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## *What is African Theatre and Performance?*

**2013 AfTA Annual International Conference**

***Goldsmiths, University of London & University of Derby,  
United Kingdom***

**11-14 July 2013**



**Abstracts and Presentation Schedule**

### **Keynote Speaker 1**

Professor Olu Obafemi

#### ***(Re) Problematizing the Performative Aesthetics for African Theatre***

**Olufemi Obafemi** has been a Professor of English and Dramatic Literature at the University of Ilorin since 1 October 1990. He was Head, Department of Modern European Languages (1990-1993), Dean, Student Affairs (1993-1997), Member of the Governing Council of the University of Ilorin (1990-1998) and member of the Governing Board of the University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital (2000-2008).

A prolific playwright, novelist, poet, literary and theatre scholar, Professor Olu Obafemi has published fourteen scholarly books, fifteen creative books and over sixty journal articles, including the landmark study on Nigerian theatre titled *Contemporary Nigerian Theatre, Politics and Aesthetics in Nigerian Theatre and Aesthetics and Ideology in Nigerian Theatre, Politics and Aesthetics in Nigerian Theatre, Public Discourse; culture, language and literature, Ideology and Stage-craft in Nigeria, etc.* Some of his creative works are *Wheels* (Novel), *Illuminations* (which received an honourable mention for ANA/Okara Prize, 2010), *Songs of Hope* (Poetry), *Naira Has No Gender*, *Dark Times are Over*, *Nights of a Mystical Beast*, *Pestle of the Mortar* and *Ogidi Mandate*, which won the 2011 ANA/J.P. Clark Prize for Drama.

Professor Obafemi was the Chairman, Board of Directors of the National Commission for Museums and Monuments, President of the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA), member of the Board of Trustees, The Nigerian Book Fair Trust and he is the current National Chairman of the Nigerian Reproduction Rights Society of Nigeria (REPRONIG). He is a Fellow of the Society of Nigerian Theatre Artists (SONTA), Fellow, Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA) and Fellow of the Nigerian Academy of Letters (FNAL). He has been External Examiner to over twenty Nigerian Universities and Visiting Professor to many Universities in Nigeria and abroad including, Universities of Lagos (Nigeria), Leeds, Cambridge, Oxford, Hull (UK), Bayreuth (Germany), Tennessee Technology University, Cookeville USA, and Western Illinois University, Macomb, USA.

A journalist of over three decades, Professor Obafemi has been an Editorial Consultant, Editorial Board Member and Columnist for eight Nigerian national dailies including *The Punch*, *Triumph*, *The Post Express*, *The Tribune*, *The Comet*, *The Sun* and *Daily Trust* Newspaper. He is currently the Director of Research of the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, Kuru, Plateau State.

## **Keynote Speaker 2**

Gabriel Gbadamosi

I will be looking back over twenty-five years of my experience of theatre practice in Africa, from Nigeria: ***'In the beginning, we were the journalists, the politicians, the pulpits; but with this difference, the people believed us': Remarks from African theatre practitioners.***

Starting with one of the last great actor-managers of the Yoruba travelling theatres, Oyin Adejobi - 'In the beginning, we were the journalists, the politicians, the pulpits; but with this difference, the people believed us' – the paper will explore, through my conversations with theatre artists from Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zimbabwe, their visions of the role of theatre as an art form in times of social change. Further, the paper will aim to raise key questions about theatre and its relationship to its audiences in times of changing social and cultural conditions.

**Gabriel Gbadamosi** is a poet, playwright and dramaturg. He held an AHRC Creative and Performing Arts Fellowship at Goldsmiths University of London for three years from September 2006-2009, working on projects in European, African and British playwriting and performance under the aegis of the Pinter Centre.

Gabriel is currently dramaturg for *Voices*, a drama series for Nigerian television by the BBC World Service Trust, and is also dramaturg for *Hydroponic*, a development programme for culturally diverse writers run by Writernet and funded by the Arts Council South East and Reading Borough Council. In addition to conducting playwrights' workshops and seminars in the Netherlands, Bulgaria and Slovenia, Gabriel has collaborated widely in productions of his plays across Europe and is a founder member of *The Fence* network of European playwrights and facilitators focused through the JANUS translation project on issues of cultural diversity and the mobility of the artist.

Previously, Gabriel was writer-in-residence as a Judith E. Wilson Fellow at the Faculty of English, Cambridge and a Wingate Scholar researching theatre and performance in Africa. He was a director of the Society of Authors and is a presenter of BBC Radio 3's culture and ideas programme, Night Waves.

Gabriel's plays include *Abolition* (Bristol Old Vic and Paines Plough, 1989); *Eshu's Faust* (Cambridge Arts Theatre and Faculty of English, 1992); *Hotel Orpheu* (Schaubühne, Berlin, 1994; Culturporto, Lisbon and Teatro Rivoli, Porto, 1997; Teatre de Griot, Barcelona, 2004) and *Shango* (De Nieuw Amsterdam, 1997). His play, *Oga's Ark*, is published in Bulgarian by Homo Ludens (Sofia 2004) with a rehearsed reading in Russian translation at the Lubimovka Festival, Moscow (2004). Recent critical writing: *Transmission: Speaking and Listening* (Site Gallery, 2005); *Under Construction: Cultural Diversity, Cultural Identity and Audience Development* (Arts Council England, 2005); *A Wholly Healthy Industry* (Theatre 2005 – Raising The Bar/Writernet Bulletin 2005); *Africa Unbound*, writing and publishing in Africa (BBC Radio 3, 2005); *Strangers to Ourselves* (Hastings Museum & Art Gallery, 2003); *Olde England-New England* (International Society for the Performing Arts, 2003); and *Früchte Der Zeit* (WUV, Vienna, 2001).

His most recent collaboration is *Sun-Shine, Moonshine* (Artwords, 2005) with visual artists Sanderson/Conroy.

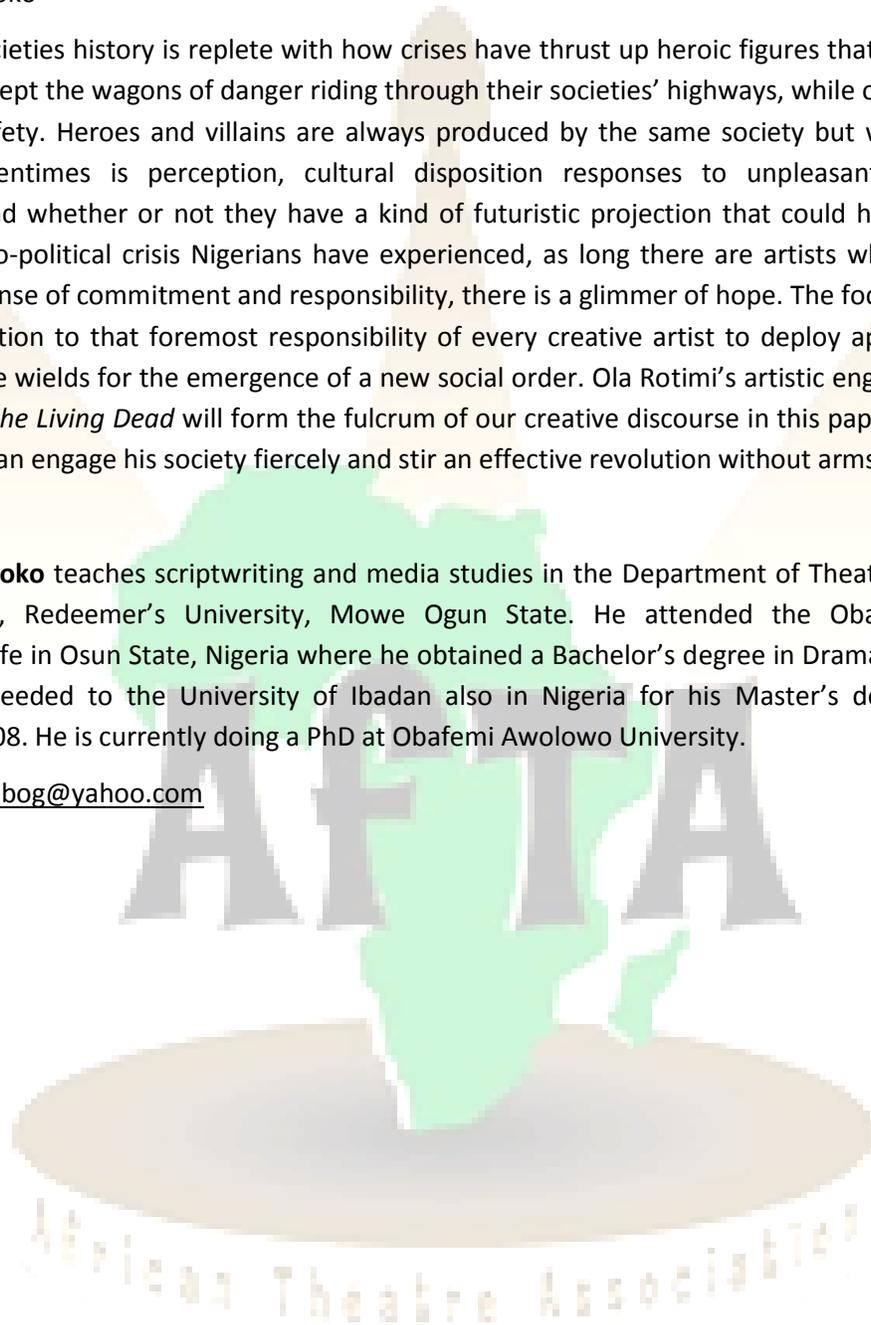
## **Transposing Our Creative Power into a Catalyst for Change in a Socio-political Clime Predominated by “Angst”**

Kunle Abogunloko

In different societies history is replete with how crises have thrust up heroic figures that simply saw the needs to intercept the wagons of danger riding through their societies’ highways, while others choose to scamper to safety. Heroes and villains are always produced by the same society but what makes the difference oftentimes is perception, cultural disposition responses to unpleasant socio-political experiences and whether or not they have a kind of futuristic projection that could hold some hope. Whatever socio-political crisis Nigerians have experienced, as long there are artists who still ply their trade with a sense of commitment and responsibility, there is a glimmer of hope. The focus of this paper is to call attention to that foremost responsibility of every creative artist to deploy appropriately the creative tool he wields for the emergence of a new social order. Ola Rotimi’s artistic engagements in his play *Hopes of the Living Dead* will form the fulcrum of our creative discourse in this paper; a sampler of how an artist can engage his society fiercely and stir an effective revolution without arms struggle.

**Kunle Abogunloko** teaches scriptwriting and media studies in the Department of Theatre Arts, College of Humanities, Redeemer’s University, Mowe Ogun State. He attended the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife in Osun State, Nigeria where he obtained a Bachelor’s degree in Dramatic Arts in 1995 and later proceeded to the University of Ibadan also in Nigeria for his Master’s degree which he obtained in 2008. He is currently doing a PhD at Obafemi Awolowo University.

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## **Experiencing the Theatre in an academic institution: The audience perspective**

Dr Femi Adedina, Bunmi Adedina (Mrs) and Ezekiel Bolaji

Theatre as experienced by the audience is expected to be holistic in nature. Types of Theatres involved also go a long way in determining this factor. Academic theatres certainly have a tilt to performance due to their aims, objectives, locale and personnel. Based on the above, this study will investigate determining factors for a rich theatre experience by the audience in an academic institution. To achieve this, the department of Theatre Arts in Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education will be put under scrutiny. This will enable the researchers gain an in-depth study into the audience perspective of performances. It will also bring to the forefront the challenges as well as proffer possible solutions to this issue.

**Femi Adedina** is the Dean, School of Arts and Social Sciences AOCOED and specializes in Playwriting, Directing and Communication Studies; **Bunmi Adedina** is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Theatre Arts, AOCOED and specializes in Children's Theatre, Drama in Education and Theatre Administration and Management; and **Ezekiel Bolaji** is a lecturer in the same Department specializing in Speech in Drama.



## Music an Ideology in Contemporary Nigerian Theatre: The Example of Femi Osofisan

Dr E. B. Adeleke

Femi Osofisan's plays have become the most performed on Nigerian stages by both amateur and professional troupes. This is due mainly to the fact that his plays have socially relevant concerns. As a welfarist and Marxist, Osofisan is deeply concerned with the well-being of the masses and he champions the cause of the downtrodden through the creation of plays that show their sufferings. This concern is demonstrated in the over forty plays he has published till date. However, it is not just the relevance of the plays to society alone that makes Osofisan such an engaging playwright. The means by which he presents his materials is also delectable and inimitable. One of the means by which Osofisan instructs and delights is music: both vocal and instrumental. Even a cursory reading of his plays reveals the veracity of this claim. This predilection for spicy music in his plays has ensured that the plays continue to be socially relevant and delightful to audiences wherever they are performed. Therefore, in this essay, we shall show that Osofisan employs music to embody his economic, political and religious ideology. We shall use *Once Upon Four Robbers* and other plays as our illustrative texts.

**Dr Adeleke, E. B.** is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of English and Literature, University of Benin, Nigeria. His areas of research interests include dramatic literature, modern African drama and criticism, renaissance and Restoration literature and criticism, music and theatre and literary theory and criticism. He currently serves as the President, Literary Society of Nigeria.



## **The Paradigm Shift in African Theatre Performance: New Media to the Rescue**

Kehinde Abimbola Adeniyi

In times past, African theatre performance thrives on stage with its electrifying actions and ecstatic response of the audience. The responses and the feedback are immediate while the audience and their emphatic feelings can be seen to generate further actions on stage. Not all these are without its challenges and hazards to both the practitioners and their audience. The new information explosion age and its associated technological breakthrough in the areas of new media has come to offer solutions to the myriads of problem and the challenges involved in stage performance for the practitioners and audience in the past. This paper thus set out to examine the old practices, its challenges, the new media, and the opportunities it presents. It will also examine the extent to which the new media have been able to move the African performance forward in the new millennium.

**Kehinde Abimbola Adeniyi** teaches theatre and media studies at the Department of Theatre Arts, Adeniran Ogunsanya College of education, Lagos, Nigeria. An Alumnus of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ife, University of Ibadan and University of Lagos where he obtained BA (Dramatic Arts) and post graduate diploma in education, MA in Communication and Language Arts and professional Master of Communication Arts (MCA), respectively. He has written many books and contributed chapters in others. His areas of research interest include theatre and media studies. A member of many professional bodies, he has a working experience that cut across the media and the academic. He is currently doing his PhD in Media and Communication at the De Montfort University, Leicester, United Kingdom.

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## **Negotiating Identities: Britishness and Mapping of Culture in Dipo Agboluaje's *The Christ of Coldharbour Lane***

Dr Sola Adeyemi

The search for identity always involves a search for origins, a traipsing along the trail of narratives, but identity is not only a story, a narrative which we tell ourselves about ourselves, it is stories which change with historical circumstances and cultural differences. Oladipo Agboluaje uses his plays to investigate cultural differences in the personae of his characters in order to uncover a universal truth in the multiplicity of identities that populate the world of his drama. This paper peels away the various layers of codification, enculturation and expressions to engage the basic energies that inform the formation of Agboluaje's characters, and assesses the effect of socio-cultural and political realities within the context of the universe created by, especially, *The Christ of Coldharbour Lane*, where he maps a new inscription of Brixton almost devoid of obvious crime but still filled with criminality.

**Sola Adeyemi** teaches drama at the University of Greenwich, London.



## **The Famished 'Fourth Stage': The Phenomenology of the Nigerian Motorway and the Aesthetics of Wole Soyinka's Yoruba Tragedy.**

Dr Olabisi Adigun

Having studied and worked in England for nearly five years, Nigerian writer, Wole Soyinka, returned to Nigeria in January 1960 as a Rockefeller Foundation research grant fellow with one purpose in mind: to redefine, from an African perspective, tragedy as it is known in the west. To this end, Soyinka travelled the length and breadth of Nigeria, "probing its ritual tissues for a contemporary theatre vision or perhaps a mere statement of being".

However, Nigerian roads are notoriously dangerous. It is in every Nigerian's psyche that the motor road is a flesh eating and blood sucking predator waiting to pounce on its hapless victims at any given time, hence the Yoruba prayer : *Ka ma rin ni ojo ti ebi n pa ona*. Unsurprisingly, this same prayer appears in Soyinka's *The Road* (1965) as: "May we never walk when the road waits, famished". It was not only The Road that the propensity of the Nigerian road to kill indiscriminately had inspired however, it also provided Soyinka with the fillip with which to theorise his Yoruba tragedy.

In this paper, I argue that Soyinka's voyage all over Nigeria, "worrying out dramatic forms from the mold of rituals, festivals and seasonal ceremonials", was wholly unnecessary, because the Nigerian motor road on which he made all the trips was itself a 'numinous abyss' upon which the aesthetics of Yoruba tragedy is predicated. Thus, what Soyinka was travelling all the way to Sokoto (in northern Nigeria) for could be found in the pockets of his *sokoto* (trousers).

**Olabisi Adigun** holds a BA in Dramatic Arts (Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria; 1990), an MA in Drama Studies (University College Dublin; 1999), an MA in Film/Television (Dublin City University; 2002), and has just completed his PhD in Drama Studies (Trinity College Dublin, 2013). He is originally from the Yoruba nation of southwestern Nigeria. He lived and worked in London for three years before relocating to Dublin in 1996. In 2003, he founded Arambe Productions, Ireland's first African theatre company. Adigun is a playwright and has produced and directed all of Arambe's productions to date. For details visit: [www.arambeproductions.com](http://www.arambeproductions.com)

## Death Ritual: The Sigma Mask Performance of the Tampulensi in Northern Ghana

Dr. Grace Uche Adinku and Jebuni Tigwe Salifu

Among the Tampulma people, the death of an elderly man, particularly, heads of household, chiefs (*Tindanas*), medicine men and cult initiates are shrouded with numerous ritual performances. Most of these rituals are esoteric and can only be understood and interpreted by traditional elders who investigate the meanings. The *Tampulensisee* death rituals as symbolic representations of the ambiguous, liminal status of the deceased during the transformation from life to an eternal existence after death as suggested by Van Gennep (1909).

This paper is designed to study *Sigma* masking tradition as an integral part of the death rituals and funeral rites that dramatize the myths and histories underpinning the origin and socio-cultural structure of the Tampulma people in Northern Ghana. It explores the structural and functional as well as aesthetic interrelationships between music, dance and ritual, as it establishes what may constitute the core concept(s) in *sigma* masking performance. It also, provides a detail account of the *Sigma* masking tradition as an esoteric society. The study further, seeks to understand the social and religious beliefs that the Tampulma people have attached to the *Sigma* masking tradition. Finally, the study explores the annihilation of these ritual performances by new religious forms such as Islam and Christianity.

**Grace Uche Adinku** has been a lecturer at the University of Ghana, Theatre Arts Faculty since 2005. She recently completed a PhD programme in African Art and Culture. She has also worked at the University of Ibadan, Independent Television Producers Association of Nigeria (ITPAN) and Redeemer's University, Nigeria. A member of United States Institute for Theatre Technology (Usitt), African Theatre Association (AfTA), African Studies Association (ASA), African Literature Association (ALA), National Association of Nigerian Theatre Arts Practitioner (NANTAP) and Society of Nigerian Theatre Artist (SONTA). Grace's work has covered a broad range of theatre, dance, musical drama and home video. Her works have continued to tour many stages in Nigeria where she regularly designs costume for professional producers, playwrights, stage and film directors such as Femi Osofisan, Bayo Oduneye, Wale Ogunyemi, Tunde Kilani, Segun Adebiji and Tunde Awosanmi.

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**Jebuni Tigwe Salifu** is currently a Teaching Assistant in the Department of Dance Studies, School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana. He holds Master of Philosophy degree in Theatre Arts (Dance in Education), Bachelor of Arts degree in Dance Studies with History, and Diploma in Dance Studies from the University of Ghana, Legon. His research interests include Dance Education, Dance History, Dance Anthropology and Ethnology.

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## **Echoes from Ghana that cannot be Buried: The legacies of Efua Sutherland on the Ghanaian Stage**

Grace Uche Adinku and Regina Kwakye-Opong

How does Efua Sutherland write? Whom does she write for? How does she (re)present women? Within the distinct features of her works, Sutherland has emphasized the role of women in reviving African traditions-oral renditions and the presentation of traditional ceremonies.

This paper, therefore, answers these questions and further seeks to examine the writer herself as a replica of the character Foriwa as projected in her play *Foriwa*.



## Directing the Audience: Unifying the Aesthetics of Stage, Radio and Screen for Effective Communication

Bernard Adjirackor

The most basic and important aspect of effective communication is to get messages across. When we talk to someone face-to-face, we instinctively know just who we are talking to. It can be observed that we automatically adjust our speech to be sure we communicate our message. For instance, when we talk to three-year olds, we shorten sentences and use simpler words. When we talk to college professors, we use longer sentences and language that is more formal. Even politicians tend to use flowery language or dabble in gargantuan verbosity in a bid to impress their supporters or befuddle their opponents. In short, we change what we say because we know our audience.

Interestingly, many writers do not make the same adjustments when they write for different audiences, usually because they do not take the time to think about, study, know and understand who will be reading what they write. Writers usually write for a more universal audience whereas Directors cater to a specific audience at a time. An example could be made of Jean Anouilh's *Antigone*. Although the overtly political focus of the play was the anti-fascist French resistance, which had a tremendous impact on the French audience of its time, the same play may mean nothing to the French audience of today. It is interesting to note that the issue of sole resistance may well be appreciated by a Tunisian audience of today. It is indeed worthy to note that Paul Collette who served as the inspiration for the revival of *Antigone*, can be likened to Mohamed Bouazizi. It therefore behoves the Director to evaluate his various audiences and present the play in a way they will appreciate. What is written is written but the Director has the chance of modifying its presentation to suit a particular audience at a time.

**Bernard Adjirackor** is a final year student of the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana, Legon pursuing an MFA in Theatre Arts (Directing). His main interests as a director include bridging the gap between the silver screen and the stage. He has produced and directed numerous made for screen musicals and other plays including *Langbodo*, *The Inspection*, *The Sudden Return* and *Fidelity Farce*.



**The Role of Theatre in Promoting Sustainable Socio Political Development in Africa: The Case Studies of *Circus of Freedom Square* by Bode Sowande and *The Black Hermit* by Ngugi wa Thiong'o**

Akinloye Gafarr Afolabi.

This paper takes a critical look at the relevance of the existing theatre expressions in Africa to the socio political development of the continent using Bode Sowande's *Circus of Freedom Square* and Ngugi's *Black Hermit* as examples. This is with a view to harnessing the potentials of theatre for more developments on the content, but as a way of providing a better illumination on the subject. The paper also examines the utilitarian function which theatre plays, within its many disciplines, in various African societies in the past, as well as in contemporary times. The paper hopes to conclude with a comparative analyzing how theatre has fared functionally between both periods, and posing questions towards the future functionality of theatre in Africa in the face of present difficulties.

**Akinloye Gafarr Afolabi** is a playwright, director, and actor with many credits to his name. He holds a postgraduate degree in Theatre Arts from the prestigious University of Ibadan, Nigeria and is currently on his Doctorate programme. Afolabi has worked in various capacities and in many parts of Nigeria. At present, he is a Principal Lecturer in the theatre Arts Department, Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo Nigeria, where he has served previously as Head of Department.



## **Indigenous Dance as a Medium for Participatory Learning: A Study of A Dance into Manhood as a Paradigm**

Nicholas Chielotam Akas

In tradition African setting, indigenous dance is an integral part of life and is linked with the worldview of the society in which it is produced. Indigenous dance in its real sense as an art form transforms; images, ideas, thoughts and feelings into movement sequence that are personally and socially significant. The communicative potency of some indigenous dance towards participatory learning aids in achieving balance of knowledge, skills and attitudes among the indigenes. Some of the indigenous dance at this stage becomes an indispensable tool in obtaining community sensitization, education and reformation. This paper therefore will look at indigenous dance as a medium for participatory learning using a dance into manhood as a paradigm.

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## Legislative Gossip as Theatre: Odeli and Abule of Ibaji of East-Central Nigeria

Dr Ameh Dennis Akoh

This essay theorizes the concept of legislative gossip as that gossip that is backed by traditional law. It adopts the idea of traditionally known masquerades and the newly theorised concept of facekuerade (Ododo, 2008). However, while Ododo engages with only the non-masked masquerade types (facekuerade), this paper looks at both, namely the masked and maskless or unmasked masquerade that ritually perform the functions of social and spiritual cleansing in their performative modes. While Odeli, the masked masquerade culture, is attached specifically to the Eka festival which is an annual festival among the Ibaji, Abule is a maskless masquerade generally referred to as *egwu-odu* (night masquerade) which is not attached to any specific festival but any occasion that requires cleansing. This paper thus discusses the interface of this two masquerade cultures as reflective of the dimensions of cultural transformation of governance among the people even in contemporary times. The methodology employed is purely participatory observation of an initiate into the Ibaji masquerade culture. Building on Bauman (1984), Turner (1982, 1988) and Schechner (2004), the aim is to fully understand the masquerade culture and its symbols as well as its approach to narrative, ritual and ceremonial forms of verbal behaviour in different socio-cultural settings. The paper discovers that this form of masquerade culture as theatre among the Ibaji people is a form of cultural expression and communal action even in their changing forms.

**Ameh Dennis Akoh** is an Associate Professor of drama and critical theory at the Osun State University, Nigeria. He attended the universities of Jos and Ibadan, Nigeria. He was until recently the Head of the Department of Languages and Linguistics. He is currently the Dean, Faculty of Culture of his university. His areas of research interest include critical theory, dramatic Criticism, sociology of literature and theatre, gender and cultural Studies. He is the Editor of the *Nigerian Journal of Indigenous Knowledge and Development*, Co-editor of African Nebula and the Uni-Osun College of Humanities Monograph Series. He is listed in the Year's Work in English Studies (YWES) Index of Critics.



## Scenic Design Concepts in Contemporary African Theatre Practice

Samuel Olayinka Amoo

Scenic design is the art of conceptualizing, planning and conceiving suitable environment to house dramatic actions. This paper examines scenic design concepts from the African theatre perspective. The integration of these visual elements in enhancing the total aesthetics of theatre experience cannot be undermined. This paper therefore, is necessitated by the need to focus on the explorative and innovative possibilities of this aspect of theatre technology in contemporary African theatre practice with the aim of identifying its limitations and an attempt to proffer likely solutions.

**Samuel Olayinka Amoo** is presently a Lecturer in the Department of Theatre Arts, Osiele, Abeokuta, Ogun state, Nigeria. He obtained a BA in Performing Arts from the University of Ilorin, Kwara state, Nigeria. He also has a Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) from National Teachers' Institute NTI Kaduna, Nigeria, in affiliation with Usman Danfodio University Sokoto, Nigeria. He is presently rounding up his Masters in Theatre Arts at the University of Lagos, Lagos state, Nigeria. He is an actor, director, speech teacher, and technical director who has many plays to his credit. His areas of specialization are Design and Theatre Technology, Acting and Speech.



## **Betwixt Ajangila and Lagbaja: The Anatomy of Commitment in African Music and Dramatic Performance**

Kayode Animasaun PhD

Music and drama like Siamese twins are vital tools in projecting culture, politics and development. This paper analyses indigenous music and drama performance during the colonial and post-colonial era. It discusses the indigenous performance involving masquerades, rituals and musical presentation from the village show to the home video. And, juxtaposing *Ajangila* of the *Alarinjo* genre with *Lagbaja* to 'archetypise' modern music and dramatic performance, and the evolvement of the home video as the new media of dramatic performance; the paper discusses the issues of commitment in movie performance in Nigeria. Analyzing the production, reception, notion and performance relationships in the production space, the paper contextualizes discourse performance levels around context of production, knowledge level of the artistes and the audience, skills of the dramatists, cultural identity, personal and fixed factors of dramatic performance in commitment. It also discusses the axioms of effective performance and commitment as determined by performer's mindset, immersion in the environment and reflectivity of the engagement.

**Kayode Animasaun** teaches at the Mass Communication Department, Faculty of Business and Social Sciences, Adeleke University, Ede Osun State Nigeria.

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## **Manoeuvring dramatic distance through metatheatrical techniques in selected post-independence Nigerian Drama**

Nadia Anwar

This paper will briefly explore how dramatic distance can be manoeuvred through metatheatrical techniques in the selected post-independence Nigerian drama. In order to demonstrate this, I shall make use of Brechtian theory of dramatic alienation and optimum distancing paradigm put forward by social psychologist Thomas J. Scheff. After tracing the link between these two theoretical models, I shall connect them with the notion of metatheatricality which foregrounds the illusive nature of the theatrical space. Both Scheff and Brecht worked with the dramatic illusion in order to alienate their recipients/audience from the emotionally affective theatrical environment; however, Scheff took his model further by introducing the pendulating nature of distance that needs to be balanced in a specific dramatic situation.

In this paper, I shall discuss/compare different levels of metatheatrical distancing in Wole Soyinka's *Death and The King's Horseman* and Ola Rotimi's *Hopes of the Living Dead*. In these plays, metatheatricality is manifested through different means. More than these traditional techniques, adaptation and contextual re-appropriation as metatheatrical techniques also serve to enhance the degrees of dramatic illusion; thus, creating both 'effective' and 'affective' dramatic distance. However, I shall limit my analysis to a few significant metatheatrical instances in the plays and will show how they demonstrate different levels and types of dramatic distancing as proposed by Thomas J. Scheff while raising possible cognitive capacities of an audience through Brechtian estrangement.

**Nadia Anwar** is enrolled as a PhD candidate in Nigerian Drama at The University of Northampton. She is a lecturer in English at the Education Department in Pakistan. She holds a Master's degree from Government College University (1997) and an MPhil with distinction in (2005) from University of the Punjab. Her primary areas of interest are African literatures/Nigerian drama in particular. She has co-translated, edited and compiled a collection of interactive theatre plays for Interactive Resource Center (2004).



## Indigenous Drama and Social Regulation in Nigeria: An Examination of Onyomkpo Masquerade of Idoma

Dr Ted Anyebe

This paper examines an indigenous theatre practice among the Idoma of Nigeria. It presents that even though recreational, indigenous drama is used as an instrument of enforcing social order. The worldview of Idoma people is discussed along with the influence of masquerade tradition as a deeply entrenched value system among many Nigerian societies. The paper uses *Onyomkpo* masquerade performance as example to validate the view that indigenous drama is a criterion put in place by the societies for the maintenance of law and order. *Onyomkpo* activities are considered among Idoma as functional instruments of entertainment and social regulation. This drama tradition is essentially, a language art masquerade. Speech art drama is language programmed. *Onyomkpo* is an anonymous masquerade. It is not the regular costumed masquerade that is characteristic of many masquerades. Even though it is not in the category of ancestral spirits, its reclusive nature, coupled with the spiritual configurations given to masquerades makes people to associate *Onyomkpo* with social purity. The research for this work was conducted using qualitative approach. The researcher used the insider/participant observation approach and relied predominantly on working with the people to gather the necessary data needed. The performers were interviewed. Relevant books were also consulted. Based on data collected, the paper concludes that apart from the aesthetic value, *Onyomkpo* assists in maintenance of law and order by ensuring compliance to societal ethics and morality.

**Ted Anyebe** is an Associate Professor with Benue State University, Makurdi. His research interest is in masquerade traditions of the Idoma people of Nigeria. He has published many articles in journals within and outside Nigeria. Ted is the author of *Synonymous*, a collection of plays, and *My Husband's Tongue is Bitter*. He is also a consultant for TreeShade Associates, Nigeria and has carried out consultancy for several programs including doing MAPs, SuNMaP, UNICEF, Theatre for Development Centre, Zaria; and Benue State University Community Theatre Projects.

## **The Significance of Music and Dance in Tiv Kwagh-Hir Performance of Central Nigeria**

Annas Ngunan Ashaver

African theatre can only be well understood when it is analysed based on the knowledge of the African society and not in allegiance to any western precept. It is only someone who has a vast knowledge of African continent's operatives that would be able to understand and interpret African performances as a theatre. The unique quality of the African theatre is that, it is both religious and secular in most cases. This is because it is woven around powerful supernatural forces and it serves as entertainment. The Tiv kwagh-hir performance is an African theatre in central Nigeria that is nurtured on the African soil with distinct features for coordinating virtually all art forms of Tiv society. The performance is mostly expressed in the story-telling form with each episode having a dramatic style and message. The expression essentially incorporates movements and gestures, singing, drumming and dances to ridicule social ills of Tiv society. The performance sometimes redefines such social ills to reform the society. All these expressions are channelled through music and dance, dialogue is rather avoided. This paper therefore, explores the significance of music and dance in Tiv kwagh-hir performance. It further projects the performance as a dance theatre in Africa thus focusing on trends that distinguish the art as African.

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## **Performance Contexts of Rituals in Transition: The Ikeji Masquerade Festival of Arondizuogu as Paradigm**

Professor Alex C. Asigbo

This study is predicated on Harrison's (1913) view that "when ritual wanes, art waxes". It is therefore an attempt to record and study the Ikeji Masquerade Festival of *Arondizuogu* of South East Nigeria in order to discover the relationship between tradition and talent as well as how a communal ritual performance can transmute into individual aesthetics and mercantile art. With the negative connotations of the word "Ritual" among the unenlightened, it has become pertinent to conduct a study into ritual performances so as to dispel these untoward cleavages as well as tap into the healing and expiating values of ritual. Ritual performances may therefore provide answers to the ongoing investigations into "theatre as therapy" which the French man Antonin Artaud had tried to postulate in his "Theatre of Cruelty". As is obvious, the frontiers of performance studies get expanded by the day; hence there is need to evolve a new aesthetics distinct from the orthodox critical canon of looking at ritual performances as enactments that must tell recognizable stories. As usual, performance contexts most times, mediate on the content hence the ritual content of these performances in transition get watered down.

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## Re-inventing Live Theatre Practice in Nigeria: Leveraging on the Power of the Television Medium

Dr Barclays Foubiri Ayakoroma

Professional theatre practice in Nigeria has become more of a thing of the past. Unlike what obtained in the early 1960s, up to the 1980s, when live theatre was vibrant in many parts of the country, even in university campuses, the situation has deteriorated to an extent where trained artists hardly think of making a living from the stage. A lot of reasons have been proffered for this unfortunate state of theatre practice in Nigeria. These include, lack of theatre venues, general insecurity, rise of TV entertainment, negative attitude of the public against the profession, non-commitment of trained artists, and poor funding. Paradoxically, stand-up comedy genre has defied the above and risen to become top flight entertainment, even at public functions. This paper argues that if there is synergy, the theatre can leverage on the power of the television medium to rise again, just as Silverbird Galleria has proved the point that cinema can be a profitable business venture. The submission is that not all is lost for professional theatre practice in Nigeria. The onus then is on trained professionals to rise to the occasion and ameliorate the situation.

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## **In Memorial: Re: Awakening ‘A Body of Memories’ in 9ICE’s Album, ‘Bashorun Gaa’**

Susan Olubukola Badeji.

The obituary of Africanism is not a recent announcement. The massacre of her cultural features including her customs, values, language and utterances-(all subsumed in moral ethics) by prejudiced whites, who regard them as primitive and barbaric, dates back to pre-colonial and colonial Africa. Thereafter given an unbecoming burial by the newly educated Africans, the influx of science; vis-à-vis technology condemns her soul in hell! Orphaned, Mother Africa’s offsprings and society become moral and ethical degenerates, without pride and with a relatively extinct heritage are reduced to urchins who go cap-in-hand for crumbs from foster mothers in their own homes. Resisting this injustice, some African scholars channelled their discourse to a racial re-awakening. This unfortunately is not far-reaching as Africa is still raped by illiteracy. However, popular culture with genres steeped in Africanism may be the salvation, this time, 9ice, a Nigerian artist, whose music reminds us of the loss of Mama Africa, thereby re-announcing her memorial.

In view of this, this paper attempts to analyze the elements of Africanism in some tracks in 9ice’s latest seventeen-track album, “*Bashorun Gaa*”. Here, he uses indigenous Nigerian languages, especially, Yoruba to preach the gospel of the beauty in African culture. Fortunately, since music is a generally acceptable phenomenon, this genre, if well nurtured might restore some pride in Africans and reinforce the African Thought System.

**Susan Olubukola Badeji** attended Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin (1989-1991), holds a BA (Hons, 1995), MA (2000) and is currently studying for a PhD in Theatre Arts at the University of Ibadan. She teaches design (Costume/Makeup) at Redeemer’s University Theatre department. She has designed for stage and movie productions, has received professional award/awards of recognition, and is interested in African theatre and creative writing.



## Reading Nollywood through the Eyes of the Nigerian Audience

Oluwatoyin Ozozoma Balogun

There is the assumption that Nollywood films are most popular among Nigerian female, particularly housewives while the male scarcely watch them. The study is therefore a survey of audience reception of Nollywood among Nigerian audience with the aim to validate or refute this assumption. If truly the female form a larger percent of the Nollywood audience what are the attractions inherent for them? The rationale for the study is borne out of the fact that the audience of any performance is indispensable to its act, noting that without an audience a performance is non-existence especially when such act exists as a socio-cultural phenomenon. The audience remains the vibrant yardstick for measuring the emotional, aesthetic and economic success of such performance. The perspective from which a work is seen has major implications on what is to emerge as its literary value and otherwise. The objective is to test the reception pattern of the target audience within the framework of the above assumption. The study employs the purposive sampling method in data gathering in order to pick the desired elements for the analysis. Two hundred (200) copies of the questionnaire used were administered on respondents in different parts of Oyo, Osun, Delta and Lagos States of Nigeria. The findings show a variegated mode of interests or rationale based on interest, pastime and disinterestedness of the target audience.

**Oluwatoyin Ozozoma Balogun** attended the University of Ibadan and obtained a Bachelor and Master Degree in Communications and Language Arts. She works with Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) as principal producer. She has attended and participated in several trainings and workshops by FRCN and other organisations including BBC World Service Trust, UNICEF Training workshop, Leadership and Interpersonal relations skills by Administrative Staff College of Badagry. Her areas of interest are African arts and culture, media, communication and human relationships. Her hobbies are listening to radio, watching television and reading.

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## **Fostering Participatory Development Communication or another Message Oriented Programme: Interrogating Rafiki Theatre Company's TfD Practice**

Keneth Bamuturaki

In African theatre practice, it is common to find practitioners who say that they engaged in Theatre for Development (TfD) but when one examines their work based on the basic tenets of TfD, they discover that actually what is being described as TfD is something else. This paper explores the work of Rafiki Theatre Company which has in the last three years (2010-todate) been engaged in the use of TfD for the empowerment of the marginalised communities in Karamoja-North Eastern Uganda. The paper is a result of a 2011 fieldwork which focused on the work of Rafiki Theatre Company and the Food, Security and Nutrition (FSN) project as implemented by the German Agency for International development (GIZ). The paper argues that in order to function as an effective tool for conscientisation and empowerment, TfD should espouse a participatory view of development. Rooted in Freirian philosophy of participatory development, TfD emphasizes letting the primary stakeholders of development (the target community) get involved in the development process and determine the outcome rather than imposing on them an outcome already decided by external actors. It emphasizes a dialogical as opposed to a monologic/linear communication process, focusing on participatory and collective processes in research, problem identification, decision making, implementation and evaluation of change. The research revealed that, though Rafiki Theatre Company and GIZ boasted of implementing a participatory view of development through their concept of Building Bridges Participatory Theatre, their work is lacking in terms of effective use of TfD in communicating development.

**Keneth Bamuturaki** studied at Makerere University in Uganda where he obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in Drama (2003), and a Masters of Arts in Performing Arts (2009). He is currently completing a PhD at the University of Exeter in the United Kingdom where he has also been teaching as a Graduate Teaching Assistant. Before embarking on his PhD studies at Exeter, Keneth was teaching Drama at the Department of Performing Arts and Film, Makerere University.

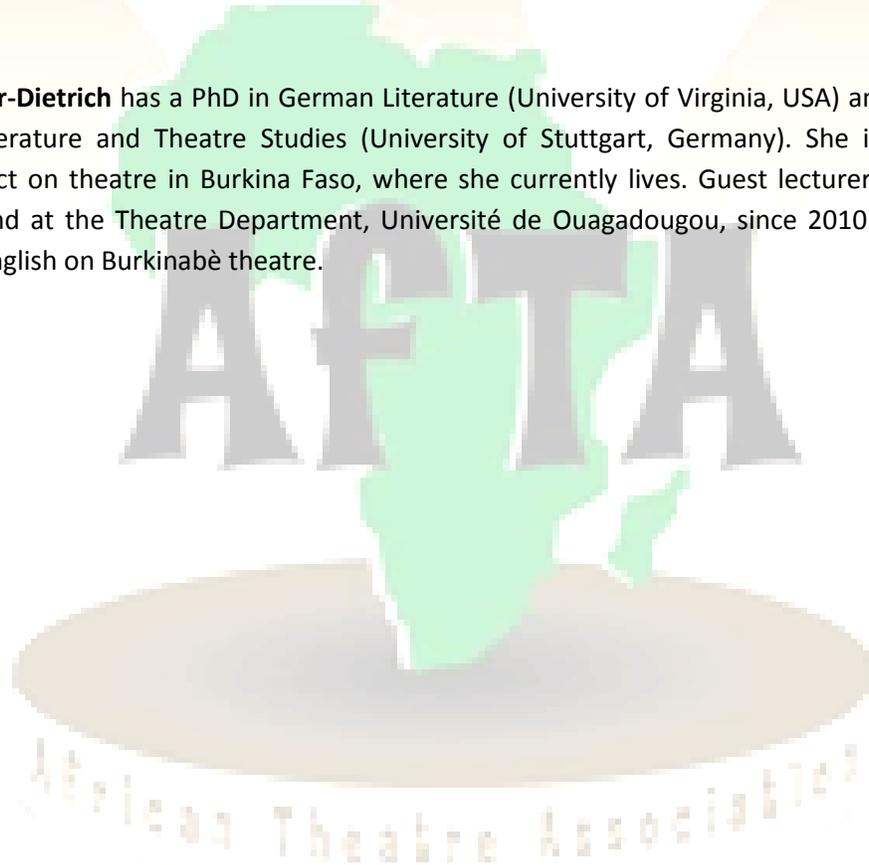


## Contemporary West African Monodrama and its Stage Production: a Challenge

Dr Annette Bühler-Dietrich

Monodrama can be considered an ongoing trend in current West African drama. With francophone West African productions present at festivals in Burkina Faso – productions originating in several countries – monodrama outnumbered regular dialogic productions with a cast of at least two. Monodramatic texts, however, breach the requirements of the dramatic text, if, as Peter Szondi famously claimed in his 1956 *Theorie des modernen Dramas*, drama is essentially dialogic. In order to make a monodramatic text plausible for the spectator, the text as well as the production needs to configure the situation of enunciation. Are we witnessing a traditional monologue, is the character on stage talking to us, the audience, or is he talking to an absent other? What are the strategies to turn monologic situations into dialogic ones? And how does this work on stage? Finally, how is a theatrical interior monologue, which is obviously “transgenre”, being staged? Which consequences do such experiments have for the genre of drama? My paper purports to consider various topical examples of monodrama and their production on stage. If and in what way African performance traditions play a viable role in these experiments will likewise be considered.

**Annette Bühler-Dietrich** has a PhD in German Literature (University of Virginia, USA) and a Habilitation in German Literature and Theatre Studies (University of Stuttgart, Germany). She is working on a research project on theatre in Burkina Faso, where she currently lives. Guest lecturer at the German Department and at the Theatre Department, Université de Ouagadougou, since 2010. Publications in German and English on Burkinabè theatre.



## **Culture and Drama in Africa: A Study of Barclays Ayakoroma's Izon Culture in *Dance On His Grave***

Nelson Ebi Campbell

The relationship between culture and drama, though an imitation of life is indispensable; because drama uses culture to explore any given society. That is why a Playwright from the gestation of idea to the publication of his play takes his materials from the society, and in turn gives back to the society what he has taken as his theme. It is because of that if a culture is misrepresented in a play, the owners of that culture will disagree with the playwright, knowing that drama expresses whom and what a people are. This study examines culture as an essential tool for dramaturgy in Africa using Barclays Ayakoroma's Izon culture in *Dance On His Grave* as a focus. We shall adopt critical theory to exam the society and culture, to establish that the Playwright should draw from his immediate locale. The study finds that Ayakoroma's Izon culture is uniquely explored in his dramaturgy and concludes that young dramatists should embrace their immediate culture like the playwrights of other cultures and generations including Aeschylus, Sophocles, Aristophanes, Shakespeare, Wole Soyinka, J.P. Clark, Elechi Amadi etc. did to become playwrights known with their cultures.

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## Play as Discourse in African Cultural Performances

Kennedy Chinyowa

It has been argued that play is a 'mode of aesthetic being' (Gadamer, 1975). Before him, Johan Huizinga (1955) had taken the lead when he argued that play is an element of culture rather than in culture. This implies that play is much more than just an element in culture but culture itself bears the character of play. Following these views and those of other play theorists such as Sutton-Smith (2002), Turner (1988) and Schechner (2002), it is possible to describe African cultural performances as functions of play. More specifically, these cultural texts are manifestations of play as an aesthetic discourse through which culture expresses itself. As Thomas Henricks (2002) points out, apart from being a theory of cultural production, play is the creative rendering of cultural action.

This paper will examine how play acts as a discursive mechanism in selected African cultural performances such as children's games, storytelling, ritual, song, dance and masquerade. It seeks to explore how play operates as a structuring device in the 'performance' of African cultural reality. An understanding of play as the aesthetic behind African cultural performances provides the basis for an understanding of its application in other contexts such dramatic literature, applied theatre and other artistic forms of artistic production. The paper argues that play is a significant patterning element in African cultural performances. In other words, African cultural performances are carried out within an aesthetic frame that is circumscribed by play. As a 'symbolic engine' of culture, play expresses what people create, come to believe in and act upon. By also giving expression to how they view life and death, joy and pain, freedom and domination, play becomes an indispensable element in the 'making' of culture, if viewed from an indigenous perspective.

**Kennedy Chinyowa** is currently Head of the Division of Dramatic Art and Senior Lecturer in Applied Drama and Theatre at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. He was a postdoctoral research fellow in the Department of Drama and Performance Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (2006 – 7) and the Department of Drama and Film Studies (2008) at Tshwane University of Technology. He was a visiting scholar in the Centre for Applied Theatre Research at Griffith University where he obtained his PhD degree in Theatre for Development.

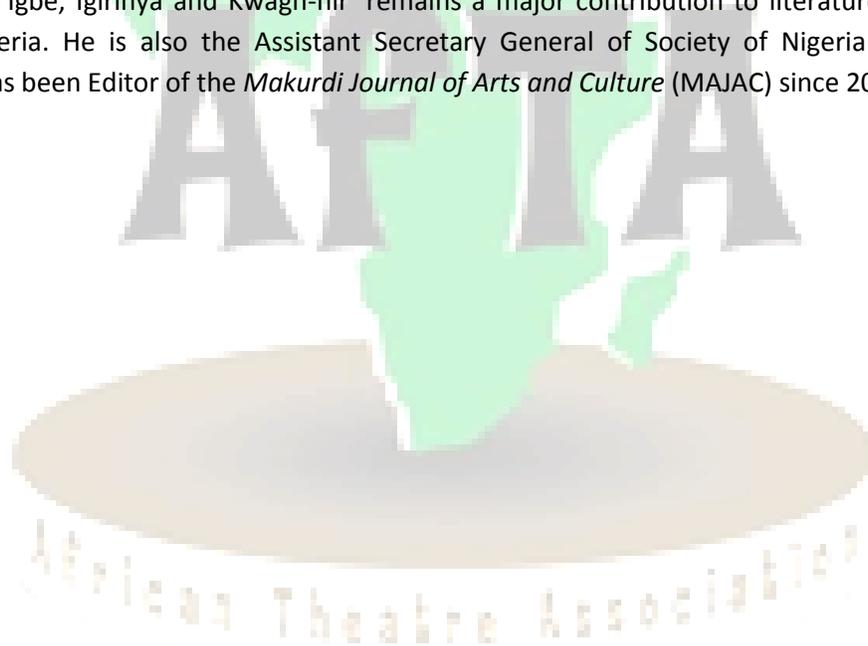


## Ritual for Ritual: Performance Aesthetics in the Tiv Girinya Ritual Theatre

Dr Gowon Ama Doki

*Girinya* is a war dance found among the Tiv, South of the Benue Valley in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria. It is a ritual dance, which grew out of the Tiv people's contact with their neighbours in the upper Cross River (Obudu, Ogoja, Ugabu, and Gakem); a group they collectively referred to as 'Udam'. The need to stem the incessant killing of their fellow men was the sole reason why the Tiv spied and subsequently began this ritual tradition. This paper through a survey design interrogates the performance aesthetics in this ritual, reconciling it with the present realities in intergroup relation. Discoveries are that, certain practices are no longer practicable and have been shredded into more tolerable kinds in line with the general principle of peaceful co-existence. The paper is a conscious attempt to examine the general character and principle of ritual theatre practice. It recommends a periodic appraisal of ritual performances with the view to re-conceptualising these performances for possible theorisation in contemporary African theatre discourse.

**Gowon Ama Doki** holds a PhD in Theatre Arts with a bias in Theatre Semiotics from the University of Abuja. He is currently a Senior Lecturer and Head, Department of Theatre Arts, Benue State University, Makurdi, Nigeria. He has published several articles in reputable journals both within and outside Nigeria. His main research interests include traditional theatre studies, semiotics and development communication as well as theory and criticism. His book 'Traditional Theatre in Perspective: Signs and Signification in Igbe, Igirinya and Kwagh-hir' remains a major contribution to literature on indigenous theatre in Nigeria. He is also the Assistant Secretary General of Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA). He has been Editor of the *Makurdi Journal of Arts and Culture* (MAJAC) since 2006.



## **African Ritual Theatre**

Bekezela Dube

The position of this paper is that the performance of a ritual, is indigenous to all mankind, describing ritual as language of communication between man and his gods, through the spirits of the dead of a clan, or group, thus sacred, spiritual and religious. The paper distinguishes African ritual performance from voodoo magic and other similar evil strains, as the positive side of ritual art, and identity of Africans, arguing for a proper study of African Ritual theatre with the hope of discovering lost treasures in indigenous knowledge systems, artistic expressions and far much cheaper indigenous African methods for information dissemination. It argues that there is no African way of reading African ritual performances, as it is pure art like all religions and thus a universal language, like music and the other arts, calling for an understanding of the environment, the ideological perceptions and world-view of the subject under study as certain prerequisite. The presentation includes images of African ritual theatre performances, revealing African ritual theatre art as composing ritualistic music and dances together with actual rituals that drive the ceremony forward, marking each stage in the proceedings, like beacons into the unknown world, of spirits. The paper explores the separation of audience and entertainer in proscenium theatre compared to African Ritual performances, raising opportunities for commercialization of African traditional products. It concludes with a description of the purpose and role of African Ritual theatre, upholding the view it served to bond not only families but other cultural groups together.

**Bekezela Dube** is the Director of Projects, Isibi Sabo Mthwakazi – a cultural communications and advocacy organization. He has ten years military experience, experienced playwright/director and cultural rights activist. Dube has written a number of plays on the political, social and cultural front notably, “Interview the candidate for the top job, Zimbombombo, Silakho, The Zimbabwean Blues”, to mention but a few. I have also contributed articles to newspapers, magazines, and the internet on various topics around cultural and social issues.

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## Impairments to Theorizing Applied Theatre in Africa

Professor Victor S. Dugga

Theatre has existed in various forms in different places from the beginning of time. The definitive moments that currently historicize theatre practices in the world today are those that have been properly documented. Moving from its early days of justifying its existence and defining its modus operandi, Theatre for Development (TfD) has increased its presence in volume and scope on the African continent in the last four decades. Taking theoretical roots from Europe and South America, the continuum of experimental works in TfD have truly incorporated the spirit of adventure. Its blossoming in Africa is perhaps unparalleled. Many local issues, which may or may not be replicated in other communities, have been treated in the application of theatre to development. It has been used by government agencies as intervention strategy to educate farmers on new farming methods, by UN agencies to campaign for Polio vaccination and eradication of child-killer diseases, by non-governmental organizations in HIV/AIDS awareness, by civil society organizations in voter education and mobilization, by other activists in peace-building, by women groups in fighting for gender equity and by environmentalist in highlighting the plight of degradation in the environment. However, there is no definite theoretical contribution that has from Africa after these robust practices. This paper looks at some classics in TFD practices in Africa while asking the question why significant theories are not emerging out of several experiments.

**Victor S. Dugga** studied in Nigeria, UK, Germany and South Africa. He won the Association of Nigerian Authors' (ANA) Prize for Drama in 2009 for his play, *Hope Harvesters*. From 2010 to 2012, he served on the Panel of Judges for ANA literary awards. He championed philanthropy in Nigeria, serving for eight years as Executive Director of Advancement at the University of Jos. He writes creative and critical works in the fields of theatre, literary theory and cultural studies. Dugga is Professor and Dean, Faculty of Arts, Federal University Lafia, Nigeria, and currently Humboldt Fellow at the University of Bayreuth.



## Preserving African Traditional Theatre and Performance in a Digital Age: Issues and Challenges

Gloria Chimeziem Ernest-Samuel

African traditional theatre and performance dates back to the pre-historic era. Some centuries ago. African theatre and performances were embedded in pure cultural values and traditions of Africans, devoid of Western corruption and influences; thus undefiled by the interaction with the forces of western colonialism. Then, it was preserved locally through cultural displays, festivals and rituals. That is hardly the situation presently. Today, we are in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a century that is not only globalised but also digitalized, hence raddled with the pressures of western interactions, civilization and use of complex modern technologies. To reach the global audience and satisfy her thirst for diversity, the preservation of true African traditional theatre and performances therefore becomes a worrisome issue for well-meaning and concerned historians, anthropologists, culture ambassadors, artiste, scholars etc, with African orientation. This paper therefore attempts to x-ray the African traditional theatre and performance through the ages, highlighting its features and functions in the society. It goes further to highlight means of preserving the theatre and performances *vis a vis* the media and others. It picks on the film medium and text as a case study and highlights the major challenges of preserving ATT and P through these media regardless of their viable promises of effectively protecting and preserving the future of African traditional theatre and performances. It concludes with a wake- up call for all to start contributing ideas to wedge the challenges facing the use of media in the aspiration of preserving our theatre and performance.

**Gloria Chimeziem Ernest-Samuel** is a lecturer at the Department of Theatre Arts, Imo State University, Owerri, Imo State. Having worked at the Nigerian Television Authority, Owerri, before she joined the academia; Gloria has special interests in media, communication, film and cultural studies. She has published two full-length novels and a play text. She has more than 20 published articles and book chapters in local and international journals.

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## **African Theatre as Performance: A Study of *Shadows of Arrival***

Dr. Osita C. Ezenwanebe

This paper analyses the art of transforming a dramatic text into a collective, theatre experience. It highlights the pervasive role of performance arts in African theatre, which turns a playwright's idiosyncratic thought or intellectual product into a collective, shared event that is relived in the moment of production. Using instances from the theatre of *Shadows on Arrival* the researcher illustrates that theatre making in Africa is still deeply rooted in shared life of the people, governed by the aesthetics of communal living. The paper interrogates the relevance of the performance arts, the distance between the self, in terms of the performers and the audience, and the role performed and the affective power of such distance. The research proposes that theatre making in Africa is predicated on certain aesthetics that inform African conception of theatre. It is the task of this paper to discuss the principles of theatre making as exemplified in the performance of *Shadows on Arrival*.

**Osita Catherine Ezenwanebe PhD** is an Associate Professor of Theatre Arts in the Department of Creative Arts, University of Lagos, Nigeria. She has a B.A in English Education from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka; two Master of Arts Degrees (in English Literature – Drama and Society; and in English Language – Nigerian English), and a PhD (Drama and Society) all from the University of Lagos. She has written and produced six plays: *Withered Thrust* (2007), *The Dawn of Full Moon* (2009), *Giddy Festival* (2009), *Daring Destiny* (2011) , *Adaugo* (Daughter of an Eagle) (2011) and *Shadows on Arrival* (2012). Osita was a Fulbright Scholar; a Visiting Professor and Senior Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence in the Department of English and Foreign Languages, Winston-Salem State University, North Carolina, USA, 2011/2012.

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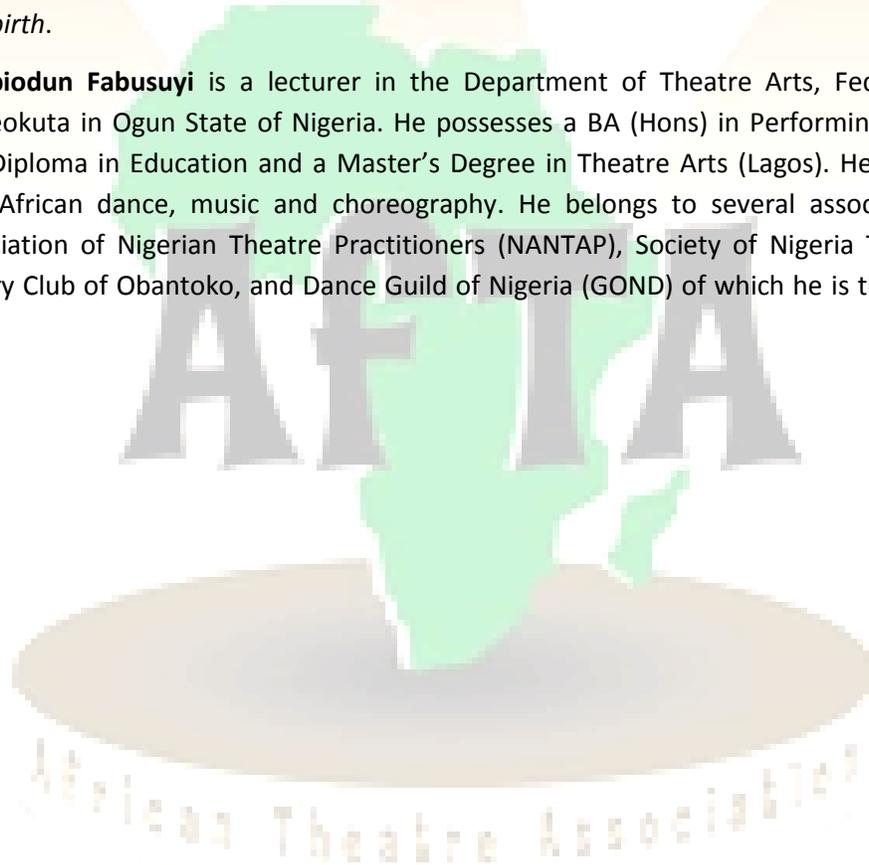


## **A Socio-cultural Analysis of African Dance, Music and Technical Theatre in the Performance of Felix Emoruwa's *Rebirth***

Oluwasuen Abiodun Fabusuyi

African theatre and performance operate within the continuum of the African World View. Its artistic presentations are subjected to the framework, forms, contents, styles and contexts of the African traditions and cultures. Hence, this paper will project the African World View via artistic exploration and the socio-cultural analysis of the performance of Emoruwa's *Rebirth*. However, this paper will depend largely on observation of the documented performance of *Rebirth* in the collection of necessary data, which will be analyzed qualitatively. Therefore, this paper has its place in the theories of African concepts of essence, transmutation and their crises point as noted by Zulu Sofola (2001) which shall be employed in the analysis of the performance of *Rebirth* by Felix Emoruwa. It will be divided into three sections. First is the interrelationship of the African worldview embedded in the performance with its structure, form and style. The second section will involve the analysis of the artistic process of staging and all the elements involved (acting style, dance, music/songs and the Technical features of Theatre Presentation). The last section will be an overview of audience responses to the performance of Felix Emoruwa's *Rebirth*.

**Oluwaseun Abiodun Fabusuyi** is a lecturer in the Department of Theatre Arts, Federal College of Education, Abeokuta in Ogun State of Nigeria. He possesses a BA (Hons) in Performing Arts (Ilorin), a Postgraduate Diploma in Education and a Master's Degree in Theatre Arts (Lagos). He specializes and researches in African dance, music and choreography. He belongs to several associations such as National Association of Nigerian Theatre Practitioners (NANTAP), Society of Nigeria Theatre Artistes (SONTA), Rotary Club of Obantoko, and Dance Guild of Nigeria (GOND) of which he is the current State Chairman.



## Youth Empowerment through Drama and Theatre

Dr Sola Fosudo

Apart from serving the functions of enlightenment and entertainment, the theatre is also useful in several other ways. For instance, it is a source of employment, cultural preservation, presentation, and projection. It also serves therapeutic functions and as social control mechanism in a society. It is a mirror of life, reflecting and highlighting the moral codes and the ills of society and castigating social evil and its doers. Beyond all of these, the theatre could also serve as an agent of civilization, community mobilisation, and youth development and emancipation. This paper discusses how the potentials of the youth in a country such as Nigeria, could be harnessed and deployed for the purposes of national orientation, development and integration, using culture, drama, and theatre as the defining tools for this evolution.

**Dr Sola Fosudo** teaches at the Theatre Arts department, Lagos State University, Ijanikin, Lagos, Nigeria.



## ***The Robben Island Bible***

Matthew Hahn

In the 1970s, prisoner Sonny Venkatrathnam received *The Complete Works of Shakespeare* on Robben Island during a time when they were briefly allowed to have one book with them. The book's 'fame' resides in the fact that Venkatrathnam passed it to a number of his fellow political prisoners including Walter Sisulu, Nelson Mandela and Govan Mbeki. Thirty-three men marked his favourite passage in the book by signing it. They signed passages that they found moving, meaningful and profound. The text selection provides fascinating insight into the minds, thinking and soul of the men who fought for the transformation of South Africa. It also speaks to the power of Shakespeare's resonance regardless of place or time. But, as Sonny explains it, he just wanted a 'souvenir' of his time in the Leadership Section on the island prison.

My play, *The Robben Island Bible*, intertwines these chosen Shakespearean texts with the interviews of the men conducted in 2008 and 2010. It has had readings at the Southbank Centre and British Museum in 2012. I have also developed workshops for young people based on the themes of social responsibility and leadership utilizing the chosen Shakespearean texts and interviews. The play and workshops reinvigorate Shakespeare's texts, enhances their relevance and places them in a completely new light. My paper would include selections of the play, clips from the reading as well as a description of its research and development over the last seven years.

**Matthew Hahn** works as a theatre director and workshop facilitator in the US, Africa and the UK and is an Applied Theatre lecturer at St Mary's University College. As a Theatre for Development facilitator, he has worked with Theatre for a Change, a UK charity that trains teachers and youth workers in Malawi and Ghana, amongst other charities and NGOs in Africa. Matthew has directed several productions in London and Edinburgh including subVERSE, a London-based new writing programme to develop political playwrights. Matthew has a degree in Political Science & Journalism from Indiana University and a Master's Degree from Goldsmiths College in Theatre Directing.



## How to Analyse the Aesthetics of Applied Theatre in Southern Africa: Some Theoretical Thoughts

Dr des. Julius Heinicke

Though the emphasis of research on Applied Theatre is mostly on social issues, in the last few years some studies focus the aesthetics of Applied Theatre. Veronica Baxter titles her dissertation, for instance: "Why do they bring us playing when we have serious problems? Aesthetics and Education in South Africa". Nevertheless, the theoretical debate about theatrical and aesthetic levels of Applied Theatre has been rare. In my paper, I will do a first step in looking for strategies and possible ways to construct a theoretical background for analysing the aesthetics of Applied Theatre. In which way does the production create aesthetics levels? How important are the aesthetics for the social political impact?

Besides that, in focussing Applied Theatre in Southern Africa a problem arises, which Samuel Ravengai mentioned in his article 'The Dilemma of the African Body as a Site of Performance in the Context of Western Training'. He asks if Western – and I want to add even American – strategies of theatre should be applied one-to-one in the African context. Productions of Applied Theatre often deal with strategies from other countries, for example Augusto Boal's 'Theatre of the Oppressed'. In the second part of my paper I want to ask, if there are specific African components and traditions that should be more considered in the work of Applied Theatre. How or in what way do these components play a role in creating the aesthetic level of the performance?

**Julius Heinicke** studied Culture and Drama at Humboldt-Universität in Berlin. 2012 he finished his PhD-thesis on Theatre in Zimbabwe at the Department of African Studies. (Supervisors: Flora Veit-Wild, HU Berlin and Christopher Balme, LMU München) In December 2012 he started his postdoctoral research on theatre in southern Africa at the Department of Theatre Studies, Freie Universität Berlin (ERC-Project "The Aesthetics of Applied Theatre", Matthias Warstat).



## **African Theatre and performance in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Focus on Trends in Oghu Umuaka Ensemble Theatre**

Chisimdi Udoka Ihentuge

Various aspects of African life are still in the struggle to recover from the effects of colonialism and its attendant neo-colonial mentality – our indigenous theatre forms and popular amusements are among the worst hit. The Oghu festival theatre is inclusive here. Oghu ensemble theatre is practiced among many communities in Njaba, Isu, Mbaitolu, Oguta, Oru East and Oru West Local Government Areas of Imo State in South East Nigeria. This theatre form has dwindled so gravely over the years, thanks to colonialism and its brain washing effects. But there has been a sort of revival of interest in Oghu theatre in recent times especially among the youths. This paper examines this revival of interest in Oghu festival theatre as practiced by the people of the old Umuaka Community. The aim is to evaluate the trends that have engendered this revival of interest so as to recommend same, or the likes, to other festival theatres that have become unpopular with the people as a result of neo-colonialism. Oghu is a dynamic theatre form that has borrowed from other cultures to further enrich it in line with contemporary realities; hence, the revival of interest. Yet, the paper cautions that care must be taken not to lose Oghu, and indeed other indigenous African theatre heritages, to constant borrowings from other foreign cultures.

**Chisimdi Udoka Ihentuge** holds a BA in Theatre Arts of the Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State and an MA in Theatre Arts (Film Studies bias) from the University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State Nigeria. He is presently researching for his PhD in Film Studies at the University of Port Harcourt. Before joining the Theatre Arts Department at the Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education Owerri, Imo State, he taught at the Department of Mass Communication and Film Studies of the Western Delta University Oghara, Delta State. He has presented scholarly papers at several conferences.

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## **Shifting Contexts in Traditional Theatre Practice: The Example of the Annang/Ibibio Community of Nigeria**

Ofonime Inyang and Patrick Ebewo

African traditional theatre (ATT) is undoubtedly the precursor of what is contextualised as African theatre and performance in its diverse manifestations. The centrality of the African traditional cultural institution as a primal structure of performance, art, performativity and culture is well established in research and discourses in the field. However, like any other practice in current context, there is evident shift in traditional theatre practice brought about by a rapidly globalising environment and changing political dynamics especially in Nigeria. What used to suffice in the traditional performance arena was a tradition of socio-cultural commitment and conscientious engagement in arts practice that produced satiric pieces that fostered discipline, good conduct, morality, behaviour change and sustainable development in the society. That legacy is gradually giving way to a new idiom and expression rooted in performances that dutifully dwells on praising corrupt political leaders and lacks the rigour and finesse of the fine art handed down from generation to generation. The motivation appears to be located in attracting financial and other favours from the recipients of the praises and that goes against the grains of cultural development and indigenous knowledge (IK) resource protection. The situation in the Annang and Ibibio community of Nigeria raises concern as indigenous theatre and performance clearly represent this downward trend in practice. The prevailing trend of negative ingenuity where local practitioners have developed different survival strategies in the age of socio-economic inequalities, political brigandage and patronising corruptibility deserves serious attention. This paper aims to analyze the material contents and praxis of Nka Iban Edem Edet, a cultural group of Annang/Ibibio extraction in its contextual positioning in the twenty first century.

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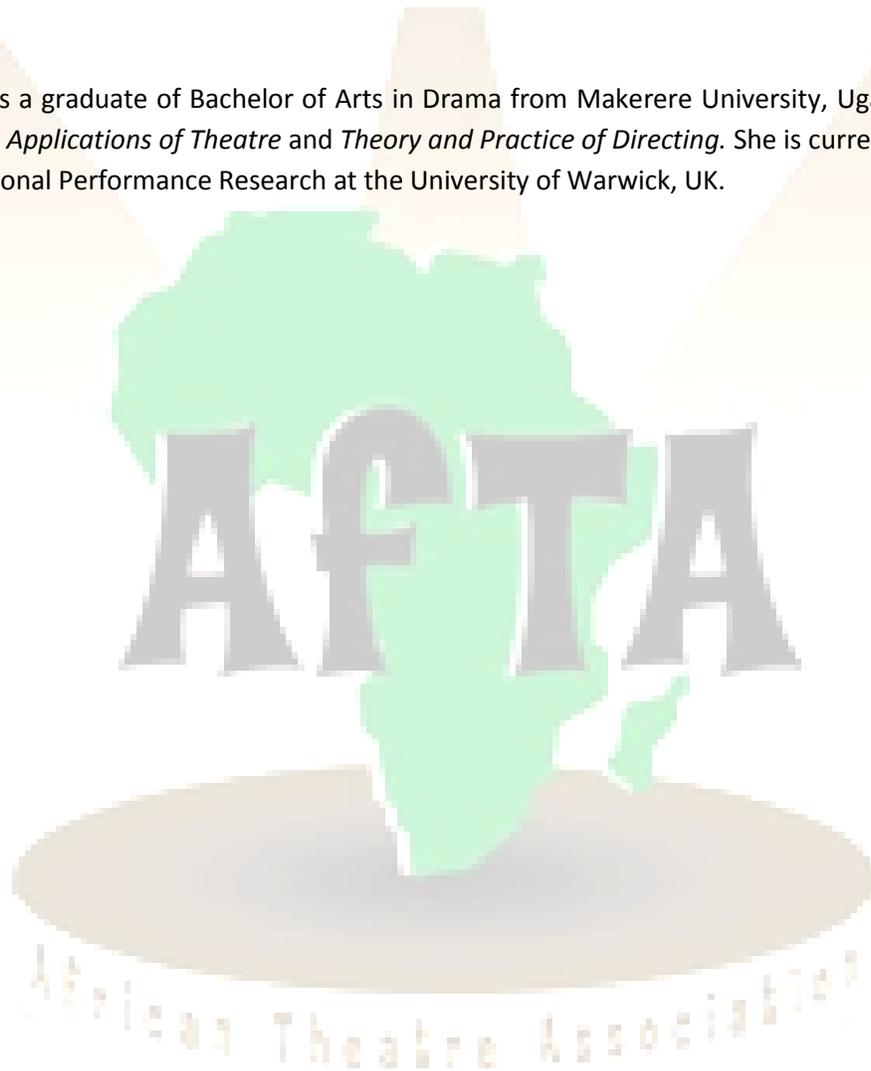
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**Performing Language: Change and Continuity in performing Kinyankore folk poetry/recitations (ebyevugo) among Banyankore people of South-Western Uganda**

Viola Karungi

The principle objective of this paper is to demonstrate how *ebyevugo* have been transformed in various performance aspects. I examine the constant as well as changing elements in the thematic of the poetry and the context in which this poetry is performed. *Ebyevugo*, until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century remained confined to their indigenous context, but with the socio-political-economic advancements, they have shown the potential to thrive in the mainstream theatre in Uganda. This paper is based on a research that I conducted in 2010/2011 in two selected districts of Mbarara and Isingiro in South-Western Uganda.

**Viola Karungi** is a graduate of Bachelor of Arts in Drama from Makerere University, Uganda where she has also taught *Applications of Theatre* and *Theory and Practice of Directing*. She is currently pursuing an MA in International Performance Research at the University of Warwick, UK.



## **The Popular Theatre Pedagogics: Panacea for the Unending Conflict of the Bawku Municipality**

Iddrisu Seidu Kananzoe

The Bawku Municipality is situated in the Upper East Region in Ghana, West Africa. It borders both Republics of Burkina Faso to the North and Togo to the East respectively. A hitherto commercially vibrant area, this area has existed as a conflict-stricken one since the aftermath of the year 2000 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections of Ghana. The conflict in the area has ethnic underpinnings but thrives on political and other social leanings. The area is a heterogeneous one, therefore this unfortunate intermittent and internecine violence, which has claimed, and still claiming many lives has polarised the area and consequently brought development in the area to a standstill. Although both Government and Civil Society Organisations to curb the situation have put several interventions in place none has been successful.

Popular Theatre is a methodology under the Applied Theatre paradigm – Theatre for Development, which explores the use of indigenous and ethnographic modes of performances in bringing out the experiences of participants to bear on the subject of concern. This paper argues that the use of the Popular Theatre theory in the various communities within the Municipality with the view to targeting the Youth, Women and Children who are the most vulnerable, to embrace peaceful co-existence as a precondition for the accelerated development of the area, is the suitable approach. For, drama and the participatory nature of this approach in particular have proved to be an effectively powerful pedagogical and communicative tool.

**Iddrisu Seidu Kananzoe** is a graduate of the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana with a Specialisation in Theatre for Development. I have been involved in the use of Drama as a Conscientisation, Development and Conflict Resolution tool for the past decade. He is currently serving at the Department of Theatre Arts as a National Service Personnel hoping to pursue a Postgraduate Programme in Theatre for Development looking at Theatre and Health.



## The use of scenic design to capture the past in the film *Sango* by Femi Lasode

Hameed Lawal

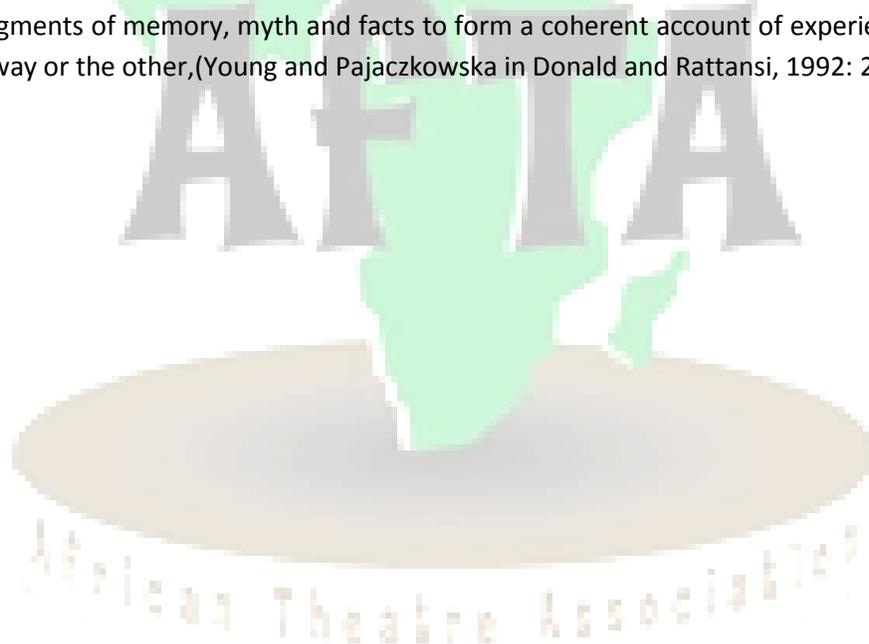
Apart from the aesthetic function, scenic designs in stage and screen theatrical productions create enabling environment to enhance character interpretation of actors and actresses. This is more so in historical plays that compel capturing of the past in costume, make-up, set and properties. A close watch of some Nigeria Video films has revealed that, detail attention is not given to scenic design in modern and historical films. While this is made up for in rented well-furnished apartments and hotel rooms in films with modern setting, much still need to be done in films with traditional setting of the past in history. It is against this backdrop that this paper examines the use of scenic design to capture the past in the film, *Sango* by Femi Lasode.



## Black Theatre Studies in the South African context

Tsepo Mamatu

In this paper, I seek to interrogate the covert ways in which the Eurocentric meta narrative remains embedded in forms of knowledge dissemination in the South African Higher Education context. Located in Hall's notions, this is a process that emerged out of the need for blacks in Britain to re-affirm and voice their need to be acknowledged within the definition of Britishness. Differing from (or complementing) Hall, what I seek to do in my paper is to respond to the absence of alternative voices. Clearly the alternative voice seeks to disrupt and diversify the meta narrative of whiteness that is 'normalised' through a pedagogical curriculum that decentres blackness and relegates it to be at the receiving end of a singular purview. Hall writes: '[T]he black experience' as a singular and unifying framework based on the building up of identity across ethnic and cultural difference between the different communities, became 'hegemonic' over other ethnic/racial identities' (1997:252). One needs to ask; why, especially in South Africa (and parts of Africa) is there this relative absence of contemporary (and historical) scripts written and performed by blacks, or even studied. Through an exploration of various South African texts that have been canonised largely by the persistence of the meta narrative of colonial pedagogy. I propose that the black apartheid lived experience has been simplified into that of the victim and perpetrator. (The Truth Commission colluded with this binary). In this context, various and varying historicities become erased or marginal. The marginalisation of black multiple voices through this canonising process ignores the need for "re-imagining"- an act which entails the piecing together of fragments of memory, myth and facts to form a coherent account of experiences previously denied in one way or the other, (Young and Pajaczkowska in Donald and Rattansi, 1992: 209)



## **Staging Uganda: the packaging, Performance and adaptations of Uganda Cultures for the International stage**

Dr Patrick Mangeni

This paper discusses theatre programs and performances that are specifically derived and developed for performance to tourists and audiences outside the Country Uganda. It considers the categories of organizations and theatre groups that develop these performances, the motivations for these performances and how the goals influence the selection, organization and presentation to the target audiences. Some of the questions the paper explores are: how have the expectations of the audiences, the directors and organizers influenced the nature, content, preparation and presentation of Uganda abroad? How is the content and the form of the original music, dance and folklore negotiated and appropriated to meet the goals of the program and expectations of the market/audience; how do these transformations present in terms of content, form and meaning? What challenges arise for the directors, choreographers and composers of these 'new' forms and how are they attempting to negotiate them? The paper draws on the period from the early 1980's with the production on *Nalumansi* by Makerere University at the International Conference of women in Nairobi, *Mother Uganda*, youth and Children theatre organized by charity-based organizations.

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## **Pattin' Juba: African Sensibility in August Wilson's *Joe Turner's Come and Gone***

Professor Joseph McLaren

August Wilson has been known for his evocation of African American culture, especially as it relates to migration from the rural South to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Like Harlem Renaissance writer Jean Toomer, Wilson perceives the South as the closest cultural linkage to a generalized or imagined Africa. One of the early plays in his cycle of ten plays--each set in a different decade of the twentieth century--*Joe Turner's Come and Gone* (1988) contains one of his strongest representations of an African sensibility. In the play, the character Bynum, the spiritual visionary who joins people together, resembles an African shaman. Also, Wilson has tapped a Diaspora connection to a broad African spirituality through cultural practice. His inclusion of the juba dance, whose origins can be traced to slavery and West African sources, suggests other African retentions in the absence of the drum, such as the ring shout. Involving patting, hand clapping, foot stomping, and singing, the juba, also known as '*djouba*', is said to derive from the '*Djouba* nation' and has linkages as well to Haitian spiritual practices. For the 2009 New York Lincoln Center Theater production, choreographer Dianne McIntyre researched the origins of the dance, included in the close of act 1, where stage directions indicate that it "should be as African as possible." Set in 1911 in a boarding house in Pittsburgh, the play also evokes African American familial concerns through Herald Loomis. The linguistic and orature-storytelling aspects of the play can also be linked to orality in an African performance context. In addition, the relationship between African spiritual sensibility and Christianization is also an element of the drama.

**Joseph McLaren** is Professor of English at Hofstra University in New York. A specialist in African, Caribbean, and African American literatures, his publications include numerous articles on literary and cultural subjects. He is the author of *Langston Hughes: Folk Dramatist in the Protest Tradition, 1921-1943* (1997). In addition, he co-edited *Pan-Africanism Updated* (1999) and *African Visions* (2000) and edited two volumes of the *Collected Works of Langston Hughes: The Big Sea* (2002) and *I Wonder As I Wander* (2002). He is co-author with legendary jazz saxophonist-composer Jimmy Heath of Heath's autobiography, *I Walked with Giants* (2010).



## **Nelson Mandela and *The Island*: Speaking for “their nation”**

Professor Mervyn Eric McMurtry

The association between Nelson Mandela and William Shakespeare has been highlighted once again in Ashwin Desai's *Reading Revolution: Shakespeare on Robben Island* (2012), which documents the lives of the thirty-two prisoners who marked their favourite passages in what is termed the 'Robben Island Bible'. There is also an association between Mandela and the Greek playwrights that needs further examination: in his biography, Mandela describes playing the role of Creon in a full-scale production of Sophocles' play *Antigone* during his incarceration. Athol Fugard, John Kani and Winston Ntshona did not know this fact when they created *The Island* in 1973, using *Antigone* as source material, from a story told by another inmate. Speaking of its 1999 revival with the original performers, Peter Brook said: "What is extraordinary... is that the performers are not playing for themselves. They really are the spokesmen for their nation." This paper engages with the 1973-1975 production and 1995-2003 revival of *The Island* in South Africa, Europe and the United States of America, to discuss the production's polyvalent meaning in the different contexts in which it was (and continues to be) performed. Post-1994, Mandela's 'presence' in *The Island*, formerly deliberately vague to avoid censorship, was foregrounded, and the play regarded as a metaphor for the freedom struggle. While the act of defiance "for the nation" that led to Mandela's imprisonment was linked to Antigone's stand during apartheid, *The Island* and Robben Island were incorporated into reconciliatory discourse after apartheid to reaffirm the ways in which arts and heritage can be a focus for both remembering a divisive past and for the transformation of the new nation.

**Professor Mervyn McMurtry** was Head of the Drama and Performance Studies programme at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, from 1996 to 2010. His doctorate was on the history and performance of political satire in South Africa. He has presented papers at conferences in South Africa, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Australia. In 2006, he was an invited researcher at Oxford University. He has published articles and entries in British, Canadian, American and South African journals, books, and archives



**Writing in the Interregnum: Ritual and the Political Consciousness in Werewere Liking's *The Power of Um and A New Earth***

Professor Katwiwa Mule

This paper examines the role of ritual in the gendered political consciousness of Werewere Liking as it emerges in *The Power of Um* and *A New Earth*. Liking, a self-educated artist, is arguably one of the most versatile writers in Africa today: a playwright, novelist, painter, musician, poet, actress, essayist, jeweler, Journalist, social activist, etc. A distinctive aspect of Liking's work is its not only its conscious attempt to valorize and legitimize the pre-colonial aesthetic and cultural heritage of Africa but also its engagement with the post-colonial African political and cultural scene through the recovery of ritual aesthetics and ideology.

**Katwiwa Mule** is an Associate Professor of Comparative Literature at Smith College, Massachusetts, USA, and a visiting Professor at the Institute of African Studies, Kenyatta University. Mule teaches various courses on Comparative Literature, African Literature, twentieth-Century Literatures of the African Diaspora, Translation Theory and Practice, and Post-Colonial Rewritings of *The Tempest*. He has recently taught courses on Children's Literature in Africa and Gender and the Politics of Development. He is the author of *Women's Spaces, Women's Visions: Politics, Poetics, and Resistance in African Women's Drama*. He has also published several essays on Women's writing and currently working Representations of Childhood in African Literature. He has recently completed a book tentatively titled *Contradictory Habitations: Contradictory Habitations: Fatima Dike's Theater and Nationalist Struggles in South Africa*.



## The Shrinking World of Audience Participation in an Era of the Electronic Stage: The Tragedy of Kuti Traditional Performance in Kogi State, Nigeria

Prof A. D. Menegbe

The thesis of this paper is that *Bassa - Nge kuti* traditional African performance in Nigeria, is on a voyage to the electronic stage. This genre of traditional theatre is expected to take full advantage of the electronic stage. The migration is likely to throw up the challenge of depleting audience participation. Audience participation is one of the pillars on which African performance rests. The synthesis of this paper is evidenced by James Gibbs, H N Eyo, Kalma Salhi, Martin Banham, Femi Osofisan, Dapo Adelugba, Osi Enekwe, Ruth Finnegan, and a host of others. The paper looks at the performance space of *kuti*, and suggests ways of possible enlargement. It is suggested that while the mobility of *kuti* performance to the electronic stage should be encouraged, we must not lose sight of the need to continue to encourage live *kuti* performance along its original traditional line. This shall enable the audience to consummate their *kuti* performance experience through such live performances. This may be likened to what happens all around the world, when live concerts are staged to give energy to the electronic performance.

**Prof. A. D. Menegbe** is a theatre scholar who has demonstrated considerable leadership in theatre scholarship. He is a graduate of the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Jos (BA Theatre Arts, 1984). He obtained his MA and PhD in Theatre Arts from the University of Ibadan, 1995 and 2012 respectively. He was the pioneer Head, Departments of Communication and Language Arts, Department of Theatre Arts and pioneer Dean, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Kogi State University, Anyigba. He has been Dean of Student Affairs and Director Consultancy services Unit of the University. He has convened a number of national and international conferences. He has been the Editor in Chief of *Anyigba Journal of Arts and Humanities* for several years. He is Editor, *Journal of Theatre and Communication Arts*. He has edited a number of books including *Globalization: The African Perspective, Cultural Renaissance and National Development*. He has authored journal articles, plays and books.

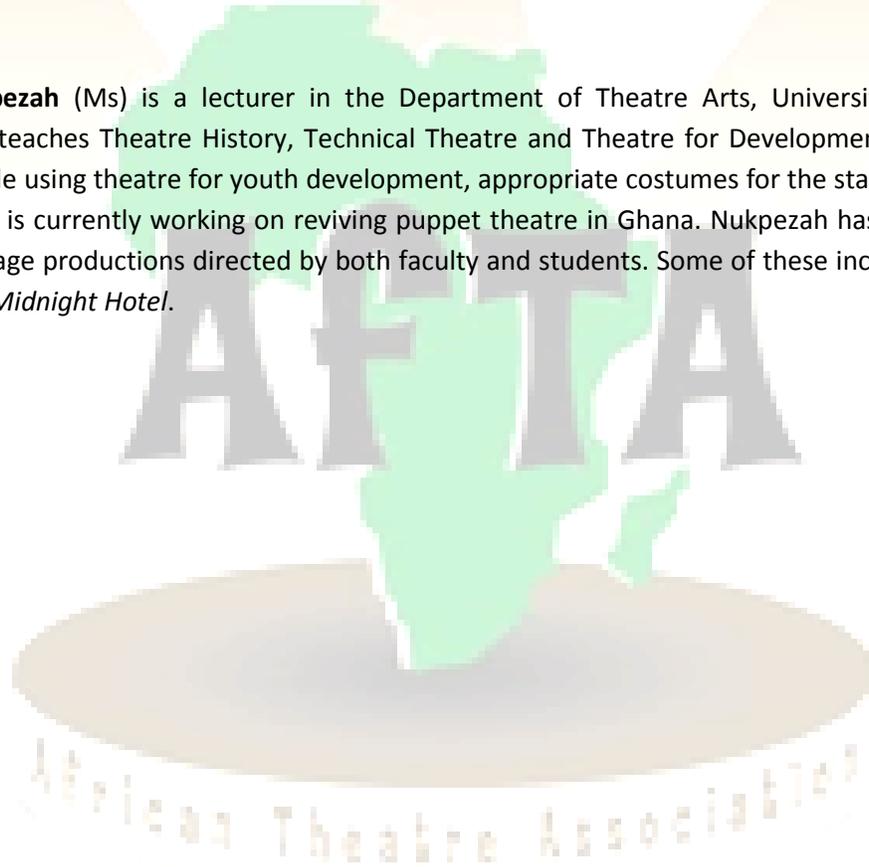


## Reaching Out: A Critical Overview of Theatre Performances and the Deaf

Patience Nukpezah (Ms)

A performance in whatever form seeks to persuade an audience into sharing knowledge and inspiring change. According to Stell (1970), 'the overall purpose of any dramatic performance is to furnish the clearest and most effective presentation of the meaning of the play script as interpreted by the director'. The acting out of a play script, I believe should be able to serve this purpose if not the overall. Who judges if this has been accomplished? What if the audiences who watch the performance cannot hear, or are hard at hearing? This article explores this question and many more by analysing a theatre performance of Femi Osofisan's *Midnight Hotel*, from the hard at hearing and the deafened point of view. It evaluates the impact the performance had on their socio-cultural and political lives. It is hoped that this exploration will chart a new way of addressing the challenges that might hinder the active participation of the hard at hearing and the deafened people in a theatre performance. It is also hoped that some innovations will be advanced which will help in shaping theatrical performances in enhancing the understanding of issues presented in a performance for the hard at hearing and the deafened in order to build a culturally active deaf community in Ghana.

**Patience Nukpezah** (Ms) is a lecturer in the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Education Winneba. She teaches Theatre History, Technical Theatre and Theatre for Development. Her research interests include using theatre for youth development, appropriate costumes for the stage and drama in education. She is currently working on reviving puppet theatre in Ghana. Nukpezah has participated in some of the stage productions directed by both faculty and students. Some of these include *Moonshine Solidarity* and *Midnight Hotel*.



## **Theatre Without Theatres: Venues, Urbanisation and the Aesthetic of Site-Specific African Performance**

Professor Charles Nwadigwe

The visual phenomena over time have become iconic identification marks in the conceptualization of African theatre. In African performance, usually identified as spectacular, the *mise-en-scene* comprising the visual production ensures that the theatre is not merely perceived but seen as African. The scenic environment of the action and allied visual elements including costume, make-up, and props remain indispensable ingredients that give the African theatre its character. However, with advancements in science and technology, urbanization and the advent and mutations of modern and postmodern theatre, the African performance is increasingly struggling with a crisis of identity. Performance venues, traditionally conceived in Africa as open, unrestricted squares and arenas consequently began to shrink and move indoors owing to pressures of urbanization and the globalized trend of Art Theatre practice. But standard, functional performance venues are scarce in many parts of Africa and in several cases unaffordable to theatre people. Furthermore, audience members have equally continued to stay away from theatre performances and settle for alternative forms of entertainment. Consequently, the modern African theatre often moves away from its conventional spaces and venues in search of audiences and patronage thereby creating site-specific performances. This paper explores the interplay between performance venues, found spaces, technology, urbanization and the Africanness of site-specific performance using Nigeria as a paradigm.

**Charles Nwadigwe** is a Professor of Theatre Technology and Performance Aesthetics at the Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria. His research interest are in performance design, theatre spaces, new media and the interplay of technology and urban popular culture. He is the founding Editor of *Applause: Journal of Theatre and Media Studies* and currently leads Pan-African Research Networks in the Humanities.

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## Theatre Practice and African Originated Theatre Paradigms: Ododo's Facekuerade Theatre in Nigeria

Pat Obi Nwagbo

This study examines how the application of African originated theatre paradigm has transformed theatre practice in Africa with Nigeria's Ododo's Facekuerade theatre as a model. Without minding the views of Eurocentric scholars, many African Theatre Scholars have come up with and given deserved attention to Theatre paradigms and theories that are from Africa and by Africans. With committed scholarship these scholars of African origin apply the African originated theatre models to theatre practice through creative and critical writing as well as theatre performances. Such paradigms including Ododo's Facekuerade Theatre, which is about maskless masquerade prototypes among many others like Wole Soyinka's ritual theatre in "The Fourth Stage", John Pepper Clark Bekederemo's African neo-classicism and ritual hypothesis, Ola Rotimi's festival theatre, Dapo Adelugba's *Daoduisim* etc. the robustness of the African culture and aesthetics are given prominence in theatre practice. We shall adopt cultural theory to determine the application of African originated theories to theatre practice and African culture, especially in Nigeria with specific focus on the culture of Ebiraland people of Nigeria. The study finds that though African Theatre scholars and practitioners have contributed to African experimental theatre, hence transformation, much is still needed. It is observed that Ododo has continuously made efforts through total theatre practice, creative and critical writing as well as technical theatre practice to explore Facekuerade theory in African Theatre with concentration on Nigeria.

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## **Documenting Igbo Dances, using the ‘Igbo Descriptive Notation’: The Nkwa-Ike Example.**

Chris Nwaru

Dance as an ephemeral art poses a problem to its documentation particularly in Igbo society, and other parts of Africa. This paper highlights the problems associated with documentation of Igbo dances using the Western documentation styles like Laban notation, Benesh notation etc. The paper attempts to develop a documentation style that is suitable for Igbo dances and perhaps some dances in other parts of Africa known as ‘Igbo Descriptive Notation’. Using the ‘Igbo Descriptive Notation’, the researcher tries to document Nkwa –Ike dance, hoping that it will help to reproduce the dance, in a similar version while retaining its cultural elements.

**Chris Nwaru** graduated from the University of Calabar, Nigeria and did his M.A at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Currently, he is a Doctoral Candidate, in the University of Northampton, researching on “African Dance”. He is a lecturer with the Imo State University, Nigeria.



## **The Organisation and Performance of Igba Ijele Cultural Music of Ifite Oraifite Nwanne Amaka Age Grade of Ifite Oraifite Community in Anambra State, Nigeria.**

Dr Ebele Veronica Ojukwu

Traditional music and dance are among the art forms that promote social cohesion and other forms of activities in every society in Africa. Virtually all areas of African life are characterised with music and dance. They serve as medium of expression of life and carriers of cultural values since a particular ethnic group is identified through their performances. Personal thoughts as well as feelings are expressed through them. It is functional in the sense that it serves as an accompaniment to other human activities in the society as well as entertainment and aesthetic oriented. This paper seeks to discuss the organization and performance of Igba Ijele cultural music and dance of Ifite Nwanne Amaka Age Grade of Ifite Oraifite in Ekwusigo Local Government Area of Anambra State, Nigeria. The paper also examines the social significance of this music and dance within the Oraifite community, its etiquette and role differentiation.

**Ebele Veronica Ojukwu** is a lecturer at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka in Anambra State, Nigeria. She obtained her first degree from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. She holds her master of Arts Degree and her Ph. D. in music from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. She specialises in music pedagogy. She has been a strong voice for music education, African and Nigerian music at many national and international conferences.

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## **Nollywood and the Deformity of the Mind**

Mary Okocha

Art is the highest form of expression, through art thoughts become visible. Art brings to fore the desire, the brooding creative instinct, and the passion that give character and power. Conduct is never perceived as absolute, so actions are deemed right or wrong, according to experience and the conclusions of reason. Man's thoughts have been produced by his surroundings, by the action and interplay of things upon his mind; and so for man, things have preceded thoughts. Art cultivates and kindles the imagination, and quickens the conscience. It is by imagination that we put ourselves in the place of another. Nollywood is reckoned as the third largest movie industry in the world and has existed for about two decades. This movie industry has been largely accused of tainting the imagination of its audience. This paper aims to ascertain this accusation, if the pictures presented have in anyway injected venom into the audience's imagination, if accountable for adverse actions taken by the audience at a later point in life and its potential for spurring a person into an action that has not been premeditated. In scrutinizing this deformity, a survey of audience perception of Nollywood image employing 200 copies of the questionnaire among viewers of Nigerian video films, from different socio-economic groups will be undertaken. The respondents will range according to age, sex, profession, ethnicity and educational level. The rationale being that the audience remains the vibrant yardstick for measuring the emotional, aesthetic and economic success of such performance.

**Mary Okocha** is a graduate of University of Ibadan, Nigeria, where she obtained a Bachelor and Master degrees in Theatre Arts specialising in Media Arts. She worked with Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, Ibadan National Station for several years before joining the employment of Osun State University, Nigeria, as a lecturer in her College of Humanities and Culture. She has researched in the areas of Media and Communication. Presently, she is studying for her PhD at University of Ibadan.

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## **Contemporary Dance, not African Dance:” The Question of a Contemporary Nigerian Dance**

Chukwuma Okoye

Contemporary Nigerian dancers/choreographers are charged mainly by Nigerian elites for being totally foreign or insufficiently Nigerian. In the main this kind of charge comes from a desire for authenticity; a desire to see indigenous Nigerian cultural dances in their pristine forms. Taking Adedayo Liadi’s work as my critical lodestar, I propose to examine the veracity of the charges of cultural saboteur against the practitioners of contemporary dance in Nigeria. I argue that there certainly is a dance form that can definitively be described as contemporary Nigerian. I hope to reveal in Liadi’s choreographic enterprise a fusion of his indigenous culture, his training in Euro-American dance and his contemporary socio-cultural life experience into a refreshing product that is at once personal and communal, novel as well as familiar. I submit that contemporary Nigerian dance is a spatially and rhythmically embodied creative and dynamic category that challenges received orthodoxies – in both the indigenous Nigerian and Western aesthetic categories – and critiques the complex peculiarities of daily living in contemporary Nigeria. Liadi’s theme and technique evidences a kind of dialogue between indigenous Nigerian cultural forms, Euro-American contemporary dance technique and the cultural, economic and socio-political challenges of living in a contemporary Nigerian cosmopolis.

**Chukwuma Okoye** is a Senior Lecturer with the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.



## **African Versus Christian Patterns in Indigenous Performances: The Transformation of Ubochi Obasi Festival**

Kelechi Stellamaris Ogbonna

Performances in the past exhibit the people's culture upholding their myths, legends, rituals and communal interest. African performance embodies the totality of the people's way of life. Thus festivals and performances have in the past played dominant and effective roles in the community by impacting, teaching, cleansing and fortifying the people. However, recent festivals and communal ceremonies are fast eschewing African patterns in their performances. Emerging trends in traditional performances reveal that traditional and cultural images such as Palm fronds, indigenous drums, *Ofo*, calabash, *Nzu* and *Odo* which in Igbo cosmology hold traditional and religious underpinnings are fast fading out from traditional performances and are replaced with Christian articles of faith such as the Cross, Bible, Holy water or Anointing oil. The traditional articles of ritual are seen as demonic, obsolete and pagan. A case in point is the *Ubochi Obasi* festival of the people of Umuobasi in Nnenetu Village which has abandoned every traditional legacy they are known for and has evolved an admixture that breeds disharmony amongst its people. A study of *Ubochi Obasi* festival through a performance study analysis of the past and present *Ubochi Obasi* reveals that the present has little or no prospects for the people of Umuobasi. The study recommends a fall back to African patterns that incorporates the people's culture, values and identity.

**Kelechi Stellamaris Ogbonna** is a playwright-Actress-Director. She studied Theatre Arts at the University of Calabar, Nigeria, and obtained the following: Diploma in Theatre Arts, B. A (Hons) Theatre Art-(Playwriting) and M.A Theatre Directing. She holds a Post Graduate Diploma in Education from National Teachers Institute, Kaduna. Presently, she is in the teaching staff of Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri, Nigeria. Her research interest is in the area of performance and African patterns.

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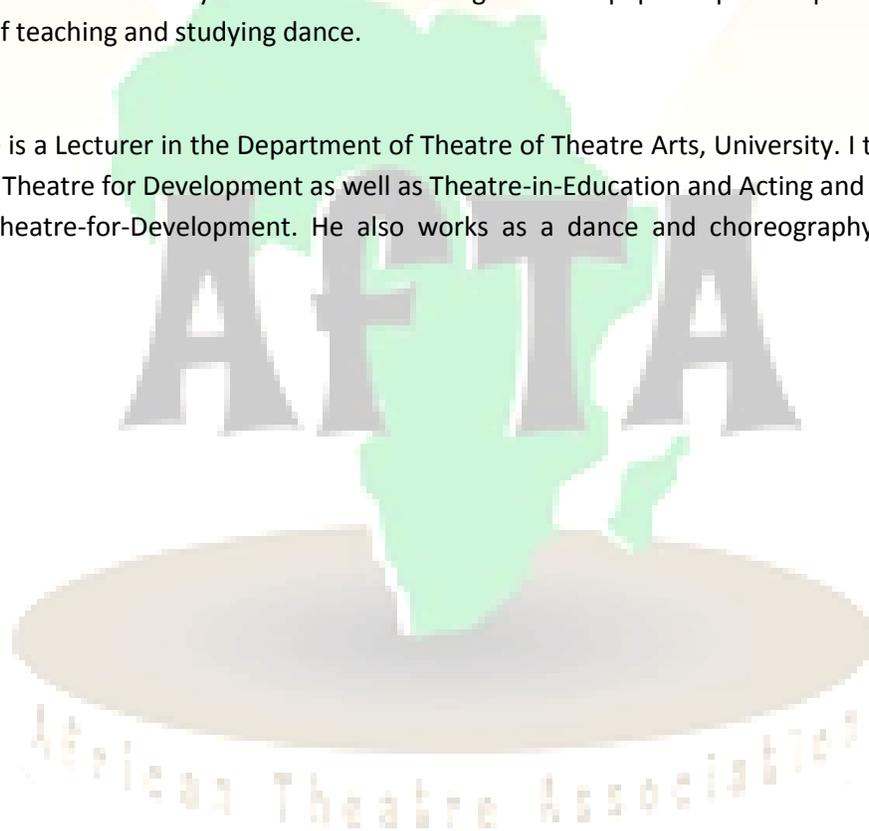


## Theatricalization of dance in the University of Abuja

Dr Emem Olutoke

The theatricalisation of dance in Africa has been a subject in dance discourse for some time now. Dance is now a regular feature of the theatre unlike in the past when plays dominated the live theatre across Africa. Dance was given a place as part of the production of drama either as incidental scenes or as integral aspect of the drama. Audience's reaction to the performances of dances for dance sake has been overwhelming and awesome. In the University of Abuja where this paper is located, dance is taken as an elective course. At the end of the semester, a day or two is usually set aside for the students to perform and present the practical aspect of the course that are usually performances. The audience's reaction to the students' performances is usually overwhelming confirming the success of the programme. This however prompted the writing of this paper. This paper therefore looks at the successful process of entrenching dance in the theatre and how this works in the educational theatres. The methodology adopted for the study is informal discussions with participants and members of the audience to arrive at the findings and conclusions. Findings for the study show an overwhelming acceptance of dance a mature art form in Nigeria, which can confidently stand on its own as a means of communication as well as satisfy the needs of theatre goers. This paper hopes to open up new vistas to the approach of teaching and studying dance.

**Emem Olutoke** is a Lecturer in the Department of Theatre of Theatre Arts, University. I teach Dance and Choreography, Theatre for Development as well as Theatre-in-Education and Acting and Speech Arts. His PhD was on Theatre-for-Development. He also works as a dance and choreography instructor and consultant.



## The Existentiality of African Ritual Dramas and “the Myth of Essence” in a Contemporary Discourse

Olabode Ojoyini

There is a need to re-engage the introduction of ritual performance into African Drama. This need arises for certain reasons: the attempt to understand the extent to which ritual functions and represents the essence of life of a people as against being an existential reflection of fear and apprehension which may promote self-interest or personal agenda of survival; to understand whether it is then truly what Soyinka identifies as “the myth of essence” or “the fictive myth” and to also appreciate the implication of either on contemporary consciousness; to analyse how it functions as the bank of primordial consciousness promoting the creation or the re-occurrence of archetypal images we are confronted with in the dramas. Of course, this will help us to also interact with the consciousness of the playwrights themselves as we begin to further engage what re-directed their interest and attention to using “indigenous performance traditions as sources and basis for their dramatic creation” (Okagbue, 2007:11). Could it be because they believed in the primacy of such rituals and archetypal images or was it to reject the so called Eurocentric views of drama by creating an authentic African drama? Could it be that they were in search of an African identity and what is the nature of such identity? In essence, what is the intentionality behind ritual dramas and “the myth of essence” in a contemporary discourse? The issues above are discussed in this paper within the frame work of the theory of existential consciousness of Jean-Paul Sartre



## **Towards Attainment: The Relevance of Music in the Women’s August Meeting, South Eastern Nigeria.**

Ruth Stellamaris Opara

Music is found in every known human culture, past and present, varying widely between times and places. Music and dance are intimately associated with African life and serves as a useful tool to bring members of a community or communities together in the celebration of events. It cements ties that community members have for one another.

Igbo married women all over the world usually travel back home to their husbands’ villages (Diaspora), once a year for August meeting. August meeting, which showcases different music, dances and other cultural activities of the women (both home and Diaspora), gears towards the uplifting of women and community development in Igbo society and Nigeria.

The primary aim of this annual meeting is for the married women in each community and its members in the Diaspora to come together and discuss the economic, social and political status of women in the community. They also discuss how they can handle the challenges facing women and girls in the community and help in the development of the community in general.

This paper explores how music is an important part of the enhancement process in addressing social issues and community building across the Diaspora. It addresses how the aims and objectives of the meeting are achieved through music. The challenges, the extent the women have been able to find solutions to the challenges facing them in community through music.

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## From Lorca to Poncela: Five Spanish Plays and an Audience

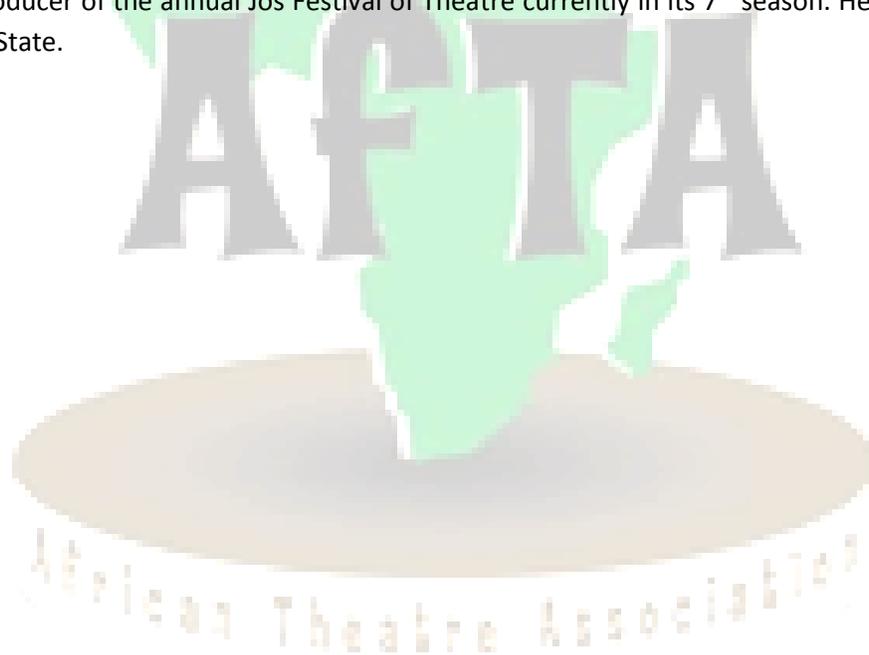
Patrick-Jude Oteh

This paper seeks to take a look at the performance dynamics as well as the marketing and audience development strategies employed by the Jos Repertory Theatre in the productions of five stage plays of Spanish extraction in collaboration with the Embassy of Spain, Nigeria. The plays differing in style, language and sensibilities seeks to question the successes or otherwise of the initiative with the Spanish Embassy as well as seek an understanding of collaborations between Embassies and local performing groups in the mounting of plays foreign to the local body.

The initiatives, which started in 2008 with, Federico Garcia Lorca's *Yerma* (2008) has continued five years later with Enrique Jardiel Poncela's *Eloise Is Under An Almond Tree* (2012). The other plays featured in these collaborations have included Lope de Vega's *Fuenteovejuna* (2009), Calderon de la Barca's *Life Is A Dream* (2010) and Miguel Mihura's *Sublime Decision* (2011).

The paper will look at the marketing of these plays outside of the free audiences they have attracted as well as a critical look at the actors that have taken part in these plays in the five years of these collaborations.

**Patrick-Jude Oteh** is a trained theatre director and holds Masters degrees in Theatre Arts and International Law and Diplomacy. He is the founding Artistic Director of the Jos Repertory Theatre. He is the Festival producer of the annual Jos Festival of Theatre currently in its 7<sup>th</sup> season. He lives and works in Jos, Plateau State.



## The Indigenous Approach to Invisible Theatre in Ghana: A Study of Traditional Asante Games

Felicia Owusu-Ansah

Traditional games have educational potential. Unfortunately, the subtle but powerful educational values, that are inherent in these traditional social games and the fact that they could be useful as communication and educational tools, are lost upon many people of Ghana. A consideration of Augusto Boal's 'Invisible Theatre', in my view, suggests that we take another look at the import of games, specifically, indigenous games, which also have an inherent quality of Invisible Theatre. Invisible Theatre is a form of theatrical performance that takes place in public places such as a restaurant, shopping centre, bus stop, and the like, instead of a typical theatre setting. The audiences in this theatre are not aware that they are watching a performance. The ultimate concern of this kind of theatre is to effect change.

This paper discusses the theatrical form and educational values of indigenous games among the Asante of Ghana. Focusing on Asante indigenous games, the paper seeks to highlight the educational motive and or communication function, which though unconscious, have always been present. The paper will again contend that indigenous games could be used as educational tools, not just for the individual, but for mass communication and for addressing communal issues for the development of the society. A few Asante traditional games like '*Kwaakwa*', '*Ahuntahunu*', '*Ehene Kwan ni*', will be critically looked at.

**Felicia Owusu-Ansah** a lecturer in the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Ghana where she is also studying for a PhD. She holds a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) (University of Ghana). She has taught Theatre History, Theatre for Development (TFD) and Modern European Drama. Her research interests include, developing new approaches to theatre for development purposes, Augusto Boal and theatre techniques and deploring indigenous knowledge for education. She has done extensive work in organising and facilitated Theatre for Development Programmes to campaign against 'Irregular Migration' in Ghana.



## Of Empty Theatre Spaces and Dwindling Performances: The Olobonbori Festival in Retrospect

Hafiz Oyetoro

Most African festivals and ritual performances are memories of the people's experiences at various stages of existence. These performances serve as a medium of promoting, preserving and transmitting values from one generation to another. *Olobonbori* dance performance in Iseyin town of Western Nigeria is one of such enriched performance where women march in procession naked, round the entire community as part of rites of passage for the dead. The Olobonbori procession was markedly known for its high acceptance, followership and participation of the community, with members of the community identifying with the ideals and tradition which the *Olobonbori* ritual dance performance stands for. However, contemporary disdain and neglect for traditional values due to Westernization, urbanization and cultural re-engineering has left this once vibrant performance in search of its audience. This paper examines the socio-cultural dilemma facing *Olobonbori* and its import on the traditional values and culture of Iseyin town.

**Hafiz Oyetoro** obtained BA (Dramatic Arts) from University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife) and an MA in Africa Studies (Dance) from the University of Ibadan, where he is currently a PhD student. He is a lecturer in the Theatre Arts Department, Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education, Oto/Ijanikin, Lagos. He has over two decades of theatre and allied arts experience in professional capacity. He is not only a play creator, writer, composer and director but has also performed in numerous playlets, full length plays, as well as TV/Film and Radio productions. He is a production consultant to theatre companies including Ibadan Festival of Plays (IBAFEST), 21<sup>st</sup> Century Masks, YASB Productions and Laffomania Organisation.



## From Theory to Practice: Dance and its place in education

Jebuni Tigwe Salifu

A study published by Derek Meakin and Patricia Sanderson (1983:69) concluded that 'teachers and others concerned with dance in schools may be forgiven if they feel more than a little disenchanted with the conditions and study of the subject'. In the context of the foregoing views this paper argues that the difficulties may lie with perceptions not only by outsiders, but also by those within the field of dance who seek a greater educative role for dance. The belief that dance is essential in the educational process has become encumbered with exaggerated claims that neither strengthen the position of dance nor garner support for it. We need to give to dance its rightful attributes and place by claiming neither too much nor too little for it. I will therefore, argue for a consideration of the special characteristics of dance as an art form and as a discipline against well-intentioned but misplaced educational outlooks that have served to consign it to a secondary position.

Dance is basic to general educational needs and has an inherent right of all. As one of the many ways of knowing and understanding, dance education is an artistic and academic mode of learning that contributes to the integration of knowledge. Quality dance education that begins in early childhood and continues throughout adulthood has a positive effect on the individual's body, mind, and spirit. This paper, therefore, underlines the benefits of dance in education to the Ghanaian child and the world at large.

**Jebuni Tigwe Salifu** is currently a Teaching Assistant in the Department of Dance Studies, School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana. He holds Master of Philosophy degree in Theatre Arts (Dance in Education) 2012, Bachelor of Arts degree in Dance Studies with History 2007, Diploma in Dance Studies 2001 from the University of Ghana, Legon. His research Interests include Dance Education, Dance History, Dance Anthropology and Ethnology.

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## **Performance Arts and Social Commentary in Tiv Ballads, the Songs of Gari Kwaghbo**

Dennis Teghtegh

In the deep seated arena of performance Tiv ballads have been used to make far reaching social comments that are quite exploratory in nature. In this artistic foray, one experiences a lot of elixir as they are capable of making situations that would have been quite serious humorous. At the same time a seemingly difficult situation is made to appeal to some, as a usual occurrence. Thus, Tiv Ballads can and have been used to play a very significant role in making social commentaries. A typical ballades experience that is unique is that performed by Gari Kwaghbo. In his songs he looks at social issues and focuses on a debtor who has been endowed with the ability to reschedule his debts after collecting another. In this artistic display, several challenges of the realities of the time are typified. In conclusion, the paper calls for urgent steps in using the performing arts in initiating an acceptable model for alleviating poverty.

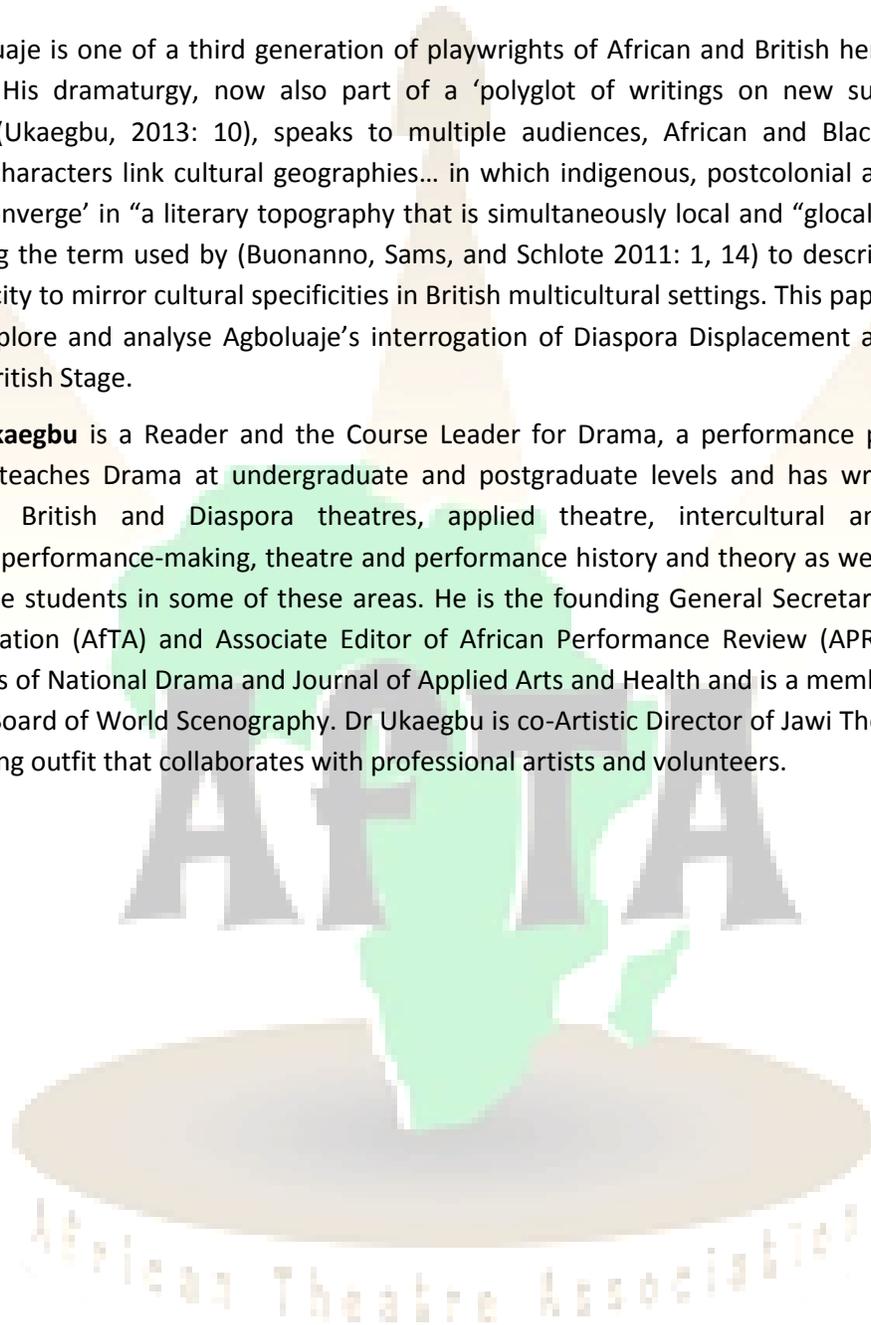


**Once Upon a Time: Diaspora Displacement and Immigration Angst on the British Stage in Dipo Agboluaje's *Early Morning*.**

Dr Victor Ukaegbu

Oladipo Agboluaje is one of a third generation of playwrights of African and British heritage writing in Britain today. His dramaturgy, now also part of a 'polyglot of writings on new subjectivities and relationships' (Ukaegbu, 2013: 10), speaks to multiple audiences, African and Black Diaspora. His 'subjects and characters link cultural geographies... in which indigenous, postcolonial and postmodern conventions converge' in "a literary topography that is simultaneously local and "glocal"" (Ukaegbu, 9), the latter being the term used by (Buonanno, Sams, and Schlote 2011: 1, 14) to describe British Asian theatre's capacity to mirror cultural specificities in British multicultural settings. This paper will use *Early Morning* to explore and analyse Agboluaje's interrogation of Diaspora Displacement and Immigration Angst on the British Stage.

**Dr Victor I. Ukaegbu** is a Reader and the Course Leader for Drama, a performance practitioner and academic. He teaches Drama at undergraduate and postgraduate levels and has written widely on African, Black British and Diaspora theatres, applied theatre, intercultural and postcolonial performances, performance-making, theatre and performance history and theory as well as supervising research degree students in some of these areas. He is the founding General Secretary of the African Theatre Association (AfTA) and Associate Editor of African Performance Review (APR). He is on the Editorial Boards of National Drama and Journal of Applied Arts and Health and is a member of the Africa / Middle East Board of World Scenography. Dr Ukaegbu is co-Artistic Director of Jawi Theatre Collective, a theatre-making outfit that collaborates with professional artists and volunteers.

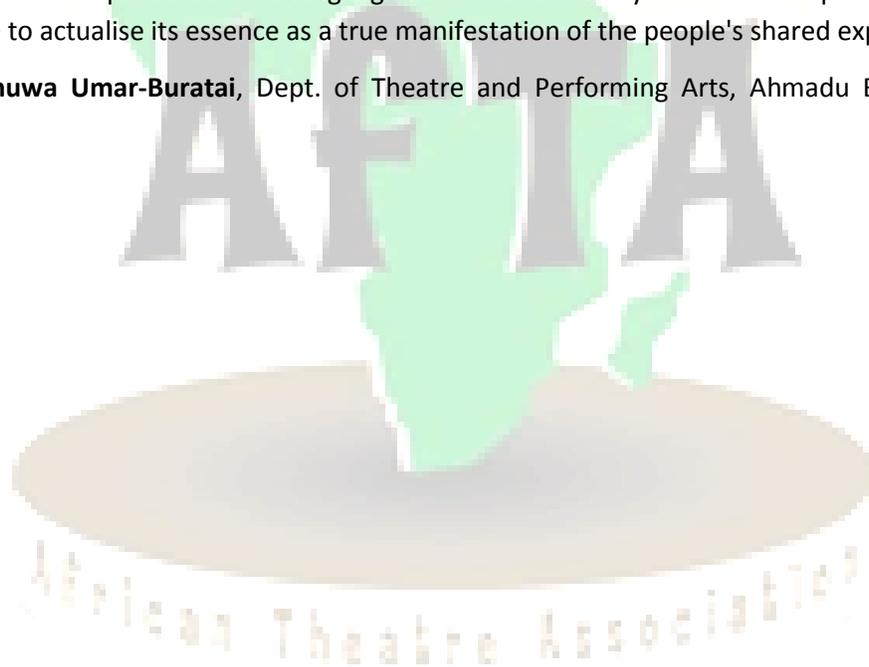


## **Form, Language and Communication: Reflections on the Contemporary African Performance Art Form as a Shared Experience**

Mohammed Inuwa Umar-Buratai

Arising from complex processes of background and development the discourse and analysis of the performance arts in Africa are fraught with questions of definition, form and content, periodisation and language. The situation is compounded by the multicultural nature of society in many modern African nation states. There is also the dimension of the colonial antecedents of these nations, as entities and of the conception of theatre and drama Africa today as an academic discipline with roots in the Greco-western literary theories and conventions. In the process, the nature and essence of the performance as a shared experience remains unrealized, either because of the form of the art or indeed it's language, both of which preclude the audience from its process. The focus in this paper is to examine the role of form and language in accentuating the nature and functionality of the modern performance art form in Africa. Specifically, the paper seeks to interrogate the place of the audience in the contemporary African dramatic experience with a view to underscoring the implication of form and language for art as a shared experience. So far as it seems, because of the problems of language, form and communication, there is a disconnect between the contemporary performance arts and its audience many an African society; such an art hardly addresses its 'audience' in the same way that the audience too hardly identifies with it. Indeed, in the words of a critic, referring to the African play as a form, the popular never gets published while the published never becomes popular. Against this background, the paper argues for the re-conceptualisation of language and form as the dynamics of the performance arts in Africa if it were to actualise its essence as a true manifestation of the people's shared experience.

**Mohammed Inuwa Umar-Buratai**, Dept. of Theatre and Performing Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria.



## Theatrical Design: The Dynamics of Performance and the Aesthetics of the Visual Accoutrement.

Julie Umukoro

Every theatrical performance is a potpourri of sign-agents pressed to duty within the complex but dynamic structure of performance. Although theatrical conventions tend to abnegate the concept of verisimilitude in stage reinvention of theatrical signs, the apocryphal nature of drama continues to create a heightened urge in its creators to foster believability; *ipso facto*, the faithful portrayal of both subject and object on stage. Given that the hub of the theatrical art is hinged on the creation of replicas, a theatrical component, in spite of close semblance to the begetting concept, is merely a copy. This thus, overrides the extremity of creating the perfect model and in turn paves way for symbolism. Nevertheless, the audience expects still in the recreated copy the ingenuity of creativity and very much so a great measure in adherence to standards. Thus, a symbol, in its emblematic stance, of *signifier* is expected, *ab initio*, to evoke a perfect mental image of that which is *signified*. The sign agent does not have to be an exact replica of what it connotes, but principally has to be seen to have the ability to conjure the intended quality of phenomenon. To institute and maintain quality, the initiator of the dramatic phenomenon, who himself is reputable in the art, should, within the limits of performance, be guided strictly by certified artistic principles and conventions. This discourse is concerned, therefore, with the visual aesthetics of performance. Of particular interest are the issues of appearance and reality.

**Dr Julie Umukoro** is a Senior Lecturer and currently, heads the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Port-Harcourt, Port-Harcourt, Nigeria. She is a Theatre Arts scholar and specialist in semiotic-studies. She has made substantial academic contributions in journals and books. Her work in Material Culture is centred mostly on non-verbal communication in drama. Besides writing, she has also found expression through exhibitions, for example: The “Dress Ensemble, Trends Today” exhibition at the Bayly Art Museum, University of Virginia (UVA ) in 2002; The Kalabari (Nigeria) Eya marriage costumes exhibition unveiled in Dubai in April 2012.



## **From Sacred to Secular: Masquerading as Street Theatre in Nigeria**

Professor Tracie Utoh-Ezeajugh

Masquerading is a cultural practice, which has its roots in the ancestral reverence /worship common in African traditional society. For the Igbo located in the South-Eastern part of Nigeria, the term masquerade refers to masked spirits or re-embodied ancestral spirits. Masquerades are believed to be sacred beings- visitors from the spirit world. They are not seen as human representation of spirits, rather they are believed to be spirits; the spirits of the ancestors of the clan. This belief is usually reinforced during performances through spectacular acts or feats, or during encounters between masquerades and spectators. In the past, the activities of the masquerade cult were shrouded in mystery and their secrets vigorously guarded. In modern day society however, a lot has changed. Masquerade performances have become influenced by the modernizing tendencies of contemporary society and are more secularised. They have gradually pulled away from highly restricted cult activities to popular entertainment on the streets. Using the qualitative method of field research, this paper investigates the new trend in Masquerading which has forced masquerade performances out of the grooves and into the streets and seeks to establish if these performances have yielded their ritual contents in so doing.

**Tracie Chima Utoh-Ezeajugh** is a Professor of Theatre and Film Design. She studied Theatre Arts at the Universities of Ife, Jos, and Port Harcourt, all in Nigeria. With a PhD in Theatre Costume and Make-up, she has taught at the Department of Theatre Arts, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria. She is a published playwright; and has written Children's books and collections of African Folktales. She has edited many Theatre Journals and an anthology of African plays. Her articles have appeared in local and International academic journals. She is a Rockefeller Fellow (2008) and a Fellow of the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) in their African Humanities Programme (AHP) 2009/2010. She is currently the 1<sup>st</sup> National Vice President of the Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA); Director of the NAU Centre for Excellence in the Arts and Humanities, and a member of the NUC National Technical Committee on Nigerian Universities Arts and Culture Festival.



## The Performance/Act of Ancient Storytelling: 'Ita Ye' in focus

Alero Uwawah

Storytelling is one of the earliest forms of performances among the Itsekiri. The Itsekiris ethnic nationality is situated within the coastal region of Nigeria – the Niger Delta region. According to the people, storytelling has been a part of them from inception. The art is culture-bound; it resides within the people and is also one of their earliest modes of sustaining and passing on the culture to successive generations. Storytelling, which is participatory in nature, elicits strong emotional evocations – joy, fear or tear – thereby offering its audience an escape route from negative preoccupations.

Regrettably, in contemporary times, external influences and the quest for wealth and power have caused massive migration to urban centres; the consequence is that, this art is endangered. Such external influences, for instance, are the advent of Television and information communication technology (ICT) which has overwhelmingly influenced both children and youths who now invest much time in chatting, ping-pong, operating play stations/computer games and watching of animations (cartoons).

This paper takes a look at this art form as a fallout of investigative research carried out among the people and made thorough documentation as regards process of performance in addition to its relevance with the hope of sustaining the art.

**Alero Uwawah** is a lecturer in the Department of Theatre Arts and Mass Communication, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria, where she handles outreach courses among others. She has a B.A (Hons.), M.A. in Theatre Arts from the University of Benin. She majors in Theatre Studies with emphasis in Theatre as a tool for Development and Crises Management. She has attended many conferences and seminars within and outside Nigeria. Her interest also lies in researching into indigenous issues. She is currently experimenting Theatrical performances of the physically challenged.



## **The Koo Traditional Ceremony of the Kono People of Rivers State, Nigeria, as a Rite of Transition From Maidenhood to Womanhood**

Basil Legodo Wikina

In most traditional African societies, it is believed that a transition from one stage of life to another requires a period of preparation. For instance, the transition of a male from boyhood to adulthood is normally characterized by an initiation process, which empowers him to confront the challenges of a higher level of his life. For females, a transition from maidenhood to womanhood/motherhood normally requires a period of preparation and an eventual release into a phase of responsibility. Among the Khana speaking people of Rivers State, this transition is normally done through a period of confinement in a fattening room culminating in a ceremonial release into womanhood. Over the years, this ceremony has retained all the elements of drama/theatre. This paper therefore examines the Koo Traditional Ceremony of the Kono people as a rite of transition from maidenhood to womanhood. Dramatic elements in the ceremony like music, dance, costume, props and audience participation will be examined. Western cultural influences on the performance will be analysed and solutions proffered on how the ceremony can still retain its Africanness in the face of this external cultural incursions.

**Basil Legodo Wikina** is a Chief Lecturer at the Department of Theatre Arts, Federal College of Education, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. He possesses a BA (Hons) Theatre Arts (Calabar), and MA from the University of Ibadan, where he is currently pursuing his PhD programme. He has many research works to his credit and has been chairman to several committees. He was a once Head of Department English language, Head of Department Theatre Arts, Dean, School of Arts and Social Sciences and currently the Dean, Students' Affairs Department of the same Federal College of Education, Abeokuta. He was also the former Ogun State chairman Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA). He is also a member of the Society of Nigerian Theatre Artistes (SONTA) and National Association of Nigerian Theatre Arts Practitioners (NANTAP) respectively. He is also the current external moderator/examiner to two Colleges of Education within the South-Western Nigeria.



## The Socio-Cultural Dilemma Facing the Olobonbori Festival

Oluwagbemiga Oluwasegun Windapo

Most African festivals and ritual performances are memories of the people's experiences at various stages of existence. These performances serve as a medium of promoting, preserving and transmitting values from one generation to another. Olobonbori dance performance in Iseyin town of Western Nigeria is one of such enriched performance where women march in procession naked, round the entire community as part of rites of passage for the dead. The Olobonbori procession was markedly known for its high acceptance, followership and participation of the community, with members of the community identifying with the ideals and tradition which the Olobonbori ritual dance performance stands for. However, contemporary disdain and neglect for traditional values due to Westernization, urbanization and cultural re-engineering has left this once vibrant performance in search of its audience. This paper examines the socio-cultural dilemma facing Olobonbori and its import on the traditional values and culture of Iseyin town.

**Oluwagbemiga Oluwasegun Windapo** is a Principal Lecturer and Head of Theatre Arts Department, Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education, Lagos, Nigeria. He is a theatre director, writer and actor who has worked extensively locally in Nigeria and internationally. In addition he is a member of academic and professional bodies such as Africa Theatre Association (AfTA), International Federation for Theatre Research (IFTR) and National Association of Nigeria Theatre Arts Practitioners (NANTAP). Windapo has written many plays which include *Sins of Sharon* and *The Hangman Came Calling*.



## Wat Kyk Jy<sup>1</sup>: Performance, Persona and Identity in the work of Die Antwoord<sup>2</sup>

Amy Louise Wilson

This paper attempts to situate the self-described rap sensation Die Antwoord in the realm of Performance Art, and thereby to argue that the group's work speaks to the sense of dislocation, uncertainty and liminality currently characterising white Afrikaans youth identity in South Africa. The author argues that Die Antwoord are, perhaps unwittingly, articulating an Afrikaans youth identity. The paper will look at the ways in which the group, through an adoption of a carefully-constructed persona embodies and disseminates notions of what it means to be young, white and Afrikaans in South Africa today. Perhaps they are, offering an outlet for this marginalised group – a means of renegotiating a new identity removed from the legacy of apartheid. It will also examine how Die Antwoord's persona has been constructed; how it operates and to what effect. The paper looks in detail at the location of white Afrikaans youth identity, and suggests that Die Antwoord are offering a route for the renegotiation of identity. The paper includes a close analysis of various performance texts (in the form of music videos, interviews and lyrics) and thus draws conclusions about questions of discourse, ownership, authenticity, and appropriation. The author also locates Die Antwoord as part of a sub-culture of 'zef', and examines the implications of this positioning. Finally, the paper posits the group's work as a socio-cultural response to philosopher Samantha Vice's question about contemporary South African life: 'How Do I Live in This Strange Place?' (2010). The author posits Die Antwoord as an alternative to Vice's call to retreat.

**Amy Louise Wilson** obtained her undergraduate degree (*cum laude*) from Rhodes University in South Africa, specialising in Early Modern English Literature and Drama. She then went on to obtain an Honours Degree (*cum laude*) from the University of Cape Town, specialising in Acting. Her research interests are always firmly rooted in South Africa. She is currently working as a freelance actress in both film and theatre and is based in Cape Town. This paper is a result of several years' research and a deep passion for South African theatre and performance art.

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<sup>1</sup> What are you looking at? (Afrikaans)

<sup>2</sup> The Answer (Afrikaans)



AFTA 2013 CONFERENCE PROGRAMME: What is African Theatre and Performance?

RHB 137A, Goldsmiths, University of London & Derby Theatre, University of Derby

**PRESENTATION SCHEDULE**

Date & Time	SESSION	FUNCTION	PRESENTER(S)	PRESENTATION TITLE
11 July 2013				
2.00 pm		Registration starts		
3.00 pm	Welcome addresses		Prof. Osita Okagbue Prof Anna Furse Dr Samuel Kasule	
	Keynote Speech		Prof Olu Obafemi	(Re) Problematizing the Performative Aesthetics for African Theatre
5.00 pm			<b>Interval - Coffee break</b>	
5.30 pm	PANEL 1: Undetermined		Kehinde Abimbola Adeniyi	The paradigm shift in African theatre performance: New media to the rescue
			Kunle Abogunloko	Transposing our creative power into a catalyst for change in a socio-political climate predominated by "Angst"
			Ameh Dennis Akoh	Legislative gossip as theatre: Odeli and Abule of Ibadan of East-central Nigeria
	PANEL 2: Scenography in African Theatre		Charles Nwadijwe	Theatre without theatres: Venues, urbanization and the aesthetics of site specific African performance
			Samuel O. Amoo	Scenic design concepts in contemporary African theatre practice
			Hameed Lawal	The use of scenic design to capture the past in the film <i>Sango</i> by Femi Lasode
			Adebisi Ademakinwa	Technical theatre: its underdevelopment and consequences on Nigerian theatre
	Julie Umukoro	Theatrical Design: The dynamics of performance and the aesthetics of the visual accoutrement		
6.45 - 7.30 pm	Play Reading		Anthonette Isioma	<i>The New Voice of Home</i>
7.45 pm			<b>Reception</b>	
12 July 2013				
9.30 - 10.30	Keynote 2		Gabriel Gbadamosi	In the beginning, we were the journalists, the politicians, the pulpits; but with this difference, the people 'believed us': Remarks from African theatre practitioners.
9.30 - 10.30 am	PANEL 3: Indigenous vs Contemporary Performance		Tracie Utoh-Ezeajugh	From sacred to secular: Masquerading as street theatre in Nigeria
			Viola Karungi	Performing language: Change and Continuity in performing Kinyankore folk poetry/recitations ( <i>ebyevuuga</i> ) among Banyankore people of south western Uganda
			Ihentuge Chisimdi Udoka	African Theatre and performance in the 21 <sup>st</sup> century: Focus on trends in 'Oghu Umuaka' ensemble theatre
			Ofonime Inyang & Patrick Ebewo	Shifting context in traditional theatre practice: The example of the Annang/Ibibio community of Nigeria
			Kelechi S. Ogbonna	African versus Christian patterns in indigenous performances: The transmogrification of the "Ubochi Obasi" festival
10.30 am	PANEL 4: Indigenous vs Contemporary Performance		Ted Anyebe	Indigenous drama and social regulation in Nigeria: An examination of Onyomkpo masquerade of Idoma
			Alero Uwawah	The performance/act of ancient storytelling: 'Ita Ye'
			Gloria Chimeziem Ernest-Samuel	Preserving African traditional theatre and performance in a digital age: Issues and challenges
			Pat Obi Nwagbo	Theatre practice and African originated theatre paradigms: Ododo's Facekuerade theatre in Nigeria'
10.45 - 11.45 am	PANEL 5: Presentation and Representation PANEL 6: Applied Theatre and Theatre for Development		Mervyn E. McMurtry Patrick Mangeni Julius Heinicke Afolabi Akinloye	Nelson Mandela and <i>The Island</i> : Speaking for "their nation" 'Staging Uganda: the packaging, performance and adaptations of Uganda cultures for the international stage How to analyse the aesthetics of Applied Theatre in Southern Africa: Some theoretical thoughts The role of theatre in promoting sustainable socio-political development in Africa: The case studies of <i>Circus of Freedom Square</i> by Bode Sowande and 'Black Hermit' by Ngugi wa Thiongo
12.00 - 1.00 pm	PANEL 7: (Post)Colonial Theatre and Performance		Tsepo Mamatu	Black theatre studies in the South African context
			Amy Louise Wilson	Wat Kyk Jy1: Performance, persona and identity in the work of Die Antwoord
			Susan O. Badeji	In memorial: Re-awakening "A body of memories" in 9ICE'S album, "Bashorun Gaa"
	PANEL 8: Decolonising Shakespeare		Barclays Foubiri Ayakoroma	Reinventing Live Theatre Practice in Nigeria: Leveraging on the Power of the Television Medium in focus
			Robert Gordon Anthony Howard	Decolonising Shakespeare in Performance from Shylock to Caliban Black British Performances of Shakespeare
	PANEL 8A: Theatre for Development		Victor Dugga	Impairments to theorizing Applied Theatre in Africa
			Idrissu Kananzoe	The popular theatre pedagogic: Panacea for the unending conflict of the Bawku Municipality
			Chijioke Uwah	Communicating HIV Messages Using Cultural Lenses: Language as Catalyst to Successful HIV/AIDS Communication in South Africa
			Athanas Ngalawa	Experimenting Curriculum Review for HIV Prevention: The Case of Traditional Girls' Initiation Trainings in Morogoro, Tanzania
			Sola Fosudo Kenneth Bamuturaki	Youth empowerment through drama and theatre Fostering participatory development communication or another message oriented programme: interrogating rafiki theatre companies TFD practice
1.00 - 2.00 pm			<b>Lunch</b>	
2.00 - 3.00 pm	PANEL 9 and 9A: Play and Performance		Nelson E. Campbell	Culture and drama in Africa: A study of Barclays Ayakoroma's Izon culture in <i>Dance On His Grave</i>
			Olabisi Adigun	'The Famished 'Fourth Stage': The phenomenology of the Nigerian motorway and the aesthetics of Wole Soyinka's Yoruba tragedy
			Regina Kwakye-Opong	Echoes from Ghana that cannot be buried: The legacies of Efua Sutherland on the Ghanaian stage
			Nadia Anwar	Maneuvering dramatic distance through metatheatrical techniques in selected post-independence Nigerian Drama
			Emmanuel B. Adeleke	Music and ideology in contemporary Nigerian theatre: The example of Femi Osofisan
			Mathew Hahn	The Robben Island Bible
			Annette Buhler-Dietrich	Contemporary West African monodrama and its stage production: A challenge'
	Osita C. Ezenwenebe	African theatre as performance: A study of <i>Shadows of Arrival</i>		



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**PRESENTATION SCHEDULE**

Date & Time	SESSION	FUNCTION	PRESENTER(S)	PRESENTATION TITLE	
3.15 - 4.15 pm	PANEL 10 AND 10A: Audiences in/of African Theatre and Performance		Oluwatoyin Balogun	Reading Nollywood through the eyes of the Nigerian audience	
			Patience Nukpezah	Reaching out: Theatre performances and the deaf – a critical overview	
			Patrick-Jude Oteah	From Lorca to Poncela: Five Spanish plays and an audience	
			Bernard Adjirackor	Directing the audience: Unifying the aesthetics of stage, radio and screen for effective communication	
			Femi Adedina	Experiencing the Theatre in an academic institution: The audience perspective	
			Awam D. Menegbe	The shrinking world of audience participation in an era of the electronic stage: The tragedy of Kuti traditional performance in Kogi State, Nigeria	
			Mohammed Umar-Buratai	Form, language and communication: Reflections on the contemporary African performance art form as a shared experience	
			Onyinye Egenti	A Pathway for Film Making in Nigeria	
4.15 - 4.30 pm		Coffee & Tea			
4.30 - 5.00 pm		Book Presentation	Oladiipo Agboluaje	OLADIPO AGBOLUAJE: PLAYS ONE	
7.00 pm		Performance, Unicorn Theatre, 147 Tooley Street, London SE1 2HZ		Lionboy	
13 July 2013					
7.00 am		Departure for Derby by Coach			
10.30 am		Arrival in Derby			
10.30 - 11 am		Tea & Coffee			
11.15 am	Welcome address		Dr Samuel Kasule Vice Chancellor, University of Derby		
11.45 - 12.45 pm	PANEL 11: African Dance, Music and Theatre and the Idea of Play and Performance in Africa		Emen Olutoke	Theatricalization of dance in the University of Abuja	
			Ruth Oparah	Towards attainment: The relevance of music in the Women's August Meeting, South Eastern	
			Felicia Owusuh-Ansah	The indigenous approach to invisible theatre in Ghana: A study of traditional Asante Games	
			Chielotam Nicholas Akas	Indigenous dance as a medium for participatory learning: A study of a dance into manhood as a paradigm	
				Chris Nwaru	Documenting Igbo dances, using the 'Igbo descriptive Notation': The Nkwa - lke example
	PANEL 12: African Dance, Music and Theatre and the Idea of Play and Performance in Africa			Annas Ngunan Ashaver	The significance of music and dance in Tiv Kwagh-hir performance of Central Nigeria
				Nicholas Akas	Indigenous dance as a medium for participatory learning: A study of a dance into manhood as a paradigm
Chukwuma Okoye				"Contemporary dance, not African dance": The question of a contemporary Nigerian dance	
			Ebele Veronica Ojukwu	The organisation and performance of igba ijede cultural music of ifite oraitite nwanne amaka	
			Kayode Animasaun	Betwixt Ajangila and Lagbala: The anatomy of Commitment in music and dramatic performance	
1.00 - 2.00 pm		Lunch			
2.15 - 3.15 pm	PANEL 13 AND 14: African Ritual Theatre		Basil Legodo Wikina	The Koo traditional ceremony of the Kono people of Rivers state, Nigeria as a ritge of transition from maidenhood to womanhood	
			Gowon A. Doki	Ritual for ritual: Performance aesthetics in the Tiv Girinya ritual theatre	
			Alex Asigbo	Performance contexts of rituals in transition: The Ikeji masquerade festival of Arindizuogu as paradigm	
			Hafiz Oyetoro	Of empty theatre spaces and dwindling performances: The Olobonbori festival in retrospect	
			Katwiwa Mule	Writing in the Interregnum: Ritual and the Political Consciousness in Werewere Liking's <i>The Power of Um and a New Earth</i>	
			Bekezela Dube	African ritual theatre	
			Oluwagbemiga O. Windapo	The Socio-Cultural Dilemma Facing the Olobonbori Festival	
				Grace Uche Adinku	Death ritual: The Sigma mask performance of the Tampilensi in Northern Ghana
				Olabode Ojoniyi	The existentiality of African ritual dramas and "the myth of essence" in a contemporary discourse
	PANEL 15: Theatre and Performances of the African Diasporas			Joseph McLaren	'Pattin' Juba: African sensibility in August Wilson's <i>Joe Turner's Come and Gone</i>
				Lekan Balogun	Engaging otherness in African and Diaspora theatre
				Victor Ukaegbu	Diaspora Displacement and Immigration Angst on the British Stage in Dipo Agboluaje's <i>Early Morning</i>
				Sola Adeyemi	Negotiating Identities: Britishness and Mapping of Culture in Dipo Agboluaje's <i>The Christ of Coldharbour Lane</i>
3.30 - 5.30 pm	PANEL 16: African Dance, Music and Theatre and the Idea of Play and Performance in Africa		Kennedy Chinyowa	Play as a discourse in African cultural performances.	
			Jebuni Salifu	From theory to practice: Dance and its place in education	
			Dennis Teghtegh	Performance arts and social commentary in Tiv Ballads, the songs of Gari Kwaghbo	
			Oluwasun Fabusuyi	A socio-cultural analysis of African dance, music and technical theatre in the performance of Filix Emoruwa's <i>Rebirth</i>	
14 July 2013				AfTA Annual General and Business Meeting	

**African Theatre Association (AfTA)**

For more information about the association, to join or to find out about the next conference, visit <http://www.africantheatreassociation.org>

Editorial Assistance: Sola Adeyemi