary in the coal mine," offering audiences both creative insight and a call to action. Whether the audience embraces the message or wrestles with its implications, the Colsons' artistry is sure to stimulate strong feelings and inspire serious contemplation.

#### **Significance of Their 50th Anniversary**

This milestone represents not only five decades of creative collaboration as musical partners but also a celebration of their profound commitment to advancing justice, equality, and freedom of expression through the arts. Ade and Iqua Colson, through their independent spirit and boundary-breaking creativity, have become enduring icons of the jazz world. Their contributions serve as a reminder of the transformative power of music to both challenge and inspire society.

Celebrate this momentous occasion at the National Jazz Museum in Harlem, where music, passion, and activism converge in "A Soundtrack for Our Times."

*John Zaff is a New York based music journalist, jazz musician and producer of various media formats.*