

**THEATRE DIRECTING AND THE USE OF MULTIMEDIA IN NIGERIA THEATRE:
*THE LION KING***

BY

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DECLARATION

I declare that this project is based on the department of Theatre Arts, Faculty of Arts,
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CERTIFICATION

I the under signed certify that this work was carried out by **FAITH EDOZE EGHONGHON** in the Department of Theatre Arts (ARTS).

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DATE

DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to God and to my family

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title page	--	--	--	--	--	i
Declaration	--	--	--	--	--	ii
Certification	--	--	--	--	--	iii
Dedication	--	--	--	--	--	iv
Acknowledgments	--	--	--	--	--	v
Table of contents	--	--	--	--	--	vi
Abstract	--	--	--	--	--	viii

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1	Background of study	--	--	--	--	1
1.2	State of Problem	--	--	--	--	3
1.3	Objective of study	--	--	--	--	3
1.4	Significance of study	--	--	--	--	4
1.5	Scope of Study	--	--	--	--	4
1.6	Research Methodology	--	--	--	--	5
1.7	Definition of Terms	--	--	--	--	6

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1	Overview of Nigeria Theatre	--	--	--	--	8
2.2	Historical overview of Theatre Directing in Nigeria	--	--	--	--	9
2.3	Director in the Digital Age	--	--	--	--	14
2.4	Emergence of Multimedia in Global Theatre	--	--	--	--	18

2.5	Successful Integration of Multimedia in Global Theatre	--	--	20
2.6	Evaluation of Audience Engagement and Theatrical Experience	--	--	23
2.7	Challenge and Opportunities in Integrating Multimedia in Nigeria Theatre	--	--	25

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1	Synopsis of the Lion King	--	--	--	29
3.1.1	Summary	--	--	--	29
3.1.2	Characters	--	--	--	30
3.2	Examination of multimedia element used in the lion king production	--	--	--	33

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1	Presentation of Data and Analysis	--	--	--	37
4.1.1	Interview	--	--	--	37
4.2	Discussion of findings	--	--	--	41

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1	Summary	--	--	--	45
5.2	Conclusion	--	--	--	45
5.3	Recommendation	--	--	--	46
	Work Cited	--	--	--	48

ABSTRACT

Nigerian theatre directors have long been known for their bright and broad spectrum of styles and approaches. In recent years, there have been an increase in the use of multimedia elements into theatrical shows, which has had a significant impact on how stories are conveyed and performances are staged. This study investigates the director's usage of multimedia elements in the Nigerian production of *The Lion King*. The study also examines how the multimedia elements influence the director's perspective and interpretation of the story. The study examines how multimedia elements influence audience engagement and experience with the performance. This study evaluates the use of multimedia in theatrical directing in Nigeria, analyzing how directors use technology to create immersive and creative theatrical productions. This study used observation of the performance, pictures and interview as the primary means for data collection, for analysis and interpretation. For secondary data was obtained by sourcing materials from the libraries , online , published and unpub work that are relating to the study .The study explore the integration of multimedia features, such as interactive technologies, sound effects, and LCD screens, into conventional theatrical forms, using *THE LION KING*. Considering the possibilities and challenges that come with using multimedia in Nigerian theatre, such as issues with accessibility, audience participation, and the preservation of customary narrative methods. This study aims to illuminate the ways in which technology is influencing theatre in Nigeria and abroad by looking at the ways in which directors are integrating multimedia into their works. .This project observes that multimedia element aid proper theatrical production that enable directors realize their artistic vision and enhance audience engagement and experience.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The field of theatre is a creation process that involves not only live imitation and script work but also dramatic form such as television, film, and other electronic media. Theatre is about the examination and resolution of fundamental human issues and it provides a vehicle for audience to reflect on important aspects of life, in the process developing their sensitivity to and deepening their understanding of human ideas through live performance. Dramatic art includes live performance that combines voice, words, movement, and visual element to express human ideas.

Theatre directing is the Coordination of the several elements of a theatrical production it is a multidimensional discipline that incorporates many theatrical production elements to bring a script to life in front of an audience on stage. The skill of supervising and directing the creative aspects of a theatre play is known as theatre directing. Working with actors, designers, technicians, and other members of the creative team, it entails interpreting and realizing a play or performance.

In addition to making creative decisions and establishing a unified vision for the play or performance, the director is in charge of conceiving the production and making sure that all of the components come together to convey the intended message or narrative. Alongside actors, they work closely to establish characters, stage blocking, and interpretation of the script.

The director's main responsibility is to develop and realize a theatrical vision on stage. Directing as an art of the theatre has been variously describe by scholars in African Theatre:

Studies in theory and criticism. Hodge (1) describe directing" as an art of leading dramatic performances...art of coordinating the element of the theatre.... art of communication. He also sees the art as sensitive craft. Woke Soyinka, cited in Musa (214) sees play directing as a complex business". This study adopts the definition in the free online Britannica concise encyclopaedia (1) which describes directing as art of the theatre with view to achieving an artistic entity.

Nigerian theatre directors collaborate closely with performers, designers, and technicians to produce effective shows. The field of theatre directing is dynamic and have a rich cultural legacy and are known for their colorful and stimulating work in the profession Nigerian theatrical productions make impressive utilization of multimedia. It is now an effective tool for enhancing the audience's overall creative experience. With time, multimedia has evolved into an essential component of any performance. It gave rise to a wide range of presentations, from educational to entertaining.

The term multimedia was coined by singer and artist Bob Goldstein (later 'Bobb Goldsteinn') to promote the July 1966 opening of his "Lightworks at L'Oursin" show in Southampton, New York, Long Island. In the 1993 first edition of *Multimedia: Making It Work*, Tay Vaughan declared "Multimedia is any combination of text, graphic art, sound, animation, and video that is delivered by computers.

Multimedia encompasses the merging of various media forms, such as sound, video, visuals, and interactive features, within theatrical presentations. One area where multimedia has had a profound impact is in the realm of set design and production. Traditional Nigerian theatre historically relied on simple sets due to limited resources; however, the introduction of multimedia technology has revolutionized this aspect. Now, sets can be created using digitally

projected backgrounds, virtual imagery, and LED screens. Consequently, these advancements have resulted in visually captivating and dynamic stage designs that heighten the storytelling process and audience engagement.

Furthermore, multimedia integration in Nigerian theatre has also influenced the techniques employed for storytelling. It provides an avenue for exploring intricate narratives, nonlinear structures, and multiple perspectives. The inclusion of multimedia elements facilitates seamless transitions between various locations, time periods, and realities, thereby enhancing the audience's immersion and overall theatrical experience.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Based on the observations provided above, the identified problem is that the majority of current Nigerian directors do not employ a media-savvy approach in their stage interpretations. As a result, this issue persists in isolating modern Nigerian audiences, who are well-versed in technology, from attending theatrical performances. Consequently, this is contributing to the decline of live theatre in Nigeria.

What multimedia features does the director of the Nigerian production of "The Lion King" utilize how does the director's perspective and interpretation of the story benefit from this multimedia component and how has the audience's experience and involvement with the performance been affected by the usage of multimedia?

1.3. Aim and objectives

The aim of this project is to examine how multimedia is utilized in a Nigerian production of "The Lion King" and how it enriches the audience experience and the director's vision.

Objectives of the Study

1. This study explores the director's use of multimedia elements in the "The Lion King" production in Nigeria.
2. The study also looks at how the director's perspective and interpretation of the story are influenced by these multimedia components.
3. The study assesses how multimedia elements affect audience participation and experience with the performance

1.4 Scope of study

This study focuses on the University of BENIN Ekehuaun campus in relations to the just concluded staging of "The Lion King" performed at the University of Benin. To identify the many types of multimedia used, such as projections, animations, sound effects, and interactive features. Analyse how multimedia elements are blended with live acting, set design, and lighting to produce a seamless experience. Examine multimedia features improving storytelling by boosting clarity and emotional impact. Analyze the impact of multimedia on audience perception, engagement, and enjoyment of the performance

1.5 Significance of the study

Over the past 10 years, performing arts has increasingly incorporated multimedia, including film and video, to the point where it is frequently disregarded as part of the whole theatrical experience. At the moment, directors, theatre designers, writers, and other theatre professionals need to think of creative ways for incorporating screens or moving pictures onto the stage. Understanding the process of creating multimedia has now become an essential skill for theatre practitioners, rather than a mere trend. This study therefore, serve as a model to

educate, create awareness to Nigeria theatre directors to learn more about how directors in modern Nigerian theatre use multimedia to realize their artistic vision. Examine how multimedia improves the storytelling and audience experience in the chosen production of "The Lion King". Contribute to the ongoing discussion concerning the role of technology and innovation It is hoped that this work carried out in an academic locale will motivate other theatre directors to implement multimedia in their play production in order to achieve the following: Enhanced storytelling Increased, audience engagement and Accessible theatre.

1.6 Methodology

This study employs an artistic approach in its methodology, emphasizing creativity and utilizing participant observation as the primary means of data collection. The aim of this research is to provide valuable information on mediatized staging techniques, which can be utilized by directors or individuals according to their specific requirements. Participant observation is a research method where researcher immersed themselves in a particular social setting or group, observing the behaviour, interaction and practice of the participants. Qualitative analysis: Analyse the "Lion King" live production to determine specific multimedia element that were employed. Conduct interviews with the director, cast and crew, and to understand their perspective on the use of multimedia. Reviews relevant of the production and related scholarly material to learn about various critics' and scholars' perspectives. As well as an in-depth examination, concentrate on Nigerian production of "The Lion King".

This study provides a framework for exploring the use of multimedia in a specific Nigerian production of "The Lion King." This study adds to the continuing discussion regarding the changing environment of Nigerian theatre and its artistic manifestations by studying the director's decisions and their impact on the audience experience.

1.7 Definition of terms

For better understanding of this study, the following important words are defined:

Theatre: is a kind of artistic expression that uses voice, language, movement, and visual aspects to convey human ideas through live performances. It is a captivating kind of entertainment that employs dramatic art to elicit powerful emotions in the audience. The acts and sequences are meticulously planned to create a strong feeling of drama, drawing on societal, personal, and historical factors

Directing: is the art of leading dramatic performances on the stage or in films. The modern theatrical director is in complete charge of all the artistic aspects of a dramatic presentation. Directing, the skill of guiding and shaping compelling performances on the stage or in movies.

Multimedia: the utilization of multiple forms of media, such as audio, video, graphics, and interactive features, in theatrical performances. Multimedia technology has tremendously influenced set design and production. Historically, due to limits on resources, traditional Nigerian theatre had to make do with simple sets. However, the introduction of multimedia has changed this aspect. Sets can now be brought to life utilizing projected digital backgrounds, virtual visuals, and LED screens.

Multimedia Theatre: this is a performance in which different creative forms, such as narrative, spoken word/poetry, song, dance, physical theatre, puppetry, technology, film or video, are blended to tell a story. It is also a form of theatrical performance that incorporates various multimedia elements, such as video projections, sound effects, music, lighting effects, and digital technology.

Nigeria theatre: describes the cultural norms and forms of theatre that have emerged in Nigeria. It includes a broad variety of performing genres, which includes modern Nigerian drama, traditional indigenous forms, and contemporary theatre influenced by Western culture. Incorporating dance, music, and storytelling .

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview of Nigeria Theatre

Nigerian theatre has its roots in the 18th century, when court jesters began to appear in regal settings around the country. There were numerous presentations of cultural troupes and traditional masquerades, which gave their craft a dramatic twist and brought diversity to the conventional scale. It provided the populace with a means of enjoying significant humorous relief as well.

The history of Nigerian theatre dates back to the 18th century, when court jesters started to perform in regal settings all around the nation. Many cultural troupes and traditional masquerades performed, giving their art a dramatic twist and adding diversity to the typical scale. It provided the populace with a means of enjoying significant humorous relief as well. In Yoruba territory, the "Gelede Masquerade" was associated with satire and comedic approaches to major societal challenges. The Igbo Agbaasa Masquerade was noted for eliciting laughter while also promoting socio-cultural awareness and education. This is not to point out the "Yankamanci" craft of the famed Hausa minstrels who specialize in humor, the "Eyo Masquerade of Lagos," and so on. All of this laid the groundwork for Nigeria's theatre.

Notable theatrical professionals like Chief Hubert Ogunde, who founded one of the first indigenous touring theatre groups, actively participated in the early 20th century. Ogunde developed and turned his artistic talents into filmmaking. When Duro Ladipo breathed fire and smoke effectively during the performance of his well-known play *Oba K'oso* at the Berlin Festival in 1965, he became a god on stage, demonstrating his inventiveness and cultural

prowess in his effort to represent the legend of the renowned Alaafin of Oyo and Sango. The amazing works of icons like Ade Love, Moses Olaiya (Baba Sala), and Kola Ogunmola.

With the opening of new cultural institutions like Terra Kulture, which dot the landscape, especially in Lagos, the following years would witness the rise of private engagement in Nigeria's theatre and arts scenes. When CHARMS LTD funded and performed D.O. Fagunwa's famous Ogboju Ode at the Muson Center, it joined the fray and demonstrated exactly what had been lacking in the field. The spirit of theatre in Nigeria was revived by these and numerous other projects.

Compared to the early 1990s, the number of theatre and art enthusiasts in the nation has tripled. However, due to the restricted nature of their outings, most theatre organizations have financial instability due to the limited places available for performances. Nevertheless, it is clear that the theatre has been a major factor in bringing the nation together over the years.

Above all, it has constituted the core of socio-economic growth. All we can do is keep working hard and making every performance matter, even though the future of Nigerian theatre appears both dire and promising at the same time.

2.2 Historical Overview of Theatre Directing in Nigeria

Nigerian theatre directing has a rich cultural history that encompasses traditional performance and storytelling techniques. A strong theatre business may be found in locations like Lagos and Abuja, where there has been a rise in interest in contemporary theatre in recent years. Nigeria has a long history of theatre direction, going all the way back to pre-colonial periods when storytelling and traditional performances were common forms of entertainment. The

establishment of theatre companies and schools in the middle of the 20th century marked the beginning of the official practice of theatre directing as we know it today.

The history of theatrical directors in Nigeria is examined in detail through an examination of the Yoruba people's Ekpe and Alarinjo festivals. In Ekpe festival Amankulur (118) observe that:

The Ekpe festival includes the tragic and humorous aspects of the society that is currently in existence. Eke day is when Ekpe occurs. Among Yoruba theatres in Nigeria, the Alarinjo Theatre is distinct in that it employs a "maquerade dramaturge." According to J.A. Adedeji:

" Ologbon Ologbogo founded the Alarinjo theatre ...It is claimed that it's was on the account of his hybrid son, Olugbore Again, that he established the theatre as part a permanent part of court environment."

The Ogunde Theatre Company was founded in the 1940s by Hubert Ogunde, a well-known playwright, director, and actor who was among the first in Nigeria to direct. Ola Rotimi, Wole Soyinka, and Zulu Sofola were among the new wave of directors that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s and helped Nigeria's theatre industry flourish. These directors were crucial in creating new theatrical genres and techniques as well as adapting Western plays to the realities of Nigeria. Because to the emergence of directors like Femi Osofisan, Stella Oyedepo, and Bolanle Austen-Peters, theatre directing in Nigeria blossomed in the 1980s and 1990s. By incorporating dance, music, and visual arts into their productions, these directors gave Nigerian theatre a fresh perspective.

Nigerian theatre directors have differing perspectives on the art of play directing, which can be attributed to stylistic distinctions. Bayo Oduneye links directing with the act of cooking. He explains, "You add a little spice here, a little spice there, with flavor--you stir it all and you have

a good meal" (quoted in Okorie: 33). Wole Soyinka's notion of play directing is broader than Bayo Oduneye's metaphoric meaning. He says that directing is

..... a complex business. This phenomenon has societal roots. This is related to the setting, the actors involved, the time allotted, the number of actors, how to divide up the time allotted to each actor considering the amount of time needed to perform on stage, and of course, the overall theatrical images that one wishes to represent and the dynamic tension of the various special images that one wishes to create on stage. Musa: 33

In Nigeria, play directing essentially elevates the theatrical phenomenon to a high status. A theatre director who follows certain guidelines and practices can develop and refine his own directorial style. As more and more gifted directors stretch the limits of conventional theatre and investigate alternative forms of artistic expression, theatre directing in Nigeria has become more vibrant and diverse. With directors having a significant impact on its future, Nigeria's theatre industry is a vibrant and innovative environment for artistic experimentation and innovation.

Over time, it was discovered that many African scholars studying theatre abroad were affected by the directing styles of their instructors. Many African theatrical directors' directorial works demonstrate how much their methods have been influenced by their masters. Ola Rotimi is one of them, referred to as "a master craftsman of stage iconography" by Akinwale (31). Nwadike (7-8), who also affirms Oga's (2000) conclusions regarding Rotimi's style, recognizes the "Pressure Cooker" approach as Rotimi's method of rehearsal. A technique that brought realism to the stage by letting activities flow in their "naturalness" as if the audience were watching an unrehearsed slice of reality, as articulated by Rotimi himself in his description of the

style: "Convoluting discourse of juxtaposed and variegated actions." The knowledge in Rotimi's is summarized by Emasealu (266).

2.3 The Director in the Digital Age

The increased number of the internet, movies, and theatre around the world has had a major influence on traditional theatre over time, because the cornerstone to any successful theatrical play is the audience's response, sometimes known as "audience participation." "If we are ever to see arise a true art of the theatre - the oldest, most powerful, and most immediate of the arts, combining the many in one," according to Reinhardt, "the audience must take its part in the play." Reinhardt (2006). The majority of people in our computerized age enjoy being in their comfort zones while yet having access to cutting-edge technology such as laptops, tablets, phones, notepads, televisions, movie theatres, and so on.

This study investigates the concept of a digital theatre that retains audience engagement, which is an important component of live performances. As a result, a new type of audience has emerged: the "co-audience," which is not limited to a specific site or auditorium and can attend the same live performance in both place and time. While some Nigerian theatre directors have included multimedia directing, indigenous theatre directors and those who aspire to the field still need additional education and training.

This study is essential to comprehending and appreciating the relationship between digital technology and theatre for individuals in the theatre industry, scholars, educators, students, and legislators. According to Cowen (2008, p. 261), the new technologies have had a significant impact on the field of cultural economics more than at any other similar time in human history. The impact of new media has taken center stage in influencing theatre practices as people push the frontiers of theatre and entertainment in general to adapt to shifting worldviews, ideologies, civilizations, and tastes. Directing multimedia theatre is gradually growing in Nigeria, despite the lack of funding and issues with many institutional theatrical practices in the country.

In the context of Africa, the historical relevance of individuals such as Hubert Ogunde and Duro Ladipo, who in their different roles attempted to create captivating theatrical illusions by adding unique and cosmic effects on the stage, deserves recognition in the context of Africa. According to Oni, the indigenous theatre groups' involvement in filmmaking during the Ogunde era expanded their lighting techniques beyond the use of basic floodlights and ultra-violet switches. They now employ dimmers and control equipment in addition to a few spot lights and fire effects like the Strand Pattern 252. Hubert Ogunde had a special interest in effects and produced excellent work when using the fire effect, for example, for his production of *Aporin Nt'enia* in which the "evil doer" was thrown into "hell fire". (103) However, the Osogbo-based Duro Ladipo Theatre also enjoyed great popularity with its historical and legendary plays, which heavily relied on costumes and props with "magical" effects. He did not leave much of a lighting legacy, especially in his performance *Oba Koso* (Oni 99). Mackintosh posits:

"The splendour of the scene, the ingenuity of the machinist and the rich display of dresses, aided by the captivating charms of music, now in a great degree supersede the labours of the poet. When the animating march strikes up, and the stage lays open its recesses to the depth of a

hundred feet for the procession to advance, even the most distant spectator can enjoy his shilling's worth of show.... On the stage of Old Drury in the days of Garrick, the moving brow and penetrating eye of that matchless actor came home to the spectator. (31-34)

The increasing influence of technology in the modern era during the late 19th and early 20th centuries reshaped the traditional theatrical performance space as the emergence of film and cinemas began to dominate the established norms. This led to the investigation of new and inventive ways to create lifelike illusions using scenography that target the audience's emotions with the use of special effects by well-known modern artists including Craig, Artaud, Appia, Piscator, and Svoboda. The lack of funding and technological limitations at the time prevented many of their theories from being realized on stage. Theatre theorists can reimagine and apply old knowledge in a modern setting by utilizing the latest computer technologies, especially those from contemporary, futurist, and postmodern views. "The electronically mediated image simultaneously displayed with the live stage action creating a juxtaposition of the discourses of the body with the electronic medium in earlier video art is equivalent (in most aspects) to that of the "live" body and the digitally manipulated video image body in dialogue in Digital Theatre." (Masura 46).

2.4 Emergence of Multimedia in Global Theatre

Over the centuries, theatre has been prompt to acknowledge and utilize the dramatic and aesthetic potentials of new technologies. The first application of basic versions of non-digital, but technical devices can be seen in the early ancient period. I will begin my historical review with the ancient Greek period. When discussing performances from this time, it is important to mention the concept of *Deus ex Machina* and its relevance to modern digital performances. *Deus*

ex Machina is likely one of the earliest attempts to incorporate additional elements in conveying the plot of a performance. The term was derived from the practices of Greek tragedy, in which a machine was used to bring actors portraying gods onto the stage.

According to Cubitt (. 571) today's art is inseparable from media since all art is mediated. As a result, the artworld is coextensive with the world of the media. Through the history various kinds of media played the role of technological innovators within the arts. The way towards nowadays digital interactive virtual theatre was shaped by multimedia. According to Waltz (. 543) first multimedia experiments date back to the 1890s their development had gone through similar stages everywhere they were utilized. In the initial phase, a storyteller was incorporated into a silent film. In the next phase, a projection was displayed on the backdrop in a theatre alongside live actors.

The use of multimedia in theatre, I quickly discovered is not a recent phenomenon. The term has undergone numerous changes and is defined in different ways. Since the technological innovations and progress of film projection and slide images, theatre creators have been incorporating these dynamic elements into their stage designs. Willett asserts that, well before World War I, film had been incorporated in opera houses for illusionistic purposes (Willet .113).

My research has identified three main contributors to the use of multimedia in theatre. These include the political theatre of director Erwin Piscator, the contemporary theatre of Russian director Vsevolod Meyerhold, and the influential work of Czechoslovakian set designer Joseph Svoboda, who remained active as Art Director at Laterna Magika in Prague through his

eighties (Laterna Magika, 2002). Burian asserts that the initial substantial integration of film into theatre can be traced back to Prague (Laterna Magika, 2002).

2.5 Successful Integration of Multimedia in Global Theatre

Globally, Theatre art is evolving around the world. Social media has had an impact on both stage and screen theatre productions. Pasikowaska-Schnass says that "recent advances in digital technology have influenced arts and culture in many ways" (2). Information and communication technology have given artists instruments to access new modalities of self-expression as well as connect and interact with their audiences." According to Tajtáková, "the evolution of new technologies and media in the knowledge era has had a huge impact on the field of the arts and culture."According to Iyamah, theatre techniques throughout history have produced spectacle, intervention, and visual transformation by utilizing the technology that is now accessible.(3)

Since "new technologies and media have enabled the creation of completely new forms of arts, mainly within digital culture," society in general and audiences in particular are craving for originality and creativity in theatrical productions on a daily basis (Tajtáková 1). One cannot overstate how much digital multimedia has impacted modern performing arts. Since the deus-ex-machina approach of ancient Greek theatre, technology has had a variety of effects on theatrical presentations (Magbagbeola 249–251). According to Kara, "a crane-like device was often used towards the end of a performance to lower an actor playing a god onto the stage in order to solve an apparently intractable problem in a plot-line" (1).

According to studies, several African and non-African theatrical directors have experimented with multimedia techniques. These directors may include but are not limited to the

following: Katie Mitchell, a London theatre director, produced a version of Virginia Woolf's novel *The Waves* in 2006, in which she "combined theatre making with the use of live video, creating a form later called 'live cinema.'" Mitchell also directed Schaubuhne Theatre in Berlin and the Schauspielhaus in Cologne" with the use of a multimedia approach; Ayo Akinwale in the performance of Duro Ladipo's *Oba Koso* (2010), Yemi Atanda in the performance of Akinwumi Isola's *Efunsetan Aniwura* (2014), Segun Adefila in the performance of "Omo Dumping" (2009). Among others, Kayode Ibiowotisi in the *Medaye* (2022) performance by Femi Osofisan. "Technological innovations are being incorporated into theatre by creative directors and playwrights using projectors and other audiovisual devices like visual displays." According to Vincent, Caitlin, Vines, and McCormick's description of a "faux-interactive" performance, multimedia theatre has been around since the 1950s and is still thriving today. Bolanle Austen-Peters' innovative use of multimedia in the production of *Fela and the Kalakuta Queens* holds significant implications for the future of both the postmodern Nigerian theatre and the craft of play directing. She had the idea to use multimedia in her productions, of course; it had not suddenly occurred to her.

For example, during the 2020 coronavirus outbreak, which left both theatregoers and artists under mandatory lockdown and made it appear impossible to stage a play, theatre professionals explored digital devices and technology as a means of addressing the risk of infection. A wider audience could see performances that were streamed live; some were captured on video and subsequently enlarged or projected into the audience using various platforms like YouTube, WhatsApp, Telegram, and emails. Consequently, more so than in any comparably brief era in human history, "the new technologies have significantly changed the field of cultural economics" (Cowen 261). Because of this, theatre performances have expanded from the stage to

the doorsteps of audiences, satisfying the 21st-century audience's desire for fresh concepts and ideas. Consequently, the "widespread usage of the internet, development of new personal devices and social media emergence caused radical changes in the distribution channels of cultural products based on their digitalization and dematerialization" (Tajtáková 1).

2.6 Evaluation of Audience Engagement and Theatrical Experience

Theatre assessment is the process of collecting and evaluating data regarding the results and impacts of theatrical productions, including artistic merit, audience involvement, social impact, and educational value. It can aid in the greater understanding and advancement of the theatre's social function for researchers, investors policymakers, and theatre professionals.

In "Exploring Theatre: An Audience-Centered Approach," Fisher and Fischhoff examine the essential part that the audience plays in theatre productions as well as theatrical experience. According to their definition, audience engagement is the attendees' active participation in the performance, which may involve mental, emotional, or physical responses. The overall impact of the performance on the audience, including their enjoyment, understanding, and sense of connection to the subject matter, is referred to as the theatrical experience, on the other hand. In their work "Audience Engagement and the Role of Emotion in Theatre," Gutshall and Sosnoski offer an alternative viewpoint on audience involvement and the theatrical experience. They stress how important empathy, identification, and catharsis are in giving viewers a meaningful theatrical experience.

In general, evaluating a theatre play's theatrical experience and audience engagement involves examining the rate of the audience's involvement and influence during the performance.

This can be assessed by observing how the audience responds, observing how audiences interact, and analyzing how well the production elicits powerful emotional and intellectual responses.

A range of techniques, such as questionnaires, surveys, and interviews, can be used to measure audience involvement in order to provide feedback on satisfaction, emotional responses, and performance comprehension. Notes on the laughing, gasps, and general reactions of the crowd during the performance. Examine social media comments, reviews, and discussions following a show to determine the audience's fervor and level of participation. Research such as "Show and Tell: The New Book of Broadway Anecdotes" by scholars like Richard Butsch have highlighted how important it is to understand audience participation while assessing a theatrical production. Scholars such as Susan Bennett's book "Theatre Audiences" examine the importance of the audience's lived experience and the transformative power of theatre in reshaping perceptions and memories. Direct public feedback on their experiences can be obtained through interviews, and questionnaires.

2.7 Challenges and Opportunities in Integrating Multimedia in Nigerian Theatre

Global trends in theatre technology reflect an evolution toward using technology to restructure production processes. However, in Nigeria, the designer is currently working in an adverse surroundings due to deteriorating economic conditions and a lack of resources. There are only a few theatres training colleges, and those that do exist lack the basic technical aid essential for a current play to meet the criteria of contemporary performance in the digital age. As a result, Ododo argues in "Design Practice in the Nigeria Theatre" that the main obstacles to design practice in Nigeria are poor training, a lack of modern design tools, with instruments and the

unprofessional attitude of some producers toward stage design, designers in Nigeria confront various challenges due to a lack of basic training facilities. For example, it is difficult to locate a traditional make-up studio in Nigeria. Many of Nigeria's few designers have yet to use the fascinating world of computers to improve their designs simply because they lack computer literacy. (ododo 32-33)

A group of theatre practitioners believe that the digital age's ever-growing and powerful interactive commercial communication culture, as well as its unprecedented ability to capture people's attention, will gradually lead to a diminished value placed on the live theatre experience, eventually leading to the theatre's demise, in which case a valuable segment of what makes us humans will have been lost to machines.

However, it is important to consider the effects of making technology the cornerstone of international standards for theatrical practice. Theatre professionals are in support of technologies that assist in changing the virtual environment for audiences. It is still difficult to make these technologies affordable and accessible to people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Since theatre is the centre of culture and culture is the foundation of all societies, if we don't establish policies that allocate significant resources to guarantee access for all theatre society industries, the technological obstacles will continue and may even cause more serious issues. Now is the perfect opportunity to make sure that emerging and new technology satisfy theatre requirements. Since the characters in the new computer and digital culture are still developing, the system is still flexible enough for us to build a strong legacy for theatre in the future. When examining possibilities for international theatre practice in 1997, Richard Pilbrow noted that "the developments in the world outside the theatre would in turn drive greater

engagement on the stage. Writers, directors, and designers will increasingly learn to use, with expression, these new members of their cast (125).

With these developments, Nigerian theatre is therefore at a crossroads. Integrating these many theatrical forms and styles with modern technology is therefore seen as a challenge given Nigeria's rich cultural heritage and the wide range of theatrical activities that are available. Other factors that contribute to this challenge include the country's declining educational standards, high rates of poverty, the rapid advancement of technology in the West, and the dearth of professional performance theatres where Nigerian designers can develop their craft. With the use of contemporary technology to improve the theatre experience, Nigerian theatre has now gained international recognition, and worldwide theatre advancements have gotten more intricate and collaborative. Theatrical works composed for Nigeria have similarly grown more complex drawing from global trends in playwriting style and techniques.

Nigerian theatres lack the sophistication of the western technology-driven performance, despite the fact that Nigerian theatre currently seems to be produced similarly to that of the rest of the western world. Although technology is viewed as a fantastic tool for the packaging of theatre products, it is not the only tool that can address all of Nigeria's issues with theatre growth. These facts lead this research to propose the following prospects for multimedia integration in Nigerian theatre. To develop and manufacture equipment domestically, Nigerian theatre technicians should work with their colleagues in the physical and applied sciences of engineering. If this is carried out, the cost of acquiring this equipment from outside will be reduced, and the country's foreign exchange will be preserved. The quality of fabricated equipment will improve over time which will place Nigeria in a position to influence global standards in equipment technology.

Programmes in theatre arts in Nigerian universities should be re-structured to align with other relevant science-based departments to offer students' joint programmes that will help bridge the gap between the applied science and theatre technology

This research also recommends the establishment of an Institute of theatre and Entertainment Technology which will be saddled with the responsibility of training theatre technologists and technicians needed to man the growing theatre and entertainment industry. Theatre arts departments in Nigerian universities are too short staffed and ill-equipped presently to be able to meet this very important national need.

CHAPTER THREE

THE INFUSION OF MULTIMEDIA ELEMENT IN LION KING PRODUCTION

3.1 Synopsis of the Lion King Production

3.1.1 Summary

The magnificent production "The Lion King" explores themes of redemption, treachery, fate, and family. The performance takes audiences to the majestic African savanna, where they see the ascent and fall of the young lion prince Simba. The timeless tale of Simba's transition from a carefree youngster to a reluctant monarch appeals to audiences of all ages.

The performance begins with the joyous celebration of Simba's, but his uncle Scar's betrayal and jealousy cast a cloud on the festivities. Following Mufasa's tragic death due to Scar's cruel ambition, Simba feels helpless and responsible. Due of his father's legacy and his own past, Simba is troubled by his father's legacy and finds comfort in Timon and Pumbaa's carefree way of life. He is forced to face his history and accept his actual identity as the legitimate king of the Pride Lands after an unforeseen reunion between Nala and Simba ignites a flame in his spirit. A voyage of self-discovery and personal development, spearheaded by Rafiki's wisdom, leads Simba to face Scar and take back his throne

The epic struggle between Simba and Scar is a breathtaking sight that demonstrates the strength of bravery, dedication, and justice. Simba's victory with Scar not only restores harmony to the Pride Lands, but it also emphasizes the value of respecting one's history and accepting one's fate.

"The Lion King" is a fascinating theatrical experience that captures the spirit of love, loss, and rebirth with stunning visual elements, breathtaking music, and compelling acting. The

show's timeless message of resilience, forgiveness, and the interdependence of all living things continues to inspire and amaze audiences.

3.1.2 Characters

Simba

Simba is an interesting character whose transformation from a carefree kid to a mature and strong leader is important to The Lion King's tale. Initially hesitant and afflicted by sadness over his father's death, Simba eventually comes to accept his destiny as the legitimate King of the Pride Lands. His inner growth and determination are visible as he overcomes his past mistakes and learns to accept leadership duties.

Mufasa

Simba's father, the honourable and sage King of the Pride Lands, is Mufasa.

He represents leadership and direction, particularly in Simba's life.

Mufasa's commitment to the Circle of Life and his devotion for his family make him a stand-in for honesty and leadership.

Scar

Scar is the scheming and cruel uncle of Simba. Driven by jealousy and a desire for power, Scar is responsible for the most cunning and terrible incidents in the narrative, creating the play's main conflict.

Sarafina

Sarabi's friend Sarafina is the mother of Nala. As a nurturing member of the pride, she is a kind and understanding lioness who watches out for her friends and family.

Nala

Nala, Simba's childhood friend and later his queen, plays a crucial role in Simba's growth and journey to reclaim his rightful place as King. Nala's relentlessness and courage inspire Simba to face his past and embrace his destiny.

Timon Pumbaa

Timon and Pumbaa, the adorable meerkat and warthog duo, provide much-needed comic relief throughout the performance. Timon is quick-witted and easy-going, while Pumbaa is lovable, loyal, and cheerful. They offer Simba support and friendship as he faces the challenges of his journey.

Rafiki

The baboon shaman Rafiki mentors Simba spiritually throughout the play. To help Simba come to terms with his identity as King and his own wisdom, Rafiki demonstrates insight and knowledge.

Shenzi , Banzai, AND Ed

The three hyenas: Shenzi, Banzai, and Ed are scar devoted followers. Ed is gullible and easily swayed, Shenzi is intelligent and confident, and Banzai is clever and quick-tempered. They come together to create a strong, unstable coalition that puts the Pride Lands' stability in jeopardy.

Zazu

The story is made funnier and more heartwarming by Zazu, the devoted hornbill advisor who served as a guide to Mufasa and then Simba. The play's emphasis on duty and loyalty is furthered by Zazu's dedication to the Pride Lands' welfare.

3.2 Examination of Multimedia Element In Lion King Production

The Lion King Stage production is known for its jaw-dropping visuals and stunning multimedia elements that bring the play to life in a whole new way. The control of light is one of the most important multimedia components employed in the production; it is essential to establishing the tone and mood of each scene.

In the iconic scene where Simba confronts Scar and faces his fears is enhanced by the use of light control to heighten the drama and suspense in the setting. A. Z. P. Rivas (2015), describe "DMX (Digital Multiplex) light control as a standardized protocol used for controlling and dimming lighting fixtures in live performance settings, such as concerts, theatres, and nightclubs. DMX allows for precise control of multiple lighting fixtures from a central controller, enabling lighting designers to create dynamic and synchronized lighting effects".

The Lion King production creates amazing visual effects that are shown throughout the performance by combining light controls with LCD screens. Audience are taken to the heart of the African savanna by the breathtaking scenery, mythical animals, and otherworldly scenes that are projected onto these screens. Perfect fusion of these images with the live action acts provides an entirely immersive experience for audiences of all ages. The production also makes use of a strong amplifier to ensure that the sound effects and music are clear and heard, enhancing the visual spectacle created by the lighting effects and LCD screens. According to S. W. Harun et al.

(2014), "a power amplifier is a crucial component in the audio signal chain that is responsible for amplifying electrical signals to a level that can drive loudspeakers or any other output devices. The power amplifier takes a low-power signal input and increases its amplitude to the desired level, ensuring the proper functioning of audio systems.

Finally, the floor mixers are essential in combining the several audio inputs from the musicians, actors, and sound effects to provide the audience a pleasing audio experience. D. L. Smith et al. (2006), defines floor mixer "as a is a type of audio mixing console that is designed to be used on the floor rather than on a tabletop or mounted in a rack. Floor mixers are often used in live sound reinforcement settings, such as concerts and events, to mix multiple audio signals from microphones, instruments, and other sources into a cohesive sound output. "The production crew creates a totally immersive auditory experience that enhances the breathtaking visuals on stage by skilfully balancing the many parts of the sound design.

Scene 1: The Circle of Life

Warm shades of red and yellow gradually lit the stage to depict the African savannah coming to life in the opening scene of The Lion King, a breathtaking sunrise effect produced by the HMX light control system. Vibrant pictures of exotic creatures moving and picture of the sun are displayed on the LCD screen, and natural sounds like animal noises and bird tweeting are amplified by the floor mixer.

Scene 2: The Presentation of Simba

A mysterious and enchanting atmosphere was created using the HMX light control system with subtle lighting effects as Rafiki introduces Simba to the creatures of the Pride Lands. An eye-catching spectacle is added to the setting by the LCD screen's images of the animals bowing to

the newborn prince. The power amplifier raises Rafiki's vocals as she sings "He Lives in You," while the floor mixer brings out the sounds of chanting and ceremonial drums.

Scene 3: Simba's Exile

Feeling guilty and humiliated after Mufasa's death, Simba flees the Pride Lands. Deep blue lighting, which symbolized Simba's anguish and despair, were employed to create a gloomy and menacing mood using the HMX light control technology. In dramatic contrast to the colourful pictures from earlier in the presentation, the LCD screen displayed images of the harsh and barren wasteland where Simba finds himself.

The LCD screen was used to display flashbacks of Simba's childhood with Mufasa, highlighting his bond with his father and the connection he has to his past. Also, it features symbolic imagery of Mufasa picture floating among the clouds, which stands for Simba's father's counsel and insight.

The HMX light produced a joyful and triumphant atmosphere in the concluding a scene, where Simba returns to reclaim his rightful role as King of the Pride Lands, lighting symbolizing Simba's victory and redemption. As Simba climbs to the top of Pride Rock, the power amplifier amplifies his triumphant yell, while the floor mixer enhances the sounds of the epic conflict and the roaring of other animals

Together, multimedia elements provide audiences an incredibly wonderful and unforgettable experience. All elements, from the power amplifier and floor mixers to the light and LCD screen controls, is essential to bringing this classic tale to life in a completely new way.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Presentation of Data and Analysis

4.1.1 Interview

The Director for the Staged Play the Lion King

Kosidichukwumma Ezinwa Eric on 17th of April 2024 (3:30 pm- 5:00pm)

Kosi a 300-level student of theatre art department of UNIBEN. He directed the stage play "The Lion King ". Kosi begins by outlining the essential elements and techniques he used to combine digital theatre with traditional theatre. These included fusing digital effects, live video feeds, LCD screens, and pre-recorded videos. The purpose of this is to improve the overall storytelling experience by establishing a smooth connection between the live performances and the digital elements. He was inspired to utilize digital theatre as a storytelling medium to stretch the bounds of conventional theatre and interact with audiences in fresh and creative ways. He claimed that the digital medium made it possible for him to produce engrossing and breathtakingly beautiful experiences that were not possible with just traditional approaches. Describing the unforeseen difficulties that came from fusing digital technology with traditional theatre, such as timing problems, technical glitches, and the need to adjust to the pace of live performances. In order to assure a successful production, he and the technical team learnt to be adaptable and responsive to these obstacles, coming up with innovative solutions on the spot. He remarked Careful preparation and rehearsing were necessary to integrate digital elements into traditional theatre while maintaining its integrity or character. They ensured that the digital

technology complemented the story and did not overshadow the live performances in collaboration with the actors and crew. Maintaining the theatrical experience's authenticity required careful consideration of how to balance the two elements.

According to Kosi, one thing he learnt from incorporating digital theatre into traditional theatre is how crucial it is to test and improve the technology as it's being rehearsed. To ensure a seamless production, it's critical to foresee technical issues and have backup plans ready. When using multimedia content, it is important to make sure that everyone is in agreement, thus it is appropriate for the cast and crew to communicate with each other. The way digital theatre was approached affected the rehearsal process, requiring more planning and technical rehearsals to smoothly include the digital elements.

Speaking about utilizing different digital technologies, he stated that live video feeds, immersive sound design, and interactive projections were the best for improving theatre productions. These elements gave the performances more dimension, texture, and visual appeal, drawing audiences in and drawing them into the play's world.

The production costs for digital theatre might vary based on the project's size and complexity. He stated that he and crew members successfully handled resources by creating a budget, prioritizing critical elements, and seeking sponsorship to offset expenses. Collaboration with digital technology partners also helped to optimize resources and stay within budget.

When it comes to incorporating digital technology into theatre productions, Kosi advises directors interested in using digital technology into their theatre works to begin with simple digital elements and progressively progress to more complicated components. The importance of

having a clear picture of how digital technology will complement the story rather than detract from the live performance. He said, a successful integration also requires working with experienced digital artists and technologists.

THE LION KING



The Circle of Life



Presentation of Simba



Scar and the hyenas



The Death of Musfasa



Timon and pumba



Rafiki and simba



Simba and scar



The return of simba

4.2 Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study is required to refer to the interview with the actors and crew members of the stage play The Lion King

Research Question 1: In comparison to traditional theatre, how did you find the experience of acting using multimedia elements in a theatrical production?

With reference to the interview, Raymond who plays the lead role of Mufasa in the performance, he mentioned that he enjoyed the opportunity to perform with multimedia elements. He said that it gave the performance an entirely new level of creativity and storytelling that traditional theatre doesn't always permit. For both the performers and the audience, the use of technology and multimedia elements contributed to a more dynamic and engaging experience.

Research Question 2: What difficulties did you encounter when performing with multimedia element in theatre production?

Blessed, who portrayed the character of Simba, claims that learning how to effectively incorporate technology into his performance was one of the difficulties he had when acting with multimedia elements in a theatre production. To make sure that the multimedia elements complemented the story line rather than overshadowed the performance, thorough preparation and timing were necessary.

Research Questions 3: In a digital production, how do you approach character development differently than in a traditional stage performance while using multimedia elements?

With reference to the interview, Ramond suggests that when using multimedia element for character development, he considers how these elements might help expose the character's inner thoughts and feelings, resulting in a more complex and immersive performance.

Research Question 4: Can you describe a memorable moment or performance from your experience with multimedia element that really stood out to you in the lion king production?

In an interview, Salome state that one memorable moment from her experience with multimedia elements during the production of "The Lion King" was the opening sequence where the savannah came to life through the screen and visuals. As the actors moved in sync with the projected images of animals and landscapes, it created a truly immersive and magical experience for both the performers and the audience. She also opines that the challenges they faced during this particular moment were ensuring that the timing of the actors' movements matched perfectly with the visuals being projected. It required a lot of coordination and rehearsal to get the synchronization just right. Additionally, technical issues such as a glitch in the sound system could disrupt the flow of the performance.

Research Question 5: As a technical team member how did you find the transition from traditional theatre to digital theatre in the LION KING production?

With the reference to the interview Rotimi states that the transition from traditional theatre to digital theatre in the LION KING production was definitely a learning curve for him as a technical team member. It involved working closely with new technologies such as media coverage, lighting, virtual sets, to create an immersive experience for the audience. According to him it was exciting to see how these digital elements enhanced the storytelling and brought a new dimension to the production.

Research Question 6: What challenges did you face in incorporating multimedia elements into the production?

In an interview, Rotimi opines that one of the main challenges they faced was ensuring that the multimedia elements seamlessly integrated with the live performances on stage and it required careful coordination between the technical team and the performers to ensure that the media coverage, screen, lighting, and sound effects all worked together harmoniously.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Summary

This study examined the University of Benin's stage performance of *The Lion King* in order to give insight on theatre directing and the use of multimedia application in Nigerian theatre. Relevant material was reviewed in chapter two to provide background information for this study and to provide an understanding of the directing at the director's disposal as well as the ways in which multimedia elements might assist a director in staging a production.

The objective of the study was to explore the director's use of multimedia elements in the "*The Lion King*" production in Nigeria. The study also examines the ways in which these multimedia elements impact the director's viewpoint and interpretation of the story. The study evaluates the impact of multimedia element on audience engagement and performance experience.

5.2 Conclusion

The lack of interest from Nigerian audience has resulted in a decline in live theatre in the country. While some have attributed this phenomenon to the emergence of television and video, others have blamed it on the nation's security situation, among other factors. However, a major contributing factor to the current state of live theatre in Nigeria is the traditional play interpretation methods that many Nigerian directors continue to use, as well as their failure to adopt media-friendly play production techniques that are in line with the social realities of the

day. Notably, a growing number of Nigerian directors are embracing multimedia in their shows, which is a positive step for the country's theatre industry.

This study serves as a model for understanding the process of creating multimedia theatre productions. It looks at the multimedia elements that are available to directors and how they might help them achieve their goals while staging their productions. The digital technology serves as a bridge between the theatre and the audience; it is a unique creative form of art that combines traditional theatrical and multimedia elements.

This study examines theatre director and the use of multimedia in Nigerian theatre using *The Lion King* to demonstrate the use of multimedia elements in theatrical productions, specifically how the multimedia elements gave greater visual impact to the story and enhanced the production's aesthetic vocabulary. It consequently proposes that Nigerian directors incorporate multimedia into their productions.

5.3 Recommendations

The growing disinterest of Nigerian audience in theatre shows is one of the main obstacles facing live theatre in the country. Multimedia theatre productions, on the other hand, are designed to appeal to today's tech-savvy audience members. As a result, multimedia performances have the ability to attract back audience who have previously left because they combine traditional theatrical elements with digital technology.

Therefore, directors in Nigeria ought to welcome the integration of multimedia into their play performances. The majority of directors in Nigeria are deterred from experimenting with novel approaches to play performances by a persistent obstacle: a lack of funding. In this regard, it is recommended that the Federal Government of Nigeria be encouraged to offer incentives that

promote theatre productions in Nigeria, with the assistance of relevant organizations such as the Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA), the National Association of Nigerian Theatre Arts Practitioners (NANTAP), and others. It is also suggested that directors have access to these incentives.

Based on the findings, this study recommends the following to relevant parties/policymakers in academia and industry: 1. more research on the necessity for Nigerian theatre directors to reinvent themselves. Theatre scholars in academia and industry practitioners should arrange conferences and workshops in collaboration with the government to train directors on how to employ multimedia in play productions.

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