

IZIBONGO

Celebrating Art in Africa and the Diaspora

Issue 49 - 2018

Song

for

Demas

Nwoko

Natty Mark Samuels

Editorial

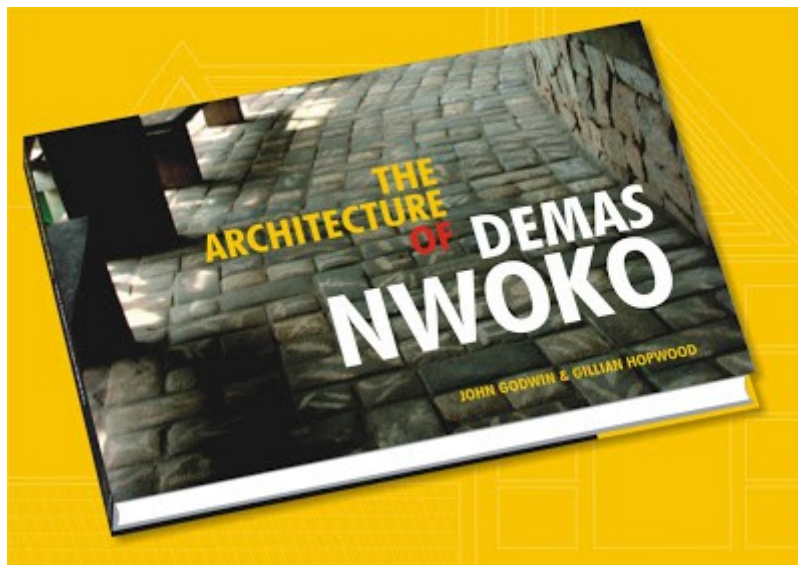
The first issue of 2018, is the final part of the *Igbo Icons Trilogy*. This edition celebrates the one I call the Renaissance Man. The others have celebrated Ben Enwonwu and Uche Okeke.

A co-founding member of the "Zaria Rebels", he went on to construct a new philosophy for Architecture in Africa.

As someone who represented Nigeria internationally, through his theatre productions and art exhibitions, that legacy continues with the **Legacies of Biafra Exhibition**, organised by the Nigeria Art Society UK, starting later this month – Jan 18th - at SOAS in London.

I give thanks for the one who helped to give us "Natural Synthesis", which generated his "New Culture". Blessed are the thinkers who bring vision to life: buildings of Ibadan, Enugu and Benin.

From Nigeria, I am happy to present to you, DEMAS NWOKO.



from *Naijablog*

Editor – Natty Mark Samuels – africanschool.weebly.com – An African School Production

<http://rastaites.com/izibongo-issues-36-46/>

https://reggaediscography.blogspot.co.uk/2017/09/izibongo-magazine-2017_28.html

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from African Art with Taj

Demas Nwoko

Song for Demas Nwoko

Renaissance Man

His head must have been going off all the time: the sweet detonation of ideas. At the time of writing, I haven't come across another artistic figure from sub-Saharan Africa, who has created in so many genres. A true polymath; a worthy carrier of the term "Renaissance Man". He was an architect, interior designer, sculptor, painter, actor, set designer, dancer and writer, as well as stage director, lecturer and publisher.

Nigeria gave us Demos Nwoko,
Italy gave us Michaelangelo.
One walks surrounded by many,
The other still walks solo.

First Love

It makes sense that you, a lover of building and buildings since childhood days in the palace of your father, should, on leaving school, take up employment in an office of the draughtsmen: civil service days. They say your first love stays with you, so it was with you.

Zaria

The city of Queen Amina,
Became the city of the "Rebels".
They used the Western canvas,
But coloured it with African Pastel.

Verse for a Pavillion

It must have been an honour Demas, overjoyed to have received as your first architectural commission, the design of the pavilion, at the 1960 Independence Exhibition.

Murals and Sculpture

The Blacksmiths in Zaria,
Totems in Lagos,
Talents in Ibadan.
Murals and sculpture,
To embellish a nation,
When the people said "we can."

Ibadan

Ibadan of Mbari,
Ibadan of hope.
It must have been good to have been there,
After loosening colonial rope.

Sweet Shrapnel

Ibadan should honour you.
That city where you gently exploded,
Offering shrapnel of inspiration to everyone.

Paris

Was Chester Himes there?
What about Richard Wright?
Did you talk books with James Baldwin,
Deep into the Left Bank night?

Theatre and Gallery

Heard Paris was good for you Demas,
In your time of extra study.
Set design for a Vichy theatre,
Exhibition on Rue Saint Louis.

Scenography

Where did you go to in Japan,
To study Scenography?
Was it Waseda,
Tokyo,
Or Tama University?

Nok

In your times of terracotta,
You came with offerings:
Paying homage to the original artists.

Demas and Wole

It is 1966 and I see you Demas, representing Nigeria, at the First Negro Arts Festival in Dakar, where *Danda* was performed. A monumental gathering, of the creative spirits of the continent and its diaspora.

Did you shake hands with the Duke?
Hold the door for Josephine Baker?
Talk Negritude with Aime Cesaire?
Drink a toast with Wole Soyinka?

Mexico City

Your *Olympic Dance* in Mexico,
Representing Nigeria on the list.
What did you think of the two,
Who stood and raised their fists?

Algiers

Did you drink mint tea?
Did you eat *Shakshouka*?
Pan African Festival,
Celebration of culture:
First time in Algeria.

Demas and Bertolt

I haven't seen *Caucasian Chalk Circle*, not yet.
Got extra impetus now;
As I know you worked on a production,
Of that play by Bertolt Brecht.

Mesmerising

Actor, playwright, director. Fifteen years of teaching Theatre Studies at Ibadan University. I imagine you Demas, in lecture room improvisations over the years. Mesmerising your students with Baroka, from *Lion and the Jewell*; stunning them with Shakespeare, in the time to study *Othello*.

Verse for Latcrete

Let it be comfortable,
A place they want to be.
Cool in the day,
Warm in the night,
Maintenance at its lowest fee.

Let us use what is around us,
Since back in history.
Blessings of mud,
The gift of stone,
Housing for you and for me.

Let us utilize the old,
Use the new when necessary.
"Natural Synthesis,"
To "New Culture,
Homage to ancestry.

Chant for the Architect

Monastery Ibadan,
Cultural Centre Benin;
The chapel at Enugu.
Homes Idumuje-Ugboko,
Gallery Agbara-Oto;
The monastery at Ewu.