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THE PERFORMER

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Performing Artists and Total Theatre Training Acquisition in the Nigerian Theatre

By

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Abstract

Performing Arts Department is a unique academic Department in the University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. The uniqueness of the Department lies in the tripartite nature of its main degree programme. Courses in the Department are specially designed to promote and accommodate music, dance and drama, which are piloted by seasoned lecturers. Students and graduates of Performing Arts are also great performers whose unique theatrical performances usually celebrate the total theatre idiom peculiar to the people of Africa. They are also being constantly grounded in the theoretical base of the theatre. Through the deductive method and with particular reference to the Department of the Performing Arts, University of Ilorin, this study examines the practical and theoretical issues involved in total theatre training acquisition. After providing a brief theoretical base to support our illustrations, we also review some unique academic courses, theatrical performances and social programmes of the Department. We conclude the study by emphasising the notion that, the performing artists can only become rounded artists if they acquire and accept the significance of total theatre training acquisition, and that the curriculum of the Department of the Performing Arts can be adopted by other interested theatre related institutions. Some suggestions are also provided as roadmap to this total theatre training acquisition.

Keywords: Total Theatre, Performing Arts, Training, Artist.

Introduction

In any human endeavour, training is the unequivocal pathway to professionalism. It is an important moment of rectitude for future success.

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This is because training, either formal or informal makes a man. Therefore, to acquire training in any field of human endeavour deserves perseverance, endurance, the carrying out of experiments or trials, critical observation, experience and rounded skill acquisition. Though lazy drones may see all these as difficult and unrealisable yet, they are unavoidable in the making of a total man in his chosen career.

In Nigeria today, we have over thirty universities that theatre, performing, dramatic and creative arts courses are being offered. This points to the fact that the theatre is growing and it is a profession that has come to stay in Nigeria. Unfortunately, majority of those who are studying theatre related courses in the Nigerian universities are unwilling theatre artists who found themselves studying the course as a result of their inability to find their ways into the so-called 'lucrative courses' such as Law, Engineering, Accounting, Business Management and so on. Most of these students therefore read and study to get certificates and are thus sacrificing the core of theatrical and practical skills that would have made them better artists.

Though specialisation is highly recognised in the theatre profession, it is, however, unfortunate to hear performing artists (students or graduates) saying that they cannot act, dance, direct plays, sing or even write short plays. This trend has hitherto rubbished and calls to question, the status of the current theatre undergraduates and graduates alike roaming the Nigerian streets. It is even sad to note that higher percentage of undergraduates and graduates cannot compete favourably with performing artists who do not study theatre related courses. Some street and market performing artists are simply better than graduates of theatre arts in Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa.

It is important, however, to state that Performing Arts Department is a unique academic Department in the University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. The uniqueness of the Department lies in the tripartite nature of its main degree programme. Consequently, the intention of the founding fathers of the Department is based on the urgent need to produce seasoned and reputable manpower to augment the existing educated and uneducated, professional and semi-professional theatre and dramatic artists scattered all over the country. Courses in the Department are specially designed to promote and accommodate music, dance and drama, which are piloted by seasoned lecturers. Students and graduates of Performing Arts are also great performers whose unique theatrical performances usually celebrate the total theatre idiom peculiar to the

people of Africa. They are also being constantly grounded in the theoretical base of the theatre. This study, through the deductive method, therefore, examines the practical and theoretical issues involved in total theatre training acquisition with particular reference to Performing Arts Department, University of Ilorin. The Department is seen as model whose curriculum can be adopted by other Creative/Theatre/Dramatic Arts Departments scattered all over the country. After providing a brief theoretical base to support our practical illustrations, we also review some unique academic courses, theatrical performances and social programmes of the Department. We conclude the study by emphasising the notion that, the performing artists can become rounded artists if they acquire and accept the significance of total theatre training acquisition. Some suggestions are also provided as roadmap to this total theatre training acquisition. Performing Artists who follow the roadmap, no doubt, will become professional artists as they ply their trades in the Nigerian dynamic creative industry and elsewhere.

Breaking the Barrier of Operational Concepts and Terms

In this study, certain concepts and terms must be understood to avoid misinterpretation or misrepresentation. Such concepts and terms are; performing, performance, performing arts, performer/performing artist and the total theatre idiom. As simple as they look, they can be misrepresented. Hence, the necessity of breaking them into minimal comprehension cannot be overemphasised.

The first is performing. The act or art of doing ostensibly is performing. To engage in certain physical and or, non-physical action is also tailored towards performing. In the simplest term, performing can be the doing of things. At theatre level, the word performing is more engaging, involving, revolving and eclectic. It is the carrying out of dramatic and or, theatrical activities. In fact, Cameron and Gillespie (1996, p. 7) are of the opinion that "to perform means both to do and to render or enact". The art and act of doing, rendering and enacting, therefore, hang on the inevitable concept of performing.

Closely related to performing is performance. What is being performed is no doubt, the performance itself. However, one important definition of performance is to see "life as performance" (Cameron and Gillespie, 1996, p. 7). Every covert or overt, conscious or unconscious, human or non-human action, freely finds expressions in performance. Yet,

the following definitions capture the local or global essence of performance:

- "In life, the execution of an action (or the action executed) or a behaviour taken in response to a stimulus. In art, the action of representing a character in a play, or more generally, any public presentation" (Cameron and Gillespie, 1996, p. 436).
- "A word used, especially in modern theatre criticism, to describe the whole theatrical event. In environmental theatre, the performance begins as the first spectator enters the performing space and ends when the last spectator leaves" (Barranger, 1995, p. 375).
- "An activity done by an individual or a group in the presence of and for another individual or group" (Schechner, 1988, p. 30).

Certainly, performance is "an essentially contested concept", and "an extremely difficult concept to define". It has also come to the fore that performance is a dictionary of, and conglomeration of known and unknown words. We have such nomenclatures as social performance, cultural performance, therapeutic performance, ethnographic performance, anthropological performance, traditional performance, linguistic performance, ritual performance and political performance (Musa, 2002, pp. 116-117).

Due to its centrality and importance in the theatre, performing arts must also be clarified. It is an art that accommodates and incorporates music, dance and drama. It is defined as "the time arts of music, dance, drama and their attendant delivery systems such as theatre, film, video and opera. Performing arts are the only art forms that must be decoded and delivered to the audience by the artists" (Huberman, Pope and Ludwig, 1993, p. 502). Performing arts can also be extended to mean "those arts that depend on a live performer in the presence of a live audience, for example, theatre, dance, opera, musical concerts" (Cameron and Gillespie, 1996, p. 436). Performing arts also savours the spontaneity of naturalness in a physical theatre and under the watchful eyes of members of audience, its final consumers.

The artist who performs and engages in the art of performance is called the performer or performing artist. Some scholars and playwrights such as Soyinka (1988), Yerima (1998) and Akinwale (2001) among others, have even used the word players to represent performers and or

performing artists. The people that engage in the art of performance are the performers who are also the human resources wing of theatrical performances. Generally, musicians, singers, dancers, drummers, saxophonist, violinists, guitarists, actors, actresses and others are performers or performing artists.

It must also be stated that playwrights, technical directors, costumiers, stage managers, make-up artists, choreographers, music directors and artistic directors who are coordinators of theatrical cum dramatic activities are not performers but are the brain behind performances or the real makers of performances. However, if any of the above personnel of the theatre decides to act or perform on stage in the presence of a free or a paying audience then, such director (music or artistic) is performing. At this level, he or she is a performer in the creative art of performance.

The core of African theatre is the total theatre idiom. The total theatre performance is a theatre of collective rhythm in all its ramifications. Importantly, the African theatre is highly technophobic and even within its ontology of monologue, the total theatre idiom welds and marries many performance aesthetics into one unique, cumulative, entertaining and educative whole.

Beyond the kaleidoscopic momentum of globalisation in theatricalisation or the various Eurocentric trappings in the postcolonial theories, however, the African theatre holds itself permanently to total theatre aesthetics where dance, music and song, puppetry, acrobatic display, masking and masquerading, incantation and invocation, mime and pantomimic dramatisation and other forms of the theatre have become reoccurring decimal of artistry in the poetic justification of African theatrical aesthetics.

In Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Decolonising the Mind* which contains, "The Language of African Theatre"; song, dance and mime to him should be "the real language of African theatre" (wa, Thiong'o, 1981, pp. 34-62). All these performance forms weld themselves holistically into one theatrical form and they are central, dominant and totally inclusive in most African play-texts and performances. It is instructive to note that this preliminary conceptual clarification can be represented through the diagram below which is humbly titled, "The Concept of Performing Arts":

THE CONCEPT OF PERFORMING ARTS

THE PERFORMANCE DESIGNERS OR MAKERS											
Artistic Director	Music Director	Technical Director	Choreographer	Sound Man	Stage Manager	Scene Designer	Thetre Manager	Lighting Designer	Property Manager	Make-up Artists	Costumier (etc)

PERFORMANCE FORMS AND STYLES														
Ritual	Traditional	Cultural	Festival	Social	Political	Ethnographic	Multi-cultural	Inter-cultural	Mono-Cultural	Religious	Linguistic	Therapeutic	Dramatic	Theatrical (etc)

PERFORMING ARTS		
Drama (tragedy, comedy, satire, (tragic-comedy, melodrama, slap-stic etc)		
Dance (dance-drama, dance-theatre etc)		Music (opera, Jazz, musicals etc)

PERFORMERS/PERFORMING ARTISTS/PLAYERS								
Actor	Actress	Dancer	Musician	Singer	Drummer	Saxophonist	Violinist	Guitarist (etc)

A Brief Historical Reflection on Performing Arts Department

Initially, the present Department of the Performing Arts, Faculty of Arts, University of Ilorin was known as the Department of the Performing and Fine Arts. However, "Fine Arts" component has been dropped and we now have Department of the Performing Arts, which was established

in 1981. Even though "Fine Arts" has been dropped from the discipline linguistically, some important "Fine Arts" designs and works are now accommodated under "Technical Theatre" courses. In the formative year of the Department, the Department has:

A student strength of 16 and an academic staff of three.

The pioneer academic staff members were Professor Atta Mensah, Dr. Akanji Nasiru and Mr. Yulisa Amadu Maddy.

Twelve other Direct Entry students later joined the sixteen students the following year (*Prospects and Registration*

Procedure for 2005/2006 Session, 2005, p. 2).

Interestingly, seasoned theatre scholars, music and dance experts such as, Atta Mensah, Late Professor (Mrs.) Zulu Sofola, Professor Akanji Nasiru, Babarinde Hall, Professor Ayo Akinwale, Dr. Bode Omojola, Dr. Segun Oyewo, Sam Amusan, Dr. (now Professor) Sunday Ododo, Felix Akinsipe, Taye Adeola, Ijeoma Akunna and a new group of scholars tagged "the twenty first century jet age scholars" have also joined the Department as academic staff. They are; Dr. AbdulRasheed A. Adeoye (the then Rasheed A. Musa), Dr. Jeleel O. Ojuade, Dr. Solomon Ikibe, Dr. Austin Emielu, Dr. Felix Emoruwa (now lecturing at University of Lagos), Mr. A. G. Adegbite and Mrs. S.O.O. Shuaib. The Department also engages the service of two seasoned theatre scholars in person of Professor Ezekiel O. Kofoworola and Dr. (Mrs.) Ekata Rosemary Isibor who left shortly for Creative Arts Department of the University of Lagos, Nigeria. We also have Mr. Tosho Awogbami who, until his meritorious retirement from the University, assisted in the technical wing of the Department. Ms Ijeoma Akunna, Mr. Sam Amusan and Dr. Bode Omojola have also resigned from the University while Professor S. E. Ododo has relocated to Department of Creative Arts, University of Maiduguri. A founding member of the Department, Professor Akanji Nasiru also retired from the Department in 2013. However, three lecturers, Messers Amali Adakole, Taiwo and Kehinde Olalusi joined the Department in 2011 while three others, Dr. Oludolapo Ojedian, Dr. T. S. Arinde and Mr. Rufai-Ahmed Kazeem joined the Department in 2013.

Since Professor Atta Mensah became the first Head of Department in 1981/82 academic session, the Headship of the Department has always being in rotation with scholars such as Late Professor (Mrs.) Zulu Sofola, Professor Akanji Nasiru, Dr. Bode Omojola, Professor Ayo Akinwale, Dr. Sunday Ododo, Professor E. O. Kofoworola, Dr. AbdulRasheed A.

Adeoye and Dr. S. O. Ikibe who have all contributed and are still contributing in no small ways, to the development of the Department.

Much as we reflect on the intellectual wing of the Department, it is incumbent to also comment on the students of the Department. With a humble start of 28 students, the Department now has over 400 students currently studying as performing artists in training while close to 1,500 students have been produced as graduates into the national economy.

Performing Arts Department, through its founding fathers also has a vision. It is a holistic vision of theatricality where dance, music and drama are being creatively taught and wed, imaginatively into one unique performance, no mid-way approach. In fact, the first Head of the Department of the Performing Arts (Professor Atta Anan Mensah) reflects clearly on the undying vision of the Department:

Here, the traditional disciplines of Music, Dance and Drama are taught in one Department where a student specialise in one discipline not only have to take courses in the two other disciplines within the Department, but also sit with colleagues of other specialisations in these arts on courses designed to integrate all three (Mensah, 1983, p.3).

Another philosophical statement sees the Department as the "new life-lines to bring fresh blossoms and new strengths to artistic manifestations which in the continent of Africa (as in Asia) harness good music and good kinaesthetics crafts to deliver the messages to drama" (Mensah, 1983, p. 3). The two statements above are expressed some thirty-three years ago and are statements of artistic excellence which wavelength makes the Performing Arts Department a baker of artistic excellence and a centre of endless creativity.

The Significance of Total Theatre Training to the Performing Artists

There are numerous reasons why total theatre training is significant to the performing artists. The first reason is that it will turn an artist into an all round artist. Such artist will have the theatrical potentials and ability to sing, dance and act. This is a vibrant way that one can become a master artist, a jack of all trades and a master of all.

African theatre is total theatre based. It is, therefore, artistically rewarding for performers and the performing artists to acquire total theatre training skills. Through the skills of total theatre, they will be useful as key participants in the African theatre enterprise. Also, a performer who has acquired total theatre training will have no problem with employment.

Such performer can always fit into any production. If it is a pure dance drama of dance theatre, he or she is most qualified. If it is opera or pure musicals, he or she fits in because he can sing. If it is drama, he or she is an actor or actress as such, performer with total theatre training will be able to compete and move through the circle of theatrical activities for rewarding and fulfilling career in the arts.

The nature of competition in the performing arts profession has also makes the acquisition of total theatre training inevitable. The fact is that there is competition between the trained, educated and talented artists and the untrained, uneducated and trial by error artists. Competition, which is a key factor in a capitalist economy, has also makes it incumbent on the part of performing arts students or prospective artists to have good training in total theatre. This is because the market of performing arts is not totally exclusive for performing arts graduates. It is a market fully saturated with various shades of characters and the simple theory of competition supports the survival of the fittest. Events in the national and global theatre markets have also made it crucial for theatre students in training to be total theatre compliant. Theatre/Creative/Performing Arts students should always have it behind their minds that they can be called upon anytime for national and international assignments. When students also graduate, a corner in New York City or a theatre hall in Washington may be their next performance venue. The ability to be able to meet up with national and international challenges in theatrical performances and presentations make the essence and the need to acquire total theatre skills inevitable.

There is also a common problem that performing, creative, dramatic and theatre arts students and graduates often worry about. It is the problem of employment. Questions such as "where can I work as a graduate of theatre?", "what can I do after graduation?", "is it true that there is no work for us after graduation?" and others are frequently asked by performing arts students as a result of intellectual poverty, a frenzy of the mind where certificates, instead of skills are being celebrated.

Perhaps, the above and many more questions necessarily made this researcher to write an article titled; "Career Opportunities for the Performing Artists". This article opens up on the loaded and constantly increasing career opportunities available to performing artists. The career opportunities that are available to performing artists are divided into three:

The first is the Performing Arts' paramount fields...
directing, acting, stage management, lighting, choreography,

costumes and make-up business management, instrumentalist, musicologist, musician, critic scene designer, producer and others. We have performing artists working as: Theatre Directors, Actors, Stage Managers, Technical Directors, Choreographers, Dancers... (Musa, 1995, p. 13).

It has also come to the fore through other researchers that:

Performing Artists can work as... Information Officer, Public Relation Officers, Secretaries of Companies and Government Ministries, Lecturers, Research Fellows, Journalists, Editors, Publishers in Publishing Companies, Producers in Radio and Television houses, Cultural Officers in Council of Arts and Cultures, Script Writers; Presenters... Career Officers in Armed Forces and Para-Military Forces, Social Welfare Officers, Advertisement Agents, Bankers and can swing into management area (cited in Musa, 1995, p. 13).

Beyond the above, some graduates of Theatre/Creative/Performing Arts are lawyers, accountants, auditors and many more. They can become all these after further training. In all, these career opportunities look attractive most especially the primary career opportunities in the field of performing arts. It can be summarised, therefore, that the power to make it in the field of performing arts is one's ability as student in training or graduate to acquire the inevitable total theatre training skills.

The Roadmap to Total Theatre Training Acquisition

Majority of successful performances, theatre traditions and performance styles that we have in Nigeria today (be it indigenous, traditional, literary or modern) developed through well articulated rehearsals and plans. Importantly, most of these performances especially in the literary tradition started as theories conceptualised by their creators. So, the first roadmap to total theatre training acquisition is for students and prospective performers in training to learn various theatre and performing arts theories. It is most gratifying, therefore, for a committed student who wants to be an all round artist to take and understand very well, some theoretical based courses with the hope of preparing and making him or her to use those theory related courses as background for his or her performance. In the Department of the Performing Arts, for example, students must develop passionate interest in some of the under-listed theory based courses:

PFA 103:	History of the Performing Arts (Greek to Medieval)
PFA 104:	Traditional African Festival Theatre
PFA 205:	History of the Performing Arts II (Colonial to Modern)
PFA 206:	History of the Performing Arts III (Western World)
PFA 215:	Theory of Music I
PFA 218:	African Music
PFA 235:	Dramatic Literature
PFA 240:	Introduction to Play Directing
PFA 241:	Performing Arts and the Print Media
PFA 304:	Traditional Theatre Forms and Production Practices
PFA 305:	Acoustics and Electronics for the Performing Arts
PFA 307:	Theatre Administration
PFA 308:	Research Methods for the Performing Arts
PFA 314:	History of Music
PFA 315:	Harmony and Counterpoint I
PFA 316:	Harmony and Counterpoint II
PFA 327:	Dance Kinesiology
PFA 330:	Dramatic Theory and Criticism
PFA 335:	Performing Arts and Tourism
PFA 401:	Principles and Philosophy of Aesthetics
PFA 403:	Advanced Theatre Management and Administration
PFA 404:	Contemporary African Drama
PFA 416:	Musicology
PFA 417:	Twentieth Century Music
PFA 418:	Afro-American Music
PFA 419:	Contemporary Nigerian Composers of Art Music
PFA 431:	Performance Theory and Criticism
PFA 434:	Twentieth Century Western Drama
PFA 435:	Black American Drama

Most of the theory related courses above designed for 100 and 200 Level's students are compulsory. At 300 Level, students are expected to specialise in any of the three core areas of Drama, Dance and Music as such, some of the courses above may not be compulsory for them but they are compulsory for specialists. The implication of this is that a student of Music, for example, must take almost all the courses in Music at 300 and 400 Levels respectively. Same goes for a Drama or Dance major. An addendum to this is the fact that there are some theory based courses that

all 300 and 400 Levels students must take irrespective of their areas of specialisation.

Such core theory courses are; PFA 304, PFA 305, PFA 307, PFA 308 and PFA 401. The wisdom behind this major decision is that theories and their understanding prepare an artist for practice and once a student's theoretical background is weak, this will affect the total theatre output of such a student.

Closely related to the above are some courses that combine theory with practice. Through these courses, students will learn some basic principles in class and then come up with performances which often serve as end products of such courses. The following courses nonetheless, fall into the category of Performing Arts theory/practical related courses:

- PFA 101: Introduction to Performing Arts
- PFA 102: Performing Arts Workshop I
- PFA 115: Fundamentals of Music
- PFA 116: Choral Studies I
- PFA 117: Choral Studies II
- PFA 118: Fundamental of Music II
- PFA 125: Rudiments of Dance
- PFA 126: Dance Studies I
- PFA 145: Introduction to Dramatic Arts
- PFA 216: Choral Studies III
- PFA 217: Choral Studies IV
- PFA 225: Basic Choreography
- PFA 234: Dance Studies II
- PFA 236: Speech and Oral Interpretation
- PFA 237: Introduction to Acting Skills and Techniques
- PFA 238: Technical Theatre
- PFA 239: Introduction to Radio and Television
- PFA301: Children's Theatre
- PFA 302: Performing Arts Workshop III
- PFA 303: Performing Arts and the Media
- PFA 313: Music Ensemble Workshop
- PFA 317: Music Directing
- PFA 321: Dance and the Society: The Town-Gown Confluence in Dance Practice I
- PFA 322: Dance and the Society: The Town-Gown Confluence in Dance Practice II
- PFA 323: Dance Workshop

PFA 325:	Advanced Choreography I
PFA 326:	Dance Analysis and Criticism I
PFA 328:	Trends in African Contemporary Dance Practices
PFA 329:	Dance Studies III
PFA 332:	Directing I
PFA 333:	Advanced Directing
PFA 334:	Introduction to Playwriting
PFA 338:	Studies in Scenography
PFA 339:	Advanced Studies in Costumes and Make-up
PFA 411:	Form and Analysis of Music
PFA 413:	Music Composition
PFA 415:	Orchestration
PFA 421:	Dance Analysis and Criticism II
PFA 422:	Advanced Choreography II
PFA 423:	Advanced Dance Workshop
PFA 424:	Twentieth Century Dance
PFA 425:	Dance and the Media
PFA 426:	Professional Dance Practices
PFA 427:	Dance Studies IV
PFA 432:	Advanced Technical Theatre
PFA 433:	Playwright's Workshop
PFA 436:	Theatre Directing for the Screen
PFA 437:	African Directors and Directing Styles
PFA 499:	Special Project

As earlier observed, some of the courses above are also compulsory for specialists at 300 and 400 Levels and are optional for non-specialists in such specialised areas of study such as Music, Dance and Drama.

The last leg of the undergraduate academic courses for Performing Arts students are purely practical courses which expose students to performances. These courses need little supervision from the lecturers. They are:

PFA 208:	Performing Arts Workshop II
PFA 209:	Departmental Production Workshop
PFA 217:	Choral Studies IV
PFA 306:	Departmental Production Workshop II
PFA 317:	Music Directing
PFA 320:	Music Practicum

PFA 324: Intermediate Modern Dance Technique

It must also be noted that lecturers teaching these courses can decide to set questions, conduct oral interviews, review rehearsals and make general comments regarding his or her impressions about the manners (negative or positive) that the students are going about these practical courses. Some performing/theatre/creative/dramatic arts students these days are also undoing themselves academically and professionally through the following unfortunate and misleading ways:

- They minor or choose courses in other Departments because they like the face of the lecturer(s) NOT because of the contents of such courses.
- They choose or register for courses simply because of the pattern of marks they will score, preferring A and B scores from lecturers. Complaining also, although quite unjustifiably, that "some lecturers are stingy with marks". Should academic marks be cheapened? Most lecturers don't think so. Academic marks should be earned.
- There is general apathy towards theory based courses or courses that will make students do frequent assignments or read numerous plays or books. In spite of its uses, the internet has also contributed negatively to the once vibrant reading culture of Nigerian students. Pinging and addiction to timeless use of handset are now affecting reading culture of students.

Students are advised not to consider any of the above inherent unacademic points coloured on the whim of passion and self-indulgence as they run their academic and professional training programmes in the University. Forget how lecturers appear, forget the "stinginess" of a lecturer's mark but be bothered about course contents and as a prospective artist, doing assignments necessarily means the sowing of the seed for intellectual acquisition.

The second roadmap to total theatre skill acquisition is through consistent reading of theatre related books, librettos, play-texts, musical scores and operas. Reading makes an intellectual and assists a performer. Through theatre books on histories, production styles and performance approaches, general yet constant and specific theatre directions will be discovered. For example, there are some books that are quite useful and inevitable in the theatre. They are: Aristototele's *Poetics*, Yemi Ogunbiyi's *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book*, Iyowuse

Hagher's *Theatre and Stage-Craft in Nigeria*, Malomo T.O. and Saint Gbilekaa's SONTA edited book, *Theatre and Politics in Nigeria*, Ossie Enekwe's *Theories of Dance in Nigeria*, Sam Akpabot's *Foundation of Nigeria Traditional Music*, Bode Omojola's *Nigerian Art Music*, Biodun Jeyifo's *The Yoruba Popular Traveling Theatre*, Femi Osofisan's *Insidious Treason* and *Literature and the Pressures of Freedom*, Ebun Clark's *Hubert Ogunde: The Making of the Nigerian Theatre* and others too numerous to mention. Theatre books, dance librettos and operas from Alexander Dean and Lawrence Carra, Hugh Morrison, Francis Hodge, Oscar Brockett, Wole Soyinka, Femi Osofisan, Olu Obafemi, Obi Maduakor, Biodun Jeyifo, Bakare Ojo Rasaki, Chris Ugolo, Ahmed Yerima and Ayo Akinwale, E. O. Kofoworola and Y. Lateef, Abiola Irele, Lanrele Bamidele, Laz Ekwueme, J. Nketia, Steve Abbah, Handel G.F., Debo Akinwumi, Duro Ladipo, Ephraim Amu, Kwabena Nketia, Abel Adeleke, Christopher Ayodele, Ayo Bankole, Akin Euba, Adam Febersima, Okechukwu Ndubuisi, Meki Nzewi, Alphonsus Okosa, and others should also be located and read. Students can find these books and the works of the listed authors from various libraries or through their lecturers. Some articles are also useful and virtually inevitable to performing arts students, they must be read. Articles in *Theatre Quarterly*, *Theatre Research International*, *Literature Today*, *TDR*, *Comparative Drama*, *SONTA Journals*, Departmental journals and Faculty of Arts journals should also be read.

Any published play-text should magnetise a performer in training. Unpublished ones should entice him for he or she must be interested in their thematic preoccupations and styles. However, plays written by Sophocles, Euripides, Aeschylus, Aristophanes, William Shakespeare, Wole Soyinka, Ola Rotimi, Athol Fugard, Femi Osofisan, Iyoruwuese Harry Hagher, Olu Obafemi, E.O. Kofoworola, Akanji Nasiru, Zulu Sofola, Esiaba Irobi, Bakare Ojo Rasaki, Ahmed Yerima, Tunde Fatunde, Segun Oyekunle, Don Pedro Obaseki and others must also be read. Students are advised to read five plays in a week as some of today's professors have experimented with this proposal before. With five-plays-a-week philosophy, students must have read major plays before completing their training.

The performing artists in training should observed life more critically. As such, critical observation of life is the third roadmap to the total theatre acquisition. Drama and theatre are products of life events through man's actions and inactions. As such, artists must look at things

that surround them critically. Students in training and prospective performers alike should be interested in the social events at school, national events, domestic cum family events and in these processes, most of what have been observed can be recalled into performances and creative writings. This is what Constantain Stanislavsky called 'emotional recall' in his theatre manifesto which he dubbed, "The System".

Understudying fellow "senior students", lecturers, seasoned artists and choosing a role model from them is the forth roadmap to the total theatre skill acquisition. Theatre Arts students should not be copycats. However, if experience is the best teacher, then experienced performers should be understudied and a committed student-performer can then reworked and re-modified the performing style or artistic mode of such performer that he or she is understudying to form his or her own developing style.

Involvement in performance makes a performer as practice makes perfection. Therefore, the involvement of students in performances is the fifth and most crucial roadmap to total theatre skill acquisition. Recent events in theatre/drama/creative/performing schools scattered all over Nigerian universities have shown that:

- Most students hate theory based courses yet they are neither here nor there with their practical based courses.
- They specially hate performances.
- They engage in performances simply because of the marks or because such performances in theatre, drama and performing schools are compulsory.
- They cultivate what is now known as "gang of stars" or "we have arrived syndrome". The constant recycling of few students who are performance freak at the expense of other willing students is not good for the professional development of the theatre profession and this can be counter- productive.

While the above are sad developments in theatre schools, it must be stated that the students cum performers in training must:

- Be interested in all academic courses (theory and practical)
- Be involved in performances especially those performances in the total theatre realm.

- Must be disciplined. Gangsterism, mafia syndrome and constant recycling must also be avoided in the theatre profession.

As a student, if you find yourself becoming “a sudden hero” in the theatre, you are just a starter and you must be able to control your sudden stardom. Paradoxically also, if you are a student-performer who loves crowd roles or who hates the stage then, you must try as much as possible to have a change of attitude. Your being in the theatre school is for training which will make you a profound, disciplined, resourceful and hardworking performer.

In the light of the above, certain performances in the performing/theatre arts schools make a performer. Students should therefore, participate actively in them. They are:

- The foundational yet “beginners” induction or “initiation” ceremonies annually meant for new students who must be inducted before qualifying to be called performing, dramatic, creative or theatre students. Induction or ‘initiation’ ceremonies are mostly rigorous and some students often run away from them. Emoruwa (2003, p. 82) has written on “The Relevance and Prospects of the Induction Ceremony to the Performing Arts Programme” to show the importance of induction ceremony. As a returning student, you must participate directly or indirectly in the making of the annual induction or “initiation” ceremonies. You should also encourage new performers who are greenhorns in the theatre instead of discouraging them. Findings through discussion with students have shown that “senior students” often discourage albeit psychologically and poisoned the mind of new students especially towards practical courses or performances.
- Performers in training should also engage in constant departmental and or occasional productions such as commissioned plays or performances, university convocation plays or performances, performances handled by lecturers which are mostly initiated as experimental productions or necessitated as a result of new findings or better, to debunk existing theatre traditions or production styles. For examples: Ayo Akinwale’s directorial style in “Mountains of Wealth”, a Department of the Performing Arts production for the

International Conference on Religions and Science in year 2001 simply infused the traditional traveling theatre style into the modern and literary production styles; E.O. Kofoworola's merging of modern and traditional styles of directing in S.E. Ododo's "To Return From the Void" for the Unilorin's year 2002 convocation production and this researcher's neo-alienation directorial style in *The Smart Game* (A 'Neo-alienation' Script) which is a Department of the Performing Arts Lunch Time Production in 2002 are worthy examples. All these are good total theatre performances. Committed performers in training will undoubtedly learn greatly from the expertise and artistic ingenuity of their lecturers if they did not run away or participate as unwilling performers.

- Students can learn from students. This implies that fellow performers in training should not treat performances mounted by fellow students with disdain. Nigerian Universities Theatre Arts Festivals (NUTAF) annually organised by Theatre Arts Students and usually hosted by a university is also an avenue for good artistic products. NUTAF has produced seasoned performers, playwrights, choreographers, instrumentalists and directors alike. It will thus be artistically rewarding, if students in training can at least attend two NUTAF fiestas before graduating. This researcher has gained tremendously from NUTAF fiestas. We led the University of Uyo Theatre Arts contingents to NUTAF 1997 at ABU, Zaria and in Year 2001, the Performing Arts Department's contingents to the University of Nigeria Nnsuka. Also, performances such as; musicals, operas, short comedies and so on from students must be seen as avenue for total theatre training.
- Holidays are not meant for enjoyment or merry making especially to an artist. Therefore, students in training should get themselves into "outside" the school's productions especially during holidays. This will enable them to be familiar with the demand of professional productions and thus compare the practical experience gained with the rigours and demands of the university theatre academic programme.

African theatre is a living theatre which is embedded in African man's ways of life. This presupposes that the core of the total theatre performances and traditions are scattered all over African traditional communities through numerous festivals, rites, rituals and occasional celebrations. Students in training must watch, observe and if possible, engage in the festival of their local communities.

Determination, personal commitment, artistic curiosity and constant practice are necessary points that prospective performers should strive to uphold while attempting to acquire total theatre training. Total theatre training acquisition does not call for or discourage specialisation in the theatre. It nonetheless calls students in training to be rounded artists as they market artistic products. The Alarinjo traveling theatre, Osun Osogbo festivals, the Ekpe festival theatre, the Bornu puppet show, the Durbar traditional performance and others are total theatre festivals which students in training can learn greatly from. They should ask questions especially on the performance modes and styles of most of the traditional total theatre performances and festivals from the traditional performers in their local communities. Experience gained through such performances can be used by students in their future performances.

One of the greatest problems facing the performing artists is ignorance. This is extended to include the ego of the artist to think that he or she can do everything. This has great negative impact. Ododo (2014, p. 53) sees this habit as "impact of ignorance" on our education. He sums this up:

An uneducated or ignorant person does not have much with which to work. The things he knows are only those things he has personally learned through his own experience. Being the prideful creatures that we often are, the ignorant person believes his way is best – mostly because he has nothing else with which to compare... Since ignorance is a disease, the performing Artists should take theory and practical aspect of his education seriously.

Conclusion

What is the use of a performer that cannot perform the basic theatre of this people? What is the essence of a performance that is disrobed of the needed artistic finesse expected from a performer? The answers can be found in total theatre acquisition. The importance of total

theatre to the African communities and the need for its acquisition is not only academic but must be given utmost attention by prospective performers and students in training. While a music specialist should love music with passion, he or she should also show remarkable interest in the rhythm of dance and the changing pattern of drama. Same goes for a drama student whose love for music and dance movements must lace up his theatrical and dramatic enactments. The drama or music of dance also calls on dance major to take music and drama seriously. Through this rounded education, we will be able to also "revive dead but desirable aspects of Nigerian traditional culture" (Ukala, 2010, p. 54). If willing performers and willing performing, dramatic, creative and theatre arts students follow in details, our recommendations under the sub-heading of "The Roadmap to Total Theatre Training Acquisition" in this article, they will be good performers who will be able to compete nationally and internationally.

As we draw our conclusion, it is important to acknowledge Umukoro's (2010) great work, "The Performing Arts in Academia". This study has also benefited from this insightful and essential work which has enjoined the trainers (lecturers) of the Performing Artists to

serve as a model of intellectual splendor and artistic grandeur to his professional colleagues in the larger society. The freedom to experiment, to break new ground is what places the academic artist at a singular advantage over the full-time perpetually hamstrung by the imperative of economic survival (Umukoro, 2010, p. 140).

Certainly, it is crucial for trainers/lecturers of performing arts to note that as much as theories are important, practical experimentation of new styles should not be ruled out if total theatre expertise is to be acquired by students that we are training.

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