

**THEATRE IN NIGERIA**  
**A CONSIDERATION OF THE SCENOGRAPHIC,**  
**TECHNOLOGICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS**

BY

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## ABSTRACT

'Theatre Arts' is essentially a visual arts discipline in which the elements of architecture, scenography and technology play very significant roles. However, these areas and aspects have suffered neglect, in the past, in the arena of Nigerian scholarship. Consequently, the present study aims at a historico-critical evaluation, analysis and documentation of the development and functions in the contemporary Nigerian theatre, as witnessed especially in and at Ibadan in the past twelve decades in broad terms and since 1948 (the founding year of the University of Ibadan) in particular.

If there was in the past an authentic African (especially Nigerian) theatre, then there ought to have been a corresponding typical and unique African theatre performance space form. Therefore there is a need to rediscover that form. But if the traditional African-particularly Nigerian theatre had had no unique and typical performance stage or space form, other than the village square, market place and the Kings' palaces, then it has to be accepted that the modern (present-day) architectural theatre forms of Africa,

and in particular of Nigeria have been imposed or have evolved from the cross currents of contacts with Western civilization and foreign influences and, therefore, they are basically foreign and of non-African origin.

Consequently, the present search for a new theatre form, architecturally, would yield better results if the merger of the traditional and western modern architecture employing modern technology in equipping them to achieve flexibility, adaptability and timelessness could be pursued.

In order to achieve that, what one has to do now is to critically examine the functionality of the present spaces and modify or refurbish them to suit the demands of the contemporary Nigerian theatre. However, most ideal would be the conception, design and realisation of new structures along the lines of new and long attested aesthetic principles and the results of technological researches arising from age-old experiments, new aspirations, current trends and future speculations.

Since the arts and the sciences have always been the bedrock of human spiritual, psychological and economic development, and since technology has always aided the attainment of socio-political growth, technology, borrowed or developed, invented or transferred, has a great role to play in the development of Nigerian theatre. Hence, the investigation of its impact in the Nigerian theatre is a necessary and perhaps an inevitable task.

The objects of the study are contained in an Introduction covering the purpose, scope, limitation, Overview of Literature, Methodology and Definition of Terms: while the findings in the three respective areas are presented in nine Chapters.

Chapters One to Three contain review of literature, overviews of studies and projects in the three areas of study.

Chapters Four and Five present, in chronological order, the historical development of theatre in Europe, America, Asia and Africa, especially Nigeria.

Chapter Six looks at the genesis of theatre education, scholarship and practice, especially in the western world and recommends a model of training and desirable lines for the future development of theatre in Nigeria.

Chapter Seven considers concepts and aesthetics of theatre arts forms and styles and relates these to the contemporary Nigerian theatrical endeavours, especially in the scenographic spheres.

Chapter Eight treats the analysis, scenographic and technological executions of the production of the selected illustrative plays.

Chapter Nine pursues the search for new physical theatre forms in their various parameters for Nigeria and examines the present state of the physical theatre structures and venues in and at Ibadan.

The thesis sees architecture, scenography and technology as prime levers of the development of theatre arts in Nigeria.

CERTIFICATION BY SUPERVISOR

I hereby certify that this is an original research project carried out by James Olusola Aborisade in the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Ibadan, Nigeria, under my supervision.

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DEDICATION

To the glory of God Almighty the giver of all talents

To my mother who nurtured me and my talents.

To Geoffrey Axworthy who led my talents into the theatre.

To Dr. Winfried Rathke who paved the way for the entry of my talent into the German Theatre.

To my children; Tokunbo, Funmilayo and Abimbola Aborishade, who endured deprivations during the harvesting of my talents into this academic basket.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
ABSTRACT	ii-iv
CERTIFICATION	v
DEDICATION	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	xiv
LIST OF FIGURES	xix
TITLE PAGE	xxiii
<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	1
i. Purpose of Study	3
ii. Scope of Study	5
iii. Limitation of Study	6
(A) Architectural Element	10
(B) Scenographic Element	11
(C) Technological Element	11
iv. Methology	13
v. Definition of Terms	14
vi. An Overview of Literature and Studies on the Areas of Study	17
End Notes on Introduction	19
<u>CHAPTER ONE</u>	21
Review of Literature, Studies and Projects on the Architectural Planning Elements	21
<u>CHAPTER TWO</u>	47
Review of Literature, Studies and Projects on the Scenographic Elements	51
The Scenographer as an Artist	71

<u>CHAPTER THREE</u> -----	87
Review of Literature, Studies and Projects on the Technological Element -----	87
 <u>CHAPTER FOUR</u>	
A Chronological Survey of the Development of Theatre Design: Scenographic, Technological and Architectural- Elements through the Ages from 500 B.C till the present---	111
I. <u>The Theatre of the Antiques - 500 B.C. to 533 A.D</u>	111
i. The Greek Theatre -----	111
ii. The Roman Theatre -----	113
II. The Theatre of Middle Age-Medieval Period -----	115
III. The Theatre of the Renaissance (15th - 17th Cent.) -----	120
IV. The English Elizabethan Theatre 15th - 17th Cent. -----	126
b. The English Theatre of the Restoration Period -----	129
V. The Spanish Theatre -----	130
VI. The French-Classicism and Theatre -----	132
The Basic Principles of Neo-Classicism -----	134
VII. The German Theatre in the 16th - 17th Centuries -----	137
VIII. The Eighteenth Century Theatre -----	139
1. The Italian Theatre -----	139
2. The Eighteenth Century French Theatre -----	141
3. The Restoration Period in France -----	143
4. The Eighteenth Century English Theatre -----	144
5. The Eighteenth Century German Theatre -----	146
IX. The Nineteenth Century Theatre -----	148
1. The English Theatre of the 19th Century -----	149
2. The Nineteenth Century Theatre in Germany -----	151
The Emergence of "Free-Independent" Theatre -----	157



Symbolism .....	159
<b>II. The Oriental Theatre: .....</b>	<b>160</b>
- The Hindu Drama and Indian Theatre .....	160
- The Chinese Drama, Theatre and Staging .....	162
- Japanese Drama, Theatre and Staging .....	164
- The Kabuki Theatre .....	167
- The Influence of the Oriental Theatre: The West .....	168
End Notes on Chapter Four .....	170
<u>CHAPTER FIVE:</u>	
<b>XII. The Twentieth Century Theatre .....</b>	<b>173</b>
- Scenography .....	173
- Theatre Technology and Architecture .....	179
- The Physical Theatre Forms .....	188
- The Proscenium Theatre .....	191
- Developmental Trends .....	195
- The Space-Stage .....	196
- The Arena (Theatre-in-the Round), The Thrust and the Open-Stage Forms .....	201
- The Multi-Purpose or Multi-Form Theatre .....	204
- Performance Venues in and at Ibadan .....	221
- The Arts Theatre, University of Ibadan .....	238
- Trenchard Hall .....	238
- Obisesan Hall .....	242
- The Cultural Centre of Oyo State .....	245
- The Mapo Hall, Ibadan .....	246
- The Youth Palace (Former British Council Hall) .....	250
- The Non-Theatre Forms .....	250
End Notes on Chapter Five .....	255

The Evolution of Theatre Scholarship in the World and Efforts Towards its Improvement in Nigeria	258
The History and Development of Universities	260
An International Commission ... ..	287
The Universities and National Culture ...	295
The Emergence of Theatre-Scenography, Technology and Theatre Architecture in Nigeria: The Historical Background -----	306
- The Early Traditional Theatre Forms: The Ritual Theatre in Nigeria -----	307
- The Late Traditional Theatre forms - The Popular Form -----	310
- The Early Modern Theatre Form: (The Concert, Opera and the Musical Drama of the Victorian 19th Cent. Lagos	312
- The Later contemporary and the most Modern Theatre Form:	327
1. The Hubert Ogunde Theatre -----	327
2. The Ogunmola Theatre -----	329
3. The Duro Ladipo Theatre -----	331
The Literary Theatre from 1950 - up to date ----	333
-- The Development at the University of Ibadan The cradle of Modern Nigerian Theatre: -----	333
--- The Arts Theatre, University of Ibadan / -----	335
-- Geoffrey Axworthy and the development of Theatre in Nigeria -----	336
-- The School of Drama -----	348
- The Wole Soyinka's Age .....	356
--- The J.A. Adedeji's Era .....	357
--- The Dapo Adelugba Spells .....	362
--- The Femi Osofisan's Days .....	363

The Developments in other places, outside Ibadan ..	364
1. Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife .....	364
2. University of Lagos, Akoka-Lagos .....	370
3. Ahmadu Bello Univeristy, A.B.U., Zaria .....	373
4. University of Calabar, Calabar .....	379
5. The New Breed and Scenography .....	380
End Notes on Chapter Six .....	383
<hr/>	
<u>CHAPTER SEVEN:</u>	390
On the Aesthetics of Theatre, Design, Scenography and Technology .....	390
Introduction .....	390
Definition of Theatre as an Art Form .....	390
Aesthetic, Aesthetics and Theatre Arts .....	407
Discussing Theatrical Art Works .....	
The Theatre and its Elements .....	416
The Drama and Theatre Forms .....	417
The Theatrical Staging Styles .....	420
End Notes on Chapter Seven .....	443
<hr/>	
<u>CHAPTER EIGHT:</u>	446
Scenographic and Technological Analysis, Design and Realisation of Illustrative Plays .....	446
Play Analysis .....	446
<hr/>	
1. <u>The Raft</u> by J.P. Clark .....	467
2. <u>Madmen and Specialists</u> by Wole Soyinka .....	467
3. <u>Death and the King's Horseman</u> by Wole Soyinka .....	492
4. <u>Opera Wonyosi</u> by Wole Soyinka .....	583
5. "The Good Ideologist of Naira Republik" by James Oluşola Aborísade .....	526
End Notes on Chapter Eight. ....	552

## CHAPTER NINE

In the Search for a New Physical Form for the Theatre in Nigeria, ... ..	555
The Pre-Colonial Era ... ..	556
The Post-Colonial: The Contemporary - Modern Architecture	561
Folk Architecture for Folk Theatre ... ..	580
The recommended new physical theatre forms for Nigeria	601
I. The Simplified theatre structures ... ..	604
II. The Modular Theatre-Systems ... ..	610
III. The Mobile Theatre-Systems ... ..	614
IV. The Multi-Purpose, Multi-Use Theatre Building	619
The Multi-Use, Multi-Purpose Theatre for Ibadan	624
The Context of our search for a new Theatre for Ibadan	627
The Planning Process and the Consultants ... ..	631
Technical Systems ... ..	638
Stage Equipments ... ..	643
Stage Lighting ... ..	648
Production Facilities ... ..	654
The Utilisation of the Existing Theatre venues	658
Interview of Impresarios and major theatre people	659
The Location of a new Theatre in Ibadan ... ..	660
Estimates: Capital Cost and Guidance ... ..	668
Cost of Operation ... ..	676
Conclusion ... ..	683
End Notes on Chapter Nine ... ..	686
Bibliography ... ..	693
Appendix: Sources of Figures ... ..	736

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LIST OF FIGURES

Fig:

PAGES

0-0	Anthony and Cleopatra: The Modern Use of Projection ... ..	66
1.	Using quantitative analysis to determine the rake of seats/rows	103
2.	Using quantitative analysis to determine the size of lumber ...	105
3.	The Greeks Amphi-theatre ... ..	112
4.	The Dionysus Theatre in Athens - Greece ... ..	112
5.	The Odeon of Herod Atticus in Athens ... ..	114
6.	The Marcellus Theatre in Rome ... ..	114
7.	The Medieval Simultaneous Setting - Front Elevation ... ..	119
8.	The Medieval Simultaneous Setting - Plan ... ..	119
9.	The Teatro Olympico in Vincenza ... ..	123
10.	The various types of "Flats" ... ..	125
11.	The Cabin-Booth-Stage in a market place ... ..	127
12.	The Cabin-Booth-Stage in an animal arena ... ..	127
14.	The Cabin-Booth-Stage in the courtyard of a Guest House ... ..	127
15.	The Performance in a non-conventional theatre hall ... ..	127
	<u>The Oriental Theatre</u>	
16.	An Oriental platform stage ... ..	169
17.	A Japanese 18th Century Kabuki-Theatre ... ..	169
18.	a. Prinzregenten Theatre - Munich ... ..	181
	b. Schiller Theatre ... ..	181
	c. Kuenstler Theatre ... ..	181
	d. Prinzregenter Theatre ... ..	181
19.	Stadt - Municipal - Theatre-Malmo ... ..	184
20.	The Ideal Theatre: Total Theatre by Walter Gropius - various stages ... ..	184
21.	An African Ceremony before a hut .. ...	189

Fig.		Page
22.	A medium-size proscenium stage .....	193
23.	A thrust stage a 'Guthrie style', the Crucible theatre Sheffield .....	202
24.	A Multi-Purpose-multi-use- Hall with retractable stall ...	206
25.	Performance Space at the Zoological Garden, University of of Ibadan .....	224
26.	Performance Space at the Botanical Garden, University of Ibadan .....	224
27.	" " " " Institute of African Studies U.I	227
28.	" " " " Staff School Auditorium, U.I. Ibadan .....	228
29.	" " " " International School, Dinning Hall, U.I. ....	229
30.	The Arts Theatre, University of Ibadan .....	232
31.	" " " " " " Workshop.....	233
32.	The Trenchard Hall, University of Ibadan, .....	240
33.	The Cultural Centre of the Oyo State, Mokola, Ibadan ...	245
34.	The Administrative Council Chambers, The Mapo Hall, Ibadan, Plan .....	249
<u>The Contemporary Nigerian Theatre</u>		
35.	<u>The Palmwine Drinkard</u> designed by Demas Nwoko ... ..	350
36.	The Theatre-on-wheels in Shakespeare's Festival 1964 ...	354
37.	The Oduduwa Hall, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife ...	364
38.	The Sketch, Arts Theatre, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria,	377
39.	The Sketch, of a Theatre Venue in Zaria City	
40.	A diagram showing the interlocking relationship between theatrical artists and their materials ... ..	397
41.	<u>The Royal Jester</u> in his stylised scenic background .....	426
42.	<u>The Royal Jester</u> in another stylised scene .....	426
43.	An example of technically mature Epic theatre setting in Bertolt Brechts - <u>The Chalk Circle</u> .....	432

<u>Fig.</u>		<u>Page.</u>
44.	The Writer's 'vision' of the setting for J.P. Clark's <u>The Raft</u> .....	448
45.	The writer's freehand sketch for J.P. Clark's <u>The Raft</u> ...	448
46.	The Writer's first 'vision' of the setting for Wole Soyinka's <u>Madmen and Specialists</u> .....	482
47.	The Writer's <u>second</u> 'vision' of the setting for Soyinka's <u>Madmen and Specialists</u> .....	488
48.	The Writer's <u>first</u> impression of the Residency for Soyinka's <u>The Death and the King's Horseman</u> .....	495
49.	The Writer's <u>second</u> impression of the Residency for the <u>Death and the King's Horseman</u> .....	495
50.	<u>OPERA WONYOSI</u> ; Part One: Scene One; "Home from Home for the Homeless" .....	517
51.	<u>OPERA WONYOSI</u> ; Part One; Scene Two: A stable: The Polo Club .....	517
52.	<u>OPERA WONYOSI</u> ; Part One; Scene Four; The Court Scene .....	519
53.	<u>OPERA WONYOSI</u> ; Part Two; Scene One: The Playboy Club .....	519
54.	"The Good Ideologist of Naira-Republik" The Prologue; Scene	536
55.	" " " " " Scene One. Supermarket	536
56.	" " " " " Scene Two: Supermarket	538
57.	" " " " " Scene Three Park	539
58.	"The Good Ideologist of Naira Republik" Scene Seven: The Gari Factory .....	539
59.	" " " " " " Scene Ten: In the Revolutionary Court .....	539
60.	" " " " " " The scheme of scene changing .....	578
61.	" " " " " " The Revolving Disc....	578

61.	The National Theatre Lagos, Main Bowl .....	594
62.	Folk-Architecture: Ron House, Northern Nigeria .....	595
63.	Folk-Architecture for Folk-Theatre .....	596
64.	The Studio-mud-Theatre, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria .....	597
65.	The Theatre in Bagameyo Tanzania based on Folk Architecture .....	599
66.	" " " " - Construction in Progress .....	600
67.	" " " " - Equipped with modern stage lighting .....	602
68.	" " " " - Amphitheatre and the Indoor Theatre .....	602
69.	<u>Simplified Theatre I - For Schools - Using Bamboo Podiums</u> .....	606
70.	" " " " " " on Sawhorse .....	606
71.	" " " " " " covered with a tent .....	606
72.	" " " " " " in various arrangements .....	607
73.	" " " " " " for proscenium staging .....	607
74.	" " " " " " for Thrust Staging .....	607
75.	" " " " " " for Schools, based on Vernacular Architecture .....	608
76.	" " " " " " for schools, based on Ver. Arch. Structural Scheme .....	609
77.	" " " " " " " " " " - Section .....	609
78.	<u>The Stage-Mobile System</u> .....	615
79.	" " " " " " - The Stage-Mobile Concept-Elevations .....	616
80.	" " " " " " - The Stage-on-the-Road - System .....	617
81.	" " " " " " - The Stage-on-the-Road - Elevations .....	618
82.	<u>The Theatre Plant - Proscenium Theatre Stage Movements</u> .....	640
83.	" " " " " " - Proscenium stage and its Machinery .....	641
84.	" " " " " " - A Multi-Purpose-Multi-Use-Theatre .....	642
85.	" " " " " " - Layout and Plan of Pulley Systems .....	645
86.	" " " " " " - Curtain Instalation and Upper Machinery .....	647
87.	" " " " " " - Lighting Plan .....	650
88.	" " " " " " - Lighting Instruments .....	651
89.	" " " " " " - A Modern Lighting Control Room .....	653

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## INTRODUCTION

The choice of this topic and subject has been motivated by the awareness that there exists a very big vacuum in these areas of learning in Nigeria. Having the privilege of more than two decades of active involvement in the theatre in various capacities (that is, as a stage hand, apprentice, artisan, student, practitioner, and teacher), especially in the artistic, creative and technical areas of Theatre Design, Planning, Scenography, Technology, one has observed that there is a dearth of indigenous literature, reference materials, sourcebooks, journals or magazines, specifically devoted to the nurture and fostering of knowledge in these highly specialised and indispensable arts and sciences of theatre in Nigeria.

Virtually all of the available texts and literature on these areas are foreign. They are imported from nations whose cultural backgrounds and heritage are alien to ours. They reflect mostly the views of practitioners and scholars in those areas of the world with different circumstances and experiences. They emanate from different socio-economic, political and cultural systems, outlooks and realities. Hence, the difference in the attendant impact on the processes, output and directions of the theatrical endeavours in the different nations.

Even though there have emerged in the past two decades some publications in form of articles, papers, and books on Nigerian theatre, particularly on the history, development and criticism of drama in Nigeria in general, none has given the present topic the necessary

and desired coverage. The available scanty sources of information in these areas have either made mere mention of the subjects or have simply glossed over them. This has been so, perhaps, because of lack of in-depth knowledge of the subjects. For instance, in the pioneer source book of Anthony Graham - White, <sup>(1)</sup> Yemi Ogunbiyi, <sup>(2)</sup> Biqun Jayifo <sup>(3)</sup> and Efun Clark, <sup>(4)</sup> there is no single chapter solely devoted to the treatment of the present areas of study. This fact has been confirmed in many places by the authors themselves in those publications. Even the pioneer, unpublished M.A. dissertations of Lynn Leonard <sup>(5)</sup> and the doctoral theses of Oyin Ogunba, <sup>(6)</sup> Joel Adedeji, <sup>(7)</sup> Femi Osofisan, <sup>(8)</sup> Oyekan Owomoyela <sup>(9)</sup> contain no detailed account of the performance spaces, scenery and techniques used.

Most of these existing works on Nigerian theatre and drama have succeeded only in establishing the historical fact that theatrical practice and drama existed in Nigeria long before the arrival of the white man. Such works include the studies of the works of the pioneer exponents of Nigerian theatre seen from the historical, critical, dramaturgical, analytical and stylistic points of view. However, none of them has given detailed accounts of the effects of those very important visual aspects of the theatre such as the aesthetics of "seating," "seeing" and "hearing" conditions - in the context of "how good" one sees, "how well" one hears, and "how comfortable" one sits at any given point in a venue for public assembly for a theatrical experience. The essence of these elements



of theatrical production embedded in theatrical designs, expressed in architecture and scenography, deploying technology for their translations cannot be over-emphasised.

The effects of those phenomena and their impact on the experience of the audience and participants have to be examined.

We have, for a long time, been hearing the deafening cries, yearnings and aspirations for a truly Nigerian theatre while there also is the awareness that theatre structures are few and that technical and scenic-backgrounds are not always present in the few ones. But how do we then get the truly Nigerian theatre?

i. Purpose of Study

Consequent upon the foregoing, the first set of aims of this present study includes, among others, a historico-critical investigation of the evolution and practice of theatre design in the world and in Nigeria from 500 B.C. to the present time with particular reference to University of Ibadan campus as a microcosmic representative of the Nigerian situation. The main areas of concern within the wide ambience of theatre design shall centre on:

- (a) architectural-planning elements which entail the appraisal of the stage - space, facilities and technical installations;
- (b) the scenographic elements which create the scenic backgrounds and housing for the play. These include the

- setting, set, scenery, properties and lights; and
- (c) the technological element which provides the technical know-how and techniques for the realisation, fabrication and manipulation to achieve the visual effects desired.

Secondly, the factors that have positively or negatively influenced the development of theatre design, its practice and the attendant implications on the standards of theatrical performance, depending on the ability or lack of ability to appreciate design potentialities and contributions, are to be analysed.

Thirdly, the impact of foreign concepts on traditional values is examined in order to assess the functionality of the existing structures.

For a theatre author, director, designer and technician in Nigeria, the process of locating legitimate documentation, either oral, written or photographic, is often a hazardous task. Information from oral sources is usually fragmentary and distorted. Available facts have to be gleaned from the widely scattered records of the early archivists, explorers, travellers, missionaries or colonial officers, particularly when treating historical or period works, and sometimes also contemporary works. Hence, the fourth object of the study is to present a compendium of illustrative and documentational reference materials, an "atlas" of major types of spaces for the performing arts within Ibadan and the University of Ibadan Campus.

And, as the fifth aim, the study posits didactic models which can be used to make the process of execution of scenographic design,

technology and architectural planning and their teaching in Nigerian institutions rewarding.

ii. Scope of Study

In order to achieve the set objectives, it is important that the scope of the study should include:

- (a) the examination of the present situation of theatre design as a development from the early and past periods;
- (b) the examination and condensation of the propounded theories on the "aesthetics" of design of and in such places for public assembly and entertainment;
- (c) assessing the existing projects to determine whether or not they are executed in conformity with the view-points of "reality", "utopia", and/or an "unrealised dream";
- (d) an examination of whether or not the division of the building into the performance area (stage-area), the audience-area (auditorium) and foyer area, or the creation of a house or space with technical devices evenly distributed in the space, for the special movement of lighting and acoustics, should be more suitable for the Nigerian theatrical concepts and manifestation;
- (e) an examination of the contribution of the Nigerian architects, planners and designers, to the process of the creation of adequate housing and environment for the theatrical and dramatic experience;

- (f) a survey and analysis of the technical installations in the venues as these affect the overall standard of performance, resulting from the creative limitations they pose for the scenographer, to freely interpret and express his ingenuity, in his service to the director's vision of the playwright's ideas.

The results of the experience with the five illustrative productions recorded in this study go a long way to buttress the above points. All of the productions are full-length, large-cast and contemporary, with some having historical backgrounds and connotations.

The study comprises eleven chapters.

### iii. Limitation of Study

Theatre arts education in Nigeria in general has been receiving greater attention since independence in 1960, beginning with the premier University of Nigeria, the University of Ibadan, established in 1948 and the first School of Drama, now Department of Theatre Arts, University of Ibadan, established in 1962. There are, today, about thirty Universities in Nigeria. Many of these institutions are nurturing some kind of theatrical exercises either frequently or

sporadically as academic and pastime activities, as amateurs, semi-professionals and professionals of varying grades.

The importance of Ibadan city and the University of Ibadan Arts Theatre and other performance venues spread all over the campus in the process of the evolution of the Nigerian contemporary theatre cannot be over-stated or over-emphasized.

The majority of the present day Nigerian theatre scholars, practitioners, artists and promoters had, at one time or the other, had their first, direct or indirect, contact with theatre through the educational theatres such as the Arts Theatre, University of Ibadan, the former British Council Theatre, now Youth Palace, and many other venues found in Ibadan city. The considered decision of the writer is then to focus attention on the University of Ibadan campus and the city of Ibadan since the impetus which has spread all over the country started from here and, moreover, because Ibadan serves as a fertile ground on which the cross-sectional representatives of the most popular architectural physical theatre structures and forms are available.

Another reason for the focus on the city of Ibadan and on the University of Ibadan campus is that various theatrical experiments of lasting impression, consequences and implications have been carried out there under the guise of academic 'exercises' where relative artistic and academic freedom still reigns. And above all, Ibadan is, by general consensus, a cultural capital of Nigeria, in addition

to her unparalleled roles in the political, economic, social and religious aspects of Nigerian life. All this has unequivocally qualified her as a mini-Nigeria by her own standard.

The venues to be examined include:

- (1) Staff School Assembly Hall;
- (2) The International School Auditorium;
- (3) The Institute of African Studies Courtyard;
- (4) The Trenchard Hall;
- (5) The Arts Theatre;
- (6) The Youth Palace - Dugbe (former British Council Theatre);
- (7) Obisesan Hall - Dugbe;
- (8) Mapo Hall, Mapo.

The following productions should serve the illustrative purposes:

- (1) The Raft by J.P. Clark, directed by Iyoo Rov-Ikpah.
- (2) Madmen and Specialists by Wole Soyinka, directed by M.A. Adesanya.
- (3) Death and the King's horseman by Wole Soyinka, directed by Bayo Odunle.
- (4) Opera Wonyosi by Wole Soyinka, directed by Dapo Adelugba.
- (5) "The Good Ideology for Naira Republik" written and directed by James Olusola Aborishade.

The thrust of this study is to make the case that the search for a true Nigerian theatre can only become fully rewarding if the important areas of scenography, architecture and technology are well taken care of first. The prime levers of the development are with them. For, unlike in the other arts of the theatre, only a few Nigerians have, so far, received thorough professional training in the areas of Theatre Design - Architecture, Technology and Scenography. As a result, the

Nigerian playwrights and directors who know that scenic backgrounds are necessary for their works are not trained in tapping the wealth of scenography and therefore cannot demand high quality, or want to exploit scenographic possibilities enough to enhance the quality of their productions. It is the really trained scenographers and technicians that can supply the missing ingredients in the dramaturgical menu of the playwright and directors in order to present palatable theatres that can effectively perform their (social) functions. But, when Nigerians are not offered the proper professional training in the areas of scenography and theatre technology, they cannot be expected to make the necessary contributions in the process of play production. Hence, if the cry for a truly Nigerian theatre has to be heard, then the educational system in the training institutions has to change to produce those experts to breathe life into the visual aspects of theatrical works. It is only then that Nigerian theatrical endeavours would really develop, grow and mature. One good thing is the recognition, by the leading theatre artists of Nigeria, the playwrights, actors and directors, of the absence and lack of theatre structures in the country. Another thing is to train Nigerians who can be capable of building and erecting even simple structures that can be built anywhere in the country and to have capable hands who would design scenery for them. It is when the playwriting, directing and scenographic aspects are all inviting that live theatre would be more patronised.

The emphasis in the respective areas of study will include:

A. Architectural Elements:

- (1) the assessment of whether or not the motive for man's desire to assemble in a performance-place "somewhere", at a given time - "sometime", is generally satisfied in the existing structures in Ibadan and at the University of Ibadan campus through the analysis of the various performance spaces and their technical facilities to determine the effects of the phenomena of "sitting", "seeing" and "hearing" on the audience, participants, design team and the production at large.
- (2) the assessment of the audience, actors and performance relationships in the various seating arrangements; in the "open", "closed" and "multi-form" spaces and on the various stage forms; arena (in the round or centre), thrust, proscenium, the modular, the room- and the space-theatres.
- (3) assessment of the effects of the above on the different theatrical genres of tragedy, tragicomedy, satire, melodrama and farce and on the diverse forms of productions, that is, music-opera, operetta, musical comedy; drama and dance.
- (4) assessment of current trends and of the views of scholars and practitioners to enable us make a possible and imaginative formulation of the prospects of a unique form for the Nigerian theatre.



- (5) Presentation of recommendations for the improvement of the existing structures in order to meet the ever-increasing demands for flexibility, functionality and adaptability for different approaches and experiments.
- (6) Demonstration of the fact that theatre buildings, structures and spaces to be designed in future, should involve the expertise of playwrights, directors, scenographers, architects, technicians, engineers, consultants, technical directors of the indigenous theatre and a host of other theatre workers in order to correct the errors of the past.

B. Scenographic Elements: Set, Scenery, Properties and Light.

- (1) Presenting parameters for the creation of scenic backgrounds to meet the "original artist's" (playwright's) and the "interpreter-artist's" (director's) visions of the play; to serve as workable guides or as a modus operandi.
- (2) The essence of "simple" or "complex" decor in the peculiar technically and financially restrictive Nigerian theatre situations is to be examined.

C. Technological Elements: Planning, Fabrication and Use of Scenery, Scenic-Technical Devices, Mounting of production, Design and Execution of the Lighting.

- (1) Demonstration of the contribution of technology to the process of play production as a vital instrument in aiding the multi-dimensional realisation of the scenographer's vision in the

invocation of fantasy and spectacles which stimulate and enliven the mind, now more than ever before. This needs to be developed in the Nigerian theatre. We live in the jet age of the computer which is already in use in all departments of theatre, entertainment industries and in man's domestic spheres world-wide.

- (2) Concluding, the study presents a model of training for the various cadres of workers in these multi-faceted and interdisciplinary creative, artistic and technical areas.

Judith Hoch Smith who conducted a study on Yoruba theatre in Ibadan recognised this grave vacuum in the training in the Nigerian Universities and rightly cites Van den Berghe who has said:

....the University has and is creating the new members of the ruling mandarin, who are westernized in accordance with the essentially Oxbridge University of Ibadan structure. The University has not adapted itself to the real needs of Nigeria and through its training of the elite helps to further adapt the country itself to the type of social system called modern.

Van den Berghe's observation is valid in our case in that the graduates of theatre programmes, without being really properly trained in the skills of theatre, go out to be "elites" to lord it over the underprivileged. Therefore, the unsavoury situation must be checked. Hence, the goal in all is the solution of the scenographic problems of scenery, light and properties, as they aid the enhancement of a successful production, in spite of all the inhibitions imposed by artistic, archival, research material, physical, financial, manpower,

and technical constraints peculiar to the Nigerian circumstances.

The pivot on which the solution to the problems hinges is the consciousness of the essence of the décor in a production which is expressed in "the marriage of form and content," revealed in the four functions of scenography in a play:

- (i) contributing towards the placing of the action;
- (ii) establishing the dominant mood;
- (iii) reinforcing the theme; and
- (iv) staging the story.

The sources of inspiration for such imaginative, artistic and technical creations include architectural "footprints" evidenced in the wall and cave paintings, archaeological finds, reports from early archivists, explorers, historians, social anthropologists, artists, designers, architects, builders, engineers, technicians, craftsmen and consultants of all shades.

Tapping from the available resources and reservoir of knowledge, the unique adaptation and authentic creations of the scenic backgrounds for the illustrative plays mentioned above were accomplished.

The results of the experience with the illustrative productions and venues recorded in this study go a long way to buttress the above points.

#### iv. : Methodology

In theatre arts, as in most of the arts disciplines, a uniform approach does not exist for the scholarly analysis of artistic and creative processes which combine aesthetic modes and technical

operations. Most of the findings are empirical results generated from relatively personal intuitions, experience and practices. Consequently, for the present study, a combination of both analytical and empirical approaches has been considered appropriate. Therefore, the technique of a three-step process of investigation, observation and comment has been adopted.

The tools for the study are principally those of scholarly research, with the information gleaned from selected primary and secondary sources and from interviews with many people (artists, craftsmen, authors, directors, technicians, clients and architects, where possible), actively involved in the process of play production, pictorial evidences are provided via photography, sketches, drawings and descriptive materials. The sum total of all are harmonised by personal experience over the years, using the illustrative plays analysed. Of course, several tours of the structures and facilities and the watching of as many productions as possible in the venues were the mandatory prerequisites.

#### v. Definition of Terms

For the sake of clarity, some of the words and terms used in this study need definition, in terms of their content and context, as they are usually given many interpretations and meanings, both literally and theatrically. Such terms include:

### Theatre:

The word and term "theatre" has been derived from the Greek term "theatron" to which many interpretations have been ascribed. For instance, in the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, theatre has been defined as:

- (i) a building or arena for the performance of a play, for dramatic spectacle;
- (ii) hall or room with seats in rows, rising one behind another for lectures, scientific demonstrations, etc;
- (iii) dramatic literature or arts; and
- (iv) the writing and acting of plays, especially when connected with one author, country, period, etc.

John Gassner<sup>(10)</sup> in his Producing the Play defines theatre as:

a composite art whose various elements, the actor, the setting, the costume and so on - must serve together, not separately"... and that "theatre" is simply the art of acting out something and that it does not even need a special building and stage, for it can take place in a threshing circle, in a street or any piece of ground...

Gassner's interpretation shows that "theatre" can not be seen as an "entirety," standing on its own, but with its component parts functioning together to keep its body going.

Professor Walther Unruh,<sup>(11)</sup> the legendary German theatre consultant, engineer and technician, in Atlantis buch des Theaters (The Atlantic Book of the Theatre) demonstrates that

theatron means seat rows rising like steps, surrounding the arena 'Orchestra' in ring form to 2/3 of its circumference .

To Unruh, "theatron", theatre, not only means the play, the performance, but also the venue, stage, the building and the performing group.

Siegfried Melchinger<sup>(12)</sup> is another German authority on theatre who sees "theatre," "arena" and "stadion" as:

places removed from the working process of daily life, in which the ephemeral superfluities happen, in which human beings (people) are seen and/or heard by people for entertainment's sake.

Richard Southern<sup>(13)</sup> in The Seven Ages of the Theatre defines theatre as:

"the doing - an act;" and "drama" as "the thing done."

He claims that theatre is:

an evolutionary organism that developed in phases - at different times and at different places of the world, happening concurrently and/or simultaneously, or parallelly.

Professor Joel Adedeji<sup>(14)</sup>, trying to clear the air on the inter-changeability of the terms, pointed out that:

confusion often arises as a result of synonymity ascribed to the two words by those who know not where "drama" begins and ends in the "theatre" or where the "theatre" takes over from where the drama leaves off.

Other sources such as Encyclopedia Americana<sup>(15)</sup>, Encyclopedia Britannica<sup>(16)</sup>, McGraw-Hill's Encyclopedia of Science and Technology<sup>(17)</sup> and the Oxford Companion to the Theatre<sup>(18)</sup> among others, defines:

theatre as a building and structure that serves as 'arena' - place and venue for the theatrical performance of religious, cultural, political, social, festive and ceremonial events with dance, mime, fight, contest, and show contents for the entertainment of the audience, as the presented group, by the performing group as the presenters.

The writer, in upholding the view-points expressed so far, sees theatre as a building and structure for the assembly of people for the communication and sharing of experience between the performers and the spectators. He looks at the architectural limitations that such structures impose on the technical realisation of the scenographic concepts, created as vehicles to aid the transport of the cross-currents of experience between the two groups involved in the process.

In the broadest contemporary sense, the word 'theatre' can also be interpreted to include the stage, cinema, radio, television, video, carnivals, night-club, circus and magic performances.

Hence, theatre, as a means of expression, is infinite in its resources. And so, theatrical planning, technology and scenography could be viewed in the same content and context.

When reference is being made to the performing group, it is not unusual to simply leave out the word "group" and just stop at "theatre" as in the example of Obafemi Awolowo University Theatre Group which could be simplified to read "Awovarsity Theatre" or in Ogunde Theatre Company that later reads "Ogunde Theatre" and, similarly, in Baba Sala Alawada Theatre Group that becomes "Baba Sala Theatre."

vi. An Overview of Literature and Studies on the Areas of Study

The springboard to the work is an overview of literature on the subject areas. There are some local volumes on

End notes on introduction

Theatre and Drama in Africa in general and a few on Nigeria in particular. However, on the specific areas of Scenography, Theatre Design, Architectural Planning and Technology, there is an acute paucity of locally conducted researches and publications. Hence, we have to depend much on foreign materials which we have adapted to our local environments and needs. The following chapter presents a capsule review of the consulted literature <sup>and</sup> studies and projects in the three distinctive sub-fields.

1. [Name], "The Yoruba people: a study of indigenous festival", [Journal], [Volume], [Page], [Year].
2. [Name], "The Yoruba Theatre: A study of Yoruba Theatrical Art from its Earliest Beginnings to the Present Time", [Thesis], [University], [Year].
3. [Name], "The Origins of Drama in West Africa: A Study of the Development of Drama from the Traditional Forms to the Modern Theatre in English and Yoruba", [Thesis], [University], [Year].
4. [Name], "Folklore and the rise of theatre among the Yoruba", Ph. D. thesis, IDIA.
5. [Name], Producing the Play (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston Inc. Revised Edition, 1957).
6. [Name], "Theatrical and Bühnenarchitektur in Das Atlantische des Theaters (Zürich: Atlantis Verlag AG, 1965), p.101.
7. [Name], Das Atlantische des Theaters (Zürich, Atlantis Verlag AG, 1965), p.19.
8. [Name], The Seven Arts of the Theatre (London, [Publisher], [Year]), pp.31 - 34.



End Notes on Introduction

1. Anthony Graham - White, The Drama of Black Africa (London - New York: Samuel French Inc., 1981).
2. Yemi Ogunbiyi, Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book (Lagos: Nigeria Magazine, 1981).
3. Biq̄dun Jeyifo, The Yoruba Travelling Theatre of Nigeria (Lagos: Nigeria Magazine, 1981).
4. Ebun Clark, "Hubert Ogunde: The Rise of Contemporary Professional Theatre in Nigeria," Unpublished M.Ph. dissertation, published as Hubert Ogunde: The Making of the Nigerian Theatre (Oxford University Press, 1979).
5. Lynn Leonard, "The Growth of Entertainment of non-African origin in Lagos," Unpublished M.A. dissertation (University of Ibadan, 1967).
6. Oyin Ogunba, "Ritual drama of the Ijebu people; a study of indigenous festival," Ph.D. thesis, University of Ibadan, 1967.
7. Joel Adedeji, "The Alarinjo Theatre: A study of Yoruba Theatrical Art from its Earliest Beginnings to the Present Time," Unpublished doctoral thesis (University of Ibadan, 1969).
8. Babafemi Adeyemi Osofisan, "The Origins of Drama in West Africa: A Study of the Development of Drama from the Traditional Forms to the Modern Theatre in English and French." Unpublished doctoral thesis (University of Ibadan, 1973).
9. Oyekan Owomoyela, "Folklore and the rise of theatre among the Yoruba," Ph.D. thesis, UCLA.
10. John Gassner, Producing the Play (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston Inc. Revised Edition), 1953, p.1.
11. Walther Unruh, "Theaterbau and Buehnentechnik" in Das Atlantisbuch des Theaters (Zuerich Atlantis Verlag AG, 1966), p.101.
12. Siegfried Melchinger, Das Atlantisbuch des Theaters (Zuerich, Atlantis Verlag AG, 1966), p.14.
13. Richard Southern, The Seven Ages of the Theatre (London, Faber and Faber, 1979), pp.31 - 34.

## CHAPTER ONE

14. Adedeji, op.cit., p.87.
15. Encyclopedia Americana, 1985 ed.
16. The New Encyclopedia Britannica, 1987 ed.
17. Encyclopedia of Science and Technology, McGraw Hill, 1988 ed.
18. Phyllis Hartnoll, Oxford Companion to the Theatre (London & N.Y., Thames and Hudson, 1967, An Encyclopedia of World Theatre).

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## CHAPTER ONE

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE, STUDIES AND PROJECTS ON THEATRE DESIGN: ARCHITECTURAL PLANNING ELEMENT

#### INTRODUCTION

... No people in political servitude can be reasonably expected to attain to artistic excellence and such efforts as they make will very often be of the nature of protest, at least in the field of literature ... (1)

Drayton's assertion holds not only for literature but for all areas of academic endeavour. Nigerian Independence of 1960 has brought indigenous intellectual scholastic liberation. However, theatre arts studies belong to certain areas that still suffer neglect and disregard in Nigeria on account of prejudices against them. The theatre arts, <sup>an</sup> age-old discipline, was not being seen as a worthy career for serious minds, not to talk of it as an academic discipline worthy of in-depth scholarship or proper training in line with other disciplines in the scientific, philosophical and humanistic faculties.

However, after a protracted process of self-acclaim, it was granted its overdue recognition and was finally admitted as an academic field into the Faculty of Arts but with the immediate consequences that the first efforts of the pioneer scholars on the Nigerian Theatre and Drama were to rewrite the existing history to show that African, and particularly Nigerian, theatre and drama was buoyant prior to the contact with the 'whiteman' and foreign

influences. Thence, the first scholarly works focussed on the areas of history, dramatic literature and criticism and on the subject of the contemporary Nigerian theatre in the English language. They have defined what constitute traditional, modern-traditional, literary and popular forms of the theatre. The works of Wole Soyinka, Ola Rotimi and J.P. Clark and, more recently, of Femi Osofisan, Bode Sowande and Bode Oshanyin of the younger breed top the list while the works of the late Hubert Ogunde, Kola Ogunmola, Duro Ladipo and Moses Olaya - Baba Sala Alawada - excell in the popular tradition sector.

In this regard, the works of Bakary Traore: The Black African Theatre and its Social Functions,<sup>(2)</sup> Anthony Graham-White: Drama of Black Africa,<sup>(3)</sup> Michael Etherton: The Development of African Drama,<sup>(4)</sup> Martin Banham: African Theatre Today,<sup>(5)</sup> Yemi Ogunbiyi: Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: a Critical Source Book,<sup>(6)</sup> .... the studies on The Yoruba Popular Travelling Theatres of Nigeria by Dr. Biḍun Jeyifo,<sup>(7)</sup> and Hubert Ogunde: The Making of Nigerian Theatre by Professor Eḅun Clark,<sup>(8)</sup> among others, have been very useful. The unpublished theses by Professor Joel Adedeji on the "Alarinjo Theatre,"<sup>(9)</sup> Lynn Leonard's "The Growth of Entertainment of Non-African Origin in Lagos,"<sup>(10)</sup> and "The Yoruba Theatre at Ibadan" by Judith Hoch Smith<sup>(11)</sup> are of immense informational value.

On the Nigerian University theatre situation, the unpublished doctoral thesis by Dr. T. O. Malomo on "The Resident Theatre Companies in the Nigerian Universities" (University of Ibadan)<sup>(12)</sup>

and on Costume Design, Dr. (Mrs.) Dany Lyndersay's "Costuming Nigerian Historical Plays: a Search for Paradigms among the Kanuri, Hausa and Fulani" (University of Ibadan)<sup>(13)</sup> and "Costume Design for Contemporary Nigerian Theatre" by Esohe Veronica Omoregie (University of Ibadan)<sup>(14)</sup> have been informative, while others, too, have given valuable information on the historical backgrounds only. Bewildering as it is, only scattered and sporadic mentioning-in-passing of the specific subject areas of theatre design - architectural planning, scenography and technology - have been made by virtually all the existing works. They have failed to treat the entire spectrum of stagecraft - especially scenery, set, décor, lights, properties and effects - as an organic entity.

Going through the selected works one by one, we look first at Bakary Traore's Le Théâtre <sup>Africain</sup> Nègre et ses fonctions sociales published in 1959 by Presence Africaine, Paris, translated by Dapo Adelugba and published by Ibadan University Press in 1972 as The Black African Theatre and Its Social Functions.<sup>(15)</sup> The book is made up of author's and translator's prefaces, an introduction, seven chapters, an epilogue and a bibliography, of which Chapter Three on "Aesthetic Problems" is most relevant to our study, for Traore claims there that:

in Black Africa, the process of dramatic development begins in religion and ends in aesthetics.<sup>(16)</sup>

The translator's contributions, in addition to the author's, include the claims that:

(a) The work of L'Ecole William Ponty and Fodeba's Théâtre -

African, the nucleus of Traore's study, evinces remarkable similarity with the theatre efforts of the Ibadan University Dramatic Society in the late fifties to the early sixties and of the later School of Drama days.

- (b) that the freshness and vitality creative Francophone Africans bring to the French language, which Traore illustrates, have parallels in English-speaking Africa. Some proverbs and extracts cited remind one in particular of Nigeria's up-and-coming playwrights, Ola Rotimi and Wale Ogunyemi.

Going by the two observations we have a basis for our generalisation, especially in the architectural aspect, which we are now going to look at more closely.

#### On the architectural element of the Black African-Nigerian Theatre

All of the authorities consulted on the development of the Black-African and Nigerian Theatre have agreed that specially designed theatre structures did not exist. And, as Traore claims:

The African Theatre has no special building; entertainment is—at least in traditional Africa—free and the actors are not paid at all. In Black Africa the place preferred for this type of entertainment is the village-square ... In fact, the village square, the centre of attraction, is the spot where the news of all the country-side around is recounted. Generally situated in the centre of the village, its sole décor being some trees at the base of which are a few ritual canaries, this place inspires confidence and peace ... The square symbolizes the village and the entire country. This no doubt explains why Africans have never felt the need to construct a building for dramatic performances. The idea of a building is foreign and was brought over by the colonizers.

With colonization, an economy based on money rather than exchange naturally brought about the need for a building. For, as we have said, the traditional theatre is free. (17)

Architecturally, the performances can be said to be "free" for they are given in the open air, even if mainly during a particular period of the year when there is no need for a special building and representative scenery. But when the performances have to hold anytime, irrespective of season, time of the day, and when the content of the performance is derived or created from sources distant, unfamiliar and not immediately known to the audience, it becomes increasingly important that scenic devices be created and invented to aid the transportation of the message, experience and vision of the 'creator' - the playwright - to the doorsteps of the audience's minds, especially when the theatre moved in-doors. Then, the daylight has to be simulated with the artificial, at first not very controllable, light sources in order to highlight the mood of the performance. And on scenery, Traoré asserts:

Moreover, there is no scenery at all in Negro-African Theatre, only the starry night and the semi-darkness lending mysterious charm, or the few trees or huts around the village square. In Europe, the scenery, imposing and enchanting as it is, is part of the aesthetic plan: in the Negro-African theatre aesthetics and communication are indissolubly linked. (18)

Another reason for the traditional African theatre not needing a special building and scenery can easily be found in:

It is a question of fluid production in order to make the largest number of people to participate so as to "produce pictures and ideas, popular in content and in realization, from which an entire people could draw a

"lesson and derive its spiritual food" .. to (use Copeau's words.(19)

In the black African setting, the "stage" is found in every village-square which features, generally, similar natural landscape and environment having trees, huts, clay pots, shrubs, animals and fowls running freely around and providing the scenic background for the play. Hence, there is no need for a make belief in scenery for traditional theatre for the "scenery has been present in every village. The performances are best suited to it, for they emanate from the life of the people, and thus can easily accommodate the spectators and the performers. In addition, "African Theatre is real life drama as it is lived by the participants" and the traditional shrine/grove is a theatre of a kind during the festival period and even when individuals seek supplication of the gods at the shrine," - opines Professor Aradeon during a personal interview granted this writer. The shrine and the grove provides the natural setting and the scenery.

Apart from the technical problems involved in the construction of scenery, which can cost much, there are those of transportation and of personnel for setting up and striking the sets in every other village. Noteworthy is the fact that the same people that set up have to perform. That would be too tasking and exhausting. But in contrast to scenery, the group can carry the rather light costumes and property stocks which, apart from the aesthetic reasons, are sacred and cultical accessories peculiar to each actor-dancer and which cannot be found in every village. Consequently, the traditional theatre might be said to be "free" in a scenographic sense also. Different, however, is the situation with the in-door theatre and with the rise of professionalism in Nigeria, when the free entertainment ceased. While the



traditional group depended on the free donations of the people, the professional group leader, in order to keep his group together and to maintain a regular itinerary, had to be relatively sure of meeting some of the most pressing financial obligations. And, as these are not always easily met, such a group leader might devise means of keeping the ball rolling by marrying <sup>some of</sup> the female members of the group while the male ones are members of his family who would always stay and endure the hard times.

However, in recent years when theatre is fast gaining recognition as a worthwhile profession with regular income, both male and female are being freed from the bondage of marriage as their livelihood is getting more secure.

The developments in traditional theatre, subjected to influences foreign to it, propelled it to become the modern traditional Black-African theatres of L'Ecole William Ponty, of the late Hubert Ogunde and of the University College, Ibadan Dramatic Society types, of which Traoré asserts:

... an erudite theatre is taking the place of the popular theatre ... As for décor, the need for a new scenic art, hitherto unknown, but for a few exceptions, in Africa, is evident. (20)

Realising the importance of the visual elements, theatre structures, and technology for the future development of African theatre, Traoré admits that

Technical training remains important. The number of buildings should first of all be increased so that the performances can be adaptable to new conditions. (21)

In the final analysis, if anything at all, Bakary Traoré's book, "an opening gambit," has served its purpose of introduction to the historical development of Black African theatre.

Yemi Ogunbiyi's book, Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book, (22) is our next treasure to be examined. Ogunbiyi's anthology is divided into seven parts. The essays contained therein were partly solicited, partly reproduced from Nigeria Magazine from its inception in the 1930s, while some of them were derived from other sources. Part One of the book carries the introduction - Ogunbiyi's "Critical Profile of Nigerian Theatre and Drama", J.P. Clark's seminal article on "Aspects of Nigerian Drama" occupies Part Two; while Part Three treats "Traditional Theatre - the Dramatic Rituals and festivals and the popular forms". Part Four is on "the Modern Theatre Traditions and the Yoruba Travelling Theatre groups", while "the Literary Theatre Tradition" is treated in Part Five. "The Theatre Management, Organization and Production aspects" are treated in Part Six, while Part Seven contains, as an appendix, "play texts."

The first reference to the stage is on the traditional theatre form and it reconfirms that no special theatre structure or stage was used. Ogunbiyi, amplifying, states:

... the setting for these performances is generally an undefined area, usually the village square (23)

In that same vein, Professor J.P. Clark asserts that:

As against this is the minimum use of sets and props outside the ritual paraphernalia, a fact that is well known for giving imagination full play. (24)

Similarly, Professor J.A. Adedeji's Ph.D. thesis on "The Alarinjo Theatre," an excerpt of which is contained in Part Three of Ogunbiyi's anthology, insists that:

... the performances were enacted in any of the following places, depending on who commanded the performances:

Court performance - in the palace quadrangle or Inner-court-yard or the piazza in the front of the palace.

Alagba's performance - at the Ode in front of the gabled frontage of his compound.

Stage: No raised platform was used. A circle is always formed by the spectators as they assembled round the space (arena) to watch the show". (25)

In this anthology, Ogunbiyi presented a capsule history of the Nigerian theatre, and the viewpoints of the major scholars on the issues on the contemporary Nigerian theatre, such as were expressed by Wole Soyinka, Olu Akomolafe, Femi Euba and Demas Nwoko in their various essays on the search for a true African theatre. And, Ogunbiyi advocates that:

... this is the first attempt ever to publish a collection of scholarly essays on Nigerian Drama and Theatre ... It is hoped that it will open the way for new lines of investigation by artists, critics, and scholars alike. (26)

Biodun Jeyifo's The Yoruba Popular Travelling Theatres of Nigeria is the next book that lays claim to "systematic and sustained personal research into the history, present activities and scope of this theatre tradition to which more than a hundred groups belong in the Western States of Nigeria. Jeyifo affirms that:

these theatre troupes are itinerant in cultural context and that from their history they have existed without permanent theatre structures and resident companies. These troupes also distinguish themselves in their established

circuits of touring and parallel itineraries spread wide across the geographical boundaries of Nigeria into some West African countries. (28)

The origin of these itinerant troupes, the touring far and wide characterises them as "in every-where" but "in no-where-at-home" - for they are physically homeless, but a socially rooted organisational movement. They have to adapt their performance techniques and styles to extremely varied physical conditions to which they are always subjected in the already fixed permanent theatre structures. These structures range from the regular proscenium theatres of the Universities and the assembly halls of the secondary schools to the make-shift platform of the town halls and hotel rooms. That challenge is a test of the flexibility of the concepts and techniques of presentation of the troupes.

The book's contribution to our study is in the area of staging, reminiscent of the Alarinjo Theatres in certain ways.

Martin Banham in his African Theatre Today (29) has devoted at least two whole pages to the subject of theatre and theatre architecture in Africa. He opines:

theatre is being used in Africa as a means of education, celebration, protest and discovery, and ... it is being more positive, more functional and more assertive than its counterparts in Europe and America; and the vigour of African theatre is not confined within buildings, but is free and flexible.

Specifically, on the physical structure, Banham insists that:

African theatre has evolved freely without a predetermined or particularly conceived architectural concept.....  
 and that ..... the most important point to make is that African theatre has developed without major restrictions

placed upon it by physical limitations or time barriers, such length of much European and American theatre. (30)

And on the contemporary theatre architecture, Banham asserts:

much of contemporary theatre architecture of Africa has, however, suffered badly from the preconceptions of European architects as to what a theatre ought to look like ... they tend to be designed from an audience point of view and to be a mixture of nostalgia and nonsense ... (30)

So much of African theatre is fluid, free-ranging in form, and it is not subjected to physical limitations or sight-lines that determine a particular angle of vision and projection. The barrier between audience and actors assumed in much European theatre architecture may be alien to the needs of much African theatre.

Other publications on African architecture include:

- Rene Gerdi's Indigenous African Architecture,<sup>(31)</sup> Adeolu Omotosho's "Trends in African Architecture-Pre-history",<sup>(32)</sup> Bob Bennet's "Development of Nigerian Architecture-Pre-history to Colonial Rule: an Overview,"<sup>(33)</sup> and "the early Post-Independence Era."<sup>(34)</sup> Professor David Aradeon's serials on Nigerian Architecture,<sup>(35)</sup> Susan Aradeon's "History of Nigerian Architecture: the Last One Hundred Years,"<sup>(36)</sup> Shim Adeshina's "An Architect's Voice";<sup>(37)</sup> and Demas Nwoko's "Aesthetics of African Arts and Culture,"<sup>(38)</sup> "Architecture and Environmental Design;"<sup>(39)</sup> Zaccheus Sunday Ali's "African Vernacular Architecture and Cultural Identity,"<sup>(40)</sup> Sylvester O. Eyong's "Folk-Architecture: A Challenge to Contemporary Urban Architecture,"<sup>(41)</sup> But none of them has treated theatre

architecture. However, they have succeeded in recognizing and recommending folk-architecture. They have also given valuable hints on African values which architects and planners of new theatre projects should be familiar with. Among these are the factors of living which embrace the totality of life, otherwise described as culture, influenced by the various determinants, elements and stimuli such as climate, protection, status symbol, society ideals, general communal life of Nigerians, the use of space and furniture, in a culture that, unfortunately, is being gradually swept into oblivion by the potent influence of Western-oriented architecture and technology.

The relevance of those works to our study would be felt when thinking of how to increase the number of theatres, especially new structures, for Nigeria, for which the cheapness, durability and functional qualities of the traditional architecture and building technology are of particular advantage. Hence, a fuller appraisal of these becomes pertinent at the point deemed appropriate in Chapter Ten.

In the areas of modern Theatre Design-Architectural Planning, Scenography and Technology, we have to depend on foreign texts and materials for there have been few locally conducted researches on these areas so far. Hence, Elden Elder's Will It Make a Theatre? (42) Theatre Planning edited by Roderic Hamm, (43) Hannelore Schubert's The Modern Theatre, (44) Werner Ruhnau's Versammlungsstaetten, (45) Theatre Design by George Izenour, (46) two unpublished doctoral

dissertations: "Contemporary Theatre Architecture" (Ned Alan Bowman, Stanford University) (47) and "Architect and Theatre: Ralph Rapson" (Marijo Crimont Toner, University of Minnesota) (48) have been consulted in detail. Also several specific completed projects undertaken by Professors Horst Birr (49) and Adolf Zotzmann, (50) Bureau Rudolf Biste, (51) Werning Theatertechnik, (52) Deutsche Theaterbau, (53) Theatre Projects Ltd. of London (54) and "Planungsgruppe" of Switzerland (55) have been studied, as they provide useful hints. In addition to these are a host of articles by scholars, practitioners and professionals published in the many international journals, such as the Theatre Design and Technology of the United States Institute of Theatre Technology, (56) Sightline of the Association of the British Theatre Technicians (57), Buehnen technische Rundschau of the German Technical Theatre Association (58), Podium of the Institute for Cultural Buildings, East Germany (59) and Proscenium of the Swiss Technical Theatre Association (60). All of the Associations are members of the Organisation of the International Scenographers, Theatre Architects and Theatre Technicians (OISTAT), (61) and they have provided additional invaluable information. The selected articles include "To See or To Hear : The Orientation of Outdoor Theatres" by George H. Quinby, (62) "Theatre As Something Else: A History of Apologies" by Donald C. Mullin, (63) "Real Theatres Please" by Donald C. Mullin, (64) William F. Powers' "Practical Problems of Accomplishing Theatre Designs," (65) D. F. Lebenold's "The

Theatre Design Process," ( 66) "Consulting in the Theatre" - Moderator: David W. Weiss, ( 67) "Theatre Space: A Brief Report on the 8th World Congress of the International Federation of Theatre Research, by Tom Watson (68). All have appeared in TD & T (69) and treated the phenomenon of vision (sight), audio (hearing) and proper space relationship (seating) of the audience to the performers, the prime concern of theatre architecture and planning. Hence, George H. Quinby's "To See or to Hear" ( 70) shall pertinently be the first "port of call" .

Quinby's article centres on the consideration of wind directions while being in the Greek theatres. The relevance of Quinby's work to our study is in the consideration of planning of open - air installations and mobile theatres. Quinby opines that:

Such a study returns to first principles in the theatre affecting the architect, the audience, the designer and the director. How are we best to see and hear?

With adequate data, it might be possible to state with assurance that the appeal to the ear took precedence over that to the eye in the earlier days of the drama. (71)

The article, "Theatre As Something Else : A History of Apologies" (72) by Professor Donald C. Mullin, aims at planning a "Real theatre space". Here Mullin endeavours to prove that theatre was, is, and perhaps would be a continuous product of "A History of Apologies" as some theatre people, on the one side, see the theatre as an agonizingly frustrating bit of frivolity, without form or permanence and therefore without merit, a view which has permeated the Western cultured mind. The opposite view, on the other side,



sees the theatre as a fascinating kaleidoscope of brilliantly shifting impressions. The two divergent views result from people's (critics and apologists inclusive) inability to accept theatre as it truly is for these have always forced on theatre loaned attires, thus subjecting it to a forced reflection of some kind of form and meaning in spite of the French Academy's "rules" which made the theatre "classic" and respectable, while the "Method-ists" made theatre "honest" and thus justifiable. And so the list of apologia of the various schools are implicating enough to have cost the art its existence. The theatre building itself, the only thing that lasts after the show has closed, is the most concrete and substantial apology, for it is, more often than not, deprived of evolving its own necessary form and shape. Rather, it is forced to assume the once current ideas and vogue about what is "reality" or "truth" or "respectability" and "worthiness for preservation" imposed on it. Mullin also identified seven principal flights and their origins that have been taken from theatrical reality as :

1. Theatre As Archeology, (vain glory and Culture consciousness)

For instance, the Terentian theatres of the fifteenth century, continuing through the Senecan and Greek imitations of the sixteenth century, were the beginnings of the classical mould casts. Examples include Palladio's Olimpico, Scamozzi's Sabbionetta and Aleotti's Farnese. They still stand, though not deliberately preserved, but rather abandoned as theatres for historical resurrection. Parallel

to these existed the Court Theatre, Market-place, and Town-Square Performance-spaces.

But, because we never learn from history, or from object Lessons, reconstructions of classic theatres have been built continuously ever since. Mullin, lamenting, emphasizes:

More recently, academicians, eager to revive Greek forms (believing that Greek forms are dead - their first mistake), have included Greek Theatres as part of their campus contribution to dramatic art ... (73)

... classical form continues to make theatre into something cultural snobs recognize as real and worthwhile. Even Tyrone Guthrie did not choose to resurrect the Globe for his Shakespeare, but thought it wiser to adapt the Graeco - Roman ground plan, the ultimate incongruity, "an apologia ad absurdum!" (74)

And in the hands of the classic Revivalists, Shinkel and his ilk, towards its archeological resurrection, theatre becomes a temple. "Megalomaniac versions of this were the designs of such men as Ledoux, Boulee, Rubo and Ferarrese, whose theatres were, presumbaly, monuments to arts, but were in reality tombs instead." (75)

## (2) Theatre as Rational Science (order out of chaos)

With a rather naive belief in sympathetic magic in which form creates meaning, theatre rationalists of the Age of Reason, firm in the belief that there was a formula for everything, tried to find a formula for theatre. (76)

The Roman master, Vitruvius, in the Renaissance stated that geometric figures were the bases of Greek and Roman theatre design. And so, efforts of the latter theoreticians, seeking to reduce the entire business of architecture to a symbology based upon geometry and mathematics, aiming at acoustical excellence and proper spatial

relationships, created theatres inscribed within ellipses, triangles and combinations of all these, which reduce all seating and acting areas to a multiplicity of various geometrical shapes such as trapezoidal, octagonal and rectangular modules. Thus, either form or formulae, is expected to make theatrical experiences meaningful. (77)

(3) Theatre as Classroom (improving each idle hour)

This is the era of "mass theatre" when theatres were designed specifically to indoctrinate the proletariat with middle-class values through elevating lectures and sinless symposia, for cultural enrichment and through the establishment of public museums, international expositions and sentimental art. (78)

(4) Theatre as Machine (hypnotic legerdemain)

Consequent upon the two world wars, the world learnt the lesson that machines could provide almost anything and that with it the vogue for Realism can be expanded far beyond the small core of dramas originally written in that style. The Germans led the path constructing new and reconstructing old theatres into models of efficiency and stage flexibility operated with complex hydraulic systems (79). Wild pursuits of mechanical perfection, featuring revolving stages for multiple merry-go-rounds, complex elevators for ballets, fantastic tracker - wire controlled dimmer boards and astounding spread of canvas or plaster cycloramas were devised for perfectly mounted, staggering realistic productions. For the theatre projects of the late '20's envisioned were mechanical stages in rings

(completely surrounding the audience), upon which a cinematic progression of scenes could be shown, *ad infinitum*, until audiences were stupefied. Mullin emphasised that:

Surely, theatre in the space - age may finally be justifiable if suitably embellished with great organ - like console of buttons, the operation of which must necessarily be left to qualified engineers. Think how delightful it would be to sit in the best seats and watch things go around and up and down, or even be twirled about one's self; it would be more interesting and certainly more impressive than watching a mere play. (80)

#### (5) Theatre as Sculpture (External Form Covers Internal Vacuity)

Architecture, like Painting and Music, is an art not easy to define and therefore causes much controversy about itself. Building, erroneously, is being looked at a distance as sculpture but not related in the scale to those occupying it. Hence, the theatre building has been seen as a sculptural architecture. Yet theatre, or any architecture as a sculpture, assumes that the architect is a good sculptor to make it come off. This has seldom been the case, so that instances of effective sculptural architecture are very few.

Mullin asserts:

Internal shapes are determined constrictively by external form. Most modern architects regard as quaint the contours of the Ecole des beaux Arts, in which all the arts were jumbled together with a great deal of form but without much meaning. (81)

#### (6) Theatre as a Rational, Mechanized Sculptured Classroom

Contemporary architectural practice considers structures in terms of organized space. Within the limitations of site and budget, the building is first conceived to be an interrelation of work and movement areas arranged in the most practical, pleasing and inexpensive manner. (82).

One of the grave sins of the architects is the consideration of "architecture as geometry" through which they pursue the confining of an audience within a geometric shape, as long as the shape pleases the architects. But what the clients, poorly prepared, get from the architects unfamiliar with theatrical needs is combined parody of a theatre.

The combination of client, consultant and architect, and those with the money or those empowered to disburse the money determine what kind of theatre the "Client" gets. Performing artists are usually not invited, and even the Technician has just recently been able to insinuate himself into these councils, but he is no more competent than the rest beyond his specific capabilities. (83)

#### (7) Theatre as Nothing at all

Mullin uses the drawing of an actor caught in the beam of a spot light, silhouetted in a void - no audience, no theatre, just an actor alone to illustrate, ideographically, the theatrical nothingness, a symbol of the lonely position of the interpretative artist, ever dependent upon himself, but responsible to all. "Include the audience member in that same limbo and he is lost in a tunnel of horrors - not watching a play." By implication, the Western cultural extension of self-determination has greatly influenced us to become so sensitive, individually, to the point that we hardly can be any more part of the group; hence, the so-called "Alienation".

In theatre architecture, contemporary philosophical trends have been infiltrating. There are already realised projects given to the

fragmentation of the audience and as well as the isolation of the actor, or simultaneous scenes playing in a cacophony of mutually cancelling theatricals, using geometrical modules for small groups of the audience to be aesthetically isolated from other small groups. The audience may couple the word "theatre" with "magic" and even expect the elusive quality, as part of the theatrical experience, like those they expect from the boxing ring or circus, the "feel" and "flavour". However, "playwrights write for actors, not for theatres, and there are no plays written for the arena, the thrust stage, or any other type." (84). Therefore, the guideposts for any specific type of theatre building, since drama does not demand for any, then could only be: The past? Caprice? Novelty?

Whereas novelty in theatre design seeks further to impose from without that which should be present within, hence the question is still: "What is a theatre and how does one go about building one?" This is a subject on which only a few of the many published writings concern themselves, especially the aesthetic and psychological needs of the actor and the audience. And as Mullin avows:

Philosophers of theatre architecture abound, true, but much of their metaphysical speculation confuses more than it helps. The Theatre may be fire, and God may have His Heaven in the loft after all, but this does not help much in designing a theatre (85)

Of special relevance to the present study are Mullin's questions and answers which contribute to the nucleus of Chapter Ten. These include:

1. What is the most flexible form possible?
2. What should be the relationship between the Actor and the Audience?
3. How do we preserve Theatricality?
4. How do we achieve the Sense of Occasion?
5. What is "Intimacy" and How is it to be Achieved?
6. How do we accommodate scenic as well as non-scenic plays?

Team-work, especially between the consultant and the architect, and their obligations to work out operational problems as well as discussing them with the probable user or operator, are a crucial point that Powers also considered. In any event, the architect is the captain of the team whose executive province is the area of technical detail of co-ordination in overall construction matters. He alone is responsible for the evaluation of the completed building. Powers also draws attention to the problems of seating arrangements, sightlines, lighting, audience comfort, safety, acoustics, aesthetic and functional problems, circulation and competitive pricing as very vital points for consideration. In conclusion, Powers stresses:

I feel the theatre designer must be adamant in his recommendations to the architect, that the physical layout of the theatre building must first provide for controlled circulation and secondly, present a pleasing aesthetic appearance. There is a great tendency for the architect in general to try to establish appearance before utility and he may well fall into this trap unless the theatre consultant makes a strong point of operational needs for controlled circulation. (86)

To Powers, the theatres of James Hull Miller seem curiously child-like and fragile, almost oriental in the sense of structure and organisation of space, yet they are based upon the most important considerations in any theatre planning - audience and actor. While not new in concept, the designs present to the less affluent client an alternative to the slavish copy of what is in New York. Invariably, designing of theatrical space entails some inherent problems, particularly when the aim is to arrive at more or less an ideal solution. To this end almost all of the recognised authorities have emphasized the multi-purpose form looked at more closely in Chapter Nine of this study.

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## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE, STUDIES AND PROJECTS ON THE SCENOGRAPHIC ELEMENTS

There is virtually no large-scale, indigenous scholarly study done in the areas of scenography and technical production in Nigeria yet. Consequently, there is a paucity of reference materials, literature and lucid documentation on the local endeavours in these areas.

However, the general consensus of all who have written on the traditional African, and especially Nigerian, theatre and drama is that theatre architecture, zealous scenography and technical theatre practice were not known, save for costumes, props and masks that were already in use since the pre-colonial period. The sun, moon and the stars provided the illumination for the theatrical manifestations of the era.

The Modern Traditional Theatre era (1830 - 1920), influenced by the slave trade and church missionaries, ushered in the European and foreign types of performances, spaces and staging techniques. The missions' school rooms and church premises were first used. With the growth in the population of the elite nationalist groups, the age-old desire for a public cultural centre was somehow fulfilled by the erection of the Academy which opened in 1866 and which was followed later by others such as the Glover Hall, etc. Detailed historical accounts of this period have been given by M.J.C. Echeruo (1), Lynn Leonard (2) and J.A. Adedeji (3) in their respective studies. Of particular interest is Echeruo's account for here we come across one Mr. Lawson, an expatriate colonial engineer who was also a stage - designer, that specially constructed a gallery for the 140 persons of a choir. (4)

With the emergence of Ogunde in 1944, the era of the travelling

theatre tradition began. Ogunde performed in schools, halls, hotels and churches, using imitated techniques and lighting devices. All scholars of this tradition are agreed on Ogunde's pioneer efforts to free the theatre from the confines of the church and to have introduced indigenous musical instruments, songs and dances into his performances. In fact, there are great manifestations of Ogunde's use of scenery, modern stage lighting and effects. The Daily Service of May 1946 confirms:

... Dance formations, lighting and stage setting are concrete proofs that the African is no more behind as many people think (5).

Professor Egun Clark's study, "Ogunde Theatre: The rise of contemporary professional Theatre in Nigeria 1946 -72", vindicates Ogunde's importation of technical equipment, lights, etc. when he went to Britain on July 3, 1947<sup>(6)</sup>. The same Daily Service carried on January 10, 1950, another comment on a repeat performance of Ogunde's 'Black Forest' premiered in 1945.

... In music, sceneries, lighting, costume, presentation and make up, "Black Forest" is a credit to the composer - playwright, Mr. Ogunde, who is now generally accepted as the saviour of the native music and Drama in Nigeria.<sup>(7)</sup>

Professor (Chief) Ulli Beier recounts his first encounter and experience of Ogunde's performance succinctly:

...It was a charming performance. The backdrop representing the Garden of Eden was executed in a school boy manner, but, nevertheless, very attractive (8)

That the other practitioners such as the late Kola Ogunmola, Duro Ladipo and the living Moses Olaiya (Baba Sala) 'Alawada' drew much of their inspiration from Ogunde in all areas of stage-craft, is on record, Professor David Aradeon, during personal discussions, opined that Ogunde, and the travelling theatre tradition must have borrowed, conceptually, from the plan of the church, the frame and the background for performances, especially the informal and the unstructured. He stressed that the splintering churches, especially those structured around the one-man-band, the prophet, an intensely active performer in the context of the church, thrived on the symbolic setting and that Wole Soyinka "Trials of Brother Jero" was inspired at this lev

On the literary theatre tradition in English, deeply rooted in the University of Ibadan in the early 1960s, which buoyantly flourished under the influence of the expatriates, IBADAN, a journal published by the University College Ibadan, (9) carried critiques of theatrical presentations staged at the Arts Theatre and Trenchard Hall respectively from 1957 onwards. We shall look into them in greater details in Chapter Eight. During that period Demas Nwoko, who initially trained as a fine artist and sculptor in the former Nigerian College of Arts and Science, now Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and who was later sponsored for a Scenic Design training in Paris in anticipation of the take-off of the School of Drama, University of Ibadan, came to the lime-light of Theatre Arts. Perhaps Nwoko's most acclaimed and major scenic design achievement was his designs for the production of Amos Tutuola's The Palm Wine Drinkard featuring Kola Ogunmola Travelling Theatre in a joint production venture with the School of Drama in 1962/63. Nwoko resigned from the University of Ibadan and became the Director and Studio-Master of his New Culture Studios for which an amphi-theatre has since been under construction, with himself as the planner, architect, engineer and consultant. One would have expected of him dedicated writings on the areas, at least in his New Culture, a purported review of contemporary African Arts, (10) published by his New Culture Publications in which his "Aesthetics of African Art and Culture" and "Architecture and Environmental Designs" dominated the eleven issues of the first volume until its demise in 1979. However, Nwoko has failed to treat the areas of the present study with the scholastic attitude befitting his

calibre as a universal genius. Nevertheless, some of his formulated theories and philosophical promulgations on art in general are, by implication, basic to theatre designs as well.

Agbo Folarin, a highly sensitive painter and sculptor, is another known practising Nigerian scenographer. In fact, as opposed to Demas Ilwoko who seems to have withdrawn from active scenic design, Agbo Folarin has been actively practising and teaching within the Fine Arts Department at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile - Ife. Folarin, assessing the situation of scenography in Nigeria, states:

I would like to begin by saying that this article is not intended to be a scholarly or historical study of modern Nigerian scenography - which is after all almost non-existent (11)

He continues:

Scenography is not just the ability to put rostra and flats on a stage, but the art of stage architect, the scenery, lighting and costume designer brought together (12)

Agbo Folarin identifies three kinds of theatre productions in Nigeria today:- the popular, especially the 'Opera'; the realistic often the unscripted, television domestic episodes; and the production of the dramatic plays. Folarin cites the famous French scenographer, Jean Cocteau, who once averred:

For, like a dwelling place, a stage setting moulds those who haunt it. (haunts those who haunt it) and if there is no interplay between the setting and the actors, the scenery becomes a lifeless perspective paralysing their action (13).

But for the generality of the Nigerian productions, Folarin opines that the dwelling place, the setting, are mostly "paralysing" the actors or, at best, providing little or no assistance to either. (14)



The present writer, upholding Folarin's views, strives to demonstrate the functions and efficacy of a "dwelling place" for the play. The illustrative plays discussed in Chapter Eight of this study seek to buttress these points. The art and craft of scenography need to be properly taught and the responsibilities are those of the training bodies, that is, Departments of Theatre Arts in the Nigerian Universities, to readdress themselves to the true professional training approaches for the Nigerian theatre to develop and to aid the playwright in "dreaming" far beyond the literary level.

Besides the works of the two major scenic designers, Demas Nwoko and Agbo Folarin, and perhaps those of the present writer, our other sources of information on contemporary scenography and technical theatre practice remain essentially foreign. We, therefore, have depended heavily on the foreign texts while adapting the information to suit our local conditions and purposes. These include Stage Design and Stage Lighting <sup>(15)</sup> by Wilford Oren Parker and the late Harvey Smith from its first to fifth editions and in its recently published sixth edition by W. Oren Parker and R. Craig Wolf <sup>(16)</sup>; Designing and Painting for the Theatre by Lynn Pectal <sup>(17)</sup>, ITI/Rene Heinaux's Scene Design throughout the World since 1935, <sup>(18)</sup> etc. Harold Burris Meyers and Edward C. Cole's Scenery for the Theatre, <sup>(19)</sup> Kenneth Rowell's Stage Design, <sup>(20)</sup> John Gassner's Producing the Play, <sup>(21)</sup> George Kernodle's Invitation to the Theatre, <sup>(22)</sup> Oscar Brockett's The Theatre, An Introduction, <sup>(23)</sup> Phyllis Hartnoll's The Oxford Companion to the Theatre <sup>(24)</sup> and A Concise History of the Theatre, <sup>(25)</sup> in addition to Bernard Sobel's Handbook of the Theatre <sup>(26)</sup>, among many

others, have proved useful in all areas of scenography, while on the technological field, Friedrich Kranich's Buehnentechnik der Gegenwart,<sup>(27)</sup> George C. Izenour's Theatre Technology,<sup>(28)</sup> Walther Unruh's Theatertechnik,<sup>(29)</sup> Maschinenfabrik Wiesbadan's Deusex-Machina,<sup>(30)</sup> Burris Meyer and Edward C. Cole's Scenery for the Theatre,<sup>(31)</sup> John Gassner's Producing the Play,<sup>(32)</sup> Richard Pilbrow's Stage Lighting,<sup>(34)</sup> Oren Parker and Rold C. Wolf's Scene Design and Stage Lighting,<sup>(35)</sup> Heinrich Braulich's and Ernst Otto Hamann's Beitraege zur Geschichte der Theatertechnik,<sup>(36)</sup> Das Atlantisbuch des Theaters by Martin Huerlimann<sup>(37)</sup> and many other volumes have been carefully consulted. An attempt will now be made to review the literature on scenography on the basis of the dates of the publication of the works for it is assumed that, the newer the work, the more current it is likely to be. Hence, John Gassner's Producing the Play<sup>(38)</sup> published in 1953, would be our first port of call.

This is a book solely devoted to the complete evolution of the play production enterprise, highlighting the production principles, procedures and styles and emphasizing the so-called arena and central stagings for both the professionals and the amateurs. The division of the book into five parts makes for easy consultation. Part One looks at such elements as the play, production styles, the actor, the acting group and their training, organisation and management of a producing company.

In Part Two, the actual "Play Production", the pivot around which Directing, the director, designing, costuming, lighting, make-up

of the play in production revolve is treated.

In Part Three, the use of music and dance, as adjuncts to production; comedy, Shakespearian plays; poetic drama, the use of theatre in the industry and television; as well as a survey of the devices of progressive or the so-called experimental production are examined.

Part Four covers simplified staging and arena theatre while the special problems of University-, School- and Community - Theatres are treated in Part Five.

Gassner presents both the aesthetic and the technical aspects of the subjects in appropriate proportions, thus making it an embodiment of balanced "soul and matter," "mind and hands," "imagination and execution."<sup>(39)</sup> To Gassner, the essence of stage production is the performance. Hence, his stress on the practical attention to acting, the need for adaptability from peculiar limitations to divergent circumstances through unprofessional actors to equipment. Gassner points out that, "although there are common denominators in production, different artists must work differently in some respects and advocates that "activity, trial and error and, above all, the test of effectiveness for a particular audience with a particular play are the ultimate textbooks of play production".<sup>(40)</sup> Thus he emphasises professional practice.

The relevance of the book to our study is implicit in its treatment of some special phases of production by recognised specialists, especially the inclusion of a separate "Technician's Handbook", reflecting the captivating auto-didactic, pedagogic and philosophical

values of the book which endears it to the student, teacher, professional, amateur and the general reader alike. Yet, Gassner warns the general reader or the critic of disappointment "if he expects a series of colourful causeries on the theatre, its glamour, its personalities, and its alternation of the sublime and the ridiculous," for even the most vivid personalities of the stage maintain a business-like attitude towards their art and craft.

Kenneth Rowell's Scene Design<sup>(41)</sup> is another mine of valuable information. Rowell, in the introduction, posits that a designer ignorant of the painting, sculpture and graphic art being created around him may only be capable of making a pastiche of a period (although even that will not be interpreted in terms that belong to his time) for plays, operas and ballets from the classical repertoire need to be re-interpreted according to the taste and fashions of the time. That implies that the set for a play should depict the message of the play the moment the curtain goes up on it, as the dwelling place of the action. The resultant impact of this is that the spectator will be sympathetically orientated to the world that is being created before him.

Chapter One of the six-chaptered book traces "The origin of Modern Stage Design" beginning with Diaghilev's Russian Ballet and the philosophy of Edward Gordon Craig. Chapter Two discusses the Neo-Romantic and Post-War Theatres, stressing the use of the semi-permanent set, the design for opera and the painter's role in the theatre. Chapter Three examines "The Contemporary Theatre" and

"Aspects of World Theatre" - with a peep into the American Musical and a glimpse into the future. Chapters Four and Five cover the "Traditional and Modern Techniques". The concluding Chapter Six deliberates on "On Becoming a Scene Designer", and surveys training procedures, costume design, designing for television and the cinema. It also contains a Glossary of Technical Terms and a Bibliography.

The book proves relevant to our study in many ways, particularly in the treatment of the new dramatic forms which, according to Rowell, "uses subtle mutation of acting, singing, dancing and mime which require visual equivalents"<sup>(42)</sup>. The achievement of the needed visual equivalents is a constant challenge to the "aesthetic climate of the designer's own time". In all, Kenneth Rowell highlights the variety of styles and techniques developed in the world since the latter half of the 19th century when the concept of an aesthetically unified production was established with profound results extending to the present day's Total Theatre. The developments have been made possible by rapid technological advancements.

Darwin Reid Payne's Design for the Stage: First Steps <sup>(43)</sup> presents one of the most modern approaches to the development of skills in scenography. Payne's book proceeds with the exploration of the creative conceptual processes of design in three articulate, thorough and well organized parts. Part I looks at the Scene Designer as a "Community Artist" whose functions and areas of influence determine the degree of his contribution to the "joint-venture" of play production and consequently his own success. The phenomena and the specific problems

of open -, space-, proscenium - and newer - theatre forms are examined.

Part Two centres on "Creative Research", the continuous search for creative answers to scenic problems rather than for expedient solutions, an reminiscence of Robert Edmond Jones's philosophical insights on research approaches open to a designer. These include the internal, external and historical resources that aid the designer's artistic and technical judgements.

The concluding Part Three, "From Text to Design," illustrates Payne's solutions to specific problems posed by such productions as A Streetcar Named Desire, Juno and the Paycock, Madam Butterfly, Romeo and Juliet, Faust, The Glass Menagerie and The Care-taker.

Of relevance to our study is the special premium placed on the qualifications of the designer whom Payne sees as "an educated person who possesses a thorough knowledge of stagecraft, materials, theatrical production techniques, drafting skills as well as a basic knowledge of theatre, and art-history, periods and styles of architecture, painting, sculpture and a familiarity with pictorial and three - dimensional design. "The most significant function of the scene designer is the ability to creatively combine all that knowledge with the manipulation of the stage space and its relationship to the human actor." (44)

Lynn Pectal's Designing and Painting for the Theatre<sup>(45)</sup> is another highly authoritative source of information on professional scenic design practice, emphasizing design aesthetics, processes,

systematic realisation and execution methods of stage scenery for the theatre, musicals, opera, dance and ballet. The book is made up of ten chapters, with its texts beautified with lavish illustrations.

Chapter One examines the designer's prerequisites, attributes and visionary powers that equip him for a judicious interpretation of the play-wright's dreams and visions.

Chapter Two exhibits a cross - sectional representation of examples from the world's stages with the American traditions as the nucleus.

Chapter Three treats the subject of the development of the design concept from research through sketches, floor plans, models, constructions, painting and lighting.

Chapter Four discusses the content and equipment of a professional scenic studio while Chapters Five, Six and Seven are devoted to methods of drawing and painting of scenery, mixing of paints, dyes, glues, binders and special finishes.

Chapter Eight is on painting and handling of backdrops and on the use of scenic fabrics and gauzes. It also presents methods of starching and treatment. Chapters Nine and Ten treat methods of painting framed scenery, decks, ground - cloths, furniture, sculptured three - dimensional elements, moulds and metal scenery. In all,

Designing and Painting for the Theatre is rich in "formulae" for achieving specific desired scenic effects. It provides different budgets for almost all forms of theatre organisations. Its relevance to this study, therefore, cannot be over-emphasized.

Another almost indispensable book is Williard F. Bellman's Scenography and Stage Technology first published in 1977 (46).

Bellman starts his book with a preface, followed by an introduction and the eight parts it is made of. Part One portrays "A Working Aesthetics of Scenography", Part Two is on "Physical Theatre," Part Three covers "Organization and Safety". The area of "Scenery" is covered in Part Four while "Properties" are dealt with in Part Five. Part Six illustrates 'colour' in the theatre while Part Seven is on "Lighting," and the concluding Part Eight treated "Scenic Projection". This is a fundamental source book on the various areas of scenery -, costume-, property-, and lighting -design and theatre technology of the twentieth century.

The relevance of Bellman's book to our study is multi-fold. Firstly, it is of didactic and pedagogic value for it opens the door into the area of theatre aesthetics and symbolism. Secondly, in the area of material sciences, it gives inspiration for experimentation with local materials, aiding creative inquisitiveness. Thirdly, in the sphere of Economics, the young and up and coming scenographer is relieved of the financial burden inherent in the use of the conventional scenic materials, for he is now more encouraged to experiment with unusual materials. The use of steel, light metal, plastics and foam in the Nigerian scenographic practice is yet to be popularized. It is expensive though, but on the long run it would prove viable for it is more durable. Also, scenic projection and laser technology are yet to be popularized in the Nigerian theatre. The possibilities with laser



to conjure fascinating and exotic images offer phenomenological attractions in the uncovering of artistic novelties. All of these innovations are already old experiences in Europe, America and in the developed areas of the world.

Any review on scenography without reference to ITI/René Hainaux's Stage Design Throughout the World since 1935 etc. published under the aegis of the International Theatre Institute once every decade will certainly be incomplete. These are Vol. I, since 1935, Vol II since 1950, Vol. III since 1960 and Vol. IV since 1975<sup>(47)</sup>. Each volume is prefaced by a clarifying foreword, composed as trenchant poems on some of the "New Trends" by Messers Hainaux, Paul-Louis Mignon and others, viewed from the "bird's eye" perspective.

The volumes present illustrations of Stage Designs, Costumes, Lighting, Make-up and Masks, mostly in black and white but occasionally also in colour plates of uniform clarity and excellently pleasing appearances of the most discussed theatrical productions of the decades from the Greek through Shakespeare to contemporary periods. "This book is not an accumulation, but a choice ... a necessarily biased selection ... We have endeavoured to bring out the most original aspects of the said decades devoted essentially to the non-traditional aspects of the performing art."<sup>(48)</sup> The collections, classified into major divisions of Drama, Opera, Ballet, and Musicals, make for easy references and comparisons of the various concepts. Materials and techniques, especially the use of "projection", are included in a section under the heading, "Analogies of Styles and Techniques".

The relevance of these volumes to our study is not far to seek. They present comprehensive bibliographies on international scenography, designers, techniques, styles, periods, origins, authenticities and the place, or venue, of productions. The course theatre is taking as prophetically expressed in Richard L. Scamozzi's words: "We are introduced to the phase of intense experimentation which rejects Aristotelian rhetoric, rejects psychology, even rejects the usual theatre buildings. In searching for more direct communication with the spectator, the stage director and scenographer are almost becoming one".<sup>(49)</sup> Directing and scenography merge in a manner in which playing space and practical structures with which actors perform become one general unit.

We discover the use of substantial realistic scenic fragments coupled with skeletal structures in pipes, metal framings, styrofoam, vacuum formed moulded round units, plastic sheeting, large area textured fabrics, screens, scrims and similar transparencies (although not in the form of scenic drop), floor hydraulics, vertically moving parts and revolves that have produced cinematic images, kaleidoscopic scenic effects and ecstatic illusions. The use of hanging banners, exaggerated props, enlargements of human size and masks in combination with puppets is becoming more and more scenically interesting. The photographs on Alwin Nikolavi's Dance Company in Volume IV of the books are manifestations of the most original techniques of lighting.

The experiment with central staging within bare walls, without any decor whatsoever, and playing in locations of non-traditional

fixed theatre structure is moving the performance from the classic and is affecting the audience-stage relationship, so that the group, actors and audience, are exalted into a festive atmosphere with exuberance, explosiveness and violent practices that now abound. Consequently, there seems to be an earnest search for free space - free from all inhibitions.

Besides the views expressed in the standard textbooks are those found in various publications such as Theatre Design and Technology, "Report on Theatre Design as Theatre", featuring C. Ray Smith's reviews, in the May, 1966 edition, of productions of Peter Weiss's Marat Sade directed by Peter Brook, of Jean-Paul Sartre's The Condemned of Altona directed by Herbert Blau and Jules Irving and of Cervantes' Man of La Mancha directed by Dale Wasserman (50). The articles report on current and contemporary theatre, new design ideas and new methods of stage-craft.

For instance in Marat-Sade, the main action is about the Jacobian French Revolutionary, Marat, who crusades for the improvement of mankind while he was sitting in a therapeutic bath of pain. Marat-Sade is a discontinuous play, its levels of reality are separate and never to touch. Its composite meaning is revealed by its biased insight ... a kind of dramaturgical fall-out, (51) in a directorial approach reminiscent of Brook's earlier experiments in the "Theatre of Cruelty" with its hitting below the belt analogical action that re-interprets symbols of behaviour with a blinding clarity.. barraging the audience with concurrent and conflicting images, physical as well as literary, .. in a way that creates a sensory implosion consistent

with the mental fission of our age. (52) Of great significance are the generated discussions on "alienation, "limitation" and "communication" problems faced by all artists in speaking, to an audience via theatrical idiom and scenography.

The single setting for the cathartic performance is a steam-room in the bathing hall of the asylum. A "Parisian" audience is seated down left on the projecting part of the built-out proscenium stage and now and then they rise in indignation to protest the anti-establishmentarian play. The staging creates an impression that amid a wild diversity of ambiguous acting area is sitting a real audience watching an unreal audience who watch a play about a real historical action performed by unreal madmen who are controlled by unreal sane men. It was a sensational and most brilliant derivative of the "Theatre of the Absurd" genre, a black comedy played in white shrouds, which displays an utterly new texture of theatre - not gaunt and vacant like most 'absurd' works, but turgid with a hypnotic involvement that is achieved by almost ritualistic incantation. (53)

The second play discussed is Jean-Paul Sartre's The Condemned of Altona which dissects guilt and responsibility in a wealthy German family that has prospered in the Hamburg suburb of Altona. Frantz, the elder son of the family, has incarcerated himself in an attic room of the family mansion for thirteen years, fed and cared for (in all sorts of stimulating ways) by his sister. Downstairs, the rest of the family is held rather melodramatically by the martinet of a 'pater familias' ... "the champion of moral reservation" in unyielding,

relentless unacceptance of the reality of their own guilt. The relevance of the production to our study is the intriguing flexible, multiform arrangement and use of the proscenium stage of New York's Beamount Repertory Theatre at Lincoln Centre on which Robin Wagner, the chief designer for the arena stage in Washington, has placed a setting that looked like one made for covering pretty well all the forms on an open-stage.

The Musical - Man of La Mancha, like Marat - Sade, also concerns lunacy and uses a play - within-a-play. It is also athletically energetic, catchily musical, fast moving and without an intermission. (54)

The relevance of the production to our study lies in the scenographic and technical realisation concept by Howard Bay which Smith aptly recounts thus:

When the audience enters, the stage is seen as a high craggy terrace of rough stone masonry quatrefoil, like a huge moorish tile. Detached both from the audience and the rear wall, like an island. For the overture, the close-in panels of the proscenium wall are retracted to reveal the orchestra, which is split into boxes on each side of the stage. After the overture, the panels close, concealing the orchestra from the audience and also from the actors, who play farther forward and who only through practice and the aid of amplification sing together with the orchestra.

What happens at the very opening is that the stage is first dimly lighted by a projected grid-like jail bars; suddenly, as if from nowhere, it is peopled with prisoners. With a fanfare of flurry, an entrance is announced, but from where? There is no visible ceremonial portal. Then a long stairway, unnoticed before, lowers from the ceiling ominously, on chairs like a draw - bridge. It reveals an entrance high on the rear wall behind the stage, a quatrefoil aperture like the stage plan. Down this stair way ... across a gulf, from a place on high ... comes Cervantes to the island - stage jail. Quick changes of scene ... switches from inside to outside ... are made with small additions to the unit set, which in this case is the entire open-stage itself.

Projections set other scenes, such as a rosette window on the floor as happens in sun light.(55)

Edward Albee's A Delicate Balance<sup>(56)</sup> a black-comedy in the mainstream of poetic drama of this century, incorporating intriguingly the absurdist tradition, exemplified in the couple of visiting neighbours who come to stay consequent upon their recognition of their loneliness and darkness of heart. The designer, William Rittman, created:

a simple setting for this discontinuous parable and is deceptively patent. It looks at first sight like the ordinary neo-georgian Fairfield country, Olive - and - moss - drawing room. But it is too full not to be empty, too perfect not to be malignant, too commonplace not to be original. Everything is suburban, old-enough money, middle-class, well kept, untouched.(57)

Ray Smith's report on "Nine Evenings: Theatre and Engineering", which took place at New York's 69th Street Armory, October 13 - 23, 1966,<sup>(58)</sup> deserves our interest for it featured series of experiments devised by a group of painters, choreographers and musicians in collaboration with a group of engineers to expand the scope of theatre technology and co-ordinated by Billy Kluever, who first gained fame in 1960 as the engineer of kinetic - sculptor of Jean-Tinguely's self-destroying machine. Ten pieces were performed twice each on the nine evenings. Some of them were seemingly not based on really new technology, but were large-scale happenings.

The first point of call on this visit is the New York's Metropolitan Opera where the specially commissioned Samuel Barker's - Franco Zeffirelli's Opera, Anthony and Cleopatra, was running. Smith avows:

The production of Anthony - for which director - designer Zeffirelli also clumsily scrambled around Shakespeare's text, was one of the most elaborate uses of theatre design and technology since Inigo Jones' day...Zeffirelli based his design on a pyramid motif and constructed drops of tubular pipes vaguely suggesting the seeds of the Nile. Pyramidal clouds and other drops were constructed of aluminium tubing and of ethafoam tubing hung on rat lines. Step units were of steel pipe.

In Act I, Scene I, a man-high pyramid folded down its four sides like a budding flower to reveal a red-cloaked Anthony ... inside Egypt, one supposes. It opened by means of a chain-driven motor that activated a reduction gear and arms that both lowered the four sides to below base line, closed them up to pyramid shape again. At the end of the scene, the pyramid was drawn up the raked stage of Act I onto a carry-off dolly. In scenes 2 and 3, the continuous texture of the scene changing was a smoothly changed, breath-catching, gilded engraving of the Roman forum. The effects were attempts to achieve some of the flow and freedom of movies and television. They were sumptuous, they were also sometimes inescapably vulgar and pretentious. Yet, they colorfully sustained the interest of an audience who were not, not all, one must suppose, knowledgeable aficionados of modern opera. They may have swamped the music, but they were expertly done in terms of technology. (59).

Among other spectacles reported on are:

1. Steve Paxton's creation "Physical Things" " a dance with a set"... consisting of an inflated tunnel through which the audience entered and which was lined with loud-speakers, some with music and some inflated plastic shapes of various sizes and spaces, some high and some low, one dark, one plaid, one with projections of the seasons and Paxton, a dancer, sees the audience as the dancers. "However, too many people had to wait too long for too little to happen through a too static tunnel structure", criticised Smith. (60).
2. Alex Hay's "Grass Field" aimed at the investigation of the "internal sound potentials of the body" For this purpose Hay had electrodes tapped on his head and amplifiers in a plastic bag on his back, not for duplication of sound patterns of his repeated actions but for



Fig. 0-0: A MODERN USE OF PROJECTION AND SCENIC STRUCTURES IN SCENOGRAPHIC REALISATION.

Fig. 0-0: The "Senate Scene" from Act I of Barber's Antony and Cleopatra.  
directed and designed by Franco Zeffirelli. Photo: Louis Melancon.



metabolism, about which little was told. The stimulating action, a gigantic aptitude test; ~~remains~~ an intriguing idea, through which an aural mosaic emanated from inside of a performer. It was an indeterminate, monochromatic, large scale pick-up sticks in which the music was a recital by the performer's inner organ. (61)

3. Yvonne Rainer investigated "on the spot directing" by means of Walkietalkie along a principle advanced by Gordon Craig. Her performers became radio-telephone controlled marionettes verbally directed to perform a series of pre-planned unrelated actions in random sequence. "The actions were inconsequential, uninteresting and upstaged by a W.C. Field's movie which the audience applauded." (62)
4. A dance, called "Vehicle," choreographed by Lucinda Childs used, as operative composing forces, entirely non-static moving elements of sound, light and an 'air cushion vehicle' (A.C.V), made of plexiglass, engineered by Peter Hirsch in which Alex Hay had to stand as if a snow white coffin has become a hovercraft in the rectangular phone - booth unit. (63)
5. "Variations VII" created by John Cage, David Tudor and others benefitted from engineering expertise of Cecil Coker to devise 'the concerts for electronic appliances'. The setting for the concert depicts:  
two long tables, makeshifts, set at the end of the Armory and were lighted from underneath by bare spotlights which cast weird shadows onto adjacent white screens in the otherwise darkened hall.

An assortment of electrical devices -- audio equipment, electric fans, a kitchen blender, a coffee grinder--with coffee, a radio, and other whirling and gurgling noise makers were the principal "actors" in the setting ... that produced the greatest pleasure of the event culminating in the primed happening of a sociological phenomenon - the crowding of the audience around the "instruments".

The varying people's actions and reactions range from: looking at how things were done; twisting dials in the hope for any modulation; wandering, sitting, squatting and laying out in the middle of the floor ... This was participation, a fundamental pre-requisite to the so-called "The New Theatre". (64)

6. "Bandoneon" (a combination) a dance of electrical components for which platforms of about 70 cm square, by 30 cm high, on which loudspeakers were installed remotely controlled and moved freely about on the floor. These were backed up by projections of non-communicative electronic patterns flashed on screens rigged at angles above the hall in which the stage and house lights were flashing on and off. Shattering the nerve was the sound. A nucleus bouncing back and forth in a tank looked analogous to a streaking meteor, rocket or satellite in the sky, visual image, a fully involved interaction of the senses and art forms -- and intersensory polyphony, perhaps -- of sound, sight and movement. This contribution to the fateful evening was by David Tudor. (65)
7. "Solo", Deborah Hay's creation, engineered by Larry Heilos, aimed at an exploration of the ambiguous area between 'moving and non-moving.' Here, too, remote controlled platforms about 70 cm square 30 cm high, some empty, some carrying performers in concerted rhythm around the floor, some of whom were simultaneously standing still, some lying in stylized positions, some moving in slow, rather coordinated tempi, in varied but slow figures, while the

stage and house lights flashed on and off irregularly making the performers, who were all dressed in white, now clearly visible and then only half so, culminating in a captivating unearthly experience along Deborah Hay's intention "to make all these elements equal in energy and visibility even at the risk of the monotonous and shapeless tempi and rhythms." (66)

8. "Open-Score" was Robert Rauschenberg's experiment, aimed at an investigation of the line between "seeing" and "non-seeing", made of two parts which are not apparently connected. Part One was a tennis match in which the rackets were wired for sound -- each hit causing a tone; the same tone for both rackets -- and the sound controlling the light in the hall. Eventually, the turning off of all lights signalled the end of the game resulting in total darkness on the performers on the stage who even before were seen only through the infrared TV projection falling on them. (67)
9. "Two holes of water 3" created by Robert Whitman was declared open on an overture of amplified gunshots revealing polyethylene-wrapped automobiles circling the floor which, one by one, moved into position to project images onto the screens lining the rear wall. An overhead TV projector was used on the floor, for which a ground cloth served as a screen. Some live TV of girlies, some war movies, some news flashes propaganda against the U.S. Department of Defence, the Vietnam War, the gases and chemicals used for five years with the accompanying commentary blared so loud at the threshold of pain through a sound track. This "Viet - Happening", a supposed sugar-coated pill turned to an event of attempted visual

and aural mosaic of images in many directions. (68)

10. Mogan Terry's "Viet Rock", a satirical anti - Vietnam war protest, engaging Oyvind Faslstrom's song, "Kisses Sweeter than Wine," and other theatrical means of pageant, mime, happening, revivalist - meeting technique, Theatre of the Absurd's approach, the Artaud theory brilliantly demonstrated by Peter Brook in Marat-Sade, the chanting, stamping, romping, ranting, stripping, dancing, screaming, crying chorus ritual to make its statement, represented one of the longest and most stimulating "intermedia" experiments, a satisfyingly broad "inter-media drama", message sometimes maddening and too long a piece.

Scenographically, "Viet Rock" used three screens set sculpturally free as background. At down-centre position was hung a plexi-glass panel, through which the audience had to look on the green water projected on the screens. Then a lumpy white ground cloth began to move, under which human beings were revealed. The area became a moonscape from where bubbly foam with a scuba diver, already shot in the head with an arrow, were floating to the ceiling, thereby revealing the scuba diver as both a dummy and underwater. This was followed by a projection of Rauschenberg as an 18th Century man doing computer fast calculations by parapsychology in a scene that turned a nightmare as a man was chased by a cart. Plastic fright mask of Lyndon B. Johnson, the then President of U.S.A., was swung against the plexi - glass screen. People on swings had bull fighters'

banderillas sticking out of their back, looking like broken parachutes with rigor mortis, real swingers! Announcement of an "organism ray" red smoke that drifted over the audience was accompanied by a silver Vinyl Zeppelin balloon, guided around the hall over the audience's heads by remote control. It was a gasser and multi - sensory. (69).

### The Scenographer as an Artist (70)

Baeb Salzer's article published in three parts, opens with his "verities" of contemporary esthetics that have purportedly exploded analogous to a balloon blown too full of air, since the mid - nineteen seventies. Salzer considers three issues in this article, firstly, the Alienation of the Scenographer; secondly, the Limitations which are the historical differences between the stage designer and the painter and, thirdly, the Communication problems faced by all contemporary artists in speaking to a public.

#### i. Alienation

Salzer, himself, a scenographer and painter, sees the artists who paint monochromatic canvases as alienated from the community of visual artists. He claims that contemporary esthetic principles are an attempted amalgam of the arts and sciences monopolizing the art world, important galleries and the influential critics and that, in part, the principles do not alter or add to the historical progression of man's search for beauty. The esthetic principles reject all past theories such as the "extra esthetic elements", any meaning or message

besides the physical existence of the work, the value of entertaining or interesting an audience, the search for beauty in a finished object or event in favour of concept or process. (71).

While Howard Bay in his Stage Design (72) thinks that the separation from human concerns in the arts scene is well nigh complete, Tom Wolfe in his article, "The Painted Word," published as a book, Modern Art Reaches the Vanishing Point (73), believes that Modern Art has become completely literary and paintings and other works exist only to illustrate the text. Also, Hilton Kramer in his "Signs of a new conservatism in Taste" (74) claims that there has been a significant symptom of a shift in esthetic loyalties exemplified in Twyle Tharp, an inventive choreographer of the "minimalism" style, who used non-dancers in her initial works of 1966. But she sooner abandoned the code of "no trying to please an audience". (75) And Miss Tharp about her change was quoted as saying:

You can only keep this up for so long, it's self defeating. It's hard to like people who won't like themselves. I guess that we were afraid that by softening up and becoming ... accessible, we'd be selling out" (76).

## ii. Limitation

Salzer deliberates here on the differences between the Scenographer, the painter and their limitations. He uses Salvador Dali's and Abe Feder's production of a ballet called Gala, for which he was a "ghost designer", as the basis of this deliberation. In the ballet Dali envisioned several men dance, fight and finally tear off one another's clothes, thereby revealing that one of them

is a woman. She is hoisted onto a pedestal, where-upon milk spurts from her breasts and the men shower under this fountain vivant. (77)

"Salzer's set design consists of several large frame-work cubes which were to be dunked into vats of some viscous liquid. In model form the four-inch wire cubes dipped into a soap solution formed beautiful bubble gems inside the cubes. When the cubes were enlarged for the stage, however, the problem of finding a viscous liquid capable of forming a bubble over a four - foot space, a sixteen square foot area emerged. After the largest chemical companies failed to find a solution ... Dali became impatient and took his project to Italy where the ballet was performed minus the large scale bubbles." (78)

From that encounter, it could be deduced that the processes of thought of a scenographer/designer are not the same as that of an artist. "While the designer is trained to find esthetic result and practical solutions to problems, the artist who is concentrating on process forgets the end result and jumps immediately to the end product." But, the painter, the artist, enjoys the freedom of expression, for he is able to create according to the impulses of his vision. From the evolved series of styles, ranging from 'cubism' through abstract 'expressionism' to 'minimalism' and the increasing abstraction thereof, not being mindful of his middle class customer, the buyer of his art work. And, the scenographer is not free to follow the painter's footsteps of abstraction, in spite of Lee Simonson's observation that

The vision of the artist as painter and the artist as scene designer are virtually identical. (79)

The basic problem of the scenographer is that he is a Renaissance man, an artist, a mechanic, an inventor, a humanist. In short, he is an anachronism in a culture which has no limits. He is an anachronism who must intelligently organize his many talents to function within imposed limitations.

The scenographer cannot bring about an experience without the factor of time, human-being and the stage which cannot be abstracted. He has to function within the limitation of the theatre, subjecting him to please a producer, a director and ultimately a public. He is never given enough time. He never has enough budget. He is always short-staffed. He must confine his creativeness to a given existing space. His designs must be fitted to the meaning and spirit of an author's play. Furthermore, because most designers must design plays, operas and musicals from every age of theatrical history, the designer faces a choice between two different limitations. Either he serves as curator of museum pieces by designing with regard to the original period intent of the work or he designs within the limitation of pleasing a present-day audience. In the process he may either destroy the play as written or he may lose his audience. And, Salzer, quoting Richard Gilman, has put it all succinctly: "the theatre has for several centuries been primarily a bourgeois art or enterprise and therefore a conservative one" (80).



"These limitations," according to Daniel Bell in his The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism, have often created pressures which mirror the difficulties in our cultural life" (81). If contemporary culture is sensate, the ascendancy of rock shows, light shows and the decline of the well-made play are easy to understand. One can see why opera, which is more sensual than intellectual, has gained a wider audience as well as dance and ballet have done. "And the scenographer is torn between contradictory tasks. On the one hand, as a visual artist, he has always represented the sensual side of theatre. While as a designer, he is limited by practical considerations, he has solved these problems intellectually. In the past he has limited the sensual impact of his own work so that it would not overpower the intellectual content of the author's work. But, today, the audience wants visual sensation and does not care about intellectual understanding. And, in a society that values "doing your own thing," the designer's ego demands that he considers himself a creative person and an artist, yet, he is bound by numerous practical demands which go contrary to the modern conception of creation and art." (82)

The scenographer, in essence, has the only option of abandoning the defensive posture in which he claims to be a craftsman rather than an artist. He must associate himself with those countless masters of the past whose great works were created within limitations. He must no longer be apologetic because his work contains ideas and feelings and because he communicates to a public.

Yet Ray Smith sees the return to conservatism as a response to basic philosophical and psychological needs which are not being met. However, the Scenographer, being heir to a certain esthetic legacy, has depended on every style and artistic concept from the caveman till now to express himself to others.

### iii. Communication

Here Salzer posits that the greatest problem in today's changing Western culture is for the artists, especially theatre artists, to be able to find a message of importance and of universal interest and to be able to communicate the same to the Western fragmented society. Throughout theatre history the importance of the word in communication has varied according to the emphasis of an era on poetry, action or spectacle and in accordance with changes in styles. Most recently, however, theatre is more of visual and emotional communication. It is from this perspective that the scenographer's status has become more important than ever before, particularly in this period of "a sense of hopelessness and a lack of anything to say", when there seem to be no longer public traditions of meaning, common faith, generally accepted myths or heroes, not even a sense of what is real. Hence, the artists have indeed stopped communicating, rather, they have settled, as has the public, for a culture of sensation, instead of that of thought. Consequently, the emergent "self-art" has no external standards, interest or potentialities for serving in community communication. The art critic, Harold Rosenberg, engaged in societal dilemma, attempts to find an

explanation for the miscarriage thus:

An art of objective reality untainted by parody would seem attainable only in styles shared by a society as a whole. The essential obstacle to an art of feeling in the grand sense is the Social and Psychological Fragmentation reflected in the advanced art of the past hundred years and this obstacle cannot be overcome by an intellectual act of force. (83)

Hannah Trendt, another observer, compares in her book, The Human Condition, the classic Greek world with the contemporary society thus:

They (the Greek) gave economic occupations an subordinate place, we worship them. Christianity at least preserved communal and contemplative life, but the natural sciences and systematic, self-oriented being 'liberating' us, delivered us into the clutches of necessity. Estranged from the world of nature and history - we cling to mere life, unable to grasp reality and deprived of common sense authority and public tradition. (84)

And, Daniel Bell again explains that today's society has turned to forms of immediate pleasure rather than retaining capitalism's historical process of delayed gratification. (85) And, similarly, Beeb Salzer has advanced that we have turned away from rational, lineal, intellectual, verbal forms of communication to more sensual forms, as vindicated by the attendance figures at ballet and opera. In contrast, legitimate theatre, the well made play of ideas, has been deserted by the educated affluent audience in favour of the more sensual entertainments of dance, ballet and opera. (86)

Also, Maxine Greene, an educational philosopher, agrees with Daniel Bell, George Steiner and David Hawkins by implying that:

... most significant events of our time, being mathematical and scientific, are for the most part beyond the understanding of a great majority of men. Hence, the discussion of the ideas which influence the lives of the society remain undiscussable. (87)

While Alfred Kazin avers that

Technology lords it everywhere over the old-fashioned art educated intellectuals brought up on modernism. Technology and bureaucracy, aided by all the sciences of manipulation and propaganda, mass culture and mass emotion, make up our public drama ... Everywhere in the West there is panic, the most obvious slackening of will and hope and faith in anything more than the ever-more urgent whiplash of the money motive. We are under the gun. (88)

Susan Sontag, equally grim, laments that:

.... this civilization, already so overtaken by barbarism is at an end, and nothing we do will put it back together again. So in the culture of transition out of which we can try to make sense, fighting off the twin afflictions of hyperesthesia and passivity, no position can be a comfortable one or should be complacently held. (89)

There are other contemporary phenomena such as the use of drugs which have contributed to private rather than shared experiences and have diminished areas of communication. Film, television and video have adversely affected communication opportunities because commercial interests have demanded that as many people as possible be corralled into watching the same films and programmes. The consequence is a public which is fed daily with mindless entertainments which do not demand critical or intellectual effort by the viewers and, for such viewers, the theatre is not the place. In the bid to find an audience, the arts have resorted to various and strange forms of performances, topical among which, for some time, is nudity and pornography, kinky theatrical sex and freak shows at which delineation

performance from reality is blurred. Critics have been made, by the excesses in the arts, to predict a period of decadence comparable to the worst of the Roman Empire. However, some "revivalist" articles have been pointing to the return to both political and esthetic conservatism. Such is Hilton Kramer's "A Yearning for Normalcy - The Current Backlash in the Arts" in which he avows that:

The truth is, much of what has passed for being avant-garde in recent years has proved to be extremely boring and extremely trivial - a mere charade of the great age of experiment in the arts, and of no great esthetic merit in itself .....

The taste now is for clarity and coherence, for the beautiful and recognizable, for narrative, melody, pathos, glamour, romance, and the instantly comprehensible, for empathy rather than entropy, for art that is a pleasure rather than a moral contest. (90)

The reviews become relevant to our studies for their astonishing revelations that the most imitated scenographers of our time, such as Josef Svoboda, Bebb Salzer, Jo Mielziner and Robert Edmond Jones, seem to have turned their backs on the theories of design accepted for long as dogma. For according to Robert Edmond Jones:

A setting should not be a thing to look at in itself, It can, of course, be made so powerful, so expressive, so dramatic, that actors have nothing to do after the curtain rises but to embroider variations on the theme the scene has already given away. (91)

And in Prague, in 1976, Jo Mielziner repeats:

.... the designer must be servant of the director. Designers should not be leaders, they should be collaborators. (92)

While the English scenographer, Ralph Koltai, avows that:

I'm interested basically in finding a concept for a production. I tend to work with directors who like me to find the concept. And I tend not to work with directors who have very strong ideas themselves. (93)

The American scenographer, Robin Wagner, sees Tom O'Horgan as such a director meant above and comments that:

... He's very open and free about using anything that he feels is good. So if you come up with a seemingly crazy idea and it works for him, he wants it and you use it. He has absolutely no ego that way ... Someone had made a comment in an interview that I had a tendency to overdesign and Tom's comment was, 'No one can overdesign for me.' (94)

In Jarka M. Burian's views, Svoboda's works in the 1970's had been greatly affected by the chance Svoboda has to work with certain kinds of directors. Burian states:

..... I think that the evidence suggests that Svoboda's work in the 1970's shows relatively more of the traditional designer than of the scenographer as he himself has embodied that term ... with a certain kind of director, one with whom he can interact fully and freely and almost intuitively .... (95)

From the views expressed so far, it could be deduced that a scenographer feels more fulfilled when he is given the freedom to create and thereby unfold himself. It could therefore be said that scenography for live theatre has, for its contributive functions, two options: either to use restraint and be servants of the word, or, in conjunction with innovative engineering, take command and provide visual fire-works, sensual and emotional messages such as fear, excitement, calm, mystery or even sexual desire, as exemplified in the technological elements of the following accomplishments to be reviewed.

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## CHAPTER THREE

REVIEW OF LITERATURE, STUDIES AND PROJECTS ON THE TECHNOLOGICAL ELEMENTS

On the area of Theatre Technology, there exists also virtually no indigenous literature or large-scale study of any kind. The applied texts for teaching and practice are foreign. Because the present study treats a tripod of inter-related subfields, one to two parts of which, sometimes, the same source of information, literature and texts may touch, that is, scenography and technology; and because of the way we have separated the literature review for the three respective parts of the study, a seeming repetition may present itself. However, the most affected in this regard are: Scenery for the Theatre (Harold Burriss Meyer and Edward C. Cole),<sup>(1)</sup> Stage Scenery, Its Construction and Rigging (A.S. Gillette),<sup>(2)</sup> Stage Craft (Chris Hoggert),<sup>(3)</sup> Stage Lighting (Richard Pilbrow),<sup>(4)</sup> Buehnentechnik d. Gegenwart (F. Kranich),<sup>(5)</sup> Theatertechnik (Walther Unruh),<sup>(6)</sup> Deus Ex-Machina (Maschinenfabrik-Wiesbaden),<sup>(7)</sup> Scene Technology (Arnold Reid),<sup>(8)</sup> Theater Technology (George G. Izenour),<sup>(9)</sup> Handbuch fuer Buehnenbeleuchtung (Association for Lighting Technique, Switzerland, Germany and Austria)<sup>(10)</sup> Buehnenbeleuchtung (Max Keller),<sup>(11)</sup>

Some articles, essays and monographs have been found useful in the journals of the United States Institute of Theater Technology, Theater Design and Technology, TD & T,<sup>(12)</sup> The German Buehnentechnische Rundschau,<sup>(13)</sup> Podium,<sup>(14)</sup> the Swiss's Proszenium,<sup>(15)</sup> and the Association of the British Theatre Technicians'-(ABTT) Sight Line,<sup>(16)</sup> Cue,<sup>(17)</sup> and Rank Strand Electrics' TABS,<sup>(18)</sup>

The consulted articles are legion but attention may be drawn to a few:

1. "Engineering Concepts in Stage Equipment" by Olorf Soot, TD & T, Number 6, October, 1966, p. 10 (19)
2. "Current Information Needs for the Performing Arts Technician," by Ned. A. Bowmann, TD & T, No. 41 (Summer, 1975), pp. 25 - 33 (20)
3. "Reflections of a Stage - Builder," by Wolfgang Roth, TD & T, Nr. 42, Fall, 1975, pp. 19 - 22. (21)
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7. "Technik, Technik ueber alles : The Theatre of Erwin Piscator," by Alex de Jonge, Tab: Stage Lighting International, Autumn, 1978, pp. 18-19. (25)

Generally, technical subjects and information are based principally on mathematical axioms. They are deductions from scientific facts and proofs which normally remain basically valid worldwide until new discoveries prove otherwise. Of course, there may be variations in the methods of application due to factors like finance, staff, production programmes and the general environment of the theatrical plant in use, yet the achievement of the desired results are the main concern of the technician whose professional

training, experience and individual outlook determine his resourcefulness. Hence, the writer begins with perhaps the most authoritative text on "stage - craft" which is Harold Burris Meyer and Edward C. Cole's Scenery for the Theatre (The Organization, Processes, Materials and Techniques Used to Set the Stage). Its first edition was published in 1938, revised in 1966, while its latest edition was published in 1971. It was regarded in America as the "bible" for the designer and the technician alike. Even though, since then, some developments have taken place on all fronts of the theatre and many scholarly works on these areas now abound, yet the book retains its value and uniqueness. Among the aims of the book, as stated on its dust jacket, are:

to provide the serious apprentice or student of theatre production with the facts, procedures, principles and general know-how on setting the stage that, until this book, could only be acquired through years of apprenticeship and trial and error.

... to relate scenery to the conceptual thinking, designing of the environment for the performance and audience confrontation, developed by the playwrights ... and to the organisations by which the production is planned, produced and operated ... within physical, organizational and financial limitations. (26)

The first five Chapters of the book discuss the state of the theatre; organization for production; planning the production; planning different types of scenery; the evolution of the stage; sightlines; perspectives, techniques for construction of various types of scenic units such as two and three-dimensional units and complicated forms, illustrated with series of studio shots, to give a general introductory coverage.

Chapter Six discusses scenic materials such as wood, lumber, metal, steel, glass, plastics, fibres, foams, and ropes.

Chapters Seven and Eight survey the "Scene Shop", its Tools and Equipment.

Chapter Nine examines "Scene Construction". Chapter Ten covers "Scene Painting" and Chapter Eleven treats the "Stage and its Equipment".

Chapter Twelve accounts for the details of "Hanging, Joining, Stiffening and Bracing Scenery and Hanging the Show," while Chapter Thirteen deliberates on "Properties". Chapter Fourteen gives detailed accounts on 'Assembling and Running the Show' and "Post Production Procedures". And, the last Chapter, Fifteen, examines "Processes and Techniques" of working wood, metal, fibre - glass, plastic and other materials.

The relevance of the book to our study cannot be over-emphasized, for it focuses on the specific requirements of Scenography and Stage Technology in terms of craftsmanship. Of particular value are the sections dealing with specialized topics such as props, special effects and sight-lines. The analysis of the characteristics of beams, aided by charts and graphs, to enable the technician assess the loading properties of structural members, to ensure the general safety of all users, contribute to the baptism of the work as a "scriptural text" with its "Old-and New-Testaments" in one volume.

However, since the early sixties, the sole authority of Scenery for the Theatre has been greatly challenged by such works



as Scene Design and Stage Lighting, another jointly - authored "epistle" to the scenographer and technologist on the paths of the playwright's and director's dream - world of theatre production. The authors of the first through the fifth editions are Wilford Oren Parker and the late Harvey K. Smith<sup>(27)</sup> while the sixth edition, published in 1990, was by Wilford Oren Parker and Wolf R. Craig<sup>(28)</sup>. The six editions have proved to be among the best havens for theoretical knowledge on Scene Design, Technical Production and Stage Lighting in one single volume. The book has two major divisions. The first section on "The Design Concept" is given to the treatment of the physical theatre, the process of scene design, the non-proscenium theatre forms, perspective drawing, drafting tools and equipment. The second section, "Executing the Design," covers Technical Production. Here, new materials such as electrical - conduit pipes, Telspar and Dexion pre - formed steel shapes; Metal working and joining, gas and arc welding, methods, tools for scenery construction, the use of rigid foams and fibre - glass reinforced plastics for 'properties' construction are introduced. The construction of traditional scenic units such as standard flats and platforms also receives some treatment.

"Designing the Lighting" for different types of settings embracing the proscenium -, thrust - , dance - and community - theatres, stressing the American and the Broadway lighting practice with samples of light plots, instrument schedules, layouts, equipment requirements and the application of the Mc Candles formulae and techniques, lavishly illustrated, have been dealt with.

Electricity generation, and distribution; instruments, lanterns, arc-follow - spots, tungsten halogen lamps, are discussed. The subjects of "colour," colour - temperature, intensity control, dimmer - and control - boards, direct - and remote - control systems for stage production and the in-depth treatment of 'projections' have won the book its overall and general acceptance.

The relevance of the book to our study is implicit in its providing some information related to the techniques used in the execution of the illustrative plays in this study. The book has also proved to be an excellent tool for didactic and pedagogic purposes.

Richard Pilbrow's Stage Lighting (29) is another valuable source of information on the practical approach to the art of stage lighting. The book consists of two parts. Part One is broken down into two sub-headings of: "Living Light for Living People;" "How to do it"; Five demonstrations; two procedures; four design problems culminating in "Multi-Screen Projection" and "Tomorrow" of modern lighting and production, prophets of which are Adolphe Appia and Gordon Craig, as Pilbrow also testifies.

Appia has defined stage lighting, as found in the nineteenth century, as "Helligkeit"-implying general illumination. Pilbrow also seems to uphold the view that "the choice may be between stark Brechtian whiteness, a psychedelic morass of multi-coloured sensation or an attempted distillation of the colours of nature" explained in the incorporated William Bundy's 'Opera lighting' and John B. Read's "Ballet and dance lighting". Pilbrow sees, as a new

dimension the developing industrial or commercial conferences using audio-visual (sight and sound) multi-screen techniques. Part Two treats Lanterns, Controls, Symbols, Calculation of Lighting angles, Rigging of the over - and side - stage equipments, Projections and Optical effects while electrical science, illumination, photometric theory on units of lumens, lux, colour- temperature and anamorphic lenses have been sparingly kept.

Pilbrow's distinguished career as a Lighting Designer is demonstrated in his description of his approaches to some of the many artistic problems he has faced. Basic to his method of solving lighting problems is the use of a model which, "however crude", is an invaluable aid when practising and that every budding lighting designer should obtain one, as Pilbrow in his author's note advised. Pilbrow recommends his work to the manufacturers as well as for all seriously interested in stage lighting, directing or teaching the theatre. A Bibliography and an Index end the 172-page book, a treatise presented in an easy-to-read way, which contributes to its relevance to this study.

Out of the selected articles on technological elements of the theatre, "Engineering Concepts in Stage Equipment" by Olaf Soot<sup>(30)</sup> attracts our attention first. Soot discusses the strides being made towards sophistication and excellence in the design of theatre environment and stage facilities. Central in the article are the areas of safety regulations, specifications, standardization, building codes, labour and employment laws, economics,

drawing of guidelines, definition of functions and the clearing<sup>up</sup> of certain existing confusions in the relationships of the architect, engineer, consultant and the manufacturer. While the architect designs its shape, the establishment of the operations of the theatre demands the expertise of the stage consultant and the engineer. Stage facilities, in contrast to those for ordinary buildings, are made up of structural, mechanical and electrical components, hence engineering knowledge must prove specific answers in all of the three fields. For instance while a failure of a column or beam in an ordinary building, which contains many redundancies, may not necessarily cause the failure of the whole structure, in the case of stage facilities where a movable ceiling, wall or lift system is in use, there is the risk that its safety may be dependent on only one specific component and a failure of such a component may have a ~~very~~ grave consequence, if the system is not properly designed. Consequently, Soot discerns, from the engineering point of view, the difference between the methods for the design of the regular stage equipment and that of industrial machinery and buildings. He reaffirms that an essential requirement of modern theatre is flexibility and mechanization while the ultimate goal remains excellence of performance rather than of mechanics. And, for this purpose, a wide variety of special equipment, movable and heavy structures, such as turntables, integrated arrangements of walls, floors and roofs have been devised and used to control space and for creating special effects for given performances. For instance, while the industrial materials handling systems may call for the use of lifts, hoists

and turntables, modern theatre employ similar machineries designed on the same principles of mechanics but for different functional requirements and purposes. Soot elucidating, states:

Stage machinery is created not to produce, but to act as an aid to the advancement of the performing arts. Therefore, while it is constantly in operation by providing flexible support for the stage and audience, by moving scenery or by creating other controlled motion, it still remains in the background and its presence should not interfere with the performance ... When I speak of engineering for the stage, I mean the work of professionals who are trained and who possess basic knowledge in various branches of engineering, who can determine the exact technical requirements for operation and safety and who are legally authorized to do so. (31)

"A Survey of Theatre Engineering: Applications of Quantitative Analysis to Problems of Theatre Engineering," (32) an article by Michael Kupferschmid of Izenour Associates states: "Mathematics and Physics can assist in the solution of many problems which occur in the design and use of theatres and their equipment." (33) Theatre Engineering, therefore, centres on the study of the special problems and their quantitative solutions. Some of its divisions touch the areas of technical design of equipments, settings, scenery, construction, technical production, lighting, management and administration of performance processes.

In the area of architectural theatre planning, involving the subjects of sight-lines, mechanics, kinetics and acoustics, Kupferschmid demonstrates:

A simplified analysis of the theatre seating problem assumes that seats are behind one another in plan view, so that a section through the auditorium looks like the picture in the figure, the point to be seen by everyone,

is level with the eye of the first spectator, who is a distance  $D = 10$  feet away in the first row of seats. The rows of seats are uniformly spaced a distance of  $d = 42$  inches apart, and the distance from each observer's eye to the top of his head is  $H = 3.6$  inches. In order to see over the first spectator's head, the second row observer's eye must be height  $h_2$  above that of the first - row observer. Similarly, the eye height of the observer in the  $n$ th row must be  $h_n$  greater than that of the first - row observer. Find  $h_n$  as a function of  $h_{n-1}$  and demonstrate an iterative procedure for finding the successive  $h$ 's, starting with  $h_1$ . (34)

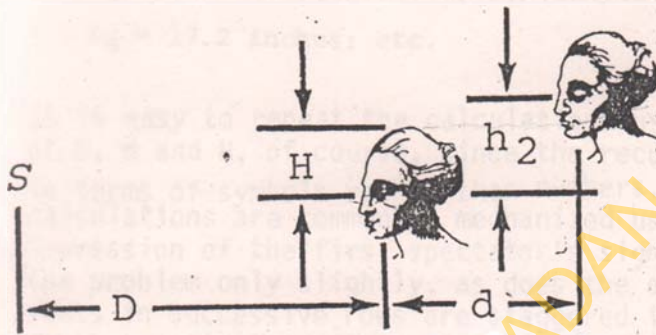


Fig. 1(a)

Solution: With reference to the figure above, it is clear from similar triangles that:

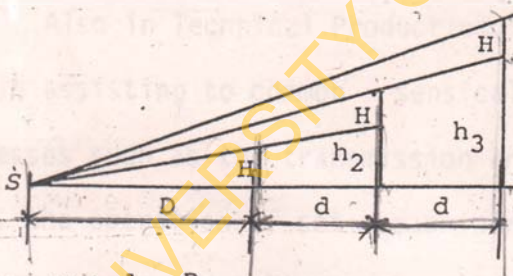


Fig. 1(b)

$$\frac{D + d}{h_2} = \frac{D}{H}$$

Likewise,

$$\frac{D + 2d}{h_3} = \frac{D + d}{h_2 + H}$$

In general,

$$\frac{D + nd}{h_{n+1}} = \frac{D + (n-1)d}{h_n + H}$$

for  $n = 1, 2, \dots$

Fig 1a and 1b above on determination of rake of seats and rows.

Therefore, we conclude that the function sought is given by

$$h_n = \begin{cases} \frac{(h_{n-1} + H) [D + (n-1)d]}{D + (n-2)d} & \text{for } n = 2, 3, \dots \\ 0 & \text{for } n \leq 1. \end{cases}$$

Calculating successive h's, we find

$$h_1 = 0 \text{ inches;}$$

$$h_2 = (0.0 + 3.6) [120 + (2-1)42] / [120 + (2-2)42] = 4.9 \text{ inches;}$$

$$h_3 = (4.9 + 3.6) [120 + (3-1)42] / [120 + (3-2)42] = 10.7 \text{ inches;}$$

$$h_4 = 17.2 \text{ inches; etc.}$$

It is easy to repeat the calculations using different values of D, d and H, of course, since the recursion for  $h_n$  is given in terms of symbols rather than numbers. The numerical calculations are commonly mechanized using a digital computer. Depression of the first spectator's sightpoint complicates the problem only slightly, as does the assumption that seats in successive rows are staggered in some specified way. Other practical considerations arise from building codes and limitations of space, and these are more difficult to include in a simple mathematical analysis. Approximations to the ideal seating profile are nonetheless routinely obtained by starting with simple calculations like those shown above. (35)

Also in Technical Production, Quantitative Analysis finds its use in assisting to common - sensically plan and direct performance processes such as the transmission and execution of lighting and sound cues, the operation of set - machinery, the movement and storage of scenery, props and costumes as well as in Technical Administration where decisions about allocation of space, time, effort, money acquisition and retirement of capital goods often are the prerogatives of the Technical Directors and Theatre Administrators.

Other related areas of application of Quantitative Analysis for the performing arts include the film, broadcast and recording

industries which need technologies specially engineered to their needs. The areas of design and research in the long - term financial planning for theatre, music and dance are similarly illustrated.

In the area of "Technical Design of Settings," - elementary engineering may be of assistance when the physical realization of a design concept requires special scenic structures, mechanisms, unusual rigging, or complicated set geometry. Kupferschmid gives an illustrative example thus:

A rigid balcony of weight  $W = 320$  pounds is to be supported by two identical  $a \times b$  fir cantilever beams, as shown. A single actor provides a live point load of  $P = 150$  pounds, and the length of the cantilever is  $L = 6$  feet. What is the smallest lumber that should be used for the beams if their maximum permissible deflection is 1%? (36)

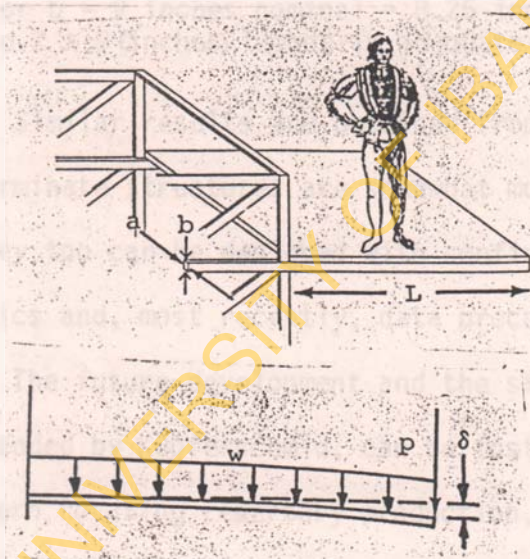


Fig 2.

Solution

$$\delta = \frac{pL^3}{3EI} + \frac{wL^4}{8EI}$$

where

$$w = \frac{W}{2L}, \quad p = 4P \text{ for the live load,}$$

$$E = 1600000 \text{ \#/in}^2 \text{ for fir, and}$$

$$I = \frac{ab^3}{12} \text{ for beams of rectangular section.}$$

Fig. 2: Using quantitative analysis to determine size of lumber



Then

$$\delta = \frac{4PL^3}{3EI} + \frac{WL^3}{16EI} \quad \text{and} \quad \frac{\delta}{L} = \frac{L^2}{EI} \left( \frac{4P}{3} + \frac{W}{16} \right) \leq .01$$

so

$$I = \frac{ab^3}{12} \geq \frac{L^2}{.01E} \left( \frac{4P}{3} + \frac{W}{16} \right) = \frac{72^2 \text{ in}^2}{16000 \text{ \#/in}^2} \left[ \frac{4(150) \text{ \#}}{3} + \frac{320 \text{ \#}}{16} \right]$$

or

$$\frac{ab^3}{12} \geq 71.3 \text{ in}^4 .$$

For a = 2 inches nominal = 1.625 inches actual,

$$b \geq \sqrt[3]{\frac{12(71.3)}{1.625}} = 8.08 \text{ inches.}$$

For b = 9 inches, nominal = 8.25 inches, actual  $b > 8.08$  inches, so 2 x 9 (inches) lumber is adequate (38).

Similar results are obtained from wood tables. Statically indeterminate structures are somewhat more difficult of analysis, but they too can be designed with confidence using structural mechanics and, most recently, data processing and computers.

The future development and the study of Theatre Engineering, as recommended by Kupferschmid, can be fostered by the technical demands of modern rotating repertory production, the emergence of new multi-use performance facilities, the economic factors pressing on theatre companies, the increasing demand for improved theatrical productions and by the employers of the expertise.

The relevance of the article to our study cannot be over-emphasized as it elucidates the essence of theatre engineering more explicitly to lovers, users and makers of theatre, especially the

city fathers, career advisers and the youngsters.

The German immigrant, Wolfgang Roth, of the New York University School of the Arts, an apprentice of Traugott Müller, a designer of Erwin Piscator in Berlin during Hitler's Nazi Germany, in his article "Reflections of a Stage - Builder" (39) discusses his involvement as a designer and sometimes as a performer.

The "Stage - Builder", as Brecht chose to call the Scenic - Designer, according to Roth, must be involved in the totality of the theatre. His or her other qualifications should include the ability to be selective, to be able to add, but also to be able to creatively eliminate (less is often more). He must derive joy in his constant search for a new way to present the theatrical truth with enthusiasm, talent, discipline and hard work. (40)

Roth also seeks to clarify the often misunderstood expression: "The Abolition of Scenery" credited to Traugott Mueller, an expression which defines the function of scenography beyond the narrow concept that "scenery serves only as decoration". Roth advances the view that sometimes one has to eliminate in order to illuminate and that theatre is not literature, but an extension of it, created through the devotion and work of many craftsmen who are not necessarily men of letters, but are guided by theatre instinct and by knowledge and not by literary or dogmatic theories. And, according to Brecht, "theatre is not a psycho-analytical clinic". (41) Roth also examines the Scenic - Designer's working procedures which, according to him, begins by listening to discussions among authors, directors, composers,

actors and dancers. Ideally, he should start doodling and designing through rehearsals, by which means he also becomes part of the whole conception. The designer, like the actor, also should depend on the play. Roth's Scenic-Designer has to be his own dramaturge, his own director, and serve as the interpreter of the poet, writer, composer, or choreographer, to translate into terms of space, distances, lights, and colours - to form his own picture of the work.

Roth speaks of creative recycling when he says: "Make something new out of something old." Very often it also costs less money. Scenery pieces, whenever available, can be rehandled and retreated and rehung and repainted and reused. "Doesn't an actor also change his face and his figure many times?"- asks Roth. "In fact, Brecht had a great affection for old set pieces and props and he wrote a poem about props found and collected. Roth also points out that the theatre lives from all arts - past and present-and warns the designer not to commit himself too early for many final solutions do come out during the work on stage and at rehearsals through the co-operation of all involved. For the designer, whose world is picture, space and art, misunderstood aesthetics as 'self - purpose' and 'speculative originality' are dangerous. In his flexible stubbornness, he cannot risk fake heaviness and ponderous infection of "meaning" which are dubious contributions. For him, the world of theatre has to be his laboratory where to experiment but not sensationalise. He should invent but with the knowledge that theatre can exist beautifully without "technology". He has to make use of technique- the technique of change - like an actor, to participate and be able

to respond to change whenever there is a need because "change is the artistic use of technique" and, "the constant change is the motor of the theatre while curiosity is its driving power." Yet, Wolfgang Roth believes that:

Happy is the designer who really does not remember what a production he did a year ago looked like on this famous space called a stage, whatever its shape, whatever it is, can be compared to a chessboard. The game has infinite possibilities. The playing field of fantasy is borderless while less does it matter the sort of theatre philosophy that governs the production. (42)

"The friends of the designer are the technicians, form workers, carpenters, scene painters, costume makers and other theatre people. They are the most vulnerable children of the arts. They carry with them a package of sorrows, worries, connections, fear for their daily bread, their daily shelter, just by being here - ("da sein"). They are dependent on others around them yet when they step on stage and work, recite, act, dance, cry, laugh, change, add, eliminate, all become marvellous, beautiful and great. Each individual is a responsible, contributing partner and their triumph is all our triumph - so, be good to them, care for them ...", Roth, soliciting, concludes.

Jo Mielziner, another great scenographer of our time, in his article, "Art versus Craft," (43) seeks to clarify the common misunderstanding of "art" and "craft".

Mielziner contends that "in the theatre, the work of the artist and that of the craftsman are inescapably interrelated. Every single contributor to the theatrical performance must be both artisan and artist, not artist versus craftsman. The performing

arts are a collaborative venture involving the creative ensemble of a producer and a director, actors, scenic -, costume-, and lighting - artists. They all strive, including those in music, lyrics and dance, to accomplish the visual and aural details of communication. And that is the essence of all arts. The more abstract the art form, the less need for concise communication. But, in the performing arts, dealing with the verbal theatre, instant and clear communication between the actor and the audience is mandatory." To this end, Mielziner asserts that:

Stage Scenery - particularly where repertoire is played, has of necessity to be a compromise between the artistic and the practical. To the technician responsible for putting a production on the stage, it often seems that the requirements of the craft are completely ignored. Sets have become more and more elaborate and some of the new forms of staging have not only not provided the proper facilities required for handling scenery but, because of their design, demand even larger sets - the major part of whose purpose is merely that of masking. Is there indeed a growing reluctance to submit art to the discipline of time and money? (44)

In the production process, a stagehand's work can be rated as craftsmanship, while that of the dimmer - board operating lighting electrician can be rated beyond craftsmanship for the nature of his executions which entail smooth, accurate timing and sensitive manipulations comparable to the coordinating function of the musician's movement in a symphony orchestra. Therefore, the most minor appearing members of the performing arts team must at least be professional craftsmen first and later become craftsmen - artists. "We have no room for the artist who rejects craftsmanship and the craftsman insensitive to the arts, for he is of little value to any part of

our theatre" (45).

Professor Jarka M. Burian in his article "A Scenographer's Work: Josef Svoboda's Designs, 1971 - 1975" (46) sees Svoboda as "the magician and wizard of projections," who has revolutionised the contemporary stagecraft with his innovative contributions that ~~stitch from the~~ ~~cast~~ the traditional scenic-design approach to the area of laser projections; with "a wide range of scenographic possibilities from the simplest, most austere settings to elaborate, complex spectacles" (47) Svoboda's works, in terms of continuity, reflect a distinct non-literal, non-representational approach to stage setting. He uses at first, in the 1950s and the 1960s, extensively, the multi-screen projection techniques integrated in live action, culminating in the creations for Their Day (1959), Soldaten (1969) and in The Last Ones (1966). His latter works depict more sophisticated projection techniques, more generalized abstract images as a background and supplement, rather than as an integrated "performer" in stage action. Also, less use has been made of kinetic stage scenery as were found in his memorable creations for Romeo and Juliet (1963), Hamlet (1965), for Brussell's Owners of the Keys (1962). The technique and approach has seemingly pushed off-stage his earlier 'polyekran' or 'laterna Magika' principle, perhaps for the meantime.

The use of Laser projections was exemplified in Svoboda's designs for Wagner's opera - cycle: The Ring consisting of Das Rheingold, Die Walküre (staged at Covent Garden, London, in 1974 and in Geneva in 1975), Siegfried and Götterdämmerung,

(produced in 1976) respectively.

Of particular interest to our study are Svobada's creations for 'The Ring' productions for which he adopted two scenographic concepts, based on the discussions he held with the director, Goetz Friedrich, who informs that:

...the Ring of the Nibelung is not a drama closed in on itself, but rather four parts of a great epic. The idea is not to unify it optically. It becomes alive through the variety of the elements, stages, styles, atmospheres, which the work sets in motion.

... where does the 'Ring' take place?

... The 'Ring' takes place in accordance with Wagner's wishes as we know them using music and scenery, on the opera stage in the musical theatre.(49).

Burrian describes the acting area thus:

It is a platform that is remarkable for its dramatically functional characteristics and its theatrically symbolic overtones, as well as its technical specifications. Technically, it is a square, lattice-framed construction measuring approximately 33 x 33 feet, 2 feet thick. Its underface is mirrored, its top capable of varied treatment.....

...But the decisive feature of the platform is its mobility: it can sink more than six feet below the stage level or rise more than nine feet above it; moreover, it can tilt up to 45 degrees in all directions and it can rotate. Supporting the platform is a single telescopic tower with two large lifting rams; all movements are hydraulically and remotely controlled by hand held units using servo-control valves. In its specific functions and dramatic versatility, scenographically it is a unique instrument capable of expressing a multitude of dramatic states. Metaphorically, it contains great theatrical power by virtue of its sheer existence as a stage within a stage(50)

The fundamental differences in the scenic design and production concepts were that those for Das Rheingold were more suggestive, open-ended, dynamic, theatrical and above all more intrinsically provocative; while those for Die Walkuere were more traditional illusionistic. The basic scenic element deployed here was repeated parallel series of ellipsoidal image - (object) - openings that filled the stage, decreasing in size toward the rear of the stage. (51).

Svoboda's informal remarks on his work elaborate this:

"We've given birth to a stage, bare boards, the plainest stage floor, the most simple reality. We didn't want it to be a ring or anything circular, but a stage. And we think and believe that we gave ourselves an absolute freedom, and an instrument that is capable of interpreting everything that we need .... Can we have a 19th Century stage dragon or laser beams? The answer is yes - if we're playing theatre - world theatre. We have the right because the moment that we elected to have an ordinary stage, a platform, a stage floor, we created the right for ourselves to play theatre, from antiquity onward, perhaps even Chinese theatre. Because we are doing theatre of completely different kinds, four works, a commedia divina. Why not confront it with all the means at our disposal? Of course, they will have the same signature in terms of one director and one designer, but why not learn from the whole history of theatre, and why not use anything and everything that expresses it 100% at the right moment, in the right way? (52)

Projections are capable of great development because they are supported by constant new discoveries in optics, lighting instruments, projection screens and lighting techniques. (53)

In essence, scenography and theatre technology for the Nigerian theatre could be deduced from Burian's appraisal of Svoboda's ability:

to derive fresh theatrical applications from the means at his disposal; space, lighting, architectonic elements and movement, as well as special instruments and materials, many of which he himself has helped to develop. Indeed, Svoboda's inventiveness and command of innovations in optics, electronics, chemistry, and mechanics sometimes obscures his underlying aim as an artist of the stage: the creation of stage poetry with the assistance of all means made available to him by modern Science and Technology. This is Svoboda's way of trying to break away from outdated scenic traditions and to make theatre - or at least scenography - genuinely contemporary, his often expressed goal has been to make of scenography a flexible, precise, responsive instrument. The ultimate concern, however, is not the instrument but the end it serves, the living work of art on the stage. (54)



End Notes on Chapter Three

by John G. Brown and Edward C. Cole, *Scenery for the Theatre*,  
1956, Dover 1967.

In conclusion, the essence and efficacy of Stage Technology, as discovered so far, include the development and the translation of design concepts, realisation, physical execution and fabrication of the ideas of the playwrights, directors, choreographers and producers on the stage. The better equipped the contemporary Nigerian live theatre is, the better its chances would be for surviving the magnitude of the threats from the media militating against it. This survival syndrome rests a lot on the proper training of all the cadres of manpower involved in the venture.

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44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. Jarka M. Burian, "A Scenographer's Work: Josef Svoboda's Designs 1971 - 1975," in TD & T, Vol. XII, Nr. 2, Summer, 1976, p. 11. Burian of the State University of New York (SUNY) at Albany, has since the 1950s and beyond 1975 conducted extensive research and published quite a number of works on the legendary Scenographer of our time.
47. Ibid.
48. Goetz Friedrich, a director of Richard Wagner's The Ring of Nibelung speaks on his approaches in TD & T, Vol. XII, Nr. 2, Summer 1976, op. cit.
49. Ibid.
50. Burian, op. cit.
51. Ibid.
52. Svoboda, on his work in Jarka M. Burian's article, op. cit.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.

A CHRONOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEATRE DESIGN-  
SCENOGRAPHIC, TECHNOLOGICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS-THROUGH  
THE AGES FROM 500 B.C. TILL THE PRESENT

1. The Theatre of the Antiques - 500 B.C. to 533A.D

i. The Greek Theatre

Going through the antiquities to classical Greece, we discover that the collapse of the grand stand for the tournament in Athens in ca. 500 BC led to the resolution to build a permanent theatre within the sacred grounds of the temple of the god Dionysus.<sup>(1)</sup>

Phyllis Hartnoll's Oxford Companion to the Theatre confirms that the Greek open-air theatres evolved from the ritual Dithyramb performed round the altar of Dionysus which took place in front of the temple, and later on a site cut out of a neighbouring hill side.<sup>(2)</sup>

The auditorium benefits from the natural slope of the hill side from which the seats, first of wooden banks, later of stone, were carved in tiers, rising upwards and enveloping the circular orchestra at the base of the hill to about two-thirds of the circumference. Behind this orchestra was the low stage platform, the "proskenion" from which proscenium was derived. This, in turn, was backed by the stage walls. Inside the stage wall were pierced, doors leading out into the dressing rooms and to the storage areas. The same doors served the actors as the entrance to and exit from the stage. The actors were at most three - never more.

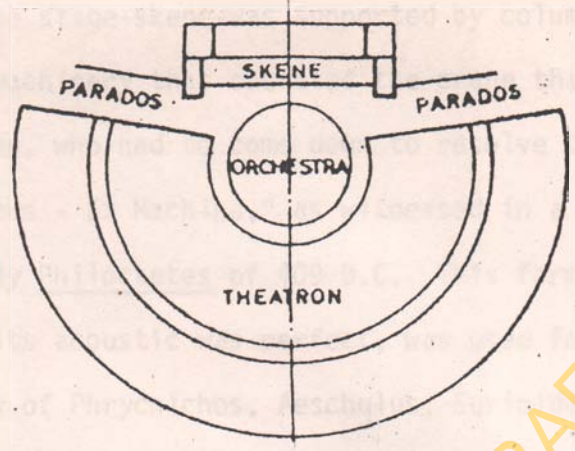


Fig 3: The Greeks Amphi theatre

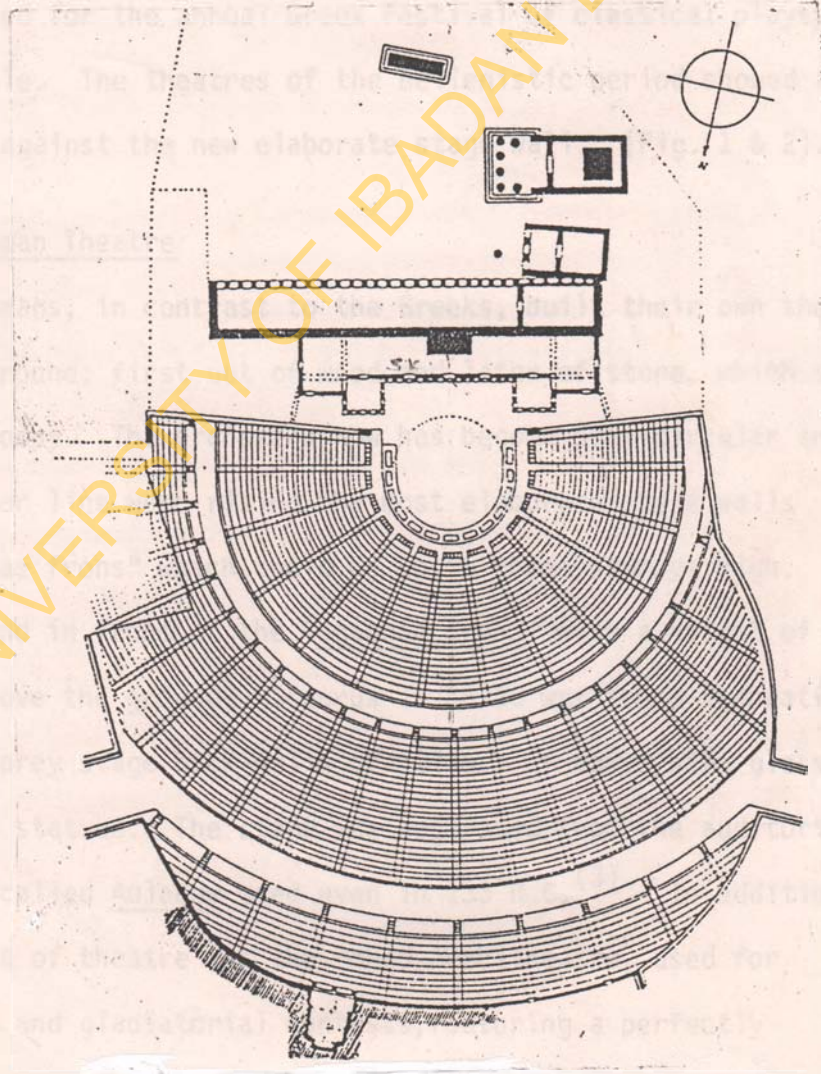


Fig 4: The Dionysus Theatre in Athens

The roof over the stage-skene-was supported by columns. The same skene was housing the machinery that operated the crane that brought down the god from heaven, who had to come down to resolve the conflicts of the plot. Hence "Deus - Ex Machina," as witnessed in a report about Sophocles' tragedy Philoctetes of 409 B.C. This form of physical theatre, for its acoustic was perfect, was used for the productions of the tragedies of Phrynicchos, Aeschylus, Euripides and Sophocles and for the comedies of Aristophanes from 500 B.C. to 388 B.C. Only such refurbished Greek theatres, like the one at Epidauros, used for the annual Greek Festival of classical plays, are still available. The theatres of the hellenistic period showed a higher stage against the new elaborate stage wall. (Fig. 1 & 2).

#### ii. The Roman Theatre

The Romans, in contrast to the Greeks, built their own theatres on the flat ground; first out of wood and later of stone, which still stand till today. The orchestra now has become semi-circular and on its diameter line were rising the most elaborate stage walls called "Scaenae frons" which could be up to three storeys high. The stage was found in front of the scaenae frons with a height of about 1.5m above the ground. Scarus in 58 BC was found decorating such three-storey stage back-walls of pillars of mamor with glass and gold and 3000 statues. The stage was separated from the auditorium by a curtain called Aulaeum used even in 133 B.C.<sup>(3)</sup>. In addition to these kinds of theatre was the round Amphitheatre, used for chariot races and gladiatorial contests, featuring a perfectly



Fig 5: The Odeon of Herod Atticus in Athen-Greece

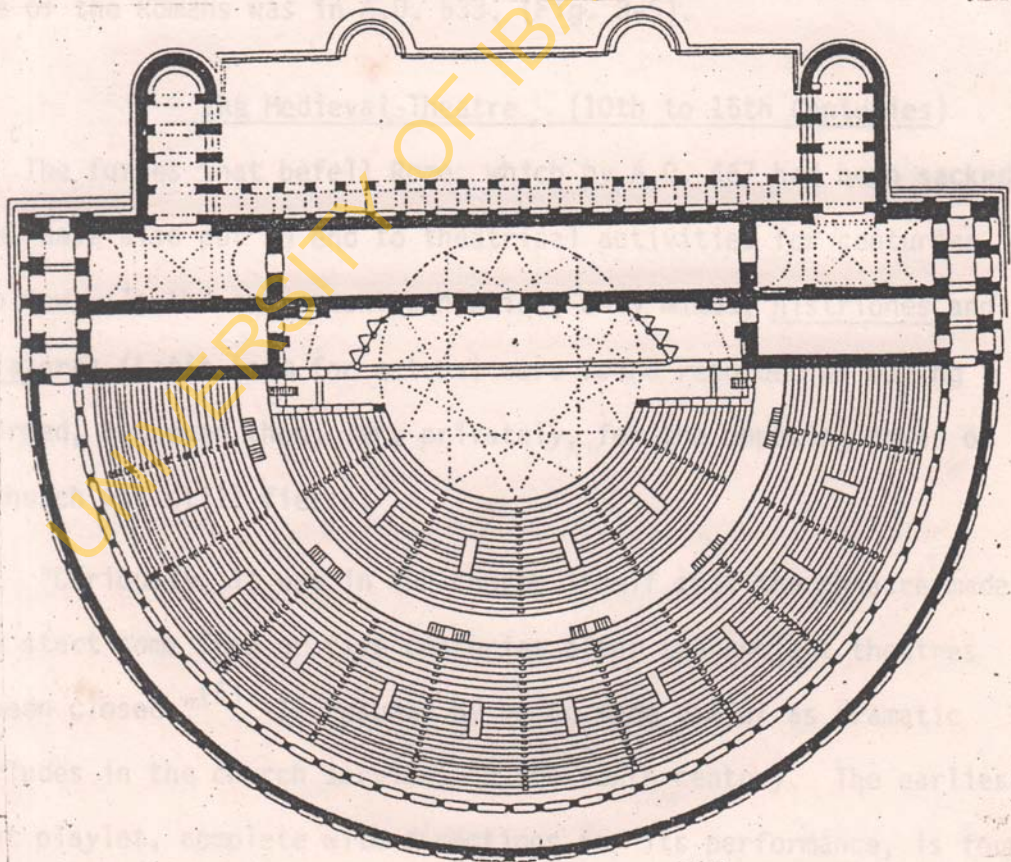


Fig 6: The Marcellus Theatre in Rome



circular arena. The Colosseum and Maximus Circus in Rome constructed between 71 and 80 A.D and the arena in Verona constructed in 290 A.D. are examples of this.

One of our first and chief sources of information on these areas was the Roman architect and engineer, Vitruvius, who was very active during the reign of Augustus<sup>(4)</sup>, but able to give, in his ten Books on Architecture, just two paragraphs on the scenery used in the Greek and Roman theatres of the time. The only scenic pieces of the classical Greek and Roman theatres were the "Periaktoi" of the Hellenistic, and the 'telari' of the Roman theatres. The stage machineries that would have been used were only indicated as inclusive of "Ekkyclema" and 'Mechane' or Machine. And the last recorded performance of the Romans was in A.D. 533. (Fig. 3-5).

### iii. The Medieval Theatre (10th to 15th Centuries)

The forces that befell Rome, which by A.D. 467 had been sacked twice, have also put an end to theatrical activities for centuries to follow. In the subsequent centuries, only mimes, histriones and iaculatores (Latin term for actors) were found recorded as having performed, but even then, very privately, for the opposing power of the church was still fierce.

"Curiously, it was in the church itself that the theatre made a new start some four or five centuries after the ancient theatres had been closed."<sup>(5)</sup> It resumed by being made use of as dramatic interludes in the church services in the tenth century. The earliest extant playlet, complete with directions for its performance, is found

in the Regularis Concordia (or Monastic Agreement) compiled between 965 and 975 by Ethelwold, Bishop of Winchester (England). By the end of the tenth century, such plays, Liturgical drama, were common in many parts of Europe, Russia, Scandinavia, Spain and Italy.

While in the church, drama was staged along some evolved conventions which include the acting space being divided into two parts: the mansions and the platea. "The mansions, also called stations, seats or 'sedes' were simple scenic devices for indicating the location of incident." They were used symbolically to represent different places - locale - while items like a throne would have suggested the king's palace, for example, Pilate's (Fig. 7). However, Oscar Brockett avows that "no adequate description of the pageant wagons has been preserved... and, "there is much disagreement on where the acting took place. It was either on the platform or platea "for the period of over two hundred years, till 1200 A.D., the interior of the churches (Cathedrals) served to provide the settings for the plays. .... Monks and priests used every means of teaching an illiterate populace the sacred history and doctrines necessary for salvation ..." with carved statues and stained-glass windows, they turned the churches into sacred story books"<sup>(6)</sup>.

By 1400 the liturgical church-drama had become very popular for it had attracted such very large congregations that the interior of the churches could no longer accommodate them all - the production and the audience. Thus, the need to move the performances outside was, partly, given credence. There, at the precinct of the

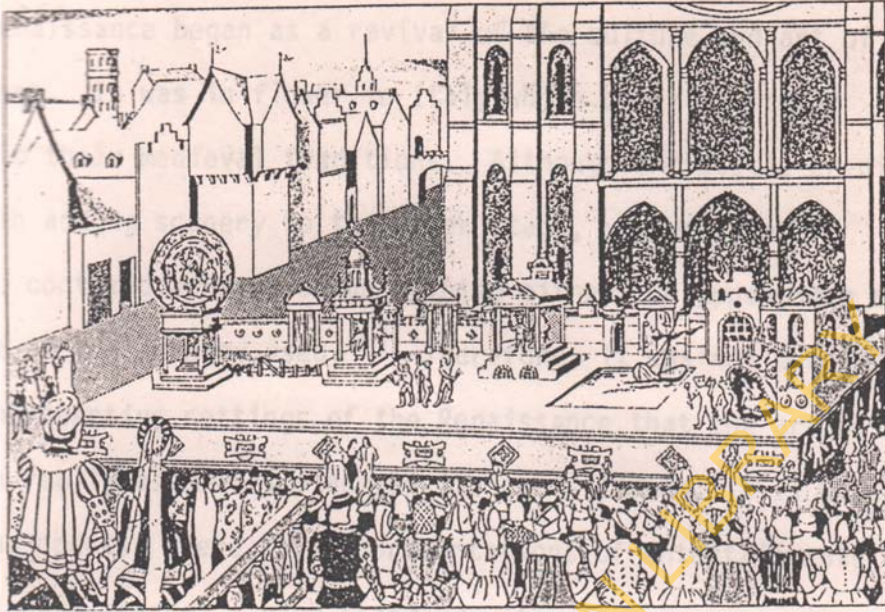
church, the drama was no longer totally free of infiltrating influences which inadvertently culminated in the control over most aspects of the productions moving from the authorities of the church into the hands of the trade guilds, municipal authorities and special societies formed to present religious dramas. Thus the Vernacular Drama which eventually evolved grew into the Cycle-(Mystery)- plays having their materials taken from the Bible and from other religious literatures. Besides these were the Miracle plays treating the lives of the saints and martyrs; Morality Plays treating the spiritual trials of the average man and the secular dramatic forms; folk play, the farce and the secular interlude.

George Kernodle has argued that "the occasions for the production of cycles of plays during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries <sup>were</sup> was the procession and festival that open the summer trade fair", (7) while Oscar Brockett insists that English cycles of plays were usually staged as a part of the Corpus Christi festival, the essential feature of which was a procession through the town with the consecrated bread and wine or both; while Phyllis Hartnoll claimed that in England, by contrast, Biblical plays were often acted on pageants while the Cornish rounds represent a rare form of permanent open-air theatre, the fixed stages. (8)

While productions on the fixed stages on the one hand may have great technical and managerial problems, yet on the other hand, they have more potentials for scope and spectacles, for the stages could have a length of seventy- and a width of up to twenty-meters, thus allowing for the placement of about twenty mansions, simultaneously, needed for a cycle, realised with the aid of inventing the "secrets" of the

elaborate stage machinery and special effects. An authoritative account reports that the complex nature of these machinery and devices in 1501 called for the services of skilled machinists and technicians: seventeen people to operate the Hell machinery, five men to paint the scenery and four actor-prompters to run a play staged at Mons in Belgium. The most popular of this is the one used in France, at Valenciennes, where such spectacular special effects—such as Christ being lifted up to the top of a temple—were shown in the passion plays.

The stages for the vernacular plays most typically were set against buildings on one side of a town square, "extending perhaps to the middle thereof, sometimes, perhaps, staged in the ancient Roman amphitheatre, or other circular place, and viewable from at least three sides." The productions followed the same basic principles of the church's scenic conventions: script of a series of playlets, the three planes - Heaven, Earth, and Hell—involved in every production. The scenic representation of all was aided by special effects and stage machinery operated from beneath the stage. The numerous trap doors served the appearance and disappearance of persons and objects. For "flying" purposes, pulleys and ropes were attached to adjoining buildings. Mystery plays were presented on mobile wagons, scene by scene. The increased interest in classical learning, changes in the social structure that gradually destroyed the feudal and the corporate life and the dissension within the church led to the prohibition of religious plays by Queen Elizabeth I, in 1558, in England.

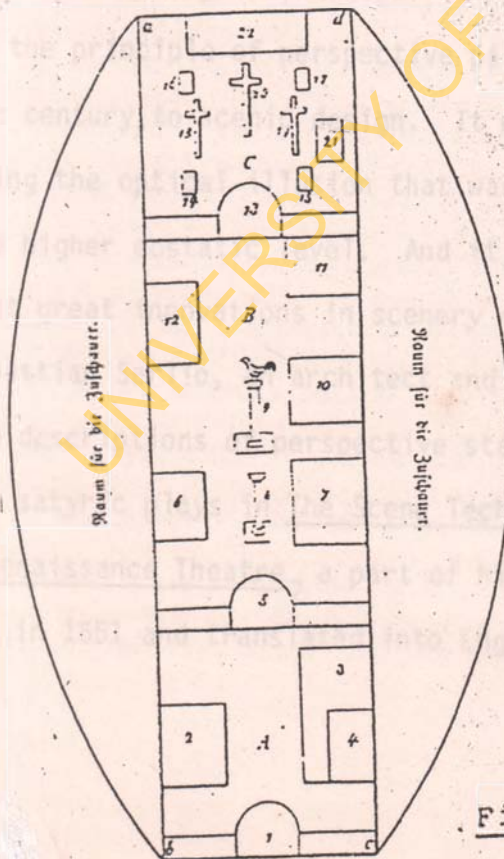


**Fig. 7** Medieval simultaneous or multiple settings on a long platform. Each episode had its own mansion, though all the mansions to be used each day were set up from the beginning. From the manuscript of the Valenciennes production, 1547. Drawn by Ethelyn Pauley.

### KEY

A, B, and C means the individual (Sections) departments of the stage.

1. The first gate.
2. Hell.
3. The Garden of Gethsemane.
4. The Olive Mountain.
5. The Second gate.
6. House of Herod.
7. House of Pilate.
8. Pillar on which Jesus was tied
9. Pillar with the cock.
10. House of Caiphas.
11. House of Annas.
12. House of the last Supper.
13. The third gate.
- 14-17. The graves.
- 18-19. The Crosses of the thieves.
20. Cross of Christ.
21. The Holy Sepulchre.
22. Heaven.



**Fig. 8** Plan of Medieval Stage

## II. The Theatre of the Renaissance (15th - 17th Cent.)

The Renaissance began as a revival of the culture and art of Greece and Rome. It was in flower in Italy while other countries still clung to their medieval traditions. Although "Aristotle credits Sophocles with adding scenery to the Greek stage, ~~but~~ we have absolutely no contemporary source describing either the appearance or the structure of the scenery used.<sup>(9)</sup> Therefore, it was not until the picture perspective settings of the Renaissance that the art of scenic design really assumed a place of its own. Indeed, it is here in the Italian courts, where lavish presentations of entertainments of various forms have reached a high standard with all possible splendour, that we finally discover Scenography properly in action. For instance, Peruzzi, influenced by the works of Vitruvius, his teacher, found applying the principle of perspective painting, developed in the mid-fifteenth century, to scenic design. It made enclosed spaces seem larger, thus aiding the optical illusion that was to bring theatrical experience to a much higher ecstatic level. And it was to open the way for the subsequent great innovations in scenery design heralded by Peruzzi's pupil Sebastian Serlio, an architect and painter, who by 1545 had published descriptions of perspective stage settings for tragic, comic and satyric plays in The Scene Technician's Handbook of the Italian Renaissance Theatre, a part of his larger work on architecture published in 1551 and translated into English in 1611.

Serlio set up a temporary theatre in a courtyard for the Academicians of Vincenza in the 1530s and another was erected in 1560 by Bartholomeo Neroni (ca. 1500-71/3) in the palace of the Senate in Siena (10) Architecturally, the legacy of 16th century Italy was the proscenium arch which framed the elaborate stage picture.

The shape of the auditorium in a horse-shoe form, evolved with the rise of Opera and ballet. Examples of this Italian Opera theatre is the Teatro Olympico at Vicenza started by Palladio but completed by Vincenzo Scamozzi (1552-1610). It has a magnificent 'scaenae frons' which was used first at its completion in 1585. Scamozzi also built the theatre "Sabbinetta" in 1589. Other theatres of such magnitude include Teatro Farnese at Parma built by Alleoti in 1619. According to Frank M. Whiting, "until the Renaissance, theatre architecture and the art of scenic design were essentially inseparable ... there was a strong tendency for the visual background of the play to be a permanent part of the theatre itself ..." (11) These consist of a pair of side scenes receding symmetrically at right angles to the front of the stage. Tragic scenes are delineated with columns, pediments, statues and other objects suited to kings; comic scenes exhibit private dwellings; satyric scenes are decorated with trees, caverns, mountains, and other rustic objects, delineated in landscape style." (12) John Gassner, in a publication by Professor Morris Hickey Morgan of Harvard University, described the settings thus:

The 'scaena' itself displays the following scheme. In the centre are double doors, decorated like those of a royal palace. At the right and left are doors of the guest chambers. Beyond are spaces provided for decoration - places that the Greeks call 'periaktoi' because in these places are triangular pieces of Machinery which revolve, each having three decorated faces. When the play is to be changed, or when the gods enter to the accompaniment of sudden claps of thunder, these may be revolved and present a face differently decorated. Beyond these places are the projecting wings which afford entrances to the stage, one from the forum, one from abroad. (13)

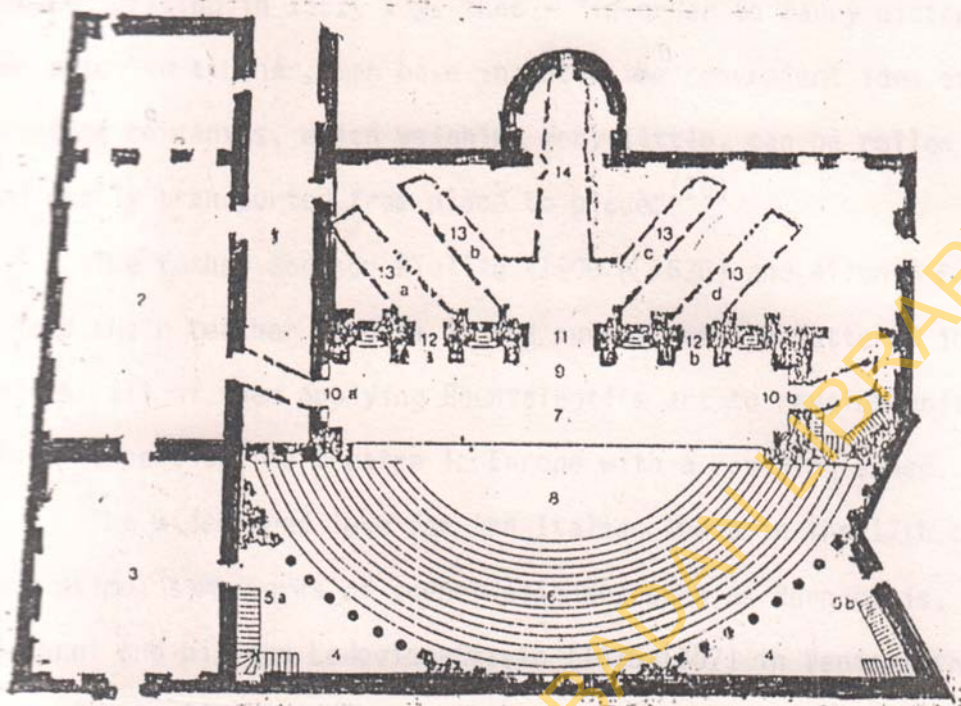
We deduce that all that has to do with scene construction and properties has been summarised thus:

Among all the things that may be made by men's hands, thereby to yield admiration, pleasure to sight, and to content the fantasies of men, I think it is the placing of a scene, as it is showed to your sight, where a man in a small place may see, built by carpenters or masons skillful in perspective work, great palaces, large temples, and divers houses, both near and far off; ... and a thousand fair things and buildings adorned with innumerable lights "All such houses I always made of spars, or rafters, or laths, covered with linen cloth ... making doors and windows as occasion fell out. I have also made some things of half planks of wood, which were great help to the painters to set out things at life. I have always made a small model of wood and paper ... and by this same model, let it be done in the large, from piece to piece ...

Some cornices cut out at the ends, and accompanied with some others that are painted, show well in work ... the windows which stand before were good to be made of glass or paper, with light being them"

I have made all my scenes of laths, covered linen, yet sometimes it is necessary to make some things rising or bossing out; which are to be made of wood ... all that you make above the roof sticking out, as chimneys, towers, pyramids, obelisks, and other such like things or images, you must make them all of thin boards, cut out round and well coloured --- (15).





1. Camminata/Corridor
2. Ombra/Old man
3. Ambulatio/Introduction
4. Spazio/Arco/Ambulatory
5. Scale a e b/Stairs (a and b)
6. Cortile/Courtyard
7. Proscenio/Proscenium
8. Orchestra/Orchestra pit
9. Fronte di scena/Fronte scene
10. Vanture (a e b)/Dividing walls (a and b)
11. Porta regia/Royal Door
12. Hospitatio (a e b)/Hospitality (a and b)
13. Prospettive dello Scamozzi (a, b, c e d)
14. Scamozzi's backdrops (a, b, c and d)
15. Via regia/Via regia

Teatro Olimpico, Vicenza.  
Built between 1580 and 1584 by Italian architect Vincenzo Scamozzi from the basic design by Andrea Palladio. (Inigo Jones later imported Palladio's classical style into England where Palladian motifs became popular.) Photograph — O. G. Brockett.

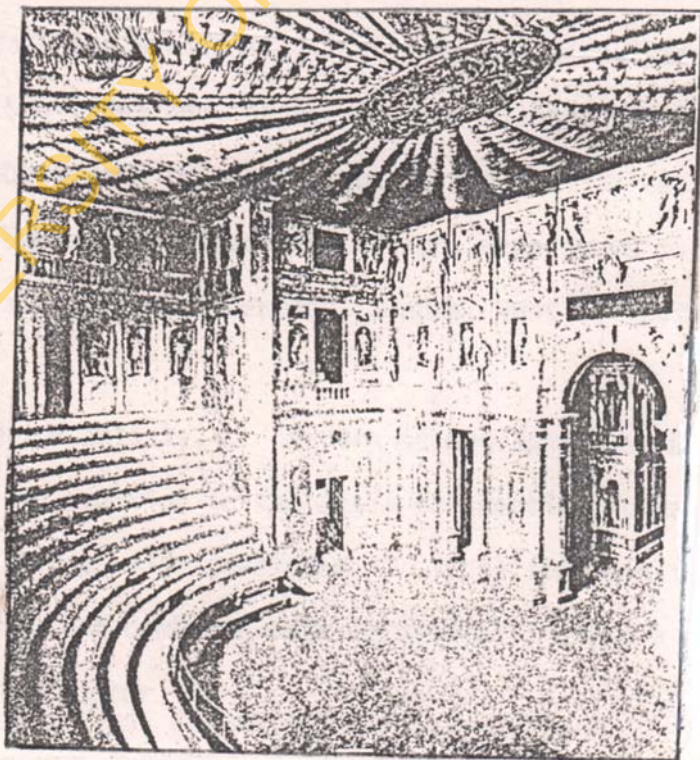


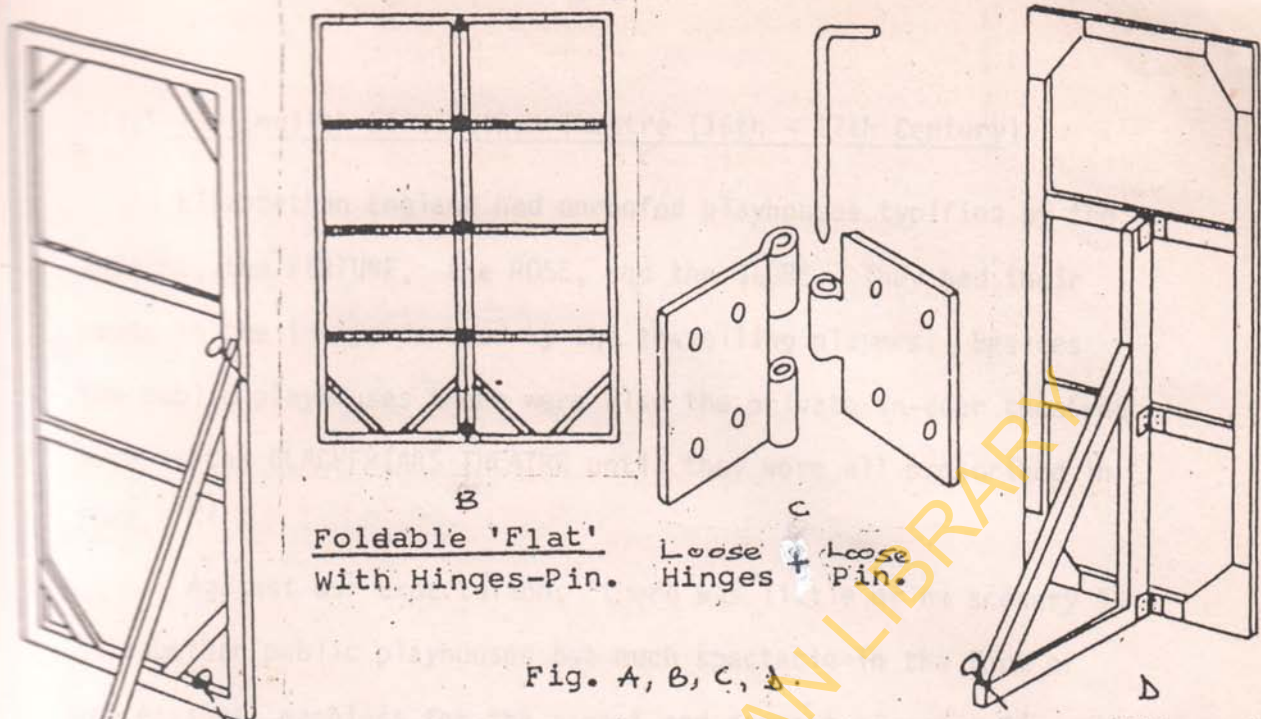
Fig 9: The Teatro Olympics in Vicenza

Serlio's use of cloth-covered frames for scenery was probably suggested to him by their use for oil paintings. The Italian painter, Vasari, writing in 1551, says that - "in order to carry pictures from one place to another, men have invented the convenient idea of painting on canvas, which weighing very little, can be rolled up, and easily transported from place to place."<sup>(16)</sup>

The father and son Giulio (1590 - 1636) and Alfonso Parigi joined their teacher Peruzzi in the pursuit of the latter's innovative drives, all of them applying Bontalenti's art to revolutionize the visual aspect of the theatre in Europe with a ravaging speed.

The widespread love for the Italian Opera in the 17th century, gave stimulus to the works of scene designers such as Burnacini, Giovanni and his son Lodovico-Otavio (1636-1707) in Venice; the Mauro family of five brothers, who worked in Venice, Vienna and Dresden between 1650 and 1820; the two generations of the Galliari family in north Italy and Berlin till 1823; the great sculptor Benini, Filippo Juvarva (1676-1736) and, above all, the Bibiena family, of which at least seven members were the best known of the Italian designers of their times, whose baroque architectural designs were found in every capital city of Italy, Austria, Germany, Sweden, Russia, Spain and Portugal. <sup>(17)</sup>

To all of those artists, modern scenography owes much gratitude. They, in addition to the angle perspective, usually credited to the Bibienas, also developed landscape painting to a grown popularity and combined both to gradually bring a new look to theatrical decor.



B  
Foldable 'Flat'  
With Hinges-Pin.

C  
Loose Hinges + Loose Pin.

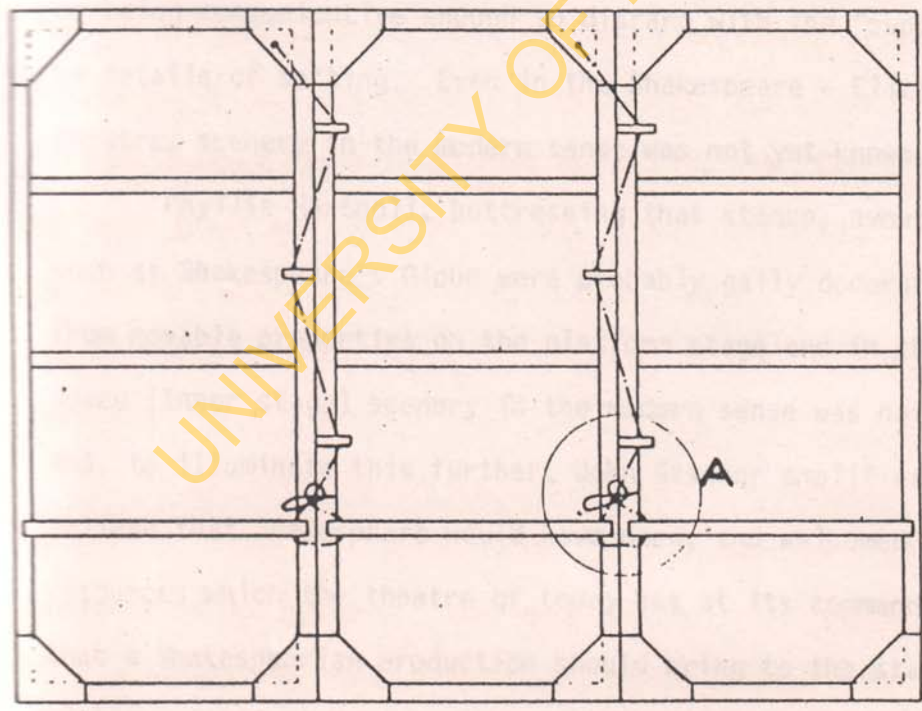
D  
Flat + Folding angular stiffener.

Fig. A, B, C, D

Fig. 10; The Various "Flat" Systems

A.  
Flat + Stiffener.

Flats laced together with 61st-Iron



A



Flat

### III.: The English Elizabethan Theatre (15th - 17th Century)

Elizabethan England had unroofed playhouses typified by the THEATRE, the FORTUNE, the ROSE, and the GLOBE. They had their roots in the inn-yards used by the travelling players. Besides the public playhouses there were also the private in-door theatres such as the BLACKFRIARS THEATRE until they were all proscribed in 1642. (18)

Against our expectation, "there was little or no scenery in Elizabethan public playhouses but much spectacle in the form of processions, machines for the ascent and descent of gods, fire works, sound effects and the like" (19). There was no need to indicate locality since the context of the play itself was accepted, perhaps, as being communicative enough to discard with the "supplementation" by details of setting. Even in the Shakespeare - Elizabethan theatre, scenery in the modern sense was not yet known.

Phyllis Hartnoll, buttressing that stance, avows: "Theatres such as Shakespeare's Globe were probably gaily decorated, but apart from movable properties on the platform stage and in the discovery space (Inner stage) scenery in the modern sense was not used." (20)

And, to illuminate this further, John Gassner amplifies: "I believe that Shakespeare would have used, and welcomed the visual resources which the theatre of today has at its command. I believe that a Shakespearian production should bring to the stage that quality of visual beauty which it is part of the theatre's business to provide." (21)

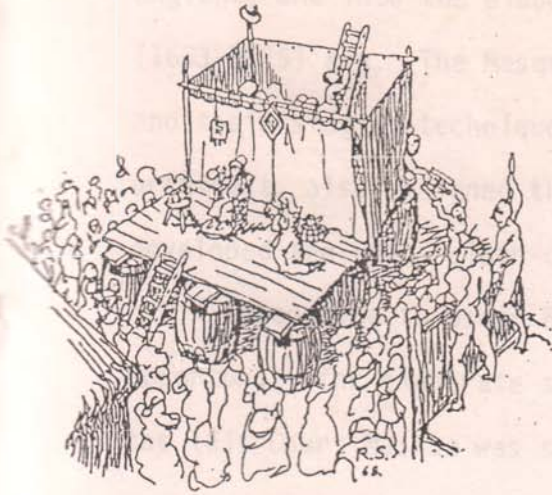


Fig. 11: Cabin - Booth - Stage on a Market-Place.

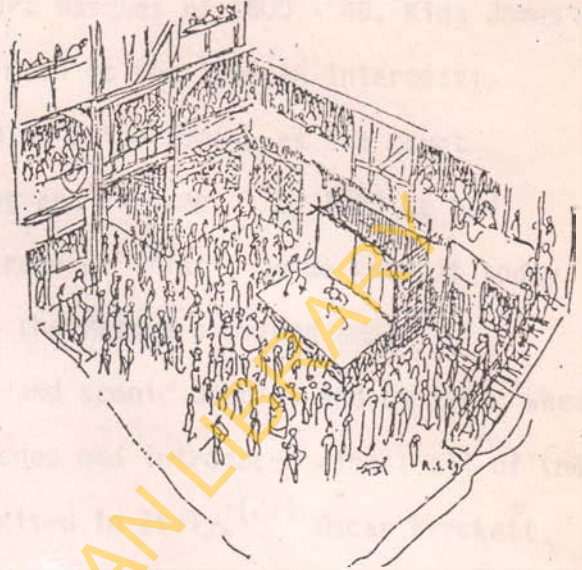


Fig. 12 Cabin - Booth - Stage in the Court of a Guest house.

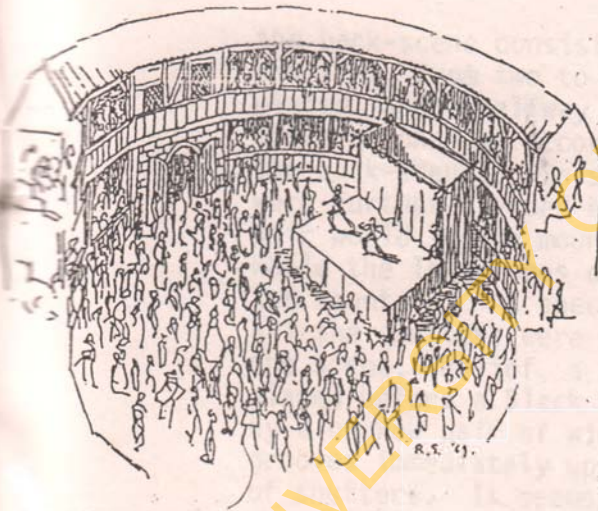


Fig. 14: Cabin - Booth - Stage in an animal-arena. The-Elizabethan - Shakespeare - Theatre

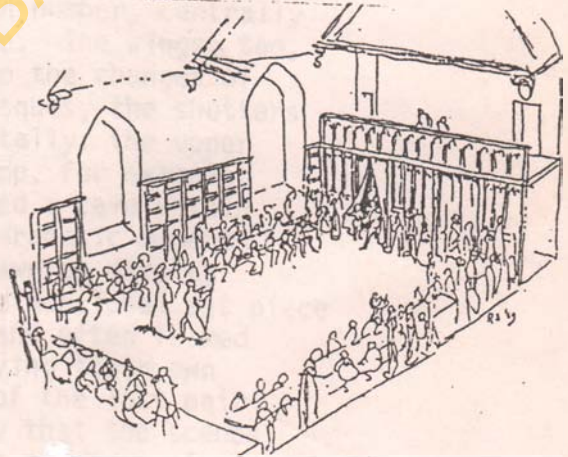


Fig. 15 Performance in a non-Conventional Theatre-Hall.

Inigo Jones (1573-1652), who had studied in Italy and had been deeply influenced by the innovations there, introduced the art to England, and into the elaborate court masques of 1600 - 40, King James I (1603-1625) era. The Masques owed much to the Italian Intermezzi, and their staging techniques for which Inigo Jones, as the court architect, also designed the setting and costumes. By 1630 he had developed the unit, cloth-covered frame or "flat", as we know it today.

According to Oscar Brockett, the Masque provided ample opportunity for elaborate spectacle and scenic display and by 1640, when the last Court Masque was staged, Jones had introduced almost all of the scenic devices that had been popularised in Italy. (22) Oscar Brockett describes the whole system thus:

the back-scene consisted of pairs of painted shutters, from two to four in number, centrally placed, about halfway upstage. The wings, too, could be changed according to the changes of the back-scenes. In some masques, the shutters were further divided horizontally: the upper pair would show a mountain-top, for example, while the lower ones disclosed a cave within the mountain. At specially dramatic moments all the shutters were withdrawn to display the scene. Relief, a three-dimensional set piece placed before a Black cloth and often framed by a narrow pair of wings having their own grooves immediately upstage of the last pair of shutters. It seems likely that the scenes of relief were constructed in a manner similar to the set scenes of a modern pantomime with their successive profiled ground rows. (23)

Besides the courts of the princes and kings, to where the masques were essentially confined, there were the public play houses engrossed in the traditional staging techniques and in design approaches on which Inigo Jones' introductions and developments had no significant

influence or impact. The public theatres were still using the bare apron stage derived from the medieval tradition until the civil war of 1642 brought a stop to development along the European continental pattern. In 1660, Monarchy was restored and it reopened the way, proscenium arch and the perspective settings became the standard. And as John Gassner emphatically states: "Certainly, from Inigo Jones to the end of the nineteenth century the new visual element, scenery, increasingly dominated the stage." (24)

The period's best known scene painter was Robert Steaker (or Streeter) (1624-1680). Others include Aggas, Fuller and Webb engaged at the Drury Lane and at the Dorset Garden theatres respectively.

#### The English Theatre of the Restoration Period

With the restoration of Charles II to the throne of England in 1660 began the English theatre of the Restoration period. But the theatre has reopened into the hands of regulations, one of which stipulated that play production without a permit or patents was illegal. By the early 1660s only William D'Avenant (1606 - 1668), as the head of the Duke's men company, and Thomas Killigrew (1612 - 1683), the leader of the King's men troupe, were in possession of the permit for a long time to come and thus maintained a monopoly over the theatres such as the Drury Lane and Covent Garden. Strategies by many of the 'illegitimate' or 'inferior' groups to circumvent the law, after trying abortively to secure the patents, and the numerous satirical productions about government officials and policies, provoked the stricter Play Production Licensing Act of 1737 which, though it was repealed in 1843, remained effective until 1968.

### Scenery and Theatre Architecture of the English Restoration Period.

Still the aesthetic revolutions going on on the continent, particularly in France and Italy, have not had a major effect on English theatrical practices and little change was seen in the area of scenic design. The adopted basic scenic style for over a century consisted of settings principally used as background, rather than environment in which the actor was to live, for he used mostly the apron upon which up to three proscenium doors opened, flanked at the back by the sets of wings and backcloths verifying a direct inheritance from the flat scene of the masques and influenced by the medieval modes.

The resurging theatrical activities resumed in the old playhouses built before the civil war of 1642. The new theatres that began to surface have begun to incorporate Italianate features of the Italian Opera house, retaining the horse-shoe plan and proscenium stage which combined with the large forestage inherited from the Elizabethan playhouse with proscenium doors opening on to it. In addition, boxes tended to be situated on the walls only with galleries above them and at the back of the auditorium (25). Examples of such restoration theatres are Dorset Garden (1671) and the rebuilt Drury Lane (1674), both credited to John Rich for their remodelling along the European pattern.

#### IV. The Spanish Theatre (16th and 17th Cent.)

Spain, between late 16th and late 17th centuries, experienced a full burst of activity, so intense that the period has been regarded as the Golden Age of Spanish Literature. The Theatre and Drama of Spain had a resemblance to the English counterparts of the same era before



the new Italian ideas of writing and staging were assimilated by the two countries without exhibiting sharp division between the theatrical entertainment designed for the court and that intended for the common people (26).

In 1579, in Madrid, the first permanent public theatre (or corrale) emerged by remodelling existing houses, that had formed a courtyard, into a theatre. In addition to the standing spaces, seats were created by installing benches, balconies and rooms of the houses that formed the courtyard. This is similar to the English Elizabethan open-air stage with a raised platform or scaffolding stage typified by the THEATRE, the FORTUNE, the ROSE, and the GLOBE, the similar roots as the inn-yards used by travelling players (27).

As for the staging, architecture and scenic design, according to Bernard Sobel, "In 16th century Spain, planks stretched across trestles were used for a stage, and costumes consisted of shepherds' fleece coats ... There was no drop curtain; a momentary clearing of the stage indicated a change of scene, though not infrequently the dialogue indicated a change of scene. A raised partition at the back of the stage served to represent a house, wall, mountain, etc. In this was sunk an alcove, covered by a curtain, which, when down, represented a tableau. Sheets could be drawn when necessary to divide the stage. Forests were represented by either painted canvas or small trees set on the stage. In all there was little scenery, only much appeal to the imagination. Little use of stage machinery was made until the middle of the 17th century when Italian stage carpenters introduced many novelties. Little sense of 'local colour' existed, but costumes were exquisite." (28)

The two great playwrights of that Golden Age were Lope Felix de Vega Carpio, usually called Lope de Vega (1562 - 1635) who occupied in Spanish literature a position comparable to that held by Shakespeare in English literature, and Pedro Calderon de la Barca (1600 - 1681) given to writing for the Corpus Christi Festival of Madrid. Other playwrights in that age, include Tirso de Molina (1534 - 1648) and Juan Ruiz de Alarcon Mendoza (ca. 1581-1639). Professional theatre started by the dramatist, actor and producer, Lope de Rueda (1510-1565) flourished in Spain until 1580.

In Spain there was also a close connection between the church and the theatre which remained intact until 1765 when religious drama was prohibited in that country.

#### V. The French-Classicism and Theatre

By the early 1630s, the French dramatists had gone to the extreme opposites of the Elizabethan dramatists of the medieval antecedents. French extremity has produced the French neo-classicism that sought to surpass even the Greeks' in almost all of its ramifications, expressed in its compactness, austerity, polish, simplicity and order over complexity and turbulence, that hybrid of conflicts, tensions and dissensions resulting from the expansive energies of the Renaissance.

With Richelieu on the throne, France was brought into the limelight, brightening the way for a new age of reason, in which heroic drama, which would harmoniously control "violent personal forces and conflicting values" in a piece was to set in. At this time still, Alexandre Hardy's (1572 - 1632) dramatic methods had had to contend with

the inherited prevalent medieval simultaneous - staging. Both of the public theatres in the 1630s, the Hotel de Bourgogne and the Theatre du Marais, still used simultaneous settings and Laurent Mahélot was still designing for this kind of settings, the décor simultane, the simultaneous setting, which was still in use in 1640. Some French producers, especially in staging Operas, imitated the elaborate effects of the Italian Opera, with its sliding wings and backdrops, monsters rising from the waves, angels and devils flying through the air, and whole choirs of angels and Jupiter in all his glory descending in clouds to restore order to a world in turmoil.<sup>(29)</sup> But Richelieu was not happy at this kind of magical setting, spectacles and grandeur which had attracted generations of theatre lovers to the arts, that had emphasized medieval rather than Renaissance ideals. Richelieu, therefore, built in his palace, in 1637, a theatre with the first permanent proscenium arch in France<sup>(30)</sup>.

This theatre called the Palais Royal, after Richelieu's death in 1642, was to become the home of Moliere's troupe. With this began another phase of development in the French theatre and especially in scenography. Cardinal Mazarin has succeeded Richelieu as the Prime Minister and, as an Italian, a deep lover of his homeland's Opera, caused the designer Giacomo Torelli (1608 - 1678) a pupil of Aleotti to move to France in 1645 as the scenic designer in his palace. Torelli created a rage for "Machine Plays" with his inventions including the "Carriage and Frame" or "Chariot and Pole" systems, which are methods of rapid scene-changing, that he had perfected between 1641 and 1645 in Italy and which won him the nickname of the "Great Wizard". This

method replaced the many stage hands used to make quick changes, but results were not entirely satisfactory because of the difficulties encountered in synchronizing the movements. Yet this solution was adopted everywhere in Europe except England.

### The Basic Principles of Neo-Classicism

The neo-classicists' French Academy formed in 1629, with Richelieu's encouragement, became an official organisation in 1636 which has exerted a decided influence on French literature and drama, aimed at elucidating the fundamental principles and concepts of verisimilitude; purity of dramatic types; the five-act form; decorum; the purposes of drama; and the three unities of time, place and action: to include no scenes of public spectacle, and to show its characters as abstract universalized types. The concept of "Verisimilitude" or the appearance of truth to be found in norms, is a complex concept which comprises three aspects: reality, morality and generality or abstraction.

In pursuance of "reality", all those things that cannot actually happen in real life must be discarded with by the play-wright. Fantasy and occurrences beyond easy human perception and comprehension, "supernatural occurrences" must be eliminated as long as they are not an integral part of a story as in Greek myths or Biblical materials. Therefore dramatists have to use drama to teach moral lessons, and in their pursuit of faithfulness to reality they were not merely to copy life but to reveal its ideal moral patterns. Hence the truth was defined as those norms that are discoverable through the rational and

systematic examination of phenomena, whether natural or man-made.

The norms remain unchanged regardless of the period or locale, thence rational men were expected to accept them as the basis for literary creation and critical judgement (31)

Consequently, every aspect of drama was to be covered by the norms, the result was that the basic types of drama, tragedy and comedy, were regarded as superior while others in between or outside of them stand for inferior mixtures. While tragedy was written about rulers or the nobility, comedy was on the middle or lower class. With the principle of complete universality in drama, cutting away everything that is not true of all men in all times and in all places - decorum interprets to mean "fitness", "appropriateness" or "suitability" for the achievement of character portrayal. The purpose of drama, to most theorists, was to teach and to please whereas the essence of "teaching" was to be vindicated through the "poetic justice" which justified rewards or punishment to the characters in the play as communicated. Hence, unworthy characters are ridiculed in comedy while the repercussions of wrong doings or errors are depicted in tragedy. To "please" in a dramatic sense implies that entertainment has to be obvious for the teaching to be effective. That is the 'sugar-coated pill' function of art.

The age of French classicism had brought the theatre of maturity. It produced three great playwrights, Pierre Corneille (1606 - 1684), Jean Racine (1639 - 1699) and Jean-Baptiste Poquelin (Moliere) (1622 - 1673) with such works as Corneille's Le Cid (The

Cid (1636); Racine's Phaedra (1677) and Moliere's The School for Wives (1662), Tartuffe (1664); The Miser (1668); The Doctor in spite of Himself (1666); The Would-be Gentleman (1671), and The Imaginary Invalid (1673).

The scenic demands of the neo-classicist's dramatic works were simple, as Oscar Brockett also testifies:

Ordinarily, the setting represented a single place and even that was not indicated in detail because of the neoclassical quest for generality. Since place was not to be depicted with marked individualizing features, the same set (done in the Italian manner with wings, borders and back scenes) could be used for a number of different plays. Furthermore, by the second half of the seventeenth century, spectators were seated regularly on the stage itself on chairs or benches, at either side leaving an acting area only about fifteen feet wide. The actor, therefore, performed in the midst of spectators and in a very confined space. As a result, the majority of plays did not call for very much physical action, and little attention was paid to creating the illusion of a specific place. The stage, auditorium and scenery followed, in all important respects, those of the Italian theatre (32).

The major scenic designers were Vigarani Jean Berain (1637 - 1711), Jean Nicolas Servandoni, at the 'Salle des Machines' (hall of spectacles) in Paris, while the Quaglio family was to continue the trend in Germany, as did Conzaga in Russia.<sup>(33)</sup> By 1680, the great age of French Playwriting was over and the numbers of theatres had shrunk steadily after 1673. The merger of the five theatres existing in 1673 at the time of Moliere's death (the companies at the Hotel de Bourgogne and the Marais, Moliere's, an Opera troupe and an Italian company) into Comedie Française became, in 1680, the first national theatre in the

world. Its other name is 'La Maison de Moliere' whose traditions it continues to uphold<sup>(34)</sup>.

## VI. The German Theatre in the 16th - 17th Centuries

After the Reformation, in Germany, theatrical performances were withdrawn from the public streets and confined within the walls of churches, convents or vineyards. Plays were given twice a week, especially the school drama.

The low state of the theatre was reflected in the plays. They featured violent action, exaggerated characters and bombastic dialogue. The 'Narr' or the Fool, in his cap and bells, typified the characteristic of the early German farce. The local form of the fool - Hanswurst - a character based on Harlequin of the Commedia dell'arte soon emerged and was taken over by actors of the guilds of mastersingers who were tradesmen and artisans that took up the art as a pastime. Hanswurst became a completely original comic figure in the hands of Stranitzky and in those of the Master singer, Hans Sachs (1494 - 1576), a cobbler by profession, who became an early German dramatist and a star in Richard Wagner's Die Meistersinger von Nuernberg, first performed in the 1550s on an improvised stage created in the abandoned Martha Kirche in Nuernberg, as the first theatre building of Germany.

Other theatrical presentations such as farce were given about the 1550s mainly by the wandering English travelling troupes - "Die Englische Komodianten" - of which the best known company, under the leadership of Robert Browne, performed in Frankfurt in 1592. The other known company was formed under Sackville in the Court Theatre of

Heinrich Julius Von Brunswick in Wolfenbuettel soon after 1592. As those companies travelled light, their scenery must have been non-existent. The stages used were erected locally for them and they reflected, basically, a modification of the Elizabethan structure with the platform stage jutting out. It had a room at the back and perhaps a gallery above it.

The Thirty Years War (1618 - 1648) came to hamper the activities of the English wandering troupes, but by 1650, however, there had been some all German troupes, even though none of them had a permanent home yet.

By 1659, the time of the last English troupe in Germany, the emergent popular Opera staging had begun to feel the influence of the Italian perspective scenery, machinery and operatic spectacles dominating in the court theatres built by the Italian architects for the reigning princes, and in the splendidly staged Jesuit plays, with texts in Latin (35).

While the first Court Opera of the Italian influence was given in 1618 at Salzburg, by 1652 the courts of Vienna had become the major opera and theatrical centre in Europe. Still the impact of the Thirty Year War continued to be greatly felt even till 1700 in Germany for, at that time, she was still balkanized into small states, with only a few large cities with small population and small wealth - each existing under different political and religious governments.



## VII.: The Eighteenth Century Theatre

### 1. The Italian Theatre

While the Italian Opera, theatre architecture and scenic design modes dominated, significant developments were recorded during the 18th Century in Europe. Then, the angle-perspective already introduced was perfected. With the vanishing point put at either one or both sides the optical illusion of greater, larger and deeper space was created on the viewer who perceived the vistas as if it were continuous off-stage on either side. Thus, the actors may be permitted a closeness to the backdrop.

The stage was treated as an extension of the auditorium and scenery had been proportioned accordingly. The wings near to the front of the stage were painted as if they were continuing portions of structures too large to be contained on the stage. They appear as if they were extensions of scenery which had its origin on the stage and which was just flowing over the apron into the auditorium. The trend towards excessive ornamentation which had begun in the seventeenth century was said to have been continued by the Bibienas. Their "columns were twisted and entwined with garlands; S-curved supports were added to beams and pediments, encrustations abounded everywhere."<sup>(36)</sup>

The development of Comic Opera in France by Rene' Le Sage in the early part of the century gave rise, in Italy, to a demand for more domestic and rustic scenes and the increasing interest in specific settings led to the inclusion of "local-colour" details.

The impact of the rediscovery of Pompeii in 1748 was felt in the aroused European interest in classical ruins which found expression in the scenic design particularly in the works of Gian Battista Piranesi (1720 - 1778). Piranesi emphasized, in his engraving of prisons and ruins, the extremes of light and shadow. Thenceforth designers were becoming more aware of the essence of creative lighting. They sought to understand "mood" and to depict picturesque places under moonlight and interiors lighted by directional beams of light. All this culminated in different experiments in scene design which had been yielding different results in visual conceptualizations and in furtherance of the known operatic tradition of the past featuring sumptuous decors by the best stage designers of the day, the inheritors of the traditions of the Bibienas, Burnacini and Javarra, and the most interesting of whom was Jean-Nicolas Servandony who had great, precocious and pernicious influences on the French, German and especially on the Italian designers, who before then were found in theatres of every European town. They all now seem to have migrated to France for she has become the citadel of supremacy. Here David Garrick of England discovered his French designer, de Louthembourg, whose scenic styles, as seen in the London theatres, were not totally devoid of Baroque style<sup>(37)</sup> inflected into Boquet's Rococo style<sup>(38)</sup>. The Rococo style consequently had brought a new vision to the world of Court entertainments and for Opera more so.

The best of the Italian playwrights of the century were, Carlo Goldoni (1707-1793) and Carlo Gozzi (1720-1806). Goldoni's reforms include sentimentalism, fun and light-heartedness in *commedia dell'arte*, while Gozzi's fairy tales, in which imagination is given free rein, and

in which many events and practices of the day are satirized, were to counteract Goldoni's. However, neither of the two could stop the decline of *commedia dell'arte*, one of the most interesting theatre forms, which by 1800 had fallen. Of the tragic playwrights, Vittorio Amedeo Alfieri (1749 - 1803) was in the forefront.

## 2. Eighteenth Century French Theatre

By 1700, France was dominating the whole European theatrical life and Paris was also a world political and cultural centre. The French Neo-classicists, Corneille and Racine, with their tragedies and Moliere with his comedies, have set the strict parameters for measuring European drama. However, with the death of Moliere came the end of a glorious epoch. Nevertheless, the Comedie of the newly established "Comedie - Francaise" continued under the leading ladies, such as Moliere's widow and Mlle Champmeslé, with the leading actors, Moliere's pupil Baron and Poisson. Yet tragedy, in spite of Voltaire, a universal genius who attempted its rescue, eventually declined into *drame-bourgeois*; sensationalism and melodrama. And, comedy, similarly, turned to concern itself exhaustively with everyday affairs and trivialities as against its erstwhile universal appeal. Voltaire's earliest tragedies evince Shakespeare's influences, whom Voltaire was the first French man to admire. Voltaire's best plays are Zaire (1732) and Alzire (1736). He was a good amateur actor and a great promoter of theatrical activities, who got the audience removed from the stage and to be banished to the auditorium since 1759. He built several private playhouses, the best being at Ferney, his last home.

Throughout the 18th Century, Opera followed by *commedia dell'arte* was most favoured. The situation changed as soon as the Italian actors, the strong rivals of the *Comedie Française*, were back, as the *Comedie-Italienne*, in Paris from the banishment of 1697. They replaced action with psychological insight and the poignancy of the emotional situation is expressed in a paradoxical and slightly precious style, which was later dubbed *Marivaudage*. Marivaux became a trap for the unwary and acclimatized the transfigured *commedia dell'arte* in France. He later became an isolated phenomenon who died without successors. However, Pierre de Marivaux (1688 - 1763) paved the way for the subsequent sentimental comedy.

Denis Diderot (1713 - 1784) espoused domestic tragedy in the 1750s and introduced the two middle genres-sentimental comedy and domestic tragedy-into the traditional classifications of drama as tragedy and comedy. Diderot conceived of the stage picture in terms of complete naturalness. This idea became an important landmark in the movement toward realism that enjoyed a persistent following during the century. Diderot's ideas found similarities in those of Stanislavsky which emphasize the arousal of maximum response in the audience, while the actor perfectly mastered the emotions to be projected, and for the two objectives to be accomplished through professional training. Diderot wrote The Illegitimate Son (1757) and The Father of a Family (1758) with which he succeeded only in establishing the term 'drame', to distinguish serious plays from the traditional tragedy.

The last brilliant phase of the French theatre before the Revolution claims credit for period plays by Pierre Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais (1732 - 1799) such as Le Barbier de Seville (The Barber of Seville) 1775, and Le Mariage de Figaro (The Marriage of Figaro) 1784. These two plays were based on the Spanish tradition that had had its influences on French dramatic literature since Le Cid.

### 3. Restoration Period in France.

During the Restoration period, in the eighteenth century, scenographic works also experienced a turn when Comic Opera was developed in France by Alain René Le-Sage. As soon as the Comedie Francaise's stage was freed of the spectators in 1759, then came the increased display of scenic elements, spectacle and local colour. This eventually rendered the old theatre buildings out-dated and inadequate. Since Palais-Royal had been razed down by fire in 1763, followed by Comedie Francaise's abandonment of its theatre in 1770, while Hotel de Bourgogne ceased operating after 1783, the buildings that rose in their stead were "cut-outs" of prevalent contemporary Italian theatre architecture which made better provisions for the audience, larger stages, complex machineries and scenic design modes. However, the maximum utilisation of these were only possible as from 1800. Before then, the basic scenic units comprising the shutters, backcloth, drops, etc. were still in use. The only change recorded was the introduction and perfection of the angle-perspective in which the vanishing point is located at one, or both sides.

#### 4. The Eighteenth Century English Theatre

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The London theatres naturally set the patterns for the many small playhouses erected in the provinces in the eighteenth century England. The only remaining examples are the Theatres Royal at Bristol, Margate and Richmond (Yorks), all much restored (40). At that time princely or ducal theatres were found all over Europe while not many towns in England could support theatres all the year round, unlike those at Celle in Germany, at Céský Krumlov in Czechoslovakia and at Drottningholm in Sweden.

Sheridan, who succeeded David Garrick at Drury Lane, replaced the much altered theatre of 1674, which was in poor condition, by a much larger building designed by Holland to the prevailing taste and practices.

Important innovation took place when in 1730 the Orchestra was moved to the front of the stage, with the apron's depth slashed first but later completely abandoned, to favour realism. This new English theatre was different from its Italian precursor in the use of the apron area which was being used for acting, entrances and exits. When used for acting, the proscenium doors, now only one on each side, were often used to indicate a change in place or passage of time, thus accounting for flexibility and better rapport with the audience. The curtain in the proscenium arch rose and fell only at the beginning and end of the play. And on the stage, the actor entered into the scenery which, between 1660 and 1800, was similar to the Italian and French practices, in which the neo-classicists' principle of generalised

universality allowed the same set to be used for a number of different plays and the shifting of sets of 'neutral' and painted wing flats, coupled with the back cloth and backscene in grooves on the stage floor sufficed to indicate change in place. Lighting was by overhead chandeliers, oil lamps and candles. Gradually, the old architectural setting was abandoned in favour of romantic landscapes, with transparencies and elaborate cut-outs helping to create an attractive stage picture which was still in use one hundred years later and lasted even longer in pantomime (41).

For Operas and Pantomime, detailed scenery and elaborate special effects were provided and the growing love for spectacle, from 1750 onwards, necessitated the employment of one or more scenic artists who catered for the growing interest in "local colour".

It was mainly because of the visual requirements and appeal of Opera and Pantomime that stage scenery and machinery became very elaborate involving great expenses and time, worthy investment that paid off partly with the great box-office returns vide the sustained audience. Amongst the most important scenic designers of the 18th century English theatre was Phillipe Jacques de Louthebourg (1740-1812) who worked with David Garrick at Drury Lane in the 1770s (42). He was responsible for many improvements in the theatre, and in 1765 he introduced stage lighting, concealed from the audience. He also removed the audience who had hitherto encumbered the stage and created sensations with the splendid 'cut-outs' the addition of ground rows, profiled pieces shaped and painted to represent rocks, mountains,

grassy plots, fences and similar objects and wing - border-drop settings. These were mobile units placed on the stages for increasing the sense of naturalness and the illusion of space and distance.

In stage lighting, De Louthenburg simulated naturalness of weather, seasons, times of the day, by placing special lighting devices behind translucent drops while the semblance of a rising moon, a volcanic eruption, changes from fair to stormy weather and other similar effects could be projected on the cyclorama.

#### V. The Eighteenth Century German Theatre

The 18th century German theatre experienced most striking changes. In the early part of the century efforts were made in Germany and Austria to banish the old comedies paramount in the 17th century and to improve the lot of the serious drama and theatre groups. Important among such promoters were Johann Christoph Gottsched (1700 - 1766) and Carolina Neuber (1697 - 1760) whose successes that began in 1725 were greatly felt, even if rather short-lived. By 1741 they had instituted the first break with tradition, when the reformer and theatre critic, Gottsched, persuaded Carolina Neuber, leader of the Company charged with the performance of his Roman tragedy, Die Sterbende Cato, to put her actors into classical dress ended with disastrous results<sup>(43)</sup>.

By the middle of the 18th century the consciousness of Shakespeare, French 'comédie larmoyante', drame bourgeois and French neo-classical drama had gripped the German audience through Gottsched.



The chief opponent of Gottsched was Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1709 - 1781) who had trained backstage of Neuber's company and had emerged as the first important German dramatist to turn attention away from the French Neo-classicism to English Drama. He was connected with the first attempts to establish a permanent national theatre in Hamburg where his Minna von Barnhelm, the first German masterpiece comedy, was staged in 1767. The breach between the court- and public-theatres had been bridged with the formation of subsidized stage troupes that served both court and public. At Gotha, in 1775, the first of the national theatres had been established while others sprang up in Vienna, Mannheim, Cologne, Weimar and Berlin and by 1800, almost all of the large Germanic cities could boast of such theatres organized along the pattern of the French Comedie Française. Of all, though not most prosperous, the best known was the one of Weimar, simply because Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was there "using autocratic methods of directing to weld a company of second-rate actors into the finest ensemble to be seen in Germany." Under Goethe's management, with Friedrich Schiller sharing with him some roles, the theatre at Weimar attained its peak period between 1795 and 1805. Goethe's premium was placed on grace, harmony, and balance in movement and speech. He sought, in every element of production, to achieve an idealized beauty. The most prominent figures in the German theatre of the period include Johann Friedrich Schönmann (1704 - 1782), Konrad Ekhof (1720-1778), Konrad Ackermann (1714 - 1792), Sophie Schroeder (later Sophie Ackermann) (1744-1816). Friedrich Schroeder has been credited for

introducing Shakespeare to the German stage and they were all connected with the Storm-and-Stress School of the chaotic outlook and structure, with its emphasis on controversial ideas and emotional outbursts from which the ensuing romanticism of 1800 emerged. During the last twenty-five years of the eighteenth century the German theatre had won international acclaim for it had given birth to romantic drama that was to overthrow the neo-classical ideals which had permeated and dominated the stages of Europe for over one hundred and fifty years.

Elsewhere in the world, the institutionalization of the theatre dates from the mid-eighteenth century. In Russia, for instance, a pioneer was Alexei Petrovich Sumarokov (1718 - 1777) with his tragedy Khorev, written in neo-classical style, first performed in 1749 by Cadets of the Academy of Nobility. In Denmark, Sweden and Norway, the beginning of major theatre endeavour with all its characteristic features existing all over Europe began in this period. Similarly, in America, theatre began then as an imitation of the English tradition.

#### VIII. The Nineteenth Century Theatre

The stage in the 19th century experienced some changes and development which had their antecedents/roots in the neo-classicism of the 17th and 18th centuries. It was almost anti-historical in outlook and it maintained that history was irrelevant to art; and that universal truth was a province of drama, irrespective of time and place. Yet some concern for the circumstances of time and place had been expressed, which gave rise to the interest in historical accuracy and illusionism. National and historical differences in architecture,

literature, dress and social customs began to attract scholastic curiosity. As a result, the first history of costume appeared about 1775 and antiquarianism generally became more interesting and gradually ended in the absorption of strange exotic dances and costumes of other countries into the plays for which unusual settings were designed. These became the so-called "local colour", projecting the unique individual characteristic features of a specific locale, the respective theatrical genres, styles and movements ranging from tragedy, comedy, melodrama, farce, realism, naturalism, symbolism in a picturesque manner.

#### The English Theatre of the Nineteenth Century

Under John Phillip Kemble, another actor destined to play a big part in English theatre, who moved to Covent Garden in 1802 as the manager and with Charles Kemble, his brother, the first English play "Coelina, ou l'enfant de mystere" translated to "A Tale of Mystery", to be labelled Melodrama was put up. It was so successful that Drury Lane also had to quickly succumb to the mania of 'Melodrama' so that the managers of the two theatres thenceforth were tempted to retain a hold on the restless audiences that is now addicted "to all the spectacular devices the stage carpenters and machinists could devise". Effects such as fire, flood, and earthquake were created and in many plays real animals - dogs, horses and even elephants—surfaced. Another innovation of far-reaching effect was the replacement of the candle and oil lamps with gas lighting in both theatres in 1802.

Gas-lighting brought an increased strength of illumination and the control of light's intensity at will at the expense of the potential risks of fire out-breaks. But, in spite of that disadvantage, gas lighting created a mysterious atmosphere with its more brilliant light of shimmering effect, which was one of its attractions.

Notable amongst the designers that worked for the Kembles at the Drury Lane - between 1794 and 1802, and at the Covent Garden theatres in the 1850s was William Capon whose works evinced the influence of De Louthembourg. Capon's passion for "authenticity" drove him to designing neo-gothic settings which were suited to Shakespeare's revivals. The neo-gothic design aesthetics dominated the English stage for the following fifty years till the 1850s. The best of the scene-painters of the period were the histrionic talents of Clarkson Stanfield, John Grieve, followed by his son William and the grandson, Thomas Grieve, who worked for Charles Kean, the son of Edmund Kean, in the 1850s at the Princes' theatre. He was noted for the brilliance, artistic unity, detail and harmony in the compositions of his sets and between the various component parts of the play - the speech, music and scenery. Queen Victoria was often attracted to the theatre, especially by these works.

In September 1808 Covent Garden was burnt. Five months later, Drury Lane suffered the same fate. It was the end of an epoch. The new buildings which arose on both sites were vast white elephants, which ushered in a new phase in the history of English theatre.

Howes Craven continued the popularising of the "romantic-

historicism" under the management of the greatest English actor to be knighted, Henry Irving (1838 - 1905), at Lyceum Theatre, London. The most influential pioneers were Robert E. Sherwood, Oliver Messel, Norman Wilkinson and Albert Rutherston. The style attained its greatest heights when Beerbohm Tree was producing Shakespeare's works. Another designer of importance that Irving and Tree engaged was the popular easel painter, Lawrence Alma Tadema (1836-1912).

The style was to give way for "realism" which depends on the box-set, in use since the 1830's, for interior scenes. The period was the great era of stage illusion, of traps, gauzes, and transformation scenes, and of trompe l'Oeil scene painting, with every detail painted on stretched canvas, doors, windows, draperies, even furniture, as well as outdoor vistas. William Beverly was one of the period's most successful practitioners. For spectacular pieces like pantomimes, cut-cloths developed to such excess that the stage picture resembled a lacy valentine. The style's popularity swept across the whole of Europe and one of its missionary apostles was Andrei Roller for the Tsarist Russia.

## 22. The Nineteenth Century Theatre in Germany

By 1850, "historical realism" and "local colour" had entered the German theatre. This is an approach by which a setting, consisting of painted background screens, which do not always have much relevance to the action of the play being performed, is added to the play. The increasing demand for greater accuracy in all aspects of

theatrical productions threatened "local colour". The consequence was that thence more careful rehearsals and better coordination of all elements were necessary and imperative. The implication was that all of responsibilities for ensuring a relatively coherent realistic production were borne by the "master-artist", the 'director', as pioneered by George II, the Duke of Saxe - Meiningen, (1826-1914) - the father of modern directing, influenced by Charles Kean's productions in London, where he visited often. The Duke, with the actress Ellen Franz, later his wife, established at his court a company which became famous as the Meiningers.

"The Duke ably ... directed the productions and designed the scenery and costumes with a high degree of historical accuracy"<sup>(44)</sup>. By the use of steps and rostrums he also kept the actions flowing continuously. The Meiningers embarked on tours in the 1870s which brought them to fame all over Europe and their influence was later apparent in productions in places as far apart as Moscow and Paris.

Richard Wagner had at about that time developed his theories on the aesthetic principles of stage production, especially on the production of Opera, choreography, designing and lighting as a "complete work of art in the hands of a master-artist." Wagner's postulation had gone a long way to influence the formative history of the Meiningers and became the pivot upon which many subsequent schools in Europe revolved.

## Scenography

In the scenic realm, during the century, emphasis shifted from artistry to craftsmanship from which specialists crystalized. Some of the scene painters fabricated architectures only, while some others produced only landscapes and foliage, and at the end all were fused into the same production. The schemes later became the canonical "Bayreuther style," or the Wagnerian staging style, in which featured imitations of the scenic solutions of the great Baroque masters, while the ingenious outsiders like Friedrich Schinkel had little chance of influencing the general practice. And so, in spite of the availability of highly skilled craftsmen and capable workers, such as the Bruekner brothers, Wagner, in the newly built Festspielhaus in Bayreuth built along his reform ideas, could only achieve conventional solutions to the optical problems of the decoration for his premiere production, the artist/painter family of Quaglio were only able to decorate the stage, and then only under strict adherence to the scenic specifications given by Wagner himself, while they were still imitating.

But we also learnt of the protests of the performing artists against the "Pappendeckel Unwesen"- paper board nuisance in scenic painting going on towards the end of the century. Nationalism, which subsequently became the new movement and direction in the arts, literature and theatre, could not exert any renewing influence on the stage form. In contrast, it worsened the situation through its painstakingly aspiring to originality in milieu and in overemphasizing of accessories. And so, the time for fundamental reform was ripe.

The thoughts of the romanticists and of Schinkel were deliberated upon. The new problems for the plays, stage and space design accompanied the budding impressionism and the "Youth - Styles". It was then that the role of the stage-scene-designer became more apparent. It became discernible that the arts of drama and dramatic music need to express their contents in optical terms too. Thus the artists and theoreticians actually started the revolt against illusionistic realism on the stage in the nineteenth century.

### Stage Technology

The technology for the stage was still the same side-scene and wings with flies, borders and back cloths though panorama walls, set pieces, fronts, step-units, etc. were in sporadic use. For the landscape, foliage and forest scenes the visual masking method in which the strange, spectacular and exotic branches stretching out of the side-stage and wings into the middle of the stage and which were made to grow together, was used. In all the scenes little premium was placed on stylistic accuracy. Realism demanded and got real door-knobs on the doors, real mouldings on the walls and by 1870, realistic acting out of day-to-day tasks, such as boiling water, brewing, serving and drinking tea, was demanded from the actors.

### Theatre Architecture

Theatre Architecture also received radical treatment in the nineteenth century. In Germany of the Baroque period the architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel (1781 - 1841) installed, in 1821, in the



newly built Berliner Schauspielhaus (Berlin Drama House) a new stage on which a classical proscenium, which frames the "symbolic background," was placed behind a flatly spread apron. Schinkel's decorations for this theatre are characterised by originality, archeologically faithful reproductions of historical accuracy and architectural forms in which the elements of romantic and realistic styles are united into magnificent scenic designs for a neutral acting and playing area.

Richard Wagner's own onslaught against what he called the "florid frivolity of the conventional Opera house" was defined in his ideas for the building of the Festspielhaus in Bayreuth opened in 1876, the scheme for which he and the architect Gottfried Semper (1803-1879) worked out. The auditorium consists of a steeply raked wedge seating plan, thereby nullifying the hierarchical arrangement in pit, box and galleries. Also the overhanging floors with their supporting intrusive columns disappeared, therefore allowing the accretion of decorative detailing associated with those structural elements to vanish.

The perfection of the sightlines, coupled with the vibrantly excellent acoustics needed for such works as Wagner's large scale music-drama, have always ensured absolute concentration on the stage picture. Hence theatres designed along the lines of Wagner's ideas can best be used for the Opera and musical productions. Problems begin the moment other forms are intended in them, especially when the elements of room design such as seating-arrangements, walls splaying,

ceilings and others are tampered with.

In order to meet the demand for illusionism, the stage floor, sloped upward, has now to be levelled; wings, backcloth and drops were no more sufficient; the manoeuvring with heavy set pieces around the grooves on a sloping floor became more cumbersome and therefore, the old methods of handling scenery (chariot-and-pole and sliding grooves) were abandoned because of their constraints. In 1875 stages received face-lifts, they were remoulded, with the stage floor levelled, and machinery for wings' handling removed. For the scenic units to be more freely placed as needed and for effective shifting, new methods, besides manual manipulation, were devised. Towards the end of the 19th century, the revolving stage, the elevator stage, and the rolling platform - stage wagon had been introduced while the front curtain is now used more than before. It is closed regularly to conceal the changing of scenes by which, within a few seconds, the creation of a new environment can be manoeuvred by the stage hands to appear like magic to the audience. Now actors surrounded by Diderot's "four-walls" can live more in the set on the stage, instead of acting mainly on the apron as was the case before.

Realism was boosted by the innovations in stage lighting such as the limelight and carbon arc with which concentrated beams of light could be thrown at specific points on the stage; simulating at first sunlight, moonlight and later for illuminating the acting areas too. With the advent of electricity after 1880 flexibility plus safety replaced the perpetual fear of fire hazards inherent in gas installation.

And there were also numerous other experiments in realistic effects.

### The Emergence of "Free" - "Independent" - Theatre

The need to be producing new drama, hitherto subjected to censorships, or yet untried, became more obvious and pressing. The new realistic techniques used mainly for traditional plays are to be tried by independent - "Free"- Theatre Movements, mainly amateur groups, free from the courts' and state's censorship, which, unlike the 'stars', are more willing to accept authoritarian directors and are more open to experimentation aimed at exploiting and developing the new staging techniques to give the new drama its chance.

The first of the new "free" theatres - the Théâtre Libre was founded in 1887 by André Antoine (1858 - 1943), then a clerk in a gas company in Paris. He started a dramatic club, in an obscure tiny house in Mont Marte, the Cercle Gaulois, with amateur actors and stage furniture, "some of which he carted through the streets from his mother's dining room"<sup>(45)</sup> Antoine was inspired by the works of the Norwegian "rebel", Henrik Ibsen, Emile Zola and George II, the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen, to whom he proved "absolute fidelity to real life."<sup>(46)</sup> André Antoine insisted on complete verisimilitude. For his productions even real food was used, and real fountains played on stage but he used the scenery and properties to reinforce the mood of a play in a totally new manner<sup>(47)</sup>. Otto Brahm (1856-1912) founded in 1889 the Freie Buehne (Free Theatre) in Berlin where Gerhart Hauptmann was launched as the most modern German dramatist of his time.

In London, J.T. Grein opened his "Free Theatre" in 1891. Many more were caught by Antoine's spirit of the 'Free Theatre' movement such as the "art theatre", the "little theatre", Off-Broadway, Off-Off-Broadway and so on, in which boldness empowered the adventure of producing plays.

The Russians were not spared the haunting by the Free Theatre's spirit for Konstantin Stanislavsky (1865 - 1938) and Vladimir Nemirovitch - Danchenko (1859 - 1943) founded their Moscow Art Theatre in 1898. Manifestations of Stanislavsky's excellence abound in his works such as My Life in Art (1924), An Actor Prepares (1936), Building a Character (1949) and Creating a Role (1961). Their regular scene designer, V.A. Simov, adopted Antoine's and the Meiningers' scenic design approach of Naturalism. Kenneth Rowell, summarizing the working aesthetics of the Naturalists, states:

The naturalists believed in the exact reproduction of a known scene or place, using as nearly as possible the actual materials and objects belonging to that environment and matching it with a "Natural" style of acting and directing<sup>(48)</sup>.

The realistic and naturalistic elements have come to stay in the theatre. From 1900 through 1950 the movement withstood and outlived all the alterations and challenges brought into it, such as Sigmund Freud's (1856-1939) psycho-analytical theories. Freud provided scientific explanation for such human behaviours which previously had been attributed to instinct or supernatural forces and was therefore placed outside the realm of realism. The Freudian concept of

the mind sees it as a faculty that telescopes experience, sublimates and suppresses desires and often works irrationally.

### Sybolism

By the late 19th century, realism's stronghold was almost completely broken by symbolism, alternately dubbed as neo-romanticism, idealism, or aestheticisms. This movement, too, started from France in the 1880s, but lived only till 1920. the main tenet of symbolism is the rejection of realism by declaring that truth cannot be found in evidence supplied by the five senses or by rational thoughts, but rather grasped intuitively. mphasizing this, Oscar Brockett asserts:

Ultimate truth cannot be expressed directly.  
It can only be suggested through symbols that  
evoke feelings and states of mind, corresponding  
though imprecisely, to the dramatist's intuitions. (49)

The Belgian Maurice Maeterlinck who lived mostly in France was the most acclaimed symbolist playwright whose works were sufficiently imaginative to give scope to the new method.

In scenographic terms, the symbolists believed that scenery was to be simplified, evocative rather than descriptive; there was to be frank stylization; complete harmony between scenery and costume and absolute abandonment of perspective backcloth. Underfined forms are to evoke a sense of infinite space and time. Historical details were avoided because they tied plays to specific periods and places rather than bringing out their timeless qualities. Colours were dictated by the play's mood.

The most important of the painters of decorations for the Theatre d'Art were Vuillard, Bonnard, Maurice Devis, Odilen Redon, and K.X. Roussell.

In England Norman Wilkinsen and Charles Ricketts, working for Granville Barker, were to be the main followers of the symbolist movement and approach.

## X. THE ORIENTAL THEATRE (5TH CENT. B.C. TO 19TH CENT. A.D.)

The oriental theatre tradition is different from that of the West but it is almost as old for it also dates back to about 500 B.C. Since its discovery, and contact, at the tail end of the 19th century, the oriental theatre has been influencing the Western theatre of the 20th century. For the purpose of this study we look at those of India, China and Japan.

### The Hindu Drama and Indian Theatre

According to Bernard Sobel, Hindu drama is the most interesting branch of Hindu literature. The subjects of Hindu drama are normally taken from the rich mythology and legend of the country, composed of a simple plot, episodes and pure language, basic elements of prose and verse, the serious and the comic, pantomime, music, dancing and song delicately intermingled. The ancient Hindu belief had it that all the arts were bestowed upon man by various gods. Siva gave the dance, and music was the gift of Brahma who was said to have commanded the heavenly architect to build the first playhouse so that the Sage Bharata could produce his plays. Bharata is thence the father of the Hindu drama, and the word "bharata" gradually became one of the terms for the "actor" (50)

The Indian theatre does not always observe the unity of action, time and place. It limits the action usually to a single year and the plays were performed in the palace halls or open inner courts. Hence, scenery is usually indicated in the text of the play by the performer's speech and action (51) whence the virtual absence of Scenery. Indian drama has largely been for the entertainment of the literary and aristocratic classes hence it was never a truly national drama (52)

### The Chinese Drama, Theatre and Staging

Drama in China evolved from 5400 B.C. to Hsra dynasty (2205-1766 B.C.), from legend, music, ritualistic religious ceremonial, military and rejoicing dances for the worship of the gods of rain, harvest, drought, famine, indicative of an agricultural society.

In the Shang dynasty (1776 - 1122 B.C.) the dancing grew to become the 'shen-hsi' or "sacred plays" of the Chou dynasty (1122 - 255 B.C.). The most significant developments in Chinese theatre occurred when the Emperor Ch'ih Shih Huang (246-210 B.C) had as many as three thousand actors in his famous "Ah Fang" palace, while Ming Huang, the Emperor of T'ang dynasty, established the famous school for actors in the 8th century A.D. in his Pear Garden at Ch'ang-an, thence the actors, till today, are called "The Young Folk of the Pear Garden". The religions of China (Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism) determine the form of Chinese theatre, for instance, the Buddhistic plays are in the form of fantasy, humour and burlesques of deity and demon symbols. Taoistic plays are based on superstition and spirit worship and are concerned with the evils of the present time. Confucian plays moralize on ancestor worship and filial piety. Since Chinese plays contain music and singing, it could be correctly called music dramas or operas. To the Chinese, "music is the soul of art and the inspiration of acting". Most Chinese go to "listen" to a play rather than to "see" it. In the theatre there is much hawking of wares, tea sipping, spitting, boring and blowing of noses with the fingers and other unsightly things among the audience. The Chinese theatre claims a high standard of artistic finish which out-shines any Western stage. Its influence is only felt on the Russian stage. In 1922, Vakhtangov produced in Moscow the play Turandot, which is an 18th century version of an Eastern legend. Puccini, Goethe, Schiller and others had also adapted Turandot. Also Voltaire's Orphelin de la Chine - (Little Orphan

of China) was based on a Chinese Yuan dynasty play.

### Chinese Staging

In the West "the play's the thing" but in the Chinese theatre "the actor's the thing," for the actor, with his magnificent costuming, properties and grand gestures, transforms the stage into whatever he wishes it to be, hence, the place of costume is supreme and its design demands a high creative capability for the Chinese costumes and garments are themselves a complete gallery.

The setting in Chinese theatre is tasking on the imagination. The stage is virtually empty; only furniture, pieces of chairs and tables, are used to represent almost everything. At the back of the stage, usually, are two doors. They bear the name of "Spirit Door". The left one, from the audience's view-point, is used for the entrance while the right one is for the exit. The entrance of one actor signals the exit of another. The actors, always only two, change their costumes on the stage with their backs to the audience using one mirror usually placed at the upstage centre. The costumes are brought in by the property men who take away the ones finished and done with. The property men actually bring on the stage the needed things, giving them to the actors or placing them at the proper positions while the actor is doing his own business. Some cloths, divided in the middle, attached to two bamboos held up by two men, are pulled aside to allow for the passage of the actors.

The nearest approach to the curtain of Western parlance is the flowing sleeve of the principal actor held before his face as



he gives a short summary or prologue of the play that follows. A change of scene or act is indicated by the entire cast moving about the stage. The usual Chinese play has four acts.

The stages of the playhouses project into the audience and the performance is seen from three sides as in the Western thrust stage.

On the Chinese theatre stage Kernodle states:

The Chinese stage has no front curtain, scenery, realistic properties. A temple - canopy, sometimes held up by two lacquer columns, decorates the acting area, and the back stage is a decorated screen or beautiful embroidered cloth that carries the imagination into romantic realms of fancy but tells nothing about each particular scene. Both the orchestra and the property man are on stage in sight all the time<sup>(53)</sup>.

The few scenic effects are highly conventionalized. To indicate mountain country, small panels painted with the traditional mountain and stream pattern are brought out and leaned against a chair or table. To show an attack on a gate, attendants hold up a long pole from which is hung a cloth painted to represent a section of wall with a gate, and behind it the defending general climbs on a chair and table to speak from above the wall. The actor in his acting creates the reality by marching, riding, shouting, brandishing his weapons, whirling, fighting furious duels with all the range of battle ... shivering to create the illusion of a storm while a demon of winter dances and the property man shakes paper snow from a box.<sup>(72)</sup>

According to Phyllis Hartnoll, "The Chinese theatre, which since the beginning of the nineteenth century has consisted chiefly of the Peking Opera, is also primarily designed for the actor ...

there is an orchestra on the stage, but no scenery and simple properties have with the passing of time acquired certain symbolic values. A table is a bridge, three chairs stand for a bed, an oar stands for a ship, a whip for a horse. Black flags mean a high wind, blue flags the waves of the sea, yellow flags a chariot. A fan is a sign of frivolity, a woman's tiny shoe represents needlework. A folded red cloak on the floor is a corpse. (55)

### Japanese Drama, Theatre and Staging

At the beginning of the 12th century, a woman, called Iso-no-Zenji, was known to have performed certain Ojokomai (dances in male attire), so that she is regarded as "the mother of the Japanese drama". But it was Saruwaka Kanzabuso, who in 1624 introduced drama proper and opened the first theatre at Yedo (later called Tokyo), thence establishing the beginning of the four types of Japanese drama. The first one is the Noh Drama and its accompanying comedies and interludes, - Kyogen. Noh is a kind of pantomimic religious dance called Kagura used in Shinto ceremonies. Later, stories were added to these dances in the Buddhist ceremonies and so the Noh, as it exists today, was developed from the old folklore of China and Japan. The second type is the 'Joruri' or epical music dramas, exemplified by the famous suicides of the forty-seven Rouins in the beginning of the 18th century. The third type of Japanese drama is the 'Kabuki'-a word meaning "the art of song and dance." Kabuki is the popular theatre of Japan. The fourth type is the New School which presents Japanese

drama in Western Style and Western drama in translations revealing the influence of Shakespeare, Ibsen, Strindberg, Maeterlinck, Wilde, Shaw and O'Neill, popular with the younger generation, while the old epical dramas hold the nation at large spellbound.

### Staging

The Noh drama is performed on a wooden platform of about 6m square, open on three sides with a narrow extension on one side for the singers or chorus and another at the back of the stage for musicians and the prompter. The stage is covered with a roof shaped like the pointed roof of a Japanese temple supported by four pillars, each with its own name and special usage. The first is the 'Shite-Bashira'— 'The First Actor's Pillar. The second pillar is the 'Waki-Bashira' for the second actor, it is placed diagonally to the first, the 'Shite-bashira.' In front of that is the 'Metsuke-bashira', the Mark Pillar for the third actor. The last pillar, the 'Fue-bashira', is for the flute player to sit by during his performance. (56)

The beginning of a play in the Noh theatre is signalled by the entrance of three or four musicians: a flute player, a shoulder-drum player, a knee-drum player, and a flat-drum player. They all later sit at the rear of the stage floor. The knee-drum player and shoulder-drum players are provided stools by the property men robed in black to indicate their supposed invisibility while they are busy arranging costumes, slipping stools under actors and bearing away used props in full view of the audience. The actors and musicians enter and

exit via the bridge called 'hashi-gakari' an open corridor with a railing on both sides that leads diagonally into the back stage. A curtain of five colours hangs on two bamboo sticks at the furthest end of the 'Hashi-gakari' which is raised by the actor whenever he enters from the green room or the mirror room called 'Kagami-no-ma'.

At the front of the bridge are placed three decorated pine trees in pots called 'ichi-no-matsu', 'Iso-no-matsu' and 'san-no-matsu' respectively and theatrically meaning heaven, earth and humanity. They are used to mark positions for the actors while performing on the bridge - the 'Hashigakari'.

The structure of the stage which projects into the auditorium ensures that the audience and theatre become an integral part of the Noh drama performances. The "Hanamichi", or flower path, a projection or runway into the auditorium, is used by the actors when representing someone starting on, or returning from, a journey, connoting a much closer contact between audience and the play.

The stage has to face the north because persons of high rank sit facing the south while the seat of honour, the reserved box for the Emperor and Empress, face the stage.

At the backstage area is a curtain, or wall, on which a spreading pine tree is painted to symbolise faithful endurance. On the further end of the bridge features the panel on which a few bamboos are painted and at the lower end of the panel is situated a small side-door called 'Kirido' - the 'Hurry-door', or 'Okubyoguchi' - the Coward's door. The Chorus, Prompter, and the Clown use the Hurry-door as an

exit while it is also used for a killed actor.

The changing of the scenes is denoted by the changing of the positions of the actors.

### The Kabuki Theatre

The Kabuki drama is epitomised by symbolism and impressionism in which a black curtain at the background connotes the night and a bamboo grove is represented by two-fold screens made of bamboo used at the right and left in the background. Painted waves on a board, or on the walls around the entire theatre symbolize a sea.

The beginning proper of the Kabuki play is announced when a wooden hammer is rapping. The faces of the actors are often illuminated by attendants bearing long torches while the assistant stage manager, who sits on one side of the stage in full glare of the audience, sounds the wooden clappers for attention to the actor in an elaborate and artistic posing moment.

The main stage is castored or constructed on rollers to facilitate its roundabout turning about the actors and for scene changing. This invention of the revolving stage and the elevator - "Serisage" for ascending or disappearing from the stage floor are credited to the playwright Syozo Namiki about two hundred and fifty years ago. The Western curtain is used in Kabuki performances but called there the 'Maku,' made of simple-patterned cotton and is pulled aside, not up or down, when in use. Wooden clappers, the 'Ki' used along the pulling on and off of the curtain is also used to punctuate the beginning, end and intervals of a play.

### The Influence of the East in the West

The awareness of the Oriental theatre attained an important stage only by 1789 when translation of 'Shakuntola' into English was done by Sir William James. It was translated into German in 1791 and into French in 1803. However, oriental drama made its impact on the Western practitioners in the 1890s when the revolt against realism brought about the interest in the oriental non-illusionistic theatrical conventions. George Kernodle confirms that "more and more, the Western theatre in the twentieth century has moved toward the freedom and imagination of oriental theatre." Designers and directors now often bring actors onto a more open playing area with only suggestive fragments of setting whereas the Western drawing for realism has only made the Western stage a technical imitator, no better than the efforts of a counterfeiter of paper money, while the prompter and property men of the Japanese stage never bother to conceal themselves. And, like the Chinese theatre, the Japanese theatre is untrammelled by any fetters of realism, time and space which are servants of the playwright, not his masters. (75)

Ionesco, Samuel Beckett, Friedrich Durrenmatt, Bernard Shaw, William Butler Yeats and the Russians depict oriental influences.

Paris hosted in 1895 a Chinese- and London, in 1900, a Japanese- troupe, followed in the early 20th century by other groups touring the West. The first "User-importers" of the Eastern conventions were Lugne-Poe, Meyerhold, Brecht, while Artaud and more practitioners since World War II have to add the line even when they hardly fully

understand the oriental theatre. Today, many developments in the modern theatre are the products of the awakening interest in the oriental conventions; the subtle mutations, mixtures or adaptations and the cross-currents of experiments.

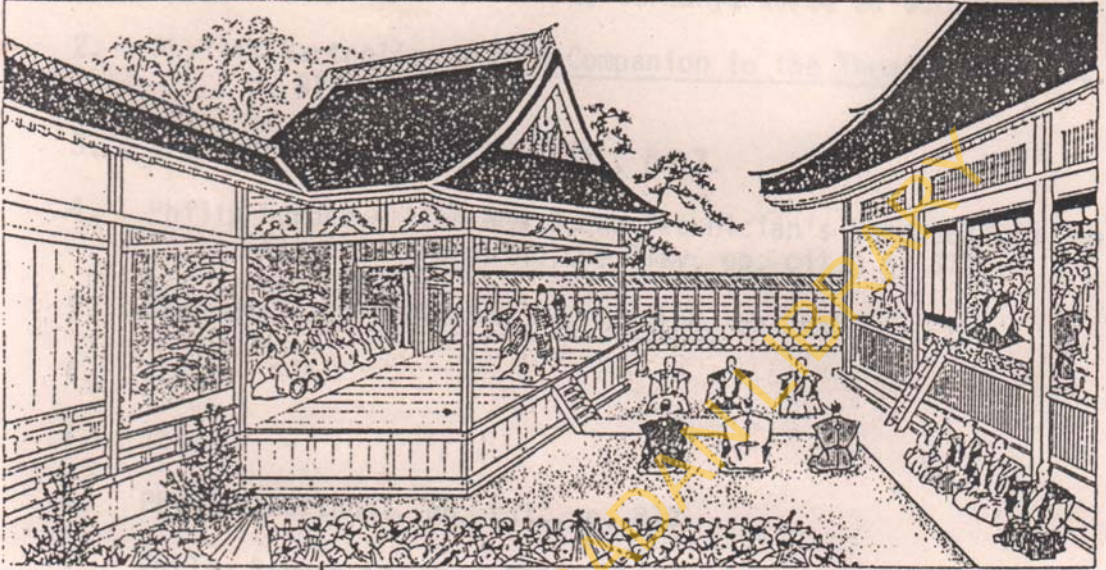


Fig. 16: An Oriental platform for actor, chorus, and musicians. A traditional Japanese Noh theatre on the estate of a feudal lord. Drawn by Bobbie Okerbloom.

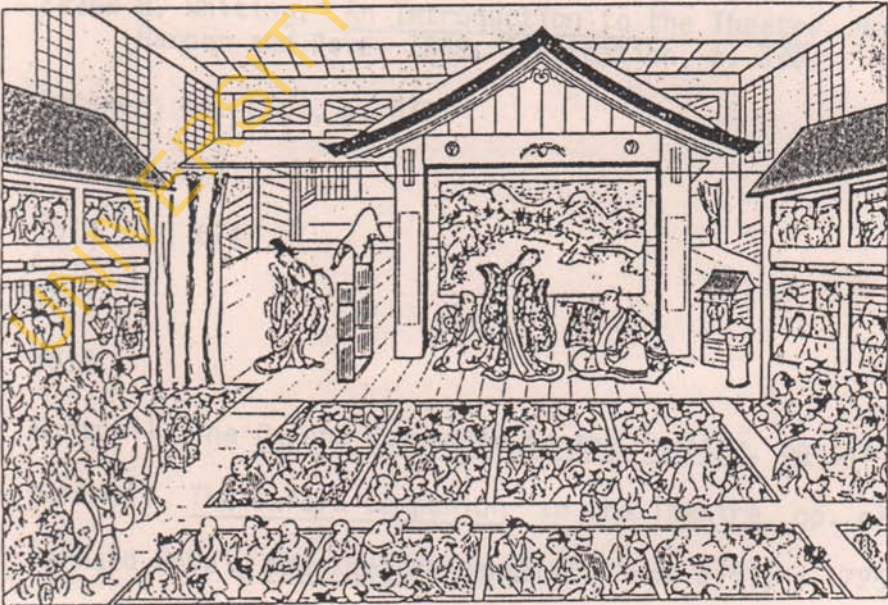


Fig. 17 For the popular Japanese audience scenic spectacle is combined with make-believe. Eighteenth-century Japanese Kabuki theatre. Drawn by Bobbie Okerbloom.

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CHAPTER FIVEThe Twentieth Century TheatreScenography

The term Stage-Design is no longer appropriate for the 20th century theatre because the operative field covered by the term has grown more complex and out of proportion. In classical Greece it was the art of decorating the theatre and of the painted decor, in the Renaissance it was the technique of painting a backdrop behind the stage, perspective. In the modern sense, it is the science and organisation of the stage and the stage space environmentally. Today, the term scenography has pushed itself forward in place of scenic design in order to over-power the notion and imagination that it is mere decorating; a concept and thought still often upheld by many. As a manifestation, movement and process, it creates living space for actions; and environments for agitating people. As a phenomenon, scenography is not design in the conventional sense.

According to a definition by Emil Preetorius, one of the most important contemporary German stage designers, in his Gedanken zur Kunst (Thoughts on Art), "In its aims, functions and roles for the

theatre, scene design has the responsibility of creating and formulating the optical part of theatre arts works, this implies the transformation of the confined area of the theatre, with the means and aids of painting (Fine Arts) for the play of the performer, in such a way that the dramatic action can be localised, unified, and enhanced" (1). It is thereby mostly bound to the requirements of the play to be produced as set down by the playwright, author, or composer as well as by the director.

The effective space for the scene has to be, at a time, infinitely expanded and, at another time, it has to be reduced to the smallest scale and yet at another time it has to be dissolved into irreality, while at another time it has to be executed into natural reality, for it has, unlike in the fine art, to paint colourful motifs on flat surfaces or on an area to create three-dimensional space and also it has to deploy the expressive means of the plastic arts and those of architecture.

The new technical possibilities of the modern stage construction have considerably freed the stage-scene-designer from the rigid scheme of side-scene and borders inherited from the Baroque period.

With the revolving stage introduced in 1896 by Lautenschlaeger, fast, unbroken and open scene changing could be effected. It became possible to preset the scenes for the whole production, or part of it, on the revolve at the beginning of the performance. The introduction of the round panorama dome since 1969 afforded the

designer the possibility of open environs in the stage space without having to take cognisance of masking at the sides and at the top. The stage picture need not be completed with painted backcloth. Scenery was projected freely on a seemingly unending, continuous and boundless sky.

The stage lighting now benefitting from the considerably improved electro-technics can now conjure on the stage all moods and can model plastically.

The director, since the times of Laube, Dinglestedt and George II von-Meiningen, became the one that, unlike before, no more had to cater for the frictionless unfolding of the external aspect of the production. But, out of his personal artistic conceptions he had to shapen all of the theatre arts into a harmoniously united entity.

In Germany, Max Reinhardt (1873 - 1943) was the first most conscious of the importance of the integration of some elements of decor into his kind of play directing. For him stage design was no longer just a decorative frame for the spoken word but a very important factor in the process of reproduction of poetic contents, in collaboration with the mimic and decorative elements.

Also in Berlin, Erwin Piscator applied in his theatre these Russian innovations for the achievement of political impact. In George Groszi's production of The Brave Soldier Schwej (1927) trick film and moving tape were used for enhancement purposes. The scene design and technology in this highly active theatre attained increasing importance and independence for its emancipatory roles.

This development began by Oscar Schlemmer's and Moholy Nagy's experimental theatre, culminating in the Bauhaus's constructivism aimed at abstraction and at turning away from the stage "picture" to "mechanization" in Kadinsky's "space - stage" sense.

\* The Swiss Adolphe Appia (1862 - 1928) also stood up against the reigning unartistry of the stage. In musical terms he examined in his book, Die Musik und die Inszenierung, published in 1899, the scenic formula of Wagnerian works. He recognised the violation of styles between the work and the scene and recommended new radical solutions. For him, too, light was an important artistic medium for form. In his designs for Wagner's Ring der Nibelungen, for instance, though he adhered to Wagner's scenic injunctions, he discarded completely all elements of the Baroque theatre. He worked without backdrops, side-scenes, shutters and without foliage in front of the empty cyclorama. From simple straight-lined surfaces he formed blocks; he constructed phenomenal three-dimensional playing environmental space into which light beams for the mythical processes of musical drama flow. His reformative ideas were rejected at that time in Bayreuth. Yet it is the indisputable influence of his ideas that makes today's contemporary staging to reach a peak in rehabilitation. It was also the fine artists, painters and architects who, joining with the "Munchener Kuenstlertheatre" (1908) (Munich Artists' Theatre), and the "Werkbund-theater" (1914) that gave the impetus to other reforms which became widely applied as in the inflected form of "Jugend-Stillbuehne" (Youth Style-Stage).

In Paris, the revival of the art of stage design began mainly with the Dance theatre spearheaded by Diaghilev's Russian Ballet. Leon Bakst (1866 - 1941), with his splendidly colourful scene designs, exerted a great influence. Besides the Russian Golovin, Larionov, Benois, and Gout Chaorowa, the important French painters tried laboriously and competitively to win the stage since then. Picasso produced for the sensational staging of Panade by Coteau, and Satie (1917) and for Tricon by von de Falla (1919) the very colourfully avant - garde abstract surfaces. The Ballet has also greatly stimulated geniuses such as Braque, Derain, Chapall, Leger, Dali and other important painters to unconventional works which have contributed to the dissemination of the professional scene designer's works.

Italy, from where the art of scene design originated, had kept her preeminence throughout to the time of classicism and had during the Baroque period reached her greatest heights. She now has to adapt herself to the works of Appia for new insights into the arts of the modern theatre especially when such masters as Enrico and Prampolini have opened the way to the futuristic "metaphysical architecture" later inherited by De Chirico who designed for ballets in Paris where the new trend has eventually established itself very firmly.

In Russia there had begun a reaction against Stanislavsky's 19th century illusionism-Naturalism - which was consequently transformed into a neoromantic "Fairytale and Dream-world" for Ballet staging. Nicolas Benois, who by then was perfecting his own style at the Scala

in Mailand and Leon Bakst, who then had been suggestively using colour in addition to his application of folkloric elements, led the reaction joined by Klaudius Sapounoff, Mstislav Dubujinski, Kanstantin Somoff and Alexander Benois.

In the course of the movement of the styles from cubism and futurism, from the way of the "unchained" to that of "political" theatre, the incorporation and integration of film, projections and photomontage into the stage design was exploited on the stages of Tairoff and Meyerhold. The great directors were assisted in their bid by such painters as Georges Jaculoff, Isaac Rabinnowitsch, Lubor Popora, Alexandra Exter, V. Rindin, Alexander Wesnin.

The trend found its following also in Poland and in Czechoslovakia where freedom from tradition favoured absorption, adaption, assimilation and acculturation of the novelty. The most important designers of Warsaw were Stanislas Jarocky, Stanislas Sliwinski, Vincent Drabik and those of Prague include Vlastislav Hofman, Antonin Heythum, Josef Capek.

In England as early as 1897, Edward Gordon Craig had begun his own experiments with drama, he envisioned the necessity for a radical revolution in theatre production and stage design. 1900 marked the beginning of his stage design works. His first design was for his mother, Ellen Terry, on which one of his most earnest supporters, Count Kessler, reports that "they astounded London by their almost fanatical simplification and their turning away from realism." (2) Other works followed, but all at first were produced on small stages.



Craig's exhibitions in Germany and Switzerland and his book On the Art of the Theatre contribute a lot illuminating his ideas which were highly beneficial to Max Reinhardt in Germany, who adopted Craig's concepts and thus earned himself great popularity of the type Craig himself was not accorded. However, most of Craig's designs never saw stage lights. Craig's critics accused him of lack of practical scene-building aptitude and inability to translate his works into practical realities for their impracticabilities. And, according to Kenneth Rowell, Craig was even called a dreamer, (52). However, Craig never despaired and he advising Rowell, says: "and don't compromise" (53).

In the United States, the creative stage design had already won prominence and meaning in the first decades of this century. The developments and progress of Europe were domesticated and given a home there through designers like Robert Edmond Jones, Lee Simonson and Norman Bel-Geddes. The following generation spearheaded by Jo Mielziner and Donald Quenslager brought new force and impetus to the status of Scenic Design.

#### Theatre Technology and Architecture

The 20th Century Theatre Architecture and Technology is the continuation of Wagner's ideas that a suitable theatre in monumental architectural style of the time, designed expressly for the production of his music dramas, be built in the Bavarian capital city of Munich, to complement the summer festival productions in Bayreuth, Wagner's wish was finally realised in 1901 by the completion of the

Prinzregenten Theater, designed by the architect Max Littmann (1862 - 1931)<sup>(54)</sup>. Littmann also designed the Schiller-Theater Berlin (1906) along the lines of Wagner's ideas but they suffered acoustic losses when used for dramatic rather than operatic performances. However, Littmann proved that he had learnt from that when he designed the "Kuenstler-theater" in Munich (1908). Here he abandoned the fan-shaped or wedge seating arrangement, but retained the flat ceiling and ensured that the steeply raked amphitheatre remained parallel to the rectangular walls of the auditorium. The concept incites austere use of decoration and thus renders it to "become a model for art-theatres and University theatres all over the world"<sup>(55)</sup>. Nevertheless, the stage of the "Kuenstler theater" had its short-comings; it was a little more than a narrow platform behind a proscenium arch with no flying space, a reaction against the enormous, increasingly mechanized stages being built all over Europe <sup>(56)</sup>.

As a flexible architect, Littmann by 1912, in his designs for the Hof-Theater in Stuttgart, evinced of the absorption of English deep amphitheatral balconies into his "typical German civic theatre of the period, with elaborate stages, immense workshop and storage areas and spacious foyers, circulation spaces, and restaurants"<sup>(57)</sup>.

Technological advancement has made the use of cantilever available to building technology which now relish in concrete and steel as the basis of the new aesthetic. Now, over-hanging tiers could exist without the aid of the pillars to support them; no more boxes, no more galleries, now only balconies with direct views to the stage reminiscent of the

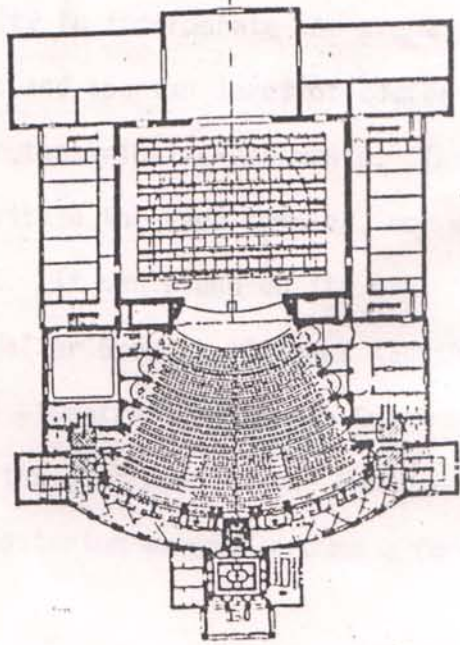
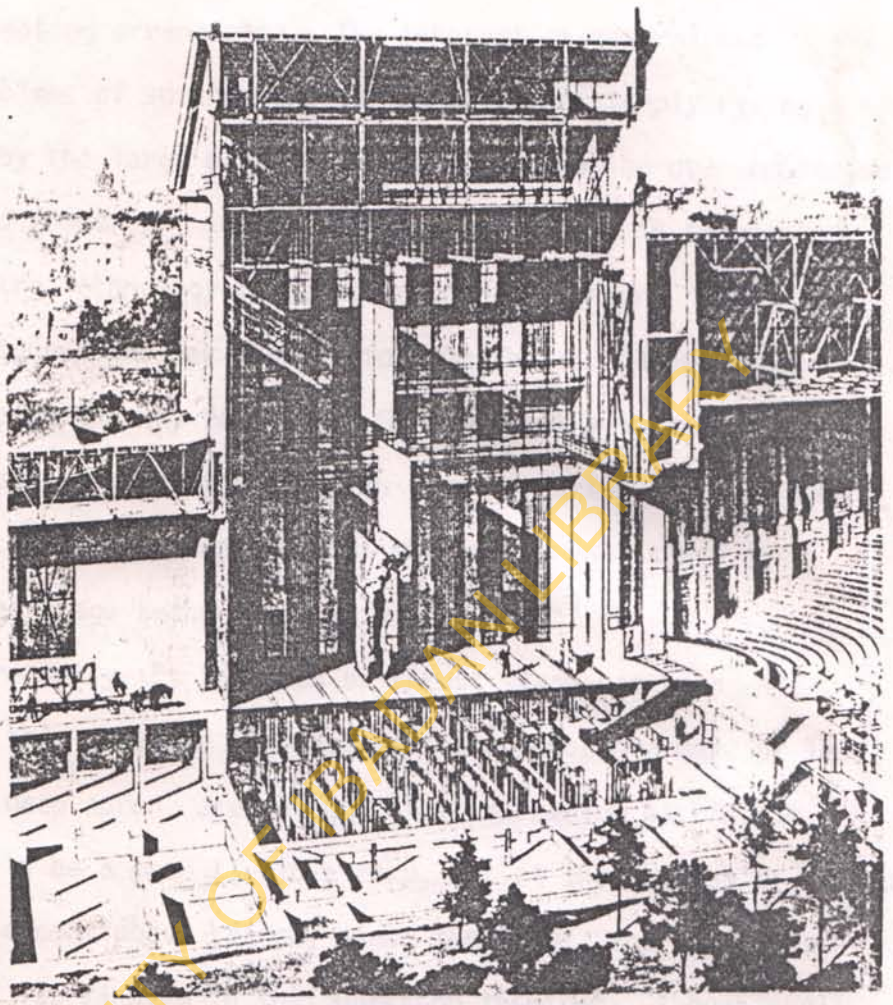
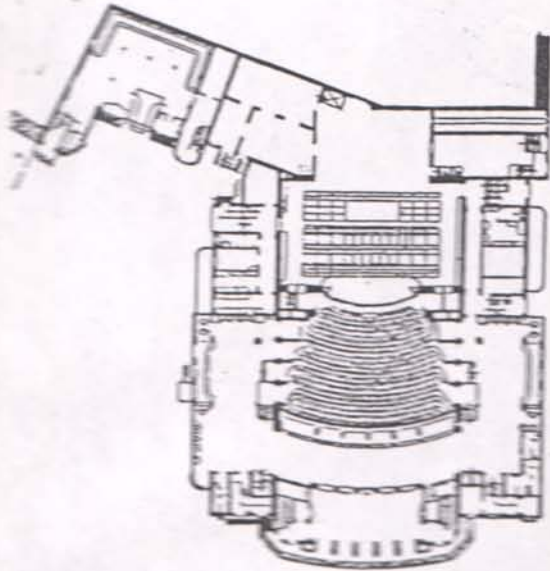
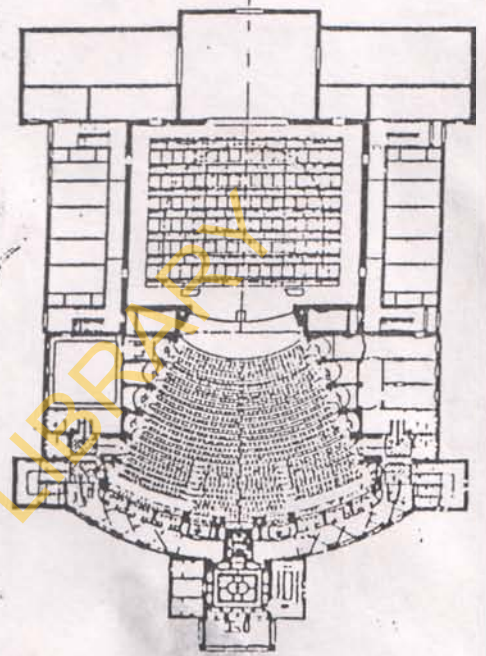


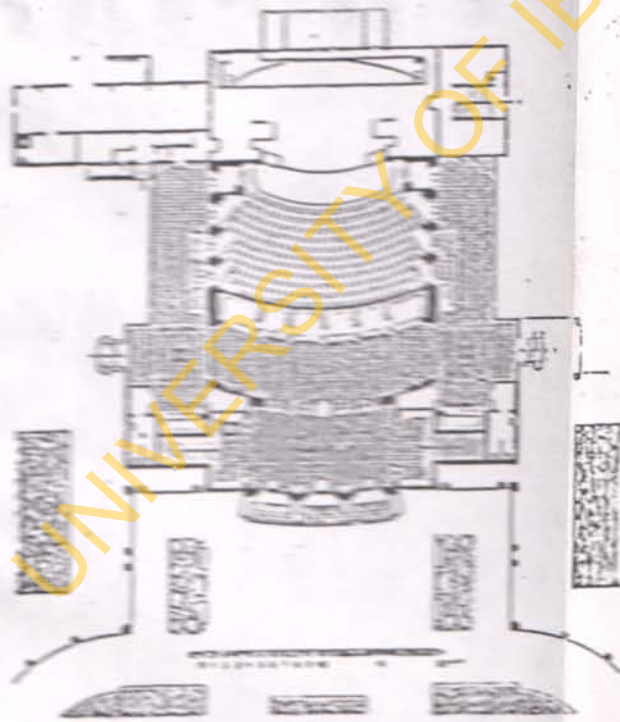
FIG. 18: Prinzregenten Theater *MUNICH*



b) Schillertheater-Berlin



c) Peinartantentheater



d) Künstlertheater-München

Super-cinema seating arrangement. The inherent structural and acoustical problems of such an auditorium, with the steeply rising tiers covered by the large expanse of ceiling, cannot be over-emphasised. Carl Brandt and Friedrich Kranich Snr. were two men in the history of German Theatre Technology that, according to Izenour, "were transitional figures who set about reforming the old baroque style" ... and "they prepared the way for modern German theatre technology". Izenour also points out that "it was in Germany during the last two decades of the nineteenth century that the great renaissance in Western European stage technology was ushered in" (9).

In recent years the open or thrust stage has been well discussed. In this case the audience is seated around a more or less semi-circular, deep apron area without the proscenium backing it. It is supposed to be a more flexible form, but at the expense of the use of scenery. The continuous search, since the 1920s, for new theatre space forms had its finding in the "workshop theatre". Though small but with a promise of flexibility to incorporate the arena staging even when it offers a simplistic and spartan level of comfort, yet it is useful for dramatic and other theatrical experiments. The workshop theatre can, but need not, be within the same complex, nor must it be incorporated in a new project. It can stand on its own.

The Erwin Piscator and Walter Gropius alliance had the aim of producing for the world a "total -theatre". Although Gropius's design remained unrealized, yet in the oval plan of the designed theatre we perceive a steep 2000-seat auditorium wrapped around a forestage

of a proscenium stage. Phyllis Hartnoll reports that the forestage was to rotate into the centre of the auditorium with subsidiary walkway stages encircling the audience, scenery being projected on to screens mounted between the pillars supporting the domed ceiling, itself a screen for a battery of built-in projectors"<sup>(10)</sup><sup>10</sup>. The project was conceived of as an arena stage.

The innovative directors soon felt that there should be closer audience involvement in the theatrical happening. In their search for more dramatic form, they discarded the proscenium arch. Notable of these was the more radical Reinhardt who made Hans Poelzig to convert for him the Circus Schutzmann in Berlin into a "Grosses Schauspielhaus" in 1919 which later became the "Friedrichstadt-palast", seating 3,000 spectators. The auditorium is steeply raked and surrounds on three sides the great horse-shoe-shaped fore-stage, at the back of which was the wide, but low, proscenium opening for the amphitheatre. The concept of the adaptable amphitheatral auditorium seating was materialised in Sweden in Malmö Stadtsteater (1944). It has a capacity for from 400 to 1,700 audience around the deep horse-shoe shaped apron stage having a 22-meter wide proscenium opening.

A seeming "return-to-the-old" is manifested in some of the German theatres of the 1950s, designed by Werner Kallmorgen.

They are in contrast to the amphitheatral seating arena and the thrust stage theatres of the same post-war period. We see in them the old balconies re-entering and taking their places as in the

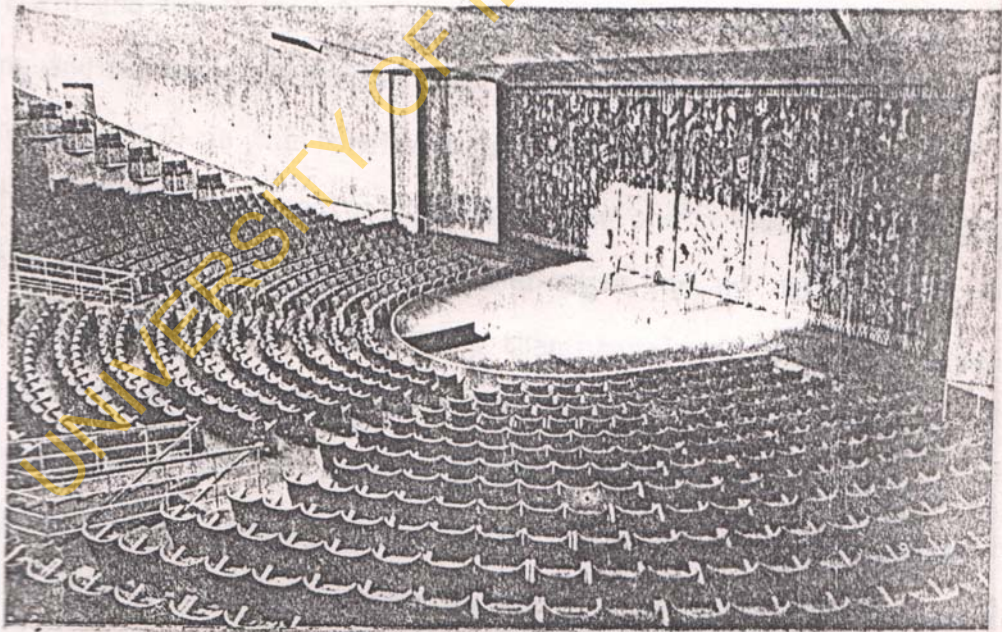
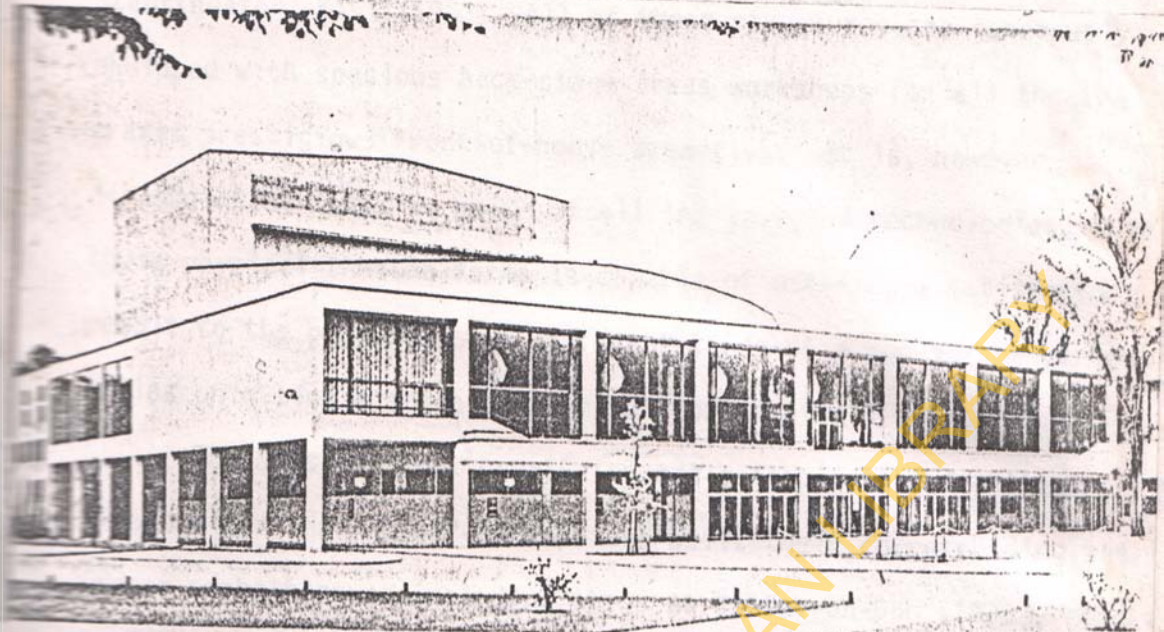
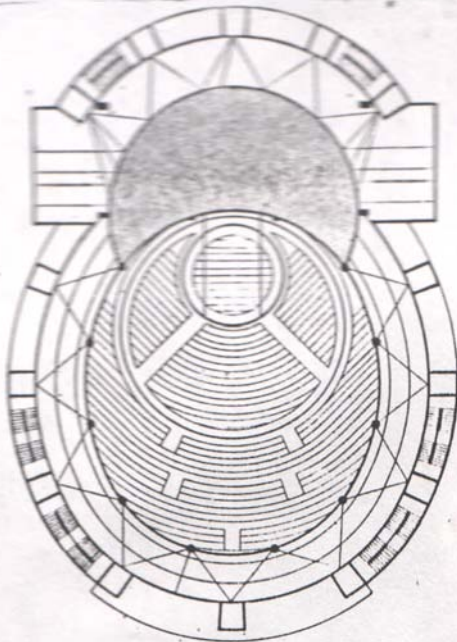


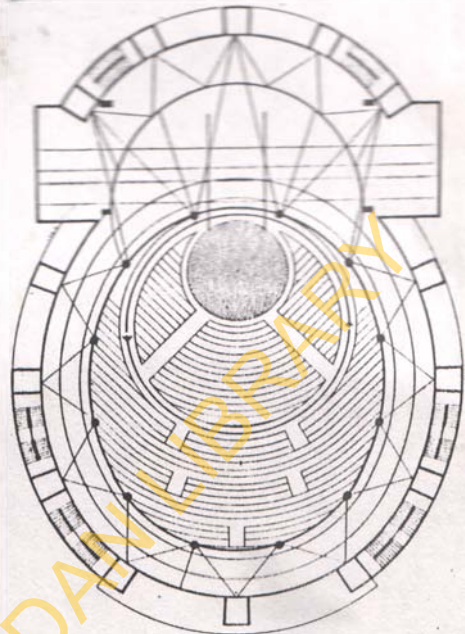
Fig. 19.  
Fig. 19:

**Stadttheater in Malmö**

Architekten Lallerstedt, Lewerentz und Helldén



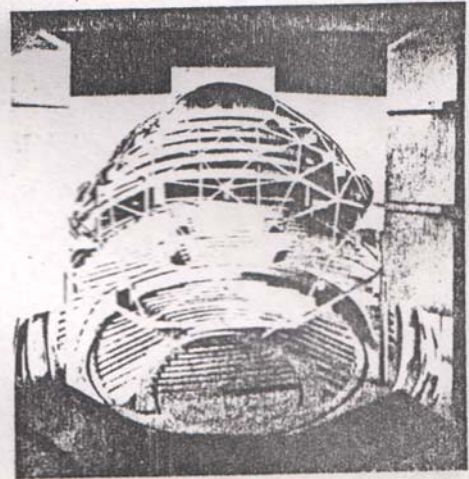
① Tiefenbühne = Deep Stage



② Proszeniumsbühne = Proscenium Stage



③ Arenabühne = Arena Stage



④ Totaltheater, Gropius (Projekt), 1926/27, drei

Fig. 20 The ideal Theater: The Total Theatre: by Walter Gropius



Thaliatheater, Hamburg (1950), the Landestheatre Hanover (1950), the Stadttheater, Kiel (1953). All of those structures are generously equipped with spacious back-stage areas, workshops for all theatre crafts, prestigious front-of-house amenities. It is, however, disappointing that, in spite of all the invested technologies, none of those physical theatre forms is capable of offering a satisfactory result to the production of different kinds of plays in the various styles on a single stage and one auditorium at all times.

The Russians took over Reinhardt's inspiration for their "Theatre for the masses"-concept and built their corresponding vast indoor amphitheatres including those at Rostov-on-Don (1936), Moscow Red Army Theatre (1940), Minsk (1941) and Tashkent (1948). "Germany up to the First World War led the world in theatre design while theatres in Britain and the United States remained unaffected by modernist designs and building techniques until the 1920s<sup>(11)</sup>. And even after 1920, Germany was still in the forefront in the modernization of the old theatres and in the conceptualization of new ones. But, eventually, the new boom in cinema architecture and the vogue for art decor came to affect the trend. Nevertheless, the then prevalent puritanism managed to yield in London such theatres as the Duches (1929), the Cambridge (1930), and the Saville (1931). The National Theatre of Britain in London, housing the Cottesloe theatre with a proscenium stage; the Lyttelton theatre with balconies and the Olivier Theatre with thrust-stage and amphitheatral seating, is an excellent example of an embodiment of the various theatre forms mentioned. "It presents

a cross-section of the 20th century theatre styles as they have evolved up to 1980"<sup>(61)</sup>.

In the USA, Norman Bel-Geddes, influenced by the Reinhardt, Piscator and Walter Gropius innovations, tried to fuse the ideas of the "Grosses Schauspiel" and the "Total-Theatre" into his experiments with the Theatre-in-the-round and Flexible-staging schemes of the 1920s and 1930s. The impact of puritanism on theatre was felt on the theatres like the Pasadena Playhouse (1925), the Pickwick, Park Ridge (1928), the Wilson, Detroit (1928) and Radio City Music Hall, New York (1932) (62). Yet, the German influence was very evident in the American theatres as seen in such buildings as the Cleveland Playhouse (1927), the Iowa University Theatre (1936), and the Hopkins Art Centre of Dartmouth College (1962) which is a kind of tamed Bayreuth that seats 3,471; the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre at Stratford - Upon - Avon (1932) and the Theatre du Palais de Cnaillet (1937) in Paris (63).

George Izenour acknowledges that "not until after World War II, when the theatre design-engineering consultant and the acoustical consultant operated as professionals at par with architects and engineers, did American theatre design, based on theatre engineering and not on stage craft, become recognizable on its own and different from both theatre design and theatre engineering traditionally practised in Western Europe (64). The American theatre became the "new" fertile land of development, ploughed by drama departments in American colleges and universities, where small theatres-in-the-round

proved both economical and artistically exciting"<sup>(16)</sup> and ... "with confidence, by the end of the twentieth century, the United States will have made its own unique imprint on theatre design and engineering in the Western world"<sup>(17)</sup>. And indeed, the examples of the University of Miami's theatre (1950); Teatros Erasmo, Milan (1953); Theatre-en-Rond de Paris (1954), Circle-in-the-square, New York (1960 and 1972); Arena Stage, Washington (1961), Victoria Theatre, Scarborough (1976), Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester (1976) have been sufficiently pointing to the fulfilment of Izenour's prophecy. Other flexible theatres include: Stratford Ontario, Festival-Theatre, (1953, rebuilt 1957); Chichester Festival Theatre (1962); Guthrie Theatre, Minneapolis (1963); Nina Vance Alley Theatre, Houston (1968); Leeds Playhouse (1970); Crucible, Sheffield (1971)<sup>(18)</sup>. Among the directors were Terence Gray at the Festival Theatre, Cambridge (converted 1926) and Copeau at the Vieux-Colombier (1919).

THE PHYSICAL THEATRE FORMS AND THE PERFORMANCE VENUES  
IN AND AT IBADAN

The Physical Theatre Forms

Literally, the physical theatre is the building in which theatre production takes place. This edifice may be a valuable piece of estate, a matter of civic pride, a centre of community activity or even (to those of puritan persuasion an abode of the devil-but most importantly it is a structure for the production of art works, that is, plays. Of course, not all plays or theatres will attain that standard; "only a few of the many plays produced rise to the level of art"<sup>(19)</sup> The theatre should make provision for the audience in the auditorium and for the performance on the stage. Both, throughout the history of the theatre, have been at various times almost pristine in their simplicity. Today, too, any place can be the auditorium; it can range from the football field to the rising side of a hill, and to such places as the Zoological and Botanical Gardens of the University of Ibadan. While the stage can vary from table tops to simple rostra platforms and to simple concrete or wooden raised floors. It can be a street or a city square as used by Soyinka's Guerilla Theatre at Ile-Ife, or a blocked up piece of land, as seen at Bode Wasimi, late Duro Ladipo's compound at Ibadan. As soon as actors and audience are present theatre is possible in any of those circumstances. "A play in production exists in both time and space and only when there is an audience to behold it."<sup>(20)</sup>

In Nigeria theatre takes place almost anywhere in almost all kinds of physical forms varying from the streets to village squares, interiors of churches, school rooms, town halls and conventional theatre halls, Richard Southern attests to John Ekwere's claim that: the surrounding of a simple



Fig. 21: *An African ceremony before a hut*

... and dance festival proved to be an open-space in a Nigerian village to which some few hundred spectators gather to watch (21) as in Fig. 48.

However, the increasing sophistication of society and its interest in technological illusionism have combined together to make theatre become more complex. Consequently, the auditorium, has to be organised, "designed" to cater for the comfort, safety and participation of the audience in the artistic ritual of play production. Exits must be provided and conspicuously illuminated at all times, stairs must have railings, steps visibly marked at the edges to prevent stumbling and fire regulations must be observed.

To this end, the craft of theatre management and organisation have to come to play in making that aspect of theatre to function. Tickets must be issued to the audience, they must be seated, provision must made for refreshments, washrooms, telephone and many other conveniences to make them happy and to encourage their future patronage.

Thus far we have looked at one part of the plant. The other part, the central element of play production, is the stage. Convention

has it that the stage is well defined space, clearly separated from the audience and it can be surrounded on certain sides by working areas. The same can also accommodate and contain both the audience members and the play. It is the people involved that can make the distinctions in their minds.

The stage, like the auditorium, must be organised; it, too, must be designed and supported by working and storage facilities with their proximity to facilitate the required effects of appearance and disappearance of persons and things.

The theatrical and dramaturgical forms often determine in a general way their physical form. According to Frederick Bentham, "there are four main (physical) forms a theatre can take; proscenium stage, open-end-stage, thrust stage and theatre-in-the-round, the last named known as arena stage in America." (3) Bentham explains that it is sometimes difficult to classify a particular theatre because flexibility in its planning can allow it quite easily to take two adjacent forms on the list of four. He stresses further that, to adapt to all four, however, the form must be small, for the smaller the better, then it becomes known as an adaptable theatre or studio theatre. In conclusion, Bentham insists that the four basic forms involved, after all, are just the same.

The size of a theatre for musical production with its presentational style and spectacular scale, for example, is the opposite of the needs of a theatre for drama, which is more intimate in

nature. Both have clung in the past to the traditional, proscenium theatre arrangement of the audience facing the stage. While a hall used only part-time for theatre, for ballroom dancing, exhibitions, banquets and so forth, is known as a multi-purpose hall, with the inherent danger of it being "suitable for everything but good for nothing" (1)

### Proscenium Theatre

The proscenium theatre, sometimes called the box-set, the "peep-hole theatre" over the several years of its development, has evolved into an incredibly efficient theatre machine capable of handling vastly complicated productions in a tight repertory schedule with ease and safety. A visit to any of the major Opera houses of the world (the Metropolitan, the Salzburg Festspielhaus, the Berlin Opera are good samples) would convince anybody.

The great flexibility of the proscenium theatre comes from the fact that scenery, actors, and properties can move in and out of the playing space from left and right, the rear, above and below. This movement usually is assisted by machines that push, pull, lift, or lower things as they are needed and take them rapidly and quietly away when they are no longer necessary.

In fact, Arena stage directors, already feeling the strain of continually trying to top themselves on a bare stage, are beginning to use more and more traditional production devices to vary the

stages. Similarly, after a number of years of staging plays on a thrust stage, the audience and directors are now quietly admitting that not all plays lend themselves to thrust staging and perhaps a proscenium type theatre could also be used.

Again, the physical structure of the theatre affects the demands that can be made of it for scenery and what can be accomplished with the theatre. The planning of most theatres has been based on the accommodation of one single form of performance. That was so because the foresight of the people specifying is usually limited, certainly shorter than the life span of the edifice they are planning for, resulting in the limitation of the scope of what the inheriting users may be able to do later. Such is the shortness of the foresight in the planning of the proscenium Arts Theatres, University of Ibadan, a hall, initially planned for lectures but which had been put to so many more uses than it was planned for, especially since 1962. (6)

Changes have taken place, though, for the new theatres contain now either modernized improvement on the conventional proscenium shape or they are completely different in form and production concept, with some of them trying to combine both with possibilities for conversion. from a conventional to an unconventional seating arrangement as the need arises. Based on the basic principles of the natural phenomena of "sight", "sound", "movement" and "time" connected with the placement of



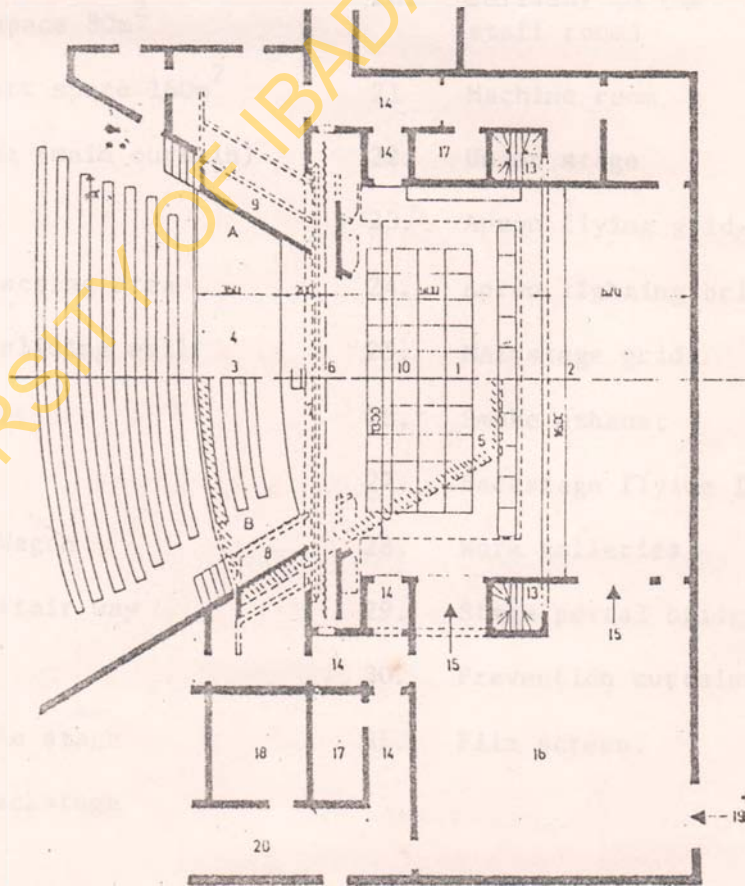
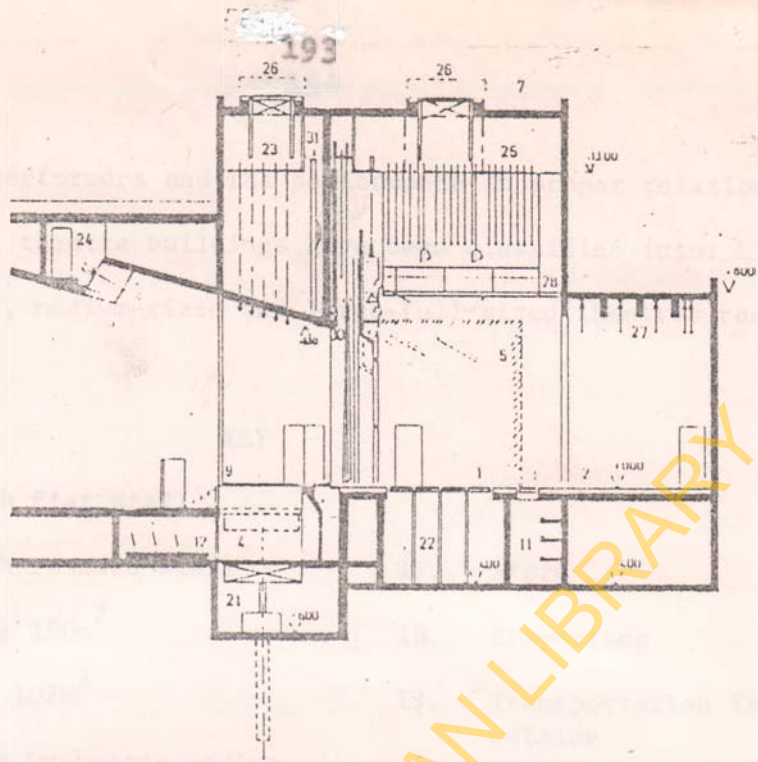


Fig. 22.A Medium sized - Proscenium Stage

the audience, performers and the performance in proper relationships to one another, theatre buildings have been classified into: Little (small) theatre, medium-sized and large-full-sized theatres respectively, Fig.

## KEY

- |     |                                     |     |                             |
|-----|-------------------------------------|-----|-----------------------------|
| A.  | Apron with fiat stall               |     |                             |
| B.  | Apron with rounded stall            | 17. | Store                       |
| 1.  | Main stage $150\text{m}^2$          | 18. | Properties                  |
| 2.  | Backstage $102\text{m}^2$           | 19. | Transportation from outside |
| 3.  | Apron with Orchestra podium         | 20. | Corridor to the staff rooms |
| 4.  | Orchestra space $80\text{m}^2$      | 21. | Machine room                |
| 5.  | Large concert space $160\text{m}^2$ | 22. | Under stage                 |
| 6.  | Curtain line (main curtain)         | 23. | Apron flying grid           |
| 7.  | Stage tower                         | 24. | Apron lighting bridge       |
| 8.  | Proscenium acting area              | 25. | Mainstage grid              |
| 9.  | Proscenium sliding wall             | 26. | Smoke exhaust               |
| 10. | Modular floor                       | 27. | Backstage flying lines      |
| 11. | Drop                                | 28. | Work galleries              |
| 12. | Stall-Seat-Wagon                    | 29. | Stage portal bridge         |
| 13. | Flyingloft stair way                | 30. | Prevention curtain          |
| 14. | Sluice way                          | 31. | Film screen.                |
| 15. | Length of the stage                 |     |                             |
| 16. | Height of backstage                 |     |                             |

### Developmental Trends

The modern trend in theatre design and architecture is the concern for the actor's close relation with the audience unlike in the old concept in the traditional, proscenium, picture frame theatre.

Some of the vehement criticism of the picture frame stage was by Sean O' Casey and Frank Lloyd Wright whose architectural campaign was heralded louder by his disciple Sean Kenny and Kean and others of their scenographers and architect milieu, whom we have come across earlier in connection with their scenographic innovations and postulations. Kean, in fact, advocating open stage, denounced the "shocking, chaotic mess" of the proscenium theatre, "those hysterical Victorian Bird-cages" - Kernodle cites. (7)

Since shortly before the Second World War, around 1938, worldwide, dramaturgical revolutionary experimentations have burst out, against the classical three-act form, by playwrights, directors and their designers, making loosely plotted plays incited perhaps by the radio, motion picture and television drama.

In an effort to find a new form midway between thrust and proscenium staging, unique uses of the proscenium stage were the new discovery, resulting in the disappearance of the traditional act curtain, as the apron was extending into the auditorium. Along fell away the picture frame feeling too. Testifying, Oren Parker and Wolf Craig confirm that:

The result gives the illusion of a thrust into the audience and at the same time provides a stage far more flexible for the limited use of scenic elements than the thrust stage. (8)

### The Space-Stage

In George Kernodle's view and assessment, the space-stage is a logical development from Appia's analysis of the elements that combine to create a living three-dimensional form on the stage: the floor levels and screens, the moving actor and the changing beams of light that unite the actor and the setting. Kernodle has, however, based his judgement on Robert Edmond Jones' suggestions contained in The Dramatic Imagination in which Jones saw Appia's Space-Stage as:

... A structure of great beauty, existing in dignity, a Precinct set apart. It will be distinguished, austere, sparing in detail, rich in suggestion ... (creating) a high mood of awe and eagerness. Like the great stages of the past it will be an integral part of the structure of the theatre itself fully visible at all times ... continually varied by changes of light ... animated through the movement of its actors ... related to the particular drama in question by slight and subtle indications of place and mood, by ingenious arrangements of the necessary properties, by the groupings of the actors by an evocative use of sound and light. (9)

In the same vein was Jacques Copeau's creation of a permanent stage in a small theatre in Paris at the beginning of this century. The stage was capable of modification. In the Festival Theatre at

Stratford, Ontario, a permanent background was used.

The characteristic feature of a space-stage include its neutrality and flexibility to accommodate many scenes and plays by simply changing the scenes through the elimination of scenic elements which may be abstract or merely suggestive of reality, light-weight enough to be brought on by hand or let down from above, by varying the lighting and effects, and by deploying the dramatic blockings and groupings of the actors and several acting levels. The space-stage is "a happy solution for the revival of old plays,"<sup>(10)</sup> especially when modern lighting and sculptural forms are combined. It presents more dynamic impact and atmosphere than any attempt to recreate and reproduce the stage realistically, periodically or historically.

The space-stage affords greater opportunities in triumphantly experimenting with projection techniques. Besides the use of the cyclorama to depict the vast space of the empty sky, a smaller reflective screen, could be used as a backing for a projected photograph or image. One of the methods of production involves the so-called projection-box which is simple in design. It houses a strong light source (bulb) which emits its rays through a piece of transparent, heat resistant plastic, or glass plate on which the image to be projected had been painted or drawn. The projection-box can be placed above or below, usually hidden, either in the front of the screen or, in the case when the screen is translucent, behind

it. Juxtaposition, fade-in, or out, dissolve and other effects could be created by the mode of changing the "negative" - the painted image on the plastic or the glass plate in quick or slow succession when using more than one projection-box. Black-outs can also be effected by the mere switching off of the devices.

The adoption of the space-stage puts a death sentence on the conventional use of the picture frame, front curtain, painted drops and often on the cyclorama as well as on the box sets, since a pool of light can be manipulated to begin a scene revealing form and exterminating the same form - through "black-out" or "fade-out". Similarly, as long as the pool of light can define the extent of the playing area, the demarcation of the height to the ceiling, length and width of the side walls, of a box-set become unnecessary. In that case, the setting will only be indicative of place; pictures and furniture essential for the unfolding of the action would be needed. In fact, the stage house with its tall walls and the encompassed vast space, the elaborate machinery of ropes and pulleys, fly lines and counter-weights become obsolete for no painted landscape or realistic wall and object are to be flown out of sight.

However, despite the huge successes of the open-stage form, there are also strong criticisms against it. Notable amongst such front-line occidental critics is the British Kenneth Tynan - a drama critic - who has called the open stage form a "stuck-out stage, a peninsula", a "promontory" or the stage that "sticks out its tongue at the

audience". To him the proximity argument at Chichester failed, in that the wide stage put the actor on the opposite side of the stage further away from the first row of spectators than he would have been from people in the twelfth row of a proscenium theatre. That any play using verbal nuance and even Olivier's own style developed on the proscenium stage was lost on the large open stage, was another of Tynan's contentions. In fact, he objected loudly to the new English National Theatre housing a large theatre of the open-stage form while the proscenium type was given to the small house, and he even objected to having both within the same complex. His criticism of London's Mermaid Theatre production of Ibsen's John Gabriel Borkman in an Elizabethan-type stage was a whip he used to flog the open-stage form. Frantically attempting a justification of his stand, in his review of that production in The Observer, he argued that:

You cannot take a play that depends on an atmosphere of imprisonment and claustrophobia, and stage it without walls or ceiling like the prospect of being hanged, the proscenium stage concentrates one's mind wonderfully and Ibsen the realist is lost without it.

Insisting still further, he claims:

the more or less straight-edged stage (preferably stripped of its proscenium framing) remains the most cunning and intimate method yet devised for transmitting a play to playgoers". (11)

We have also stumbled on the projected schemes advanced for the Jacques Polieri's inspired audio-visual theatres which project radically different audience - performer relationships in which the

audience are separated into groups and they have widely different views of a constantly changing performance area, an example of which is the Theatre Mobile, built for the Paris Festival de l'Art d'Avant-Garde in 1960 for which Polieri was the design consultant. "In this theatre, a circular, raked, motorized seating section for 300 people was surrounded by two annular stages, the inner ring movable and the outer ring fixed. For *Rhythms and Images*, Polieri placed abstract sculptures by Brancusi, Pevsner and Jacobson on remote-controlled mobile stands, spaced along the mechanized inner stage. Music, lighting and poetry were combined with the animated sculpture to make what Polieri called "a verbal, musical and plastic fantasy".

The ballet and dance have their own special requirements in audio-visual theatrical form which give shape to their own performance areas through the patterns of their choreography, that more fully enjoyed when viewed from a slightly steeper angle than is provided in the normal theatre seating arrangement.

We envision that only the costume, properties, the dazzling power of lighting and effects would be most appropriate as this brilliant and triumphant production's ~~accou~~trement while an elaborate scenic background would be keeping fort at the gate of the new-found land of the audio-visual theatre.



332

The Arena (Theatre-in-the Round)

The Thrust, and Open-Stage Forms

The developments in theatrical staging of the past decades have often-times demanded, in continuous succession, for the fusion of the arena - and the proscenium stage into a new physical form - labelled at variance thrust, open, apron or three-quarter-round stage. The basic quality and characteristic of this new compound is its professed ability of bringing the audience much closer to the performance, as in the case of arena stage where the acoustical advantages inherent in the unification of the room could now be maximally exploited. From the economic perspective, too, the cost of building and operation of a stage on which less heavy scenery would be used, has another advantage, which often-times outshines, those of the arena stage, for it offers interesting scenic grouping and lighting effects.

Tyrone Guthrie of Britain and James Hull Miller of the United States of America have been popularly acclaimed as strong advocates for this form. In My Life in the Theatre, Guthrie gives accounts of his glimpse, a vision of the future, of an open-stage. The vision became a reality, to him, when he discovered the Presbyterian Assembly Hall in Edinburgh. He accounts:

The Hall is encircled on the four sides with seats and balconies both surrounding a central platform which made it to resemble the Elizabethan theatre. (12) 2)



The Crucible Theatre, Sheffield. A 'Guthrie style' thrust stage with single tier auditorium seating 1,022. Opened 1971.  
Architect: Renon Howard Wood Associates. Design Consultant: Tanya Moiseiwitsch. Theatre Consultants: Theatre Projects Consultants

Fig. 23

From that discovery, and the experience he had there with productions for the Edinburgh Festival, he was motivated to accomplish the design of a large Shakespearean theatre for the new festival in Stratford, Ontario in Canada, a project for which he engaged the collaboration of Ms. Tanya Moitsejwitsch, the legendary English female theatre designer and consultant. The success of the structure went a long way to inspire others in England including the Festival Theatre in Chichester, opened in 1962 by Sir Lawrence Olivier; the plans for the new National Theatre in London and the one in Minneapolis in the United States of America.

The new-old form of thrust plus arena stage has now been taken on by many recent theatres. This stage actually was designed primarily for drama and possibly intimate musicals.

These shapes have the attendant implication of drastically reducing the amount of scenery, as against the proscenium stage which is meaningless without changing scenery. However, they, on the other hand, in a sense, tend to give the theatre back to the actor and playwright by minimizing the scale of the production.

The emphasis, scenographically, has shifted from the background to what the actors wear and what they sit or stand upon; a trend which, of course, may be disturbing to the designer who has been used to filling the stage with objects and to the beginner, too, who is enthusiastic about testing his abilities because the trend calls for limitations in staging. Nevertheless, minimization does

not mean outright cancellation; therefore, the need for design will still be present as long as there is theatre in any form.

### The Multi-purpose or the Multi-form Theatre

The finding of solutions to the age-old problem of and schism on the ideal form for the best theatrical communication, has pervaded the 20th century architectural theatre, designs, planning and technology. The seriousness and urgency of the matter forced the world to call for a congress on "Theatre Space", to examine the interaction between space, technology, performance and society in Munich, Germany, in 1977.

Different, similar and complex views were expressed. While some theatre makers vowed on their preference for the proscenium stage, still some pledged their sympathy for the open-stage form and many discovered there then how undecided or uninformed their minds were, while a great number expressed non-allegiance to any of the existing forms as being suitable for their own concepts and imagination of modern theatre.

Yet, a consensus must be found. A form that would profess to be able to do the cross-section of presentations some degree of justice must be found. A form, mediatory in character, a compromise, has to be devised - and so the mysterious multi-purpose or multi-form theatre purports universal answers and solutions to most of staging problems. But, with all its good intentions, it evinces some distinct and basic mannerisms. Whenever the seats in the auditorium sprawl around the thrust form, beyond the proscenium - wall, stage - wall, lines towards

180°, impossible sightlines emerge. And, neither the screening-off of the side seats, no matter by what means, nor leaving them open, to the view or a vista of the audience, have proved easy or aesthetically satisfactory. The form has earned itself antagonising criticisms; its validity queried and it has been given names such as: "an all-purpose theatre that is no purpose theatre"; "a compromise theatre that has no form of its own"; a theatre in which if you try to please everybody, you please nobody" and a theatre "useful for all, but good for none" (13)

In the technologically advanced world with long-standing theatre traditions, frantic efforts have been made, several experiments performed, researches conducted and documentations compiled over the endeavours of theatre architects, consultants, engineers in conjunction with theatre makers and artists, all aspiring to achieve an ideal, adequate and pleasing spatial relationship between the audience and the performers.

Russell Johnson, an English Architect, an Acoustics and Theatre Planning Consultant, in his paper, "What is a Multi-purpose Auditorium?", writes:

In Europe, almost all halls for the performing arts are single-purpose facilities. In Europe, a concert hall is a concert hall-period. It is designed as such and is not suitable for play-making, dance, musical comedy, or opera. The European opera house is designed to function as a suitable home for opera, and is acoustically incorrect for concerts. A play house is for "straight" or "legitimate" drama (speech plays),

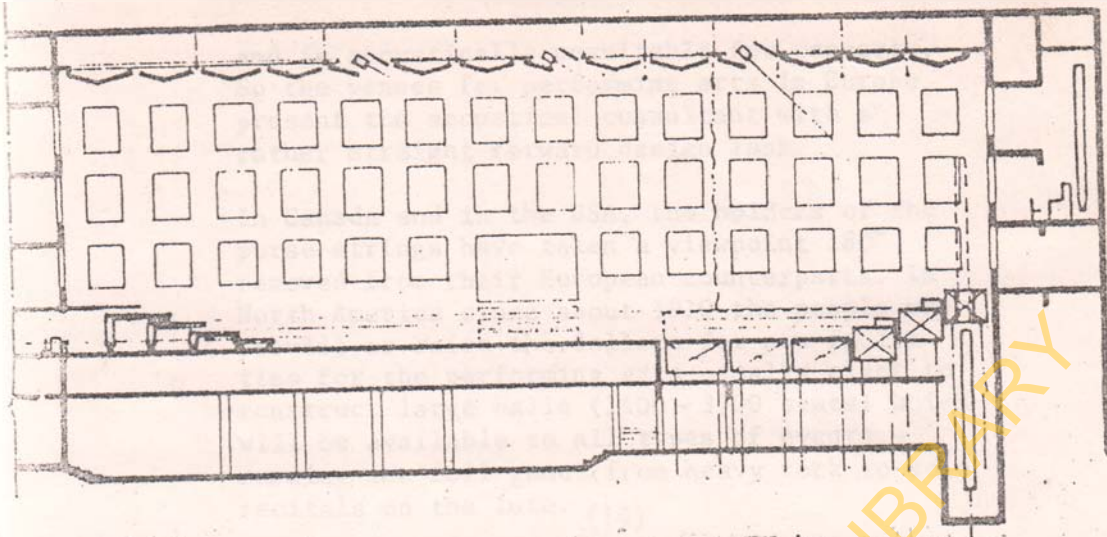


FIG 24: 'MULTI-PURPOSE HALL'; ABOVE: SECTION; BELOW: PLAN

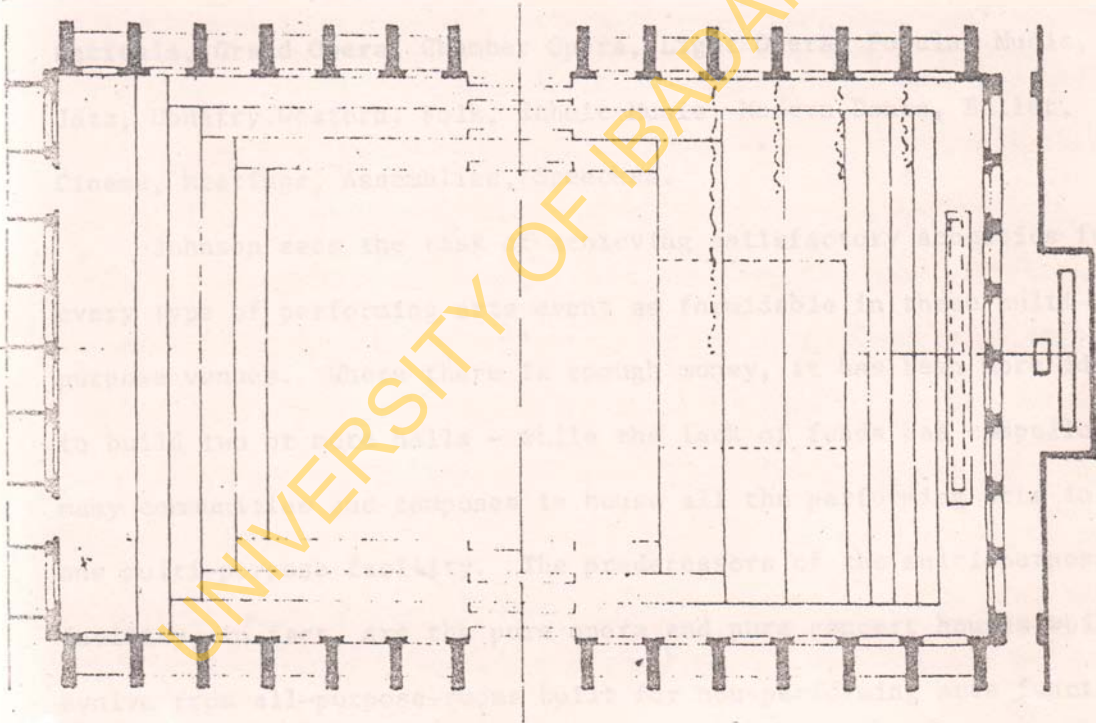


FIG-24:  
Multi-purpose hall with vertically moving Film screenwall,  
retractable stall tiered seats, without flying grid vertically  
moving podiums.

and is acoustically unsuitable for concerts. So the venues for performing arts in Europe present the acoustical consultant with a rather straight forward design task.

In Canada and in the USA, the holders of the purse-strings have taken a viewpoint 180° removed from their European counterparts. In North America since about 1910 the people who provide or raise the dollars for new facilities for the performing arts usually elect to construct large halls (1400 - 3700 seats) which will be available to all types of events - running the full gamut from heavy rock to solo recitals on the lute. (14)

Among the activities in typical North American Civic or Campus Auditorium are: Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra, Choral Concerts, Recitals, Grand Opera, Chamber Opera, Light Opera, Popular Music, Rock, Jazz, Country Western, Folk, Ethnic Music, Modern Dance, Ballet, Cinema, Meetings, Assemblies, Speeches.

Johnson sees the task of achieving satisfactory acoustics for every type of performing arts event as formidable in these multi-purpose venues. Where there is enough money, it has been more ideal to build two or more halls - while the lack of funds has compelled many communities and campuses to house all the performing arts in one multi-purpose facility. The predecessors of the multi-purpose facility, in fact, are the pure opera and pure concert houses which evolve from all-purpose-rooms built for non-performing arts functions such as dining, courts of law, worship, and receptions.

The German-speaking Max Frisch has said: "Man has since long discovered the theatre for himself, what man now needs is only the details of different aspects and elements." (15) Similarly, Karl

Morgen, the innovative German theatre architect of Hamburg, once said: "Give to the theatre people much space, whatever else they need, they would put therein themselves". (34)

Realising Max Frisch's and Karl Morgen's ideas was Adolf Zotzmann, who, until his death in 1989, was for post Second-World-War Germany, perhaps, after the late Professors Unruh and Muentler, both of Berlin, the most versatile German Professor of Theatre Technology, who lectured at the Technical University in Hanover. He was a Consultant and a Technical Director. Upholding the views of Frisch and Morgen Zotzmann admitted that he, too, like no one else, could conjure nothing novel, or offer the present day world of theatre new technological wonder, magic or miracle greater than to contribute to the popularising of the abounding technological feats. Zotzmann also believed that the theatre today and in the future would benefit more if it is provided, generously, with vast space and room programming which could accommodate, relatively, all eventually upcoming developments without suffering from serious spatial constraints.

Adolf Zotzmann distinguishes between planning for Cultural Assembly Places, the conventional and traditional theatre building; the multi-purpose houses with technical stage installations, and scene podiums; studio-theatres and simple assembly places with light or no technical equipments beyond, perhaps, rostrums; and the houses for new production forms and experiments with large



unit playing areas, with heavy infrastructures, side stages and storage spaces. Zotzmann's example of one successful multi-purpose modern theatre building is the reconstructed, old, courtyard theatre of Sarah Bernhardt in Paris. In that theatre, Zotzmann reports that the stage and the auditorium were united and made to constitute one big space-room. Here, the integration of technical scenic area, the stage, and the auditorium is said to have been completely perfect. (17) According to Zotzmann, the entire floor area was fashioned in a chess-board manner, comprising podiums that can be grouped into various units and shapes at will. This then offers a highly variable and simple "scene". Other examples from Zotzmann's Theatre Planning practice include the Opera House in Zurich, and the Staat Theatre, Bern, both in Switzerland, and many in Germany where he planned extensively similar modular - theatre forms for such theatres in Muenster, Ulm, Recklinghausen and Witten.

Characteristic of such houses are their multi-purpose usefulness in catering for a wide spectrum of cultural activities of the community in which they are sited. The philosophy guiding the planning of these edifices is the provision of a "meeting place" to fulfil a lot of societal functions and activities, otherwise known as "processes". (18)

The accommodation of the various "processes" takes place in two ways; Zotzmann explains:

- (1) Through side-by-side (simultaneous) placement of different "processes" in direct neighbourhood to each other; and
- (2) Through a successive (subsequent) placement of different processes in the same venue.

While the first way - the simultaneous placement - emphasizes the sociological aspects, to encourage the development of societal consciousness through concurrent happenings taking place in rooms placed side-by-side of each other, the second way places premium on the economic aspects to develop a highly technologically ripe single-room space that can accommodate the successive happenings of the processes, and to offer maximum concessions at the expense of very costly investment on equipments, inventory and operations which on the other hand may, as it often does, put the initially calculated economic considerations into question.

For the solution in either way, Zotzmann differentiates between two levels of this technology, namely: the theatre technology in the building and the technology for the play production proper.

The "processes" are brought into proper communicational relationship of an aesthetically pleasing environment, creating an impressive atmosphere, when lighted creatively, using the techniques, equipments and effects of modern stage lighting. (19)

Hannelore Schubert, a prolific German architectural critic, conversant with all the questions of theatre building and who has collected materials from all over the world, parts of which are

contained in her Moderner Theaterbau (Modern Theatre) ~~believes that~~ today, the trend is towards a different imaginative approach to play making. One carries each theatre piece into a traditional stage and adjusts the scenography, the performance style and form of the play to fit onto that stage, since a complete reconstruction of the stage, on no account, could be done. Or, else, one radically reconstructs or refurbishes the stage for the experiment at hand. And, if this, too, is not feasible, one turns to a simple hall, which, of course, would not necessarily impose itself on the director as would a conventional theatre with its conventions and excessively installed technology, but which, rather, would offer the highest degree of scenic freedom. A mobile technology will just be installed therein when needed. (20)

Thus, the recent development in theatre planning is to conceive of the whole theatre structure as a unit in which the stage house and the audience area are brought together to form a large hall where the production can be "fabricated" along the respective situations and requirements of each play. She gives such examples, as "Free theatres" designed by Vischer, Weber, Bignens in a contest for the Stadt theatre, Basel 1953, Roman Clement's "Theatre Project B", 1955, for the Darmstadt's Theatre Discussion; R. Von Doblhoff's design for a Free Theatre in 1958; and Werner Ruhnau's Design for the contest for the Schauspielhaus (Drama House) in Duesseldorf in 1959/60.

Werner Ruhnau, another German theatre architect, in his design

goes further than the mere variability of the stage area. He planned variability for the whole floor of both stage and auditorium with hydraulic podiums. In this theatre, all imaginable situations, arrangements and placements of the audience in relation to the performers and the stages could, in fact, be created such as the box-set; arena and space-theatre relationships. The seating is no more fixed and can be re-arranged during performance also. The upper-stage permits, from every point, access to the moving or changing playing area. The simple variability also enables changeability of the seats of the audience in relationship to the placements of stage. Many stages are simultaneously possible, the spaces between stages, audience and foyer are additionally open to city landscape, such as:

- (1) Introverted box-set theatre: The small Orchestra pit can be closed. By removing the box-frame, the space-theatre becomes feasible, Technical stage provisions are made from above and, as usual, from the sides. The foyer leading to the stalls is closed.
- (2) Arena theatre with performance area in the middle. Entrance of the performers from the sides from the folding walls. Lighting comes from boxes in the folding walls and from the lighting bridges over the tribune. The roof over the acting area is open, technical stage provisions are from above. The foyer leading to the stalls is open.
- (3) Mobile theatre with many acting areas which lay claim on

optimum integration of actors and spectators in which the performers enter from all angles and for which technical stage provisions for scene changing are from above and for moving acting areas are from beneath. And, the foyer leading to the stalls is open. (21)

Another of Ruhnau's concepts was his so-called "Podien-Klavier" (Podium Piano) presented to the jury at the competition for "Theater fuer Morgen" (Theatre for Tomorrow) (22) in Berlin in October, 1966, at which Erwin Piscator was present. The concept was inspired by a kind of "total theatre of light and space" already conceived between 1925 and 1927 by Piscator and Gropius.

However, the cost of the basic infrastructure and operation in a repertory theatre could be very prohibitive. Yet, Ruhnau believes that the new theatre forms should not be conceived for a particular societal class or for a pre-determined selection of plays, but to be the 'meeting-place' for every spiritually and artistically interested person and for every imaginable spectacle. He based his ideas, philosophy and convictions on three chains of thoughts:

- (1) Actors' use of mask and costume for change of their characters.
- (2) Changed playing areas, from play to play, with properties and furniture.
- (3) Theatre makers' desire to change from play to play, and from stage form to stage form.

For this purpose, as for the stage area, equipments are to be created for the auditorium which can facilitate the instant changing of the whole theatre structure. Stage and audience areas are to be connected with passages, the hall is to be given a new roof so that the visitors can be served with good acoustic reflection and reverberation time.

Ruhnau, in a poetic manner, presents his vision, philosophy and design concepts for the 'theatre of tomorrow' in January, 1968, at the instance of an architectural contest on the same subject matter--thus:

We don't have a monarchy.  
 We don't need any more court theatres.  
 We don't want a "Formed" society.  
 We don't want unconditional party discipline.  
 We don't want courtiers.  
 We don't want faith-healers, medicine-men,  
 salvationists, moralists.  
 We want confident, responsible fellow-citizens  
 and fellow-actors.  
 We want an open society.  
 We live in an age of cybernetics, automation,  
 space travel, telecommunications and electrical information.  
 We no longer just see round the next street  
 corner but are linked up with the global  
 information network formed by the mass  
 media - radio, television, teleprinter,  
 telephone, and picture transmission.  
 Our horizon has been extended.  
 We don't live in one dimension.  
 We don't live in one perspective.  
 The simultaneousness of various stimuli, types  
 of information, actions and reactions in  
 daily life has made multi-sensorious perception  
 relevant to the age.  
 The modern theatre must do justice to these new  
 habits of perception and sharpen the senses  
 of spectators, listeners and co-actors for  
 them.

Only in the theatre can the simultaneousness of various events be achieved on different, spatially separate levels in multi-perspective space.

Only the theatre can unite productively all modern media of information.

Only drama and music are created openly and in public and can be influenced by the public.

The court theatre performs in front of a passive public and denies it, even architecturally, any spatial change.

The peep-show theatre aligns people and determines their angle of view.

Communication between stage actors and spectators is one-sided.

Once you sit in a row of seats you sit enclosed in plush.

Entry allowed only during the intervals.

No smoking, drinking, eating, talking.

Silence and devotion, please.

An open society requires open forms of theatrical performance.

Open forms of theatrical performance demand open forms of theatrical structure.

Open forms of theatrical structure include all forms of theatrical performance and all those desired now.

The peep-show structure of the court theatre, on the other hand, excludes all forms of theatrical performance except those of the peep-show.

Open forms of theatrical performance stimulate the public to choose between different forms.

The co-actor can change the play within its own rules.

The ritual performed by the faithful in church during mass, on the other hand, is the observance of fixed modes of behaviour.

Open forms actuate the public.

The principle of open forms is variability.

Open theatrical forms, therefore, require alterable types of theatrical architecture.

Variability instead of monumentality.

An open society instead of a closed society. (41)

The Berlin contest for 'Design Concept' for "the theatre of tomorrow" also featured students' design concepts by George Renken and Norbert Woerner and by Jaacor Agani from 1963 in which many stages but with limited technical apparatus were presented. Common to all these projects is the principle of Television Studio outfits and installations whereby a large hall is so equipped that the whole technology is fixed in the roof and ceiling for the floor, ground, to be free and adjustable. (25)

Some other concepts towards the multi-purpose theatre structure include Peter Blake's presented at the Ford Foundation Design Contest and the ones by the German architects Weber and Rabinov in 1965 for the studio theatres of the National Theatre in Budapest. Here, too, emphasis is on simplicity of a hall in which different situations of audience and performance placements can be achieved. The solutions here include the use of seat wagons.

For the Theatre Laboratory, the workshop theatre, at Finland's University of Tampere, Tolvo, Korhoner adopted a similar approach. There, a large room with many technical installations could be concealed and revealed in parts by the use of a round curtain while the ceiling and roof containing the technical gadgets remain always visible. (26)

Mies Van de Rohess's concept for the National Theatre in Mannheim, Germany is another exceptional example featuring a sensational revolving stage form and communications with the city and the public.



The expansiveness and rarity of the materials used, the aesthetic forms and atmosphere created lure the public from distances as a change from their daily routine lives.

In the United States of America, many examples abound of contemporary theatre architecture seeking to find a lasting solution to the problem of the multi-functionality of theatre structures. Here, one differentiates between the "official", college, the private and commercial theatres, the types on Broadway and the Lincoln Centre, in New York City, which represents, outwardly, the most important theatre centre on the East Coast. At the Lincoln Centre are concentrated three large theatres, the Metropolitan Opera (Met.), the Vivian Beaumont Theatre and the New York State Theatre. (27)

The private component of the American theatre building includes the College theatres spread across the continent, which, to a great extent, have been erected with private initiatives. It could be said of the USA that the most developed theatres evolved within the colleges. They are workshop theatres in the best sense of the matter. Some of these are the Kalita Humphreys Theatres opened in 1960 in Dallas, Texas - designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, the "Theatre Castle" with the strong sculptural accent in Houston, Texas designed by the Architect Urich Franzen with George Izenour as the Theatre Consultant. Izenour had become a legendary American scenographer, theatre Consultant and Planner. He has earned several awards for his contributions to the many interesting solutions for the multi-purpose useful-

ness of the theatre. For the Jesse H. Jones Hall in Houston built by Caudill, Rowlet and Scott, Izenour planned a variable capacity which is achievable through the lowering of ceiling elements that cut off, at will, a "rang" - circle and thus reduces the seating capacity from 3000 for musical production to 1800 for dramatic presentations. The Loeb Centre in Webster Groves, Missouri, designed by the architects Murphy and Mackney, profitted from Izenour's innovative consultancy for the technology faithful to the diverse uses as assembly -, laboratory - and lecture - hall for the college. Variability in the auditorium area is achieved by dividing it into series of side rooms, by the lowering down of iron curtains, panelled on both sides with plywood boards to enhance acoustics. The rooms can take from 200 to 500 people for classrooms. The stage penetrates deep into the auditorium. The system is economically very demanding though, but the approach worths its while and it reminds us of the ones at Folkwang School in Essen - Germany and in the Reinhardt Seminar in Vienna - Austria.

The experimental theatre of the University of Miami - Florida, designed by Robert M. Little and Marian Manley, is another excellent example. The Harvard University owns also a very skillfully convertible theatre installation designed by Hugh Stubbins. It evolved from the peep - box - set stage and can convert into central arena stage, through easily moved wagon-seat-banks which can be pushed to the end and be used as space-stage, or used as peep-box-stage. On this stage, the

Architectural Forum of the time writes: "A teaching machine" for the Drama House at Birmingham, Alabama, one of the most versatile instruments for performing drama of all kinds, has recently gone into operation. (45)

This theatre which is amphitheatrically conceived has a revolving cylinder stage whose middle segment is fixed and whose other two half-circle segments can be driven up or lowered. A third, separate, half-circle segment is installed under the stage area beneath. This, too, can be driven or raised up by turning the centrally pivoted system, so that each time three scenes can be set on the semi-circular stage segments. (46)

To Hannelore Schubert, "It is, however, not quite understandable why such a complicated machinery has to be installed when and if an horizontally sliding installation would have equally been sufficiently satisfactory" (47) George Kernodle also believes that "the most ingenious solution is to make all the sections of the auditorium mobile," (48)

Buttressing his point, he recalls several projects that were drawn in the 1920's, one of which is the Harvard project. He reports that the theatre, the Loeb Drama Centre at Harvard, becomes convertible through an electronically controlled machinery, which turns it to become proscenium or an arena stage as the circular centre section of the building revolves. The large centre section of the floor holds seats when the proscenium stage is used, while the same seats are rolled off, and the floor raised to make for a thrust stage, and, when arena stage is

needed, the seats are then placed on the proscenium stage. Concluding,

Kernodle insists that:

all theatre people are agreed that a multi-form plan is excellent for the small studio theatre, especially as an experimental theatre for students. (49)

Another authority on this subject is James Hull Miller. Miller argues that a theatre should be a single architectural space, not two rooms, not one for the audience, and one for the actors. (50) He insists that the one single space should have entrance ways for the actors and flat walls and screens for projected backgrounds. Miller sees in the ceilings acoustical canopies that can be provided with slots for the accommodation of lighting equipments and curtains commonly useful to the actors and audience. Miller argues further that the decor should be free-standing, central as nucleus around which the characters move but not to be pushed to the perimeter. However, instead of the painted wings and backdrops of the box-set, which enclose the actors and fill out the picture space up to a frame, he wants the scenery to be like 'scenic islands' with levels and heights, such as towers or small platforms, with properties, windows and door-ways, or a fragment of wall. (51) Sometimes a shape of an object can serve as a signal of the locality or as an ideogram. Instead of a cyclorama, to enclose and fill out the picture, he uses slabs of the theatre-wall as openings for actors' entrances. He projects scenic elements and colours, either on the walls or on the preferred portable self-supporting (standing) screens set up in front of the wall. And since there is no elaborate rigging to fly heavy scenery, the instruments for scenic projections may be located overhead or behind the translucent screens; Miller's plans have been particularly useful for the low cost school theatres.

### THE PERFORMANCE VENUE IN IBADAN

It is a fact that the Arts Theatre University of Ibadan, in which all the illustrative plays discussed in the preceding chapter were produced and staged still remains the best proscenium theatre in Ibadan, and we shall find out more about it later, yet there are other theatres in Ibadan which deserve closer examination, for they too have been used for play production at different times.

#### Performance Venue in and at Ibadan

In Ibadan a cross section of all forms of physical structures of performance spaces are available which thence qualified the city to be called a microcosm of the Nigerian theatrical landscape.

Beginning with the open spaces in the Zoological and Botanical Gardens of the University of Ibadan through her streets, football fields, to the Institute of African Studies's Courtyard, stopping over at the Dinning Halls and at the Staff Club rooms on the way to the Staff School auditorium. On the way back, we may pass beside the churches and go to the International School Hall; from there we could come to the Trenchard Hall and finally end up in the Arts Theatre, the most complex of them all.

Going into the city our eyes first catch the Mapo Hall standing fearlessly on top of the Mapo Hill; from there we can spot Obiṣeṣan Hall and the Youth Palace (the former British Council Hall); looking to the North we can locate the area of Baba Sala's Awada Spot at Yemętu

and further northwards the sight goes dimly to the late Duro Ladipo's Bode Wasimi "shrine". Turning eastwards, Aremo Anglican Church where many religious dramas have been presented could be seen, with its tower pointing religiously to the sky above. And towards the South, we perceive the direction of the Ibadan Grammar School and Saint Anne's School and swaying a little more south-westward, we dimly see the Olubadan and Liberty stadiums. The Cultural Centre of Oyo State Government, entrusted to the Oyo State Council for Arts and Culture, could be seen half-sleeping on the Mokola hillside, while Demas Nwoko's New Culture Studio theatre, yet to be completed, bows on another hillside opposite. The Banquet Hall at Premier Hotel, and ballrooms of other hotels, the innyards of private residences have all been used for performances at one time or the other.

We also remember that some estates have been rented, leased or bought in the past for theatrical performances. Mbari Club of old comes to mind as an example. Unfortunately, most of those venues are not equipped with necessary infrastructures to enable theatrical seeds to germinate and grow well in them. They are mostly ill-~~badly~~ planned and equipped without giving consideration to the general welfare and comfort of the audience, not to talk of other social amenities belonging to such centres of communal meetings and activities we find elsewhere in the world. In all these venues, the stage has varied from the bare floor to the raised wooden - and even concrete - floors. Many a time there is no curtain, especially in the open-air venues. Nevertheless, we have been making do with whatever we have. With imagination, we

even manage to turn the physical limitations in all of the venues, sometimes, to artistic advantage. In fact, such limitations must have prompted the idea of the Theatre-on-Wheels of Geoffrey Axworthy, for a neutral-free-performance venue needed. Mobility was another consideration. Since most people cannot come to the theatres where they are sited, then there must be a theatre that can go to the people where they are, and, so the Theatre-on-Wheels innovation has done that excellently, it is an example of arena and thrust theatres in Nigeria. The foregoing considerations should guide the choice of staging of facilities in and at Ibadan.

In trying to analyse those venues, it is useful to group them, using the conventional modes of classifying theatre structures. John Gassner has identified two groups, as the Simplified Stage and the Theatre Plant<sup>(35)</sup> Borrowing from his, we may attempt a grouping of these venues thus:

#### A Simplified Stage

The experiments aimed at the Zoological and Botanical Gardens, on the streets, market places, school - room and halls, thriving on make-shift platform and desk-top stages, only just big enough to take a few actors, is all that is needed. They demand little effort, in the street, village square and field arrangements, entrances and exits are provided for the actors through the audience while the door leading into the room serves in the case of in-door performances.

Lighting usually is accomplished via the daylight for the day-time show; moonlight, hurricane and gas lanterns and ordinary light bulbs for the night-time and interior performance.

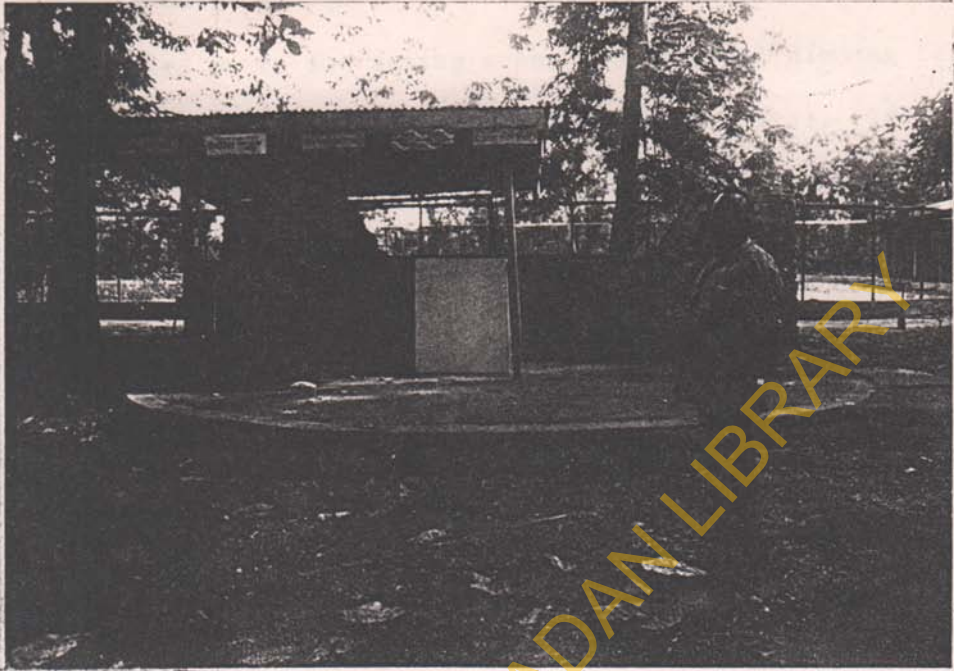


Fig. 25: The Performance Space at Zoological Garden, U.I.



Fig. 26: The Performance Space at Botanical Garden, U.I.



Normal stage lighting equipment, which, when available, are mounted on tripods focussed on to the acting area. For want of dimming facilities, ordinary switching, on-and-off switching, suffices. The actors depend on their own acumen for the expressiveness of their acting. Important, mostly, in this kind of staging, generally, is the individual ingenuity.

#### The Arena (Theatre in the Round) Stage

Even the arena type of stage, the Theatre-on-Wheels, was extremely limited in its accomplishments of effect and impact on the audience. Nevertheless, the productions 'Shakespeare Festival', directed by Geoffrey A worthy in 1964, Danda directed by Demas Nwoko in 1965, Hassan directed by Bayo Oduneye in 1972, Langbodo in 1977 directed by Dapo Adelugba at the Institute of African Studies's courtyard and Femi Osofisan's The Chattering and the Song in February 1977, in the "Pit" Theatre at OAU, Ile-Ife, were some efforts made at the arena and thrust-staging in and around Ibadan.

The inherent limitations to the use of scenery is, for the audience, a deprivation of the theatrical spectacles they are used to on the proscenium stage, where, at least, some fantastic illusion could be served. To enliven them, some directors found the limitations as apparent challenges to their creative solving of the "task of minimizing the losses of dramatic effect" by attempting to balance them with

startling innovations. At any rate, the settings for out-door production normally require only such properties or even "scenery" that cannot be affected by rain. The present writer remembers vividly how much he and other few crew members had to suffer in the hands of winds and torrents of rain during the 1964 and 1965 tours of the country respectively. The problem is normally arrested by using few movable units, preferably the kind that can be built in place and that can stand all the season.

### The Theatre Plants

In Nigeria today, most of the best theatre buildings (plants) are situated within the universities. At present, there are some thirty odd universities in Nigeria. Many of them are nurturing some kind of theatrical activities sporadically or frequently, academic, or as amateurs, semi-professionals and as professionals. They use various forms of performance spaces with or without theatre equipments while some are relatively well equipped. Many of the institutions are contemplating building their own theatre structures.

To this end, the craft of theatre management and organisation has to come to play in making that aspect of theatre to function. Tickets must be issued to the audience; they must be seated, provision must be made for refreshments, washrooms, telephone and many other conveniences to make them happy and to encourage their future patronage. The central part of the plant, the stage, has now to be looked at.



(a)

Fig. 27 (a&b); THE INSTITUTE OF AFRICAN STUDIES' QUADRANGLE



(b)

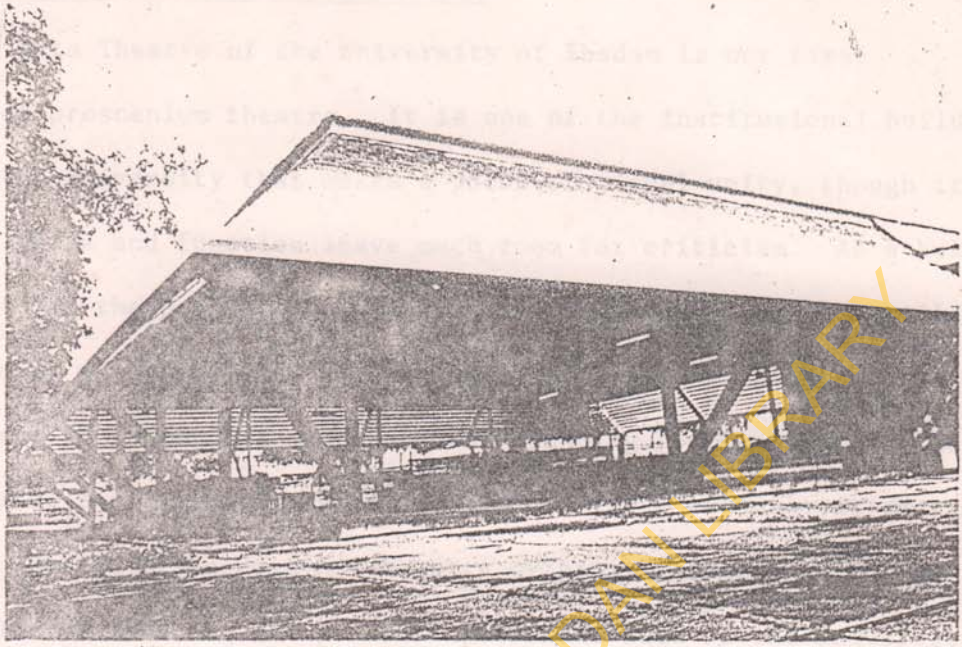


(a)

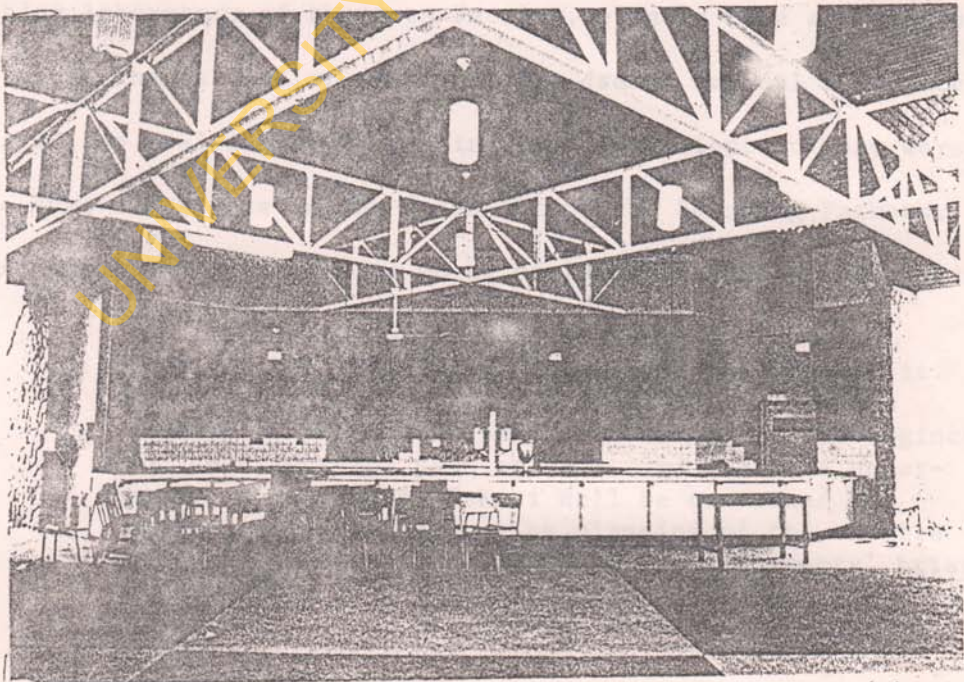
FIGS 28(a+b): THE STAFF SCHOOL AUDITORIUM, U.I.



(b)



Figs 29 (a+b): THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL DINING HALL, U.I.



THE PROSCENIUM THEATRE STAGEThe Arts Theatre, University of Ibadan

The Arts Theatre of the University of Ibadan is our first example of proscenium theatre, It is one of the institutional buildings of the University that makes a point of visual unity, though its siting, scale and function leave much room for criticism. As a building meant for the people, the planning of the space within the building, the movement of the people, their visual and emotional participation are subject to functional architectural planning. Consequently, the Arts Theatre could rightly be called a miscarriage because it emerged in 1955, instead of an Open-Air-Theatre originally conceived in the Master Plan of 1948 for the present permanent site of the University. In an Open air-theatre, apart from weather constraints, conditions such as space, movement, visual and emotional participation could be more easily satisfied. The Arts Theatre was provided, in the first instance, as a part of the teaching laboratory of the Arts Faculty, planned more as a lecture-and-cinema-theatre than a regular theatre. For drama, musical and dance performances, in the real sense, it remains still deficient in many ways for there are some oversights in the foresight of the Founding Fathers, in spite of the extension and refurbishing works of 1960/61, some of which are:

the theatre was built within twenty-five yards of a hall of residence, with a main road around it. This, together with open-louvered walls, ensures that every production should be ruined by the engines and headlights of passing cars, and that the unfortunate inhabitants of Kuti Hall be condemned to eternal sleeplessness. The planning of the theatre was equally uninspired; perhaps the architects' brief

was at fault, but the general conception is of a lecture-hall-cum-cinema, in which, perhaps, an occasional play might be run up by staff or students; no backstage working space was provided, nor any proper provision for equipment appropriate to this type of stage; a single toilet and three tiny unventilated dressing-rooms was the only concession to its use as a live theatre; some of these defects were rectified later, when the Regional Fire Officer condemned the building as unsafe. That the University provided no professional staff for its operation, and an annual budget that would not have kept a single academic department in stationery suggests that the architect merely expressed the official view of its likely employment as a theatre. They could not be expected to foresee that this would become the most active and influential theatre in Nigeria; or that a building playing such an important role should be quite differently designed and provided for.

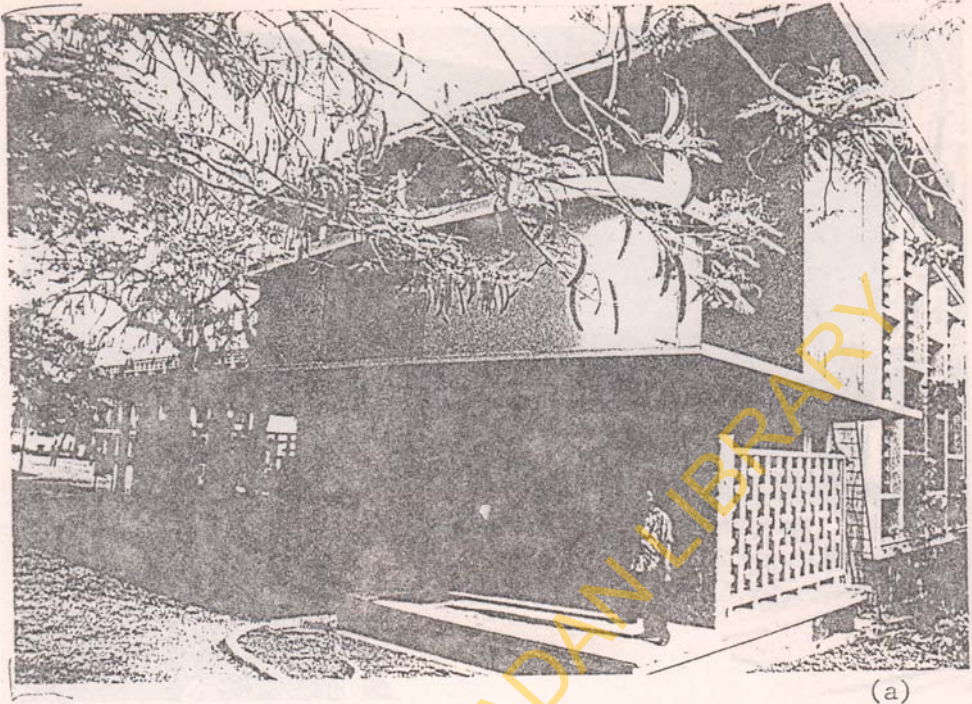
53

#### Auditorium

The louvered - walls must remain open always as the only source of ventilation, therefore rendering the productions vulnerable to the intrusions of unwanted sounds from outside and an uncontrollable audience, who want to watch without paying money or when there are no more free seats in the auditorium available.

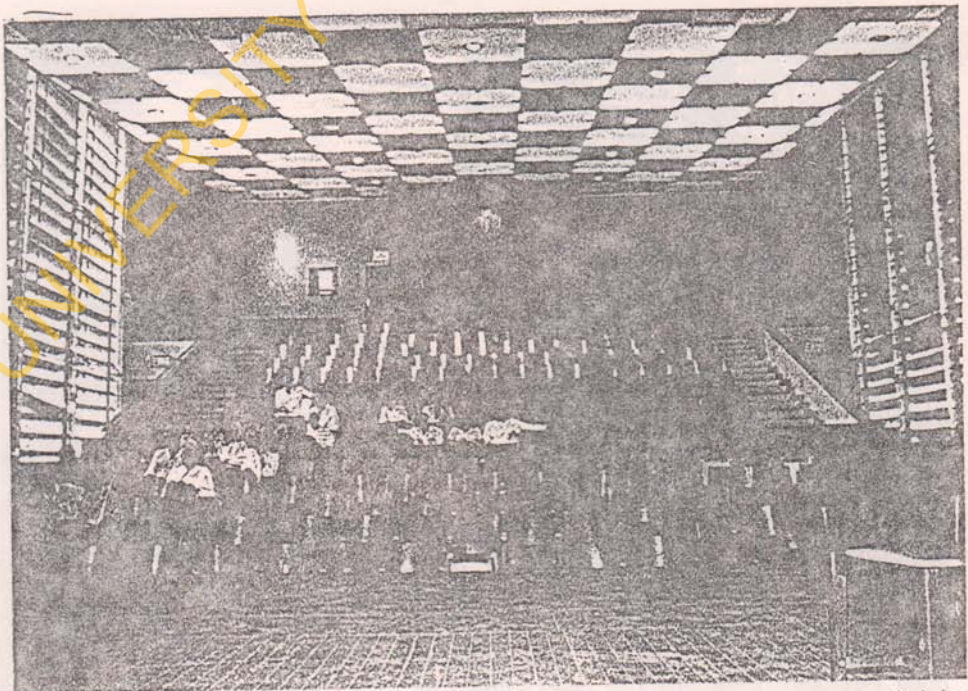
#### Access to Seats

For the audience to get to the majority of seats, they have to make a U-turn to climb the steps leading to their seats. This, in case of panic, is dangerous as they have to run down the steps and may mistakenly run on to the stage or even to the exit doors that do not lead directly into safety; while turning round to find the entrance, they could get tramped.



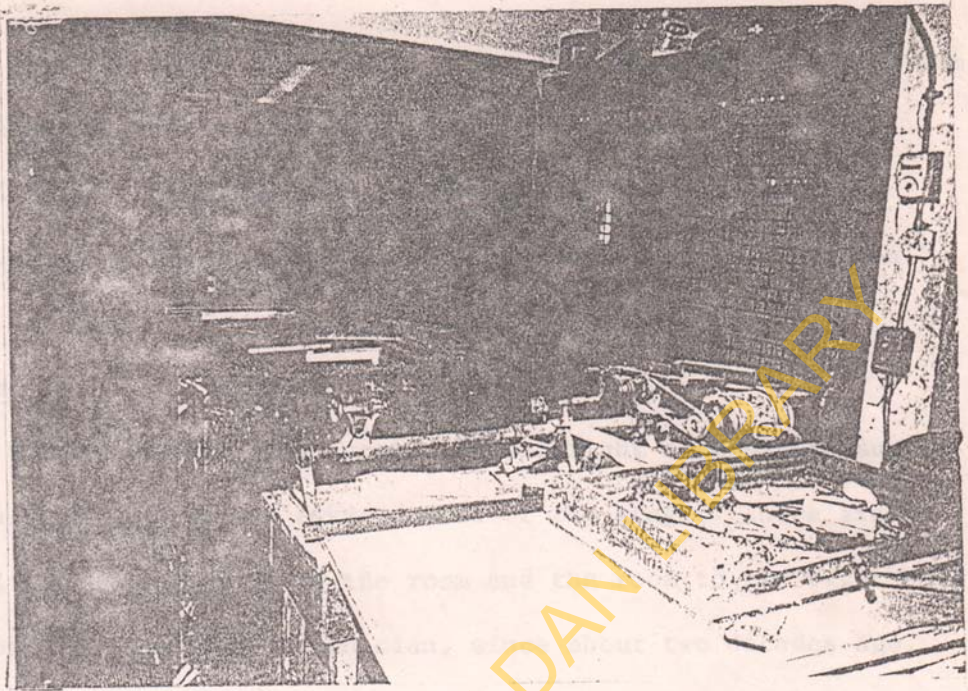
(a)

FIGS 30 (a+b): THE ARTS THEATRE UNIVERISTY OF IBADAN, U.I.



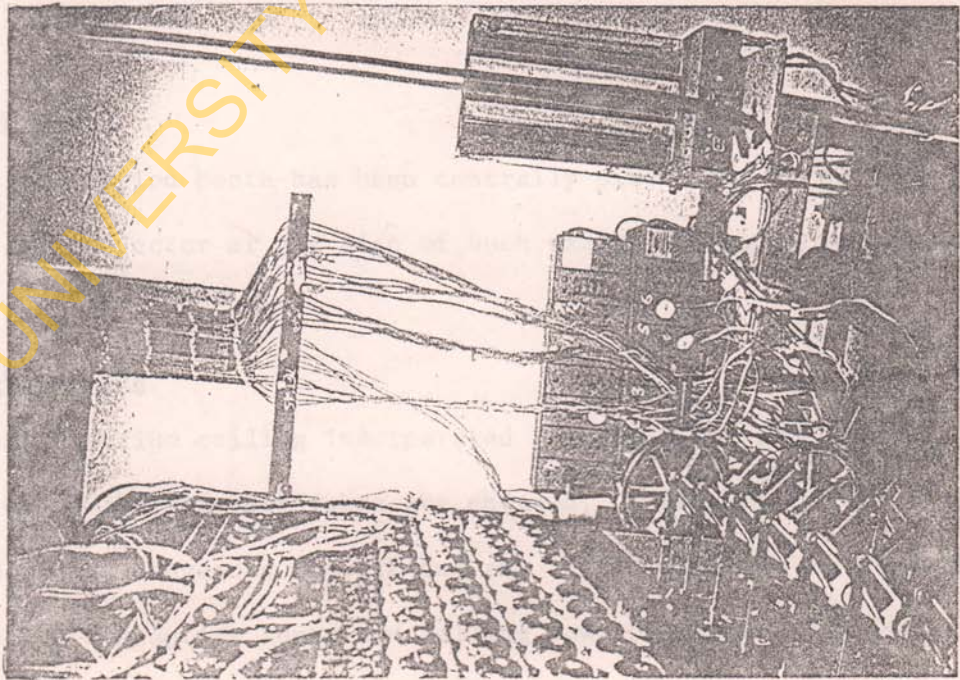
(b)





(a)

Figs. 31 (a+b): THE ARTS THEATRE: WORKSHOP & LIGHTING BOOTH



(b)

### Lighting

The lighting booth is located at the left side of the auditorium which permits only an angular view of the stage. The lighting is controlled by an antiquities, a resistance-~~and a 24-~~ channel mini 2 Thyristor-Strand Electric-Dimmers, which are almost out of function.

### Sound Room

The Sound Room has been located on the right side of the auditorium, resulting also in the awkward view of the stage. There are no functional sound equipments in the room and the room to the right had been occupied by the house-technician, since about two decades ago, as his office. This third room had in earlier years been used by the dialogue coach. Its occupancy led to an ill-fatedly constructed alternative room directly in the scene - dock - back stage, the worst imaginable placement.

### Projection Booth

The projection booth has been centrally placed but it no longer contains any projector or any sign of such except the holes in the wall.

### Auditorium Ceiling

The auditorium ceiling incorporated a catwalk and FoH lighting boxes in which the few spotlights are encased. Access to the boxes is only through the dangerous catwalk and any little movement in the boxes constitutes a disruptive sound and falling down of objects down into the

auditorium. The only access to the catwalk above the ceiling is through the projection room. The catwalk has been covered from beneath with breakable asbestos plates which renders the catwalk extremely dangerous for any slight displacement of the leg ends in falling down on the chairs of the stall with grave consequence.

#### Auditorium Side-Booms

Booms located in the auditorium in form of vertical pipes on which lights are mountable are not ideal because such lights cannot be easily reached, except via the louvres which do not allow easy manipulation of the lights. The safety lights (emergency lights) which operate on batteries placed on the top of the left exit door have not functioned in the past fifteen years. In fact the battery charger and all associated equipments have been removed by unknown persons.

#### The Stage

The main stage is a medium-size-stage having a total area of  $15 \times 8 = 120\text{m}^2$ . There is a very narrow wing-space on the stage left side but none on the right side. The proscenium opening is 9m wide and 6 meter high; preceded by an extension that constitutes the apron of 2m width running from wall to wall of the auditorium. There is provision for 16 manual flying lines with pin-rails which have become obsolete for over ten years.

Back-Stage

The narrow back-stage serves the purpose of storing the scenic units. Access to this is through two doors leading from the stage. The doors are 2m x 8m high each. The permanent cyclorama, made of white painted plywood, disallows the movement of large objects on to the stage. It does not allow for rear projection and deeper setting.

Exits

The right one leads straight to the main road over a narrow surrounding lawn of less than five (5) metres width, which is intercepted by an iron gate. The left one leads to the corridor of the adjacent office block, the Faculty of Arts-Annexe. For actors exiting from the left to re-enter the stage from the right means running round the whole stage house. This is even worse for the actor exiting from the right who will have to run over several dangerously placed steps.

*They Actors usually use the basement !!!*

Workshop

This is directly under the back-stage. The only entrance from outside is via a car-garage door. The workshop is only 2.5m high. It does not permit easy movement or erection of scenery for try-outs. The only clear access to the stage is via the leading bay and steps located outside, on the stage right side, in front of the only door leading to the back stage. One has to carry the scenic units right round the workshop almost using the main road surrounding the theatre, which

separates it from the students' Kuti-Hall. The only direct link between the back stage and the workshop is via a trap door of 2 x 8ft on the floor of the same 6m wide back-stage area that runs the entire breadth of the theatre.

But, except for this Arts Theatre, no other venue at Ibadan has a functional workshop for scenery construction to facilitate trial set-up, painting, rigging, lighting and rehearsals in the same building, to allow for flexibility and ease of traffic of scenic materials and personnel. The consequence of this lack has been glaringly felt on the virtual non-existence of the appropriate backgrounds to most of the productions staged in almost all of the venues. Where used at all, sceneries in those venues have always appeared as mocked ones built perhaps under great economic constraints.

On the whole, the Arts Theatre has, since the inception of the former School of Drama, been put to uses beyond the scope it was planned for. It has been serving as a springboard for research since the beginning time of the School of Drama in the 1962/63 session. It has also continued to serve the new Department of Theatre Arts (which grew out of the School of Drama) since 1970 as a laboratory which has by today's standard become grossly inadequately equipped. The physical form and the technical facilities of the theatre have affected the standard of productions mounted there and the capabilities of the students turned out there. Its influences also tell on the level of awareness of the production team of playwrights, directors, producers,

scenographers, designers and technicians working in this theatre. The possibilities of creating high level, artistic, imaginative and technologically complex theatrical spectacles and manifestations of great splendour is therefore limited.

### Parking Space

The parking loop defined by the Arts Theatre, Niger Road and the Porter's Lodge, is also dangerous because it has no specific access. Cars drive in and out at any point onto the Niger road parallel to the parking space. Still another dangerous point is the blind right-angle corner of the Arts Theatre in front of Kuti Hall. The Niger road is a busy road that deposits the great number of Zoo lovers from the city during the weekends to the Benue Road, this vehicular/human traffic system is not separated and visibility for oncoming vehicles does not exist. Perhaps, "a big mirror placed at the outer curvature of the road should make possible visibility for both human and vehicular traffic".<sup>(37)</sup>

### Trenchard Hall

The Trenchard Hall, as the second cultural edifice on campus, next to the Arts Theatre, is a complex born of the same Master Plan of 1948, and it is supposed to be serving more communal purposes than the Arts Theatre because of its scope, dimensions and location.

David Aradeon, a professor of architecture at the University of

Lagos, in his architectural critique of the campus of the University of Ibadan, has appraised Trenchard Hall thus:

In terms of scale, function and location, Trenchard Hall with its administrative complex stands in relation to the University of Ibadan "city" as Mapo Hall does to the total and greater city. (38)

Trenchard Hall, then, is an institutional building which has, as one of its purposes, to serve as a meeting point for the University community and the greater urban populace. However, the hall is encroached upon by the institution's Vice-Chancellor's Office, the Porter's Lodge, the former University Bookshop and the Mellamby Hall, and the structure at its front features a high iron fencing which renders a seeming impression of an imprisonment, a complex inaccessible to the general public visiting the University, may be, for the first time. "To the visitor, the location of the Trenchard Hall at the end of the shaft bringing him from the larger iron-barricaded main-gate joining the Oyo Road. the building, with its tower and clock, clearly provides the identification and orientation he needs to know that he has finally arrived at the "formal" University of Ibadan." (39)

After overcoming all the problems of finding one's way to the entrance of the hall, the visitor may discover that "the Trenchard Hall's lobby merely carries that dissipating feeling to a logical finale because as a transitional space between the outdoor and the indoor of the auditorium, it is out of scale." Aradeon, also, sees the institutional centre as being rather disappointing. He states:

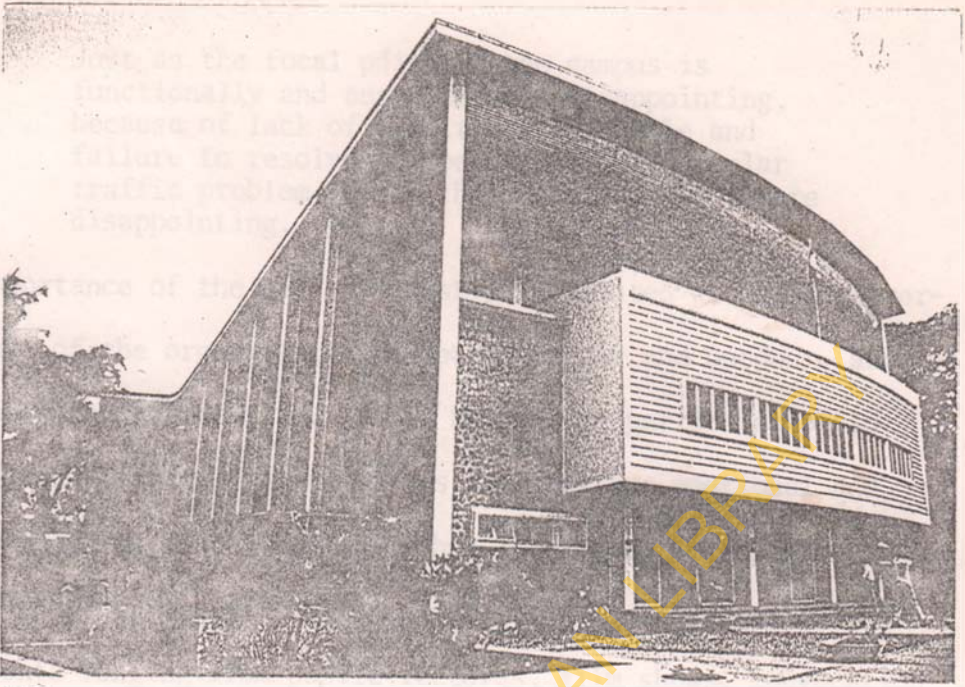


Fig 32 (a) + (b): THE TRENCHARD HALL EXTERIOR



FIG 32 (b): : THE TRENCHARD HALL INTERIOR



Just as the focal point of the campus is functionally and aesthetically disappointing, because of lack of clarity, wrong scale and failure to resolve the pedestrian - vehicular traffic problem, so is the institutional centre disappointing. (57)

The importance of the hall can best be evaluated within the overall structure of the organization of spaces indoor and outdoor, and not in itself as a separate entity. And, beyond the particular philosophy, specific period and place, it is the positive emotional and functional impact of space on people that is phenomenal. That is what makes a great space, a great building and great architecture as used for events ranging from public lectures, film shows, convocation ceremonies, wedding receptions, concerts and also drama presentations, but in which, today, only the annual Havana-Jamboree and occasional film shows hold. It had served as the seat for various major musical and other minor productions during the University's golden age. And during the period of the closure of the Arts Theatre in 1960/61 session for extension works, it became the main centre for the dramatic, theatrical productions and for other cultural, social and educational activities, as a kind of multi-purpose venue on the campus. Trenchard Hall can accommodate more than one thousand audience. Trenchard Hall has perhaps been faithful to the functions expected of it. Perhaps ~~the~~ administrative bottlenecks and the prohibitive rental charges that now send off the potential users, when under the expatriates the monolithic complex, hidden behind the ivory tower, enjoyed maximum patronage. Since there are other forms of theatre venues in and at Ibadan, it would be expedient now to go and

visit them in terms of their popularity for the purpose. Hence we call first at Obiṣeṣan Hall.

### Obiṣeṣan Hall

Obiṣeṣan Hall was not built as a theatre. The Hall was conceived for cinema film projections only, hence, on entering the building, through the main entrance doors, we arrive in the foyer. Here there are two box-office windows facing each other. From that foyer lead flights of stairs to the balcony for the cheaper seating, and from the foyer still lead doors to the auditorium, where the seats are more expensive. The seats are hard and wooden, with folding chairs, and the floor is uncovered concrete.

Although there are 'fire' doors on both sides of the auditorium, experience has shown that they are usually closed from inside during productions to keep gate crashers out. Even the windows above the doors are then locked, too.

There is no provision for stage lighting, not even working lights on the 'stage' area. Equally in the auditorium, there are no house lights. Therefore, the stage and auditorium are dark, as there are even no safety lights, when the audience is taking their seats.

The surface treatment of the interior of the hall does not allow for sound reverberation, hence the acoustics is disastrously poor. The hall has no sound equipment of any kind and therefore the troupes hiring it have to bring their sound and light equipment which is bound

to reproduce poor reverberation and effects. One of the only few alternative ways for the group to illuminate the stage, pick, amplify and distribute the sound of the performer, is to set whatever-available lights and microphones standing around the edge of the shallow stage, thereby causing interference with the spectators' view of the stage. Therefore, the actors' movements are dictated by the static position of the microphones - meaning that the actors had to deliver their lines where the lights and microphones are placed. And so, these in turn determine some of the conventions of performance in the hall such as the actor's position when delivering lines, and the stage - area which may be utilized for the few, the lights can only illuminate a certain area of the stage, front and centre, at a time. With the limited numbers of lighting instruments, there can be no talk of creative lighting and effects nor of the skill of the non-existing lighting designer and/or technician.

We also discover that Obisesan Hall can be a potential death trap, especially during panic, or emergency situations for all the safety measures and regulations for public assembly places are usually flagrantly violated or neglected.

"Obisesan Hall is a dark, damp, unventilated auditorium in which heat rises to well over 100°F during the course of a four or five-hour play!"<sup>(58)</sup> To buttress our claims, we recall the experiences of three witnesses of an incident that occurred in the hall on September 7, 1971.

One of these witnesses was Judith Hoch Smith who, unfortunately, had an unforgettable experience, as a member of the audience on that fateful night at an Ogunde Theatre Group's performance. She reports:

During a performance of Ogunde Theater, my assistant and I were sitting well to the rear of the ground floor of the auditorium which was filled to capacity with people, some persons were standing in the back of the hall both on the ground-floor and in the balcony ... During this night, when Ogunde Theater Group was well into its third hour of performance, a bright white light flashed in the ceiling of the auditorium and hundreds of persons screamed, "Explosion" and "Fire"! People left their seats and began pushing toward the nearest exits, momentum was building up until the noise was deafening and the crash unbearable. A mass stampede was underway during which time I was trampled by many people, receiving a blow to the head, which knocked me unconscious for a few moments and which crushed my glasses. Finally, I struggled out a fire exit, one of the last to leave having been on the floor for some time. There were people lying everywhere on the grass, bleeding from cuts received in the stampede and some children appeared to have broken limbs. (59)

The second witness is in fact an assistant to Smith herself, who reported that "all the exits including the fire-doors and the front entrance had been locked causing the mass exiting to be so brutal" (60) And, the third witness amplifies that in such a mass confusion there was no police to be seen, though there were several of them at the commencement of the play; but as soon as the explosion had occurred they had disappeared," and that "he had been pushed through a pane of glass window and required stitches to close the gash on his leg" (61).

Obisesan Hall as a Cinema Hall with its shallow stage features as a kind of proscenium stage.

The Cultural Centre of Oyo State:

The limitation of the thrust stage is evidenced in the Cultural Centre, Ibadan. One of the flaws of a thrust theatre is that one can hardly fly anything over the thrust area. Although in some instances spot-flying-lines have been installed for special uses in some of the most modern theatres, in Germany particularly, they are still very commonly used. In the case of the Cultural Centre at Ibadan even the flying system on the main stage has, since 1977, not been installed. Nothing really is ready there. Planned was a movable apron and orchestra-pit-platform, as an extension to the main stage to be thrusting into the auditorium. For the fact that the equipments to make the main stage function as a real proscenium stage are not there, everything happening has to be done on that thrusting front of the stage with the consequence of non-use of scenery. Therefore, scene changing has to be done virtually in view of the audience. A greater problem is the sightline which forces the useful playing area to be limited to a little area of the vast thrust stage. The installed 100 channel-dimmer board lighting system is still unused,



Fig. 33: - OYO STATE CULTURAL CENTRE, IBADAN.

The Mapo Hall, Ibadan

The building popularly known as Mapo Hall was originally christened as the Administrative Council Chambers and Central Council Hall of Ibadan Native Administration built between 1928 and 1929, during the colonial era. And, since then, Mapo Hall has remained a colonial historical, monumental and architectural heritage prominently dominating the picturesque panoramic view of Ibadan city, from its site on Mapo Hill, reminiscent of 'stage-buildings' of the period of classicism that lasted till the early nineteenth century in Europe.

Among the information gleaned from the scanty documentation on the building, passed on to the National Archives, Ibadan, but unfortunately found in unkempt conditions, is a Memorandum No. 557/23/1924:N of 13th September 1928 written by the Executive Engineer, Native Administration, Ibadan, addressed to the District Officer, Ibadan, a copy of which was addressed to The Resident, Oyo Province, Oyo, that:

To carry out the work of the above building, and to have it completed and ready for opening on or about the end of March, 1929. I am compelled to ask for more labour. I estimate that not less than 140 men will be essential every week, please. (45)

And the project which was initially estimated to cost ₦18,000.00 was by May 6, 1928, to cost additional ₦6,000.00, which by today's prices would be running into millions of naira.

Obviously, Mapo Hall was not conceived as a theatre hall, but by virtue of the multi-purpose concept of the planners, it has been put to various uses ranging from civic, societal, political, judicial uses to ceremonial functions, while it has also served for the staging of theatrical performances and it was exceptionally

patronised by the late Chief Hubert Ogunde's Theatre Group who used the open-stage-form of the Hall extensively in the 1950s through the early 1970s.

Among the concessions the hall offers is its universal platform on which alternately the judge, in the case of use as court-hall, the officiating minister when used as an altar, for example, for a wedding ceremony, and an actor, when used as a traditional performing area, could be located.

The raised platform that constitutes the stage can be extended into the flat floored auditorium space to become a thrust- or open-stage-form. Above the platform is a pavillion from which the supporting columns are rooted to the hall floor. It has some narrow spaces on either side that remind us of the conventional side-stage or wing-spaces in a traditional proscenium theatre. Above the platform is a shallow, loft-like grid on which instruments, painted scenery and back-drops could be hung. The steel railings fixed on the balcony surrounding the three sides of the hall provide excellent mounting positions for the lighting instruments and fittings.

On the balcony's left and right sides over 120 spectators can sit on the usual 6 feet long benches provided. The floor space has a capacity for an audience of over 1600 seated on chairs facing the platform-stage. Movable three-dimensional structures can be combined in front of the back-drops to constitute light scenery. The background wall, opposite the main entrance, harbours doors leading into

the rooms at that rear area which serve as the dressing rooms, as entrances and exits from the stage from where the colourful and lively dancers of the Ogunde Theatre have always mustered the thrilling acclamation of the audience for decades by supplying the rhythmic and exotic movements that kept the mouths of the spectators opened ajar for long. They are capable of entering and exiting from the several directions provided by the large doors, some leading over the flights of steps, stairs and levels, to and from outside of the relatively long rectangular shaped hall.

Mapo Hall reflects, in essence, the characteristic features reminiscent of an open-stage, which therefore would qualify it to be termed one, at least along the criterion of the English theatre historian, Richard Southern, who, according to George Kernodle, has observed that most of the great theatres of the past-oriental, Greek and Elizabethan - have had audiences on three sides and a conventional scenic backing for the fourth give the formula for the ideal and universal theatre:

take any room and put a stage against one wall;  
open the four traditional access ways to it in  
the wall (left, right, and centre doors, and an  
"above"); add the "booth", or player's rooms  
behind the stage, rake the seating floor, pro-  
vide for a gallery for looking diagonally down  
on the stage. (63)

As soon as Mapo Hall's floor could be raked or seats rising in tiers could be set in, the perfect fulfilment of Southern's criteria above for the contemporary modern theatre would have been met.



ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
AND OFFICES. IBADAN. W. AFRICA.

SCALE 8" = 1" THE MAPO HALL,

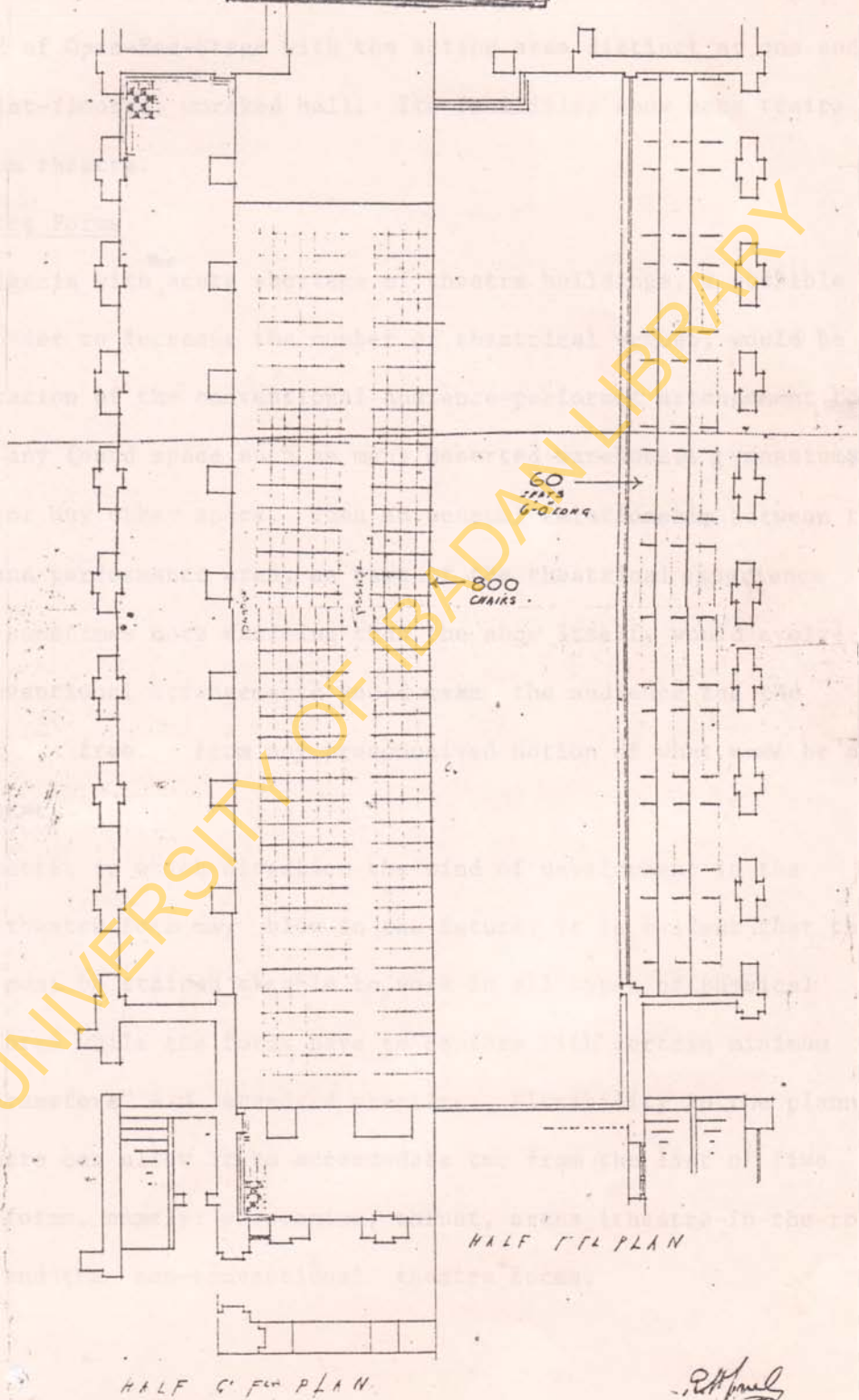


Fig. 34: THE MAPO HALL

R. H. [Signature]  
10. 4. 29.

### The Youth Palace, Dugbe

The Youth Palace, formerly the British Council Hall, at Dugbe is a kind of Open-End-Stage with the acting area distinct at one end of the flat-floored, unraked hall. Its facilities show some traits of proscenium theatre.

### Non-Theatre Forms

In Nigeria with <sup>the</sup> acute shortage of theatre buildings, a possible way out, in order to increase the number of theatrical venues, would be the alteration of the conventional audience-performer arrangement to fit into any found space such as many deserted warehouses, gymnasiums, ballrooms or any other space. Then an unusual relationship between the seating and performance area, as part of the theatrical experience which is sometimes more exciting than the show itself, would evolve. The unconventional arrangements would ~~make~~ the audience and the performer free from any preconceived notion of what would be seen or heard next.

No matter in which direction the wind of development in the physical theatre form may blow in the future, it is evident that the designer must be trained ~~to be~~ able to work in all types of physical theatre forms while the forms have to conform with certain minimum "design-parameters" - of standard practice. Flexibility in the planning of a theatre can allow it to accommodate two from the list of five ~~different~~ forms, namely: proscenium, thrust, arena (theatre-in-the-round), open-end and the non-conventional theatre forms.

This survey of world theatre architecture, scenography and technology had led to the following conclusions:

1. There exists a universality in the development human culture all over the world, occurring though at different times, sometimes parallel and and many times independent of each other.
2. It appears that most, if not all, theatres originated from rituals - the shrines - cults, the altar and the church - the temple. These serve as the backgrounds providing the befitting scenery - contextual scenery - for the actions.
3. There is the continuum in the evolution and development of theatre as art throughout the ages and in all periods. For instance, while the Greek theatre evolved in the 5th century B.C. out of the ritualistic festival of a religious nature, the Yoruba Alarinjo Theatre has its roots in the ancestral worship, typified by the Egungun Masqueraders, out of which it crystallised to become a travelling theatre form resembling the Elizabethan Travelling troupes met by Shakespeare. The medieval period's influences reflected met by Shakespeare. The medieval period's influences reflected in the works of the late Hubert Ogunde, Kola Ogunmola and Duro Ladipo. They all had their starting points in liturgical drama and are the representatives of the professional theatres. The Italian Commedia dell'Arte of the Renaissance period has also its parallels in Nigeria in Moses Olaiya Adejumo - 'Baba Sala' - Alawada Group type of expression.
4. The aesthetic premises of the Yoruba Travelling Theatre Groups show that they also compare favourably with the Oriental and Asian aesthetics of "non-illusionistic" theatrical art of grotesque stylization of décor and properties and of their commercial imperatives.

A.J. Gunawardana observed that contemporary popular Asian theatre's commercial imperatives of competition do not always make for organic developments <sup>(76)</sup> and the development and elaboration of a unified integrated idiom of performance out of such disparate elements like music, dance, mime and speech took to a very uneven and many-sided pattern. <sup>(77)</sup>

5. The periods that produced a Yeats, Ibsen, Barker, Moliere, Hauptmann, Schiller, Goethe, Belasco, Brecht and the convulsions of the modern genius have their parallels in Nigeria, too, where Wole Soyinka, Ola Rotimi, J.P. Clark, Femi Osofisan, Bode Sowande, Bode Osofisan and others are pulling their weight.
6. In the architectural and scenographic realms, if the periods can be proud of Agatharchos, Anaxagoras, Pulcher, Vitruvius, Serlio, the family of the Bibienas, Leonardo da Vinci, Raffael, Parigi, Furttenbach, Mahelot, Torelli, Burnacini, Seyffert, Schinkel, Semper, Brandt, Craig, Appia, Linnenbach, Reinhardt, Sean Kean, Copeau, Bel-Geddes, Lee Simonson, just to mention a few, Nigeria started off well with Demas Nwoko, Agbo Folarin, David Aradeon, perhaps the present writer and a few others.

While Nwoko's scenographic works include his designs for "The Palmwine Drinkard" by Amos Tutuola, 1963, Folarin's include his designs for Obaluaye by Wale Ogunyemi, 1970, and Aradeon's scenographic debut include his sensational designs for "Bull Frog in The Sun," a film based on Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart and No Longer at Ease, including a set-design for "Umuofia Village," set in a village opposite University of Ibadan in 1971. Some of the present writer's works are discussed in Chapter <sup>Eight</sup> of this deliberation.

In all, creativity, imagination and ingenious conceptualisations have been the inherently potent factors propelling the developments.

7. The new arts conception has been tying together the new generation of theatre artists and stage designers practising in various theatrical set-ups, and struggling to achieve freedom from traditions. It has begun to bear fruits, at this end of the 20th century, as the revolutionary swings are giving way to a calming down in art life.
8. The seeming confusions in the different kinds of styles of the modern stage design do not constitute disorder or inability; but rather they are an expression of the original ebullient multiplicity of the endeavours.
9. The accomplished stylistic movements, and those still taking place, are breaking from the tradition of craftsmanship and are now finding new connections to the arts in the current directions.
10. All over the world, from Finland to New Zealand, from Japan to America, Theatre Design and Technology have been accorded their rightful positions as very vital factors in theatre arts works, although, in Nigeria the fields remain relatively unploughed. These areas of theatre arts are still new and they must be developed in order to raise the general standard of the Nigerian theatre and even to preserve it. It is on this that meaningful theatre practice, scholarship and research would hinge.
11. Scenography in Nigeria has to maintain contacts with the various manifestations of modern arts: Cubism, Constructivism, Surrealism, Informal and Pop-Art which have long found their way into the theatres of Europe, Asia and America.

12. The recently discovered materials, Light and colour are used as forming, shaping and design factors for the room, space and stage, electronic music and sound scenes, film as a medium for the physical visualisation of the sub-conscious and the regions of the dream world, have all gained more meaning in their application as artistic mediums. They have grown beyond being mere technical aids to enliven the newest works of drama and music exuberantly and voluptuously.
13. On the whole, the Nigerian theatre has borrowed from the various periods, and indeed. plays from the various sectors in time have been successfully staged on Nigerian stages and especially in the Universities.
14. In Nigeria today, the spectacles presented on the TV-Screens and in the Movies are great motivations for the people to watch the programmes. They would prefer to see the presentations in real life, if only possible. Consequently, for live theatre in Nigeria to live up to the standard and for it to draw the people's affection, elements of spectacle, effects, fantasy and magic, possible only with ripe technology, backed by creative scenography, become the prime lever. These can only be accomplished through proper training and experiments. The arts of Theatre Architecture, Scenography and Technology have been growing along with the theatre through the ages. Hence, the conscious nations of the world have been establishing institutions that train professionals in all areas of the theatre for their national cultural growth.

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THE EVOLUTION OF THEATRE SCHOLARSHIP IN THE WORLD AND  
EFFORTS TOWARDS ITS IMPROVEMENT IN NIGERIA.

The Discovery of Theatre Science and the University.

"Theatre schools seem to provoke many people, particularly theatre people, to hostility. They say that schools are conventional and academic, perpetuating lifeless traditions or because they are aggressively non-conforming and so become narrow, sectarian and theoretical, if not hysterical; and I will readily agree that geniuses and various romantic artists are better off without training in any school at all"<sup>(1)</sup>.

Michel Saint-Denis's assertion did not only stem from his belonging, like Louis Jouvet and Charles Dullin, to Charles Copeau's school, but more importantly from his experience with the Dullin school, where Barrault and Jean Vilar were trained. Based on Copeau's and Dullin's two non-conforming schools, Michel set up his three equally non-conforming schools: The London Theatre Studio (1935 - 1939), the Old Vic Theatre School (1946 - 1952), and L'Ecole Supérieure d'Art Dramatique in Strasbourg, opened in 1954. All the schools were aimed at solving the "problems which the theatre of our time has got to face; having no definite style of its own, it wavers continually between a classical tradition and the remarkable achievement of modern realism, which is still in the process of full evolution."<sup>(2)</sup>

It is on record, though, that school drama had already appeared during the Middle Ages in Northern Europe. In the late 15th century, some of the most elaborate productions of such works as Stylpho (1494) by Wimpfeling and Henno (1497) by Johann Reuchlin as school drama in Northern Europe, then, were particularly staged in Germany.

However, the great impetus of school drama came in 1501 when six Latin plays by Hrosvitha, a dramatist of the 10th century, were published. Although she borrowed Terence's style, Hrosvitha, nevertheless, substituted the pagan subjects in Terence's works with the "Chastity of Christian Virgins". The 16th century continued to witness a steady stream of plays dedicated to religious, moral and didactic stories that employed classical dramatic devices. The trend could be summed up under a collective title as "Christian Terence" or "Sacred Comedies," especially for such plays by Cornelius Schmonaeus.

The religious controversy of that era, however, led to the emergence of two groups of school dramatists. While one was in support of Protestantism, the other was for Catholicism. Even though the Protestants cultivated the school drama, it reached its peak in the Catholic Schools run by Jesuits. In all, school drama was considered to be a useful instrument for the teaching of doctrine, speaking and deportment. It was offered in Latin and, where practicable, in the vernacular.

The History and Development of Universities

Already in the 6th Century B.C., as history tells us; Pythagoras had had his contact with the ancient civilization of India. Pythagoras was said to have emigrated to the South of Italy and curiously, his name, Pythagoras, evinces a suspicious resemblance of the Indian "Pitta-guru" - meaning "father - teacher". There in South Italy, Pythagoras established a kind of monastic community dedicated to a religious way of life, actively concerned with politics and fostering mathematical research.

The conquest of Persia by Greece in the 5th century B.C. ushered in an age of expansive learning, training in "excellence" as the prerequisite for the producing of "top-men" demanded at that time. Towards the fulfilment of that task, extra-mural lecturers or "sophists" gave courses of instruction on virtually all topics - spanning over wrestling to political oratory.

By the 4th century B.C., the two strands had merged in the Academy of Plato which lay claim to be the first world university. Plato's practical aim consists of a scheme, ideal for training statesmen and ministers of religion in a programme that offered, among others, two years of physical training, ten years of undiluted mathematics, five years of logic and philosophy. For Plato, whose one phrase, inscribed over his door, has been translated to mean "All hope abandon, ye who enter here without knowledge of Geometry", this education was viewed as a primary tool to influence those most likely to become future leaders of church and state and thus the

essence of educational drama, to be later pursued at more scientific levels in the Universities, evolved<sup>(3)</sup>. Yet, these universities, with their antecedents in the schools of the Middle Ages, have a long history.

A new strand was brought into the pattern of education by Aristotle, Plato's former student, and probably, the world's greatest scientist in biology, who founded a University institution that was given largely to scientific research and to patient accumulation of facts, a basis for derivable fruitful generalisations.

The end of the classical period saw the emergence of a conception of education with a fulcrum of linguistic and mathematical disciplines around which science as either a vocational training or as a subject for advanced study is pivoted.

China had, at about 124 B.C., got a University for the training of administrative civil servants, established by the Emperor Wu. It had a bias for literary and historical studies. The intellectual curriculum also offered music and archery as its extra-curricula subjects while all is geared towards the inculcating of one single religio-philosophical outlook of Confucian, a reminiscence of the Christian Paris's and the marxist Moscow's institutions.

The Islamic World also boasted University education which sprang up, simultaneously, as those in Europe began to spread. The Quranic schools which were originally designed to elucidate the juristic principles contained in the Qu'ran, however, developed and even offered wider education which embraced theology, jurisprudence,

linguistic, literary and historical studies, offering professional qualification in the form of a teaching diploma or a B.Ed. cumulative in such careers as law, theology, administration or education. Yet Science and mathematics were not immediately catered for in the first Islamic Universities. They received attention elsewhere. The University at Baghdad and the University of Sankore at Timbuktu earned great world scholastic reputations. And, in fact, there was the old saying that "Salt comes from the North, gold from the South and Silver from the country of the Whiteman, but the word of God and the treasures of wisdom are to be found only in Timbuktu."

Still, not until the 12th and 13th centuries A.D., during the period of the great upsurge of higher education, did the Mediaeval European University evolve. Between 1300 and 1350 A.D. Italy had, in connection with the growth of civic independence, nine Universities founded. At that time Northern Europe was still under the yoke of Feudalism, a clog-in-the-wheel of the progress of that region. By then the University at Bologna had specialized in law, that at Paris in theology, while the one at Salerno had its focus in medicine. They all attracted students from all over Europe. Their administration was run on the model of the guilds, sometimes of masters, and sometimes of students; with their syllabuses patterned along the lines of those of ancient Greece thriving in the liberal arts, with "snacks" from Aristotle's Science while still fighting for autonomy from Church or State.

It was during the 18th and 19th centuries A.D. that, finally,

in Germany the greatest influence on the modern University was heralded. The revolution, sparked off from the University at Halle and Goettingen, was soon followed in Berlin. It was attended by a three-fold achievement, namely: greater freedom, chasing out of Latin by the Vernacular, and the introduction of seminars alongside lectures. The students became much freer and began taking responsibilities in the planning, execution and accomplishment of their academic objectives. Education in the German Universities was then piloted towards the aim of the acquisition of a general capacity for scientific and independent thought in contrast to the previous approach of the accumulation of a store of facts or training for a particular vocation. It was also here in the German Universities that the peculiar blend of teaching and research was inaugurated. This resulted in theses that sometimes appeared narrow in their scope for they were products of research-oriented concentration. This new philosophy is succinctly put by Von Sybel thus:

But this is important; that the student gain a clear conception of the problems of science and of processes by which he solves them; this is necessary; that he himself conduct these processes at some ... points, or at least at some one point: that he follow out some problems to their remotest results - to a point where he may say to himself that there is now nobody in the whole world that can instruct him further on this matter, that here, he stands firmly and surely on his own feet and decides according to his own judgement.<sup>(5)</sup>

Developments are also recorded in the Soviet Union where a

University course lasts for five years and which presupposes a ten years' thorough academic grounding at school, in all areas of arts and science subjects. About 75% of the Russian students study science and the course includes some economics, philosophy, one foreign language and it is intensely specialised.

The Russian concept contrasts greatly with that of the U.S.A. It gives rise to a low "wastage on drop outs" of about 20%, as against the relatively high wastage of nearly 50% of the American concept. The Russian low "wastage" rate compares favourably with the figures of "drop-outs" in Britain and less than those of many other nations. The curricula of the Russian Universities are identical, reflective of insufficiency of freedom to experiment and of places of political indoctrination, as in the case of the ill-fated theories of Lysenko.

In the USA thousands of curious Universities and Colleges abound. They all evolve from the schools, which on the other hand are products of a democracy - based concept, a system which advocates, as John Ferguson has termed it, "slightly, but not very, unfairly - identical education for all at the pace of the slowest", that has the advantage of wide students admission but its disadvantages of a big drop-out of nearly 50% after the first year and a "low-standard" first degree cannot be over-emphasized<sup>(6)</sup>. However, these demerits are being absorbed or compensated for by the postgraduate schools of great intensity, which are brilliantly organised as the peculiar



glory of the American educational system.

In Great Britain, the Universities reflect less variation when compared with those in the USA. Yet, with the exception of the "sui generis" of those found in Scotland, three categories are discernible. The first type are the older Universities of Oxbridge and Camford which have provided exclusive education for the 'ruling-class' - the Establishment - and which have also shown remarkable power of assimilating those from other backgrounds. They bear allegiance to their mediaeval origin and remain conservative. In fact, it has taken the scientific and technological revolution such a long time to penetrate through the iron gate of Oxford, whose infectious attitude of resentment and snobbery of the sciences has plagued Cambridge. According to Ferguson, many subjects are better taught elsewhere: "no one in their senses would go to Oxford to read Sciences or Cambridge for education in respect of the academic teaching they would receive."<sup>(7)</sup>

The second group of the British Universities, the civic Universities, labelled by Bruce Truscot as the "Red brick" contrast greatly with that of Oxbridge, just like the grammar school does with the "public school". However, turning to science and technology was more / <sup>easily</sup> accomplished by the "Red bricks" than by Oxbridge and the sorts of Manchester Universities. Nevertheless, they lay claim to a very high academic standing.

The third group of the British Universities led by Keele and followed by Sussex are the beneficiaries of the Robbins report -

"a masterpiece of radical thinking on the basis of detailed fact-finding". These Universities are relatively new in the experimental adventures.

Today's India has an enormous proliferation of Universities, most of which are substandard and with substandard staff, thus producing uncountable graduates with questionable degrees. A possible warning for Nigeria, we fear!

The present trend in international University education features a pattern that blends teaching and research, culminating in a more vocational education approach which has a direct relationship to the local society within which the University is sited.

The above foregoing survey of the history of the development and the trend of University education as an evolution from a society with some degrees of complexity and sophistication should serve as an important backcloth for our argument later in this chapter.

Yet, it is strange to discover, however, in the same European history of Universities and of the humanities that, at a time when philosophy and history had long established their methodical foundations, the three "arts sciences" namely, the "art science" - to which all forms of Fine Arts, in the narrower sense, are ascribed, the "music arts science" and the "theatre arts science" were just struggling to find their way into the spheres of the Universities as areas of academic studies and research. Even "literature arts Science", a late-comer to the philosophical faculty, had already been established before them. In fact, not until the middle of the 19th century was

the "Art Science" fortunate enough to find such important representatives as Rumohr, Kugler, and Schnaese, Carl Justi and Jacob Burckhardt who paved the way for the masterly achievements of Bode, von Woelfin, von Schmarsow, Dehio or Friedlander and Goldschmidt<sup>(8)</sup>.

Musicology had even greater difficulties than "Art Science" in finding its way into the humanities as a scientific University discipline. However, a pioneer of Guido Adler's calibre, the founder of the "Monuments of Musical Art" and one of the first methodicians and style researchers in music was appointed professor of musicology in Prag German University only in 1885 and in 1898 he got the world famous professorial chair at the University of Vienna, while Max Friedlaender, the researcher of the German songs, could not accede to the professorial chain for Musicology until 1903 in Berlin.

And, as the last of the three "Arts Sciences", the "Theatre Arts Science" came as an independent academic and research area on the scene. It is surprising that such an important cultural phenomenon as the theatre, which has for over 2500 years found itself in daily renewal of developmental processes, must suffer such a long delay before it could establish its mode of scientific inquiry. One of the stumbling blocks in its path has been the belief that this phenomenon, theatre, could be interpreted in details, in its developmental stages, mainly from the literary basis - from the drama aspect. It was later discovered that only one of its many constituent and equally

important components is thus being touched. The other components appeared to generations of researchers so difficult because, in contrast to poetry, painting, plastic art or architecture, theatre art, according to Lessing, is a "transitory art".

While the beauty of poetry lies in the texts, that of painting, plastic art or architecture rests in the monuments, those of the fine arts lie in the object of those artistic creations which could be accurately studied and analysed even after centuries. This in recent years, due to advancement in electronic media and audio-visual facilities for retrieval, is becoming the case with Theatre Art Sciences. Theatrical art work in the past became dead by the last curtain draw or fall, or by the last switching on of the house lights. It only lived thenceforth in the memory and in the reminding effects it had on the audience.

In addition, with time, the dependency of this "multiple-principle" theatrical art work on its audience and its public influence (audience response and effect) was realised. It was realised that, though poetry could be interpreted without bringing the readers into consideration in terms of the time of composition, or a later epoch, it is impossible to embark on theatre art science without the audience research. Since stage art without an audience is total nonsense, because the theatrical art work is only complete with the audience, thence this "second" audience research always has to be involved. And, for the same audience research also special

methods have to be evolved. These touch the socio-logical, economic and organisational problems connected with the phenomena of theatre since the ancient Greeks.

Whereas the poet composes and conceptualises in solitude, all forms of theatre need an "apparatus", whether of a simple or of a cleverly complicated nature. In this regard the theatre has gained much from the area of Archeology. ~~wherefore~~ the German Archaeological Institute, for example, was founded in Rome in 1829.

#### Development of Theatre Sciences

Neither the "multiple principle" nor the necessary togetherness of the two spheres of a theatrical work of art mentioned above was realised overnight. It evolved through long developmental processes and stages.

The necessary self-worked-out solutions proceeded painstakingly from the mother earth of literature sciences under severe constraints and struggles, within the universities. For a long time the philosophical faculties were not willing to grant theatre arts sciences special professorial chairs and special institutes. Many prejudices were brought against the theatre and much underrating of its meaning and significance. These prejudices have remained to some degree a factor that plays significant roles, even up till today.

Nevertheless, however, it was some of the intimate literary historians of the theatre with foresight that paved the way for a serious and stern, scientifically-based theatre research, first in

the German-speaking areas and later in some other countries of Europe. This happened in the eighties of the 19th century during which Rankes' World History (1881 - 1888) was published, in which Dilthey published his Introduction to the Humanities (1883) that was the basis for subsequent further development. In the same book, Nietzsche proclaimed his critical vision about a "Morgenrote" (1881), a "Frohliche Wissenschaft" (1882), and his "Zarathustra" world. It was also in this same period that the German and English Goethe Association (1885/1886) was founded and, simultaneously, Ibsen began to capture the European Performance/Production Plan. (1881 - Gespenster and The Ghosts, 1882 - An Enemy of the People: 1884 - Wildente (Wild Duck)). Also at the same time, Richard Wagner just completed his life's musico-dramatic master work - Parsifal (1882) and shortly thereafter Gerhart Hauptmann began his multi-faceted stage career, in 1889, with the social drama, Vor Sonnenaufgang (Before Dawn), in conjunction with Maximilian Harden, the brothers Hart and Theodor Wolff, at the "Freie Buhne" (Free Stage), of which Otto Brahm was the artistic director.

One of the first literary historians who attempted to undertake historical theatre research and gave lectures, not only on the history of drama, was the Germanist Wilhelm Greiznach of Goethe's city of Frankfurt, in the University of Krakau, the then capital city of the Austrian Crown State of Galizien. He was already so equipped with theatre-history that, by 1878, he had published Versuch einer Geschichte des Volksschauspiels vom Doktor Faust; in 1879, the

Entstehungsgeschichte des neudeutschen Lustspiels and in 1881, he published the Buehningeschichte des Goetheschen Faust. In 1893-1909, Greinach published four volumes on Geschichte des neuren Dramas (History of New Drama) and he became a Professor in 1883.

Also in 1883, Richard Maria Werner, who had conducted stern scientific new research on Vienna's Hans Wurst Stranitzky (1883) and on Vienna's Folks theatre began to lecture in the second bi-lingual University of Galizien in Lemberg. At the same time, Alfred Freihers von Berger, the Director of the German Drama Theatre, Hamburg (1899-1910), and of the Burgtheatre (1910-1912) began his dual life as the artistic secretary of the Burgtheatre and as a professor of Aesthetics in the University of Vienna. He was the first to hold the Veni-legendi-scientific-theatre lectures, particularly on dramaturgy and theatre aesthetics. According to von-Berger, the art of acting is as creative as an actor's. He also believed in fanatical accuracy in the interpretation of an author's marks.

Similarly in 1885, Berthold Litzmann of Kiel appeared as one of the literary historians in Northern Germany. He taught from 1883 in Universities of Kiel, Jena and Bonn and from 1911 he edited and published the articles and dissertation series.

Historical Theatre Researches, a very outstanding set of publications, considering the state of the theatre sciences at that time. He published not less than 35 volumes which still contain very valuable findings for today's use.

Litzmann proved himself to be a theatre scientist of the highest order, among other things, through his directorial works and especially through his widely publicised two-volume book on the Hamburg's (Sturm and Drang) "Storm-and-stress" actor, F.L. Schroeder, 1890 - 1894, who happened to be a key figure in the process of attaining freedom for the German Theatre System.

In 1898, under the aegis of Litzmann's theatre research, a controversial dissertation, "Die geistige Entwicklung der deutschen Schauspielkunst in 18. Jahrhunderts" (The scientific development of the German Art of Acting in the 18th century) by Hans Oberlaender who incorporated the ideas of Dilthey surfaced. Oberlaender was a student of the literary historian Max Hermann, who, since 1891, had been resident at Berlin University. Hermann is known to be the father of the young theatre sciences in the German-speaking world, and had earlier inspired many other theatre study dissertations like that of Oberlaender. The Faculty of Philosophy of Berlin University did not, of course, accept such topics yet, so that such doctoral candidates as Carl Hagemann, with his dissertation on the "Geschichte des Theaterzettels" (History of the theatre programme) (1910), could only obtain doctorate degrees in the



Universities sympathetic towards theatre studies. Since 1900, Max Hermann conducted systematic scientific theatre lectures and seminars not only in theatre history ~~but also~~ developed, in them, a method of scientific theatre reconstruction which brought to the limelight historical, philosophical and humanistic points of view in equal proportions. He published his main work, Forschungen zur deutschen Theater-geschichte des Mittelalters und der Renaissance (Researches on German Theatre History of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance) in 1904.

Already in 1902, Heinrich Stuemcke, Berlin's Chief Editor (Editor-in-Chief) formed the "Gesellschaft fuer Theater-geschichte" (The Society for Theatre History) twenty-five years after Joseph Kuerschnerg had proposed the plan for it. Members of the association include theatre researchers, practitioners, lovers and friends of the theatre from all over German - speaking areas under the chairmanship of the Berliner Literature and Culture Historian Ludwig Geifer and with Berthold Litzmann, Alexander von Weilen, Max Grude, Paul Schleuther and many others in the directorate. This society created, in addition to the one by Litzmann, another equally important one, up till today still publishes serials, Schriften der Gesellschaft fuer Theater-geschichte, appearing since 1902.

Almost at the same time as Litzmann, Alexander von Weilen, the Vienna literary historian and Court Librarian since 1888, began lecturing at the University of Vienna on Theatre Sciences. His publications include: History of Theatre Systems in Vienna (1889);

with Oscar Tueber in 1902 The Theatres of Vienna and his multiple volume, History of the K.K. Hofburg Theatres, and, in 1908, Hamlet on the German Stage.

It occurred that, in the 1880s and 1890s, the first centres for Theatre Sciences emerged in the Austrian and in some of the German Universities.

A new impulse was received from the International Exhibition of Music and Theatre Works in Vienna in 1892 during which many objects on the entire spectrum of theatre development, from the Middle Ages to the present time and from all over middle Europe were shown for the first time under the directorship of Karl Glossy.

For the first time ever, on display here were drama prints, handwritten documents, theatre handbills, and production books, role and scene pictures, stage design sketches, models of technical stage installations and devices, models and drawings of Auditoria, Stage and of curtains for drama and music theatre not only from the German-speaking theatres but also from the Slavonic nations of the Donau monarchy and from the Hungarian theatre. The visitors from all over Europe and America, people in many places began to collect theatralia. Mostly they were the actors themselves who now realised that they could turn their "transitory" creations into perpetuity and that these present objects could aid the future research works. Two examples of actor-collections encouraged by Glossy's Vienna Theatre exhibition were Hugo Thimig's collection which became the Austrian National Library in 1922. It was also motivated by Josef

Gregor and contains more than one million objects from the erst- while court collection and the Burg museum. The second was the Munich actress Clara Ziegler's collection, which, on her death in 1910, became Munich's Theatre Museum.

By 1910 Arthur Kutscher, who had been involved in practical theatre from his youth, began to give scientific theatre lectures in the University of Munich in addition to his literary/historical lectures and practicals. He published his books - Ausdruckskunst der Buehne (Expressive Art of the stage/theatre) in 1910 and Grundriss der Theaterwissenschaft (Fundamentals of Theatre Sciences) in two volumes in 1931/36.

In 1920, Walther Unruh, in Berlin, founded his comprehensive private theatre collections which is now owned by the Institute of Theatre Sciences of the Free University of Berlin.

The spark had since been ignited all over Europe. In France, beginning, in 1894, in the Sorbonne, Gustave Lanson expanded his lectures on the History of the French Drama to include, increasingly, informative theatre history excursions while the romanist Eugene Lintihac began in 1896 to lecture as a sequel to his earlier introductory theatre history lectures of 1883 to 1893, delivered in Odeon Theatre, more intensively on French Theatre. His Histoire generale du Théâtré en France emerged from his lectures of 1904 to 1910 in Sorbonne, out of which five volumes from the Middle Ages to the Second Empire, were published.

It is possible that the French Auguste Rondel, who in 1895 opened the Rondel Collection, the most important French Theatre museum up to date, was motivated by Glossy, The Rondel Collection was acquired by the French Government in 1920. Rondel's, with the collaboration of Jacques Copeau, was as effective as the Eberle's Swiss Association.

In 1927, Oskar Eberle, Nadler's student, inaugurated the "Schweizerische Gesellschaft fuer Theaterkultur".

Gustave Cohen continued this effort, especially for the French and Belgian theatres of the Middle Ages at first in his researches and later in his lectures in the Universities of Amsterdam, Strassburg and Sorbonne. Already in 1902, there had been an association with the name Societe d' Histoire du Théâtre. (the Society for the History of Theatre) in Paris which then published contributions from respectable researchers in the Bulletin de la Societe de l' Histoire du Théâtre. The first President was Victorien Sardou and the foundation members include Arnault Georges Cain, Claretie and many others.

1922 was a special year of achievement for the theatre sciences for it was then that Neijendem created the Theatre History Museum in Christianborg in Kopenhagen. Agne Beijer, the present doyen of theatre scholars of Europe, founded the new world famous theatre museum in the castle of Drottingholm near Stockholm; where the theatre of the Rococo period spreads around the castle.

In the subsequent years, a new footing for theatre sciences emerged. For example, at the University of Berlin, the Institute for Theatre Sciences, fought for by Max Hermann since 1919, was realised in 1923, under the directorship of Julius Petersen who had, in 1904, published Schiller und die Buehne, (Schiller and the stage) in 1919 Die National Theater and in 1929 Goethes Faust auf Buehne. (Goethe's Faust on Stage) and he also contributed to the History of the Theatre of the Middle Ages.

Max Hermann later joined Petersen in this new institute and also worked with Winfried Klara, Rolf Bodenhausen, and Georg Droscher - the senior dramatist/director of the King's Opera under the Landen. He was also the founder of the museum of the Prussian Stage Theatre.

Soon after the opening of the Institute in Berlin, the naturalist, Eugen Welff, became an Associate Professor (Reader) for German Literature and Theatre History in the University of Kiel and he undertook the erection of the theatre museum of Kiel in 1924.

After the forced pause caused by the First World War, Carl Niessen began as a private lecturer in the University of Cologne to give lectures, conduct research, and make historical theatre collections, partly as an official of the Institute for Theatre Research and partly as personal Niessen Collections. Under the headship of Rolf Badenhausen it became the property of the University of Cologne. Niessen in 1929, with Kutscher, published the serials: Quellen und Forschungen and Die Schaubuehne. In 1936, Niessen became an Associate Professor and thus attained the first chair specifically

for Theatre Arts Sciences in the German-speaking area.

One of the greatest and most successful achievements in scientific theatre exhibitions in Europe was the (German Theatre Exhibition) "Deutsche Theater Ausstellung" - Magdeburg (1927) organised by Rapp which brought together the past and present in a wide span and emphasized technical theatre aspects.

In Switzerland, the Swiss Association for Theatre Culture and the "Schweizerische Theatersammlung" (The Swiss Theatre Collection) in Bern, which contain Appia's legacy were founded under the directorship of Edmund Stadler.

The Dutch founded their Union Toneel Museum in Amsterdam. Out of this one of the most beautiful and most intelligently organised theatre museums of Europe developed under the directorship of Frithjof van Thienen.

In Italy, shortly before the First World War, in 1913, one of the most important and universal theatre collections, the internationally oriented Museo Teatrale alla Scala, was born. The course of time it incorporated the great Theatre Library Renato Simoni. In 1931, Rome followed with a Theatre Library and Collections - Biblioteca Teatrale del Burcardo under Professor Fiocco.

In England also, some important steps were taken towards the opening of the sources of research by the establishment of Victoria and Albert Museums in London in 1909. These very elaborate state-owned Arts Collections housed many private theatrical collections of such people as George Clint, Piot Charles Xean, Fischel, Enthoven and

many others. This is a conglomeration of invaluable materials into which the English Theatre Research, since then and up till today, could profitably dig.

Again, another World War interrupted many progressive efforts in the development of European Theatre Sciences. It was more or less an act of revolution as in 1942, in the midst of unlucky penetrations, that Aurel Wolfram brought the "Gesellschaft für Wiener Theaterforschung" (Association of the Vienna Theatre Research) to life. In the following year, 1943, Heinz Kindermann was called to the newly created chair of the Theatre Sciences at the University of Vienna. Consequently, he founded the Institute of Theatre Studies in the University of Vienna which has become one of the most comprehensive ones in Europe.

By 1949, the new Société d'Histoire du Theatre under the directorship of Leon Chancerel and Rosemarie Moudoles was formed in France. It rendered invaluable services for it had published the Revue d'Histoire du Theatre, in which the important research findings, newly computed documentation and also bibliographies of international journals containing scientific and literary works appeared for the 16th year.

Very soon after the war, the London Theatre Researchers and Theatre Friends, at first under the author of the Theatre Notebook, The Seven Ages of the Theatre and The Staging of Plays before Shakespeare called, under the active initiative of Ifan Kyrle Fletcher, for the formation of the Society for Theatre Research.

They organised the first World Theatre Congress in London in 1955, out of which emerged the Federation Internationale pour la Recherche Theatrale (International Federation of Theatre Research) under the first presidentship of I.K. Fletcher and later under the theatre historian - Alois Nagler-of Yale University, followed by the theatre-and art-historian, Fritschjof van Thieven, of Amsterdam. With this blessed organisation, finally, an important forum for scientific theatre studies and cooperation was founded. The Federation was affiliated to the International Institute for Theatre Research in Venedig which has mainly bibliographic and iconographic responsibility.

In the same year, 1955, the Institute of Theatre Studies of the University of Vienna, on the occasion of the signing of the Austrian State Agreement and on the occasion of the reopening of the Burgtheater and Wiener Staatsoper, that were destroyed in the war, organised the "Euopäische Theater-austellung 1955" (The European Theatre Exhibition 1955) in fifty-four halls of Vienna's artists' houses. With its 4500 objects from 23 countries, and covering over 2500 years, up till that time the most comprehensive exhibition of the European Theatre Studies as catalogued by Franz Hodamcouwsky and Heinz Kindermann. Also, in the same year, for the first time, the quarterly journal for theatre studies, Maske und Kothurn, of the same Institute that then began its eleventh year of publication, for discussions<sup>of</sup> the new researches of the famous theatre researchers of Europe, America and East Asia.



The Federation Internationale pour la Recherche Theatrale set up a special commission for the establishment of new chairs for scientific studies and by 1966 already there was immediate success and progress to the extent that, in Germany, there were chairs in the Universities of Berlin (Free University), Cologne, Munich and Marburg and Institutes for Theatre Studies in the Universities of Hamburg and Erlangen. In Austria, the University of Vienna has a professorial chair and an institute. In Switzerland, the Universities of Bern and Zurich have chairs for Theatre Studies. In France, the Sorbonne; in England, the Universities of Bristol and Manchester each has a chair and an institute. In Italy, the University of Rome and the Catholic University in Mailand, each, a chair and an institute. In Sweden, the University of Stockholm, a chair and an institute; in Norway, the University of Oslo, a chair and a visiting lectureship; in Finland, the University of Helsinki and Turku, each an invitation lectureship. In Holland - Amsterdam, a chair along with an institute; Utrecht, an invitation lectureship. In Turkey - Ankara, a chair and in Istanbul, a visiting lecturership. In Israel - Tel-Aviv, a visiting lectureship.

In many East European countries there are many chairs for Theatre History in the theatre history departments of the Universities and academies. For instance, in Hungary there was in Budapest an independent Institute for Theatre Studies along with an invited visiting lectureship and in Thorn, a chair. In Czechoslovakia, in Prague, a chair and an Institute, and in Brunn, an invited lectureship

were inaugurated. Yugoslavia had in Zagreb an invited lectureship.

In the mentioned European Universities and institutes, the students receive basic scientific training connected with an introduction to the important branches of the practice. For example, the students of the Institute for Theatre Studies of the University of Vienna receive, besides the European theatre history that runs through ten semesters, special lectures and seminar exercises in three phases on basic problems of dramaturgy, directing, stage design, costume design, stage technology, criticism, audience research, theatre sociology, theatre bibliography and iconography. In addition to those courses, are practicals carried out by ten outstanding theatre specialists. For example, practicals on directing include production book design, cooperation between the director and the designer, programme planning, theatre criticism, radio and television drama, and on artistic and scientific film. Students majoring in theatre arts sciences, in order to get an impression of the professional play production, are given, in the second part of their study, the opportunity to carry out assistant director's roles in some Vienna theatres under the supervision of known directors.

In the United States of America, George Pierce Baker, the founder of American Theatre Research, started to give scientific theatre lectures, projects and exercises first at Harvard University from 1895 till 1925 and later, from 1925 till 1933, at Yale University. Baker engaged himself with the sitting opposite of the "peeping-box" and with the 'Shakespeare stages'. He introduced into the principles

of dramaturgy, playwriting, directing and technical theatre seminars to demonstrate that, in conjunction with practical theatre, try-outs and rehearsals, playwriting is all-embracing. He thus introduced the Drama Department into the American Universities that were different in their structure from the scientific theatre methods of the European institutes. In the U.S.A., in more than one hundred of the Universities and colleges Drama Departments like those at Yale, Carnegie Mellon, Columbia, Princeton, City University of New York and the State University of New York abound.

One of the great achievements of the theatre research of the USA is the separation of the theatre collection containing the legacies of Robinson Locke and David Belasco from the New York Public Library under George Freedley, in 1931.

In Japan, in Tokyo, there are four Universities with chairs and institutes in all of the four.

Generally, scientific theatre studies made very rapid advancement within the eighty years since Greiznachs, Werners, Bergers and Glossys made their singular pioneer efforts.

In the areas of Theatre Design - Architecture, Planning, Scenography and Technology - Germany, a highly technological country, had led the world of theatre for long. The outstanding records of achievements in the areas of teaching and research in these disciplines have been attested to by the world's leading experts in the fields. One of such attestations was made by the American George Izenour who has paid great tribute to the works of the late

Professor Walther Unruh<sup>(9)</sup>. Other German authorities include the late Professors Thomas Munter, Adolf Zotzmann and the living Professors Jan Fiebelkarn, Horst Birr, Julian Herrey, Werner Ruhnau. These German geniuses have been giving an impetus to the works of the Scenography, Architecture and Technology Commissions of the OISTAT (International Organization of Scenographers, Theatre Architects and Technicians) by drawing the attention of the public authorities and persons responsible for the construction, use and administration of theatre houses to the importance of security of goods and persons in the theatres. The organisation declared:

1. The Theatre a Privileged Place of History.

The theatre occupies a privileged place in the cultural history of mankind and must be preserved at any price. In our contemporary societies the theatre progresses by leaps and bounds. Theatre art is in constant evolution, new spaces are created, new technologies and new materials are invented while cultural buildings are multiplying.

2. Protection of Life and Safeguarding of Goods

Security in theatre starts with the protection of the lives of persons, audiences, actors and theatre workers and of their well-being. It also embraces safe-guarding material goods, the moral, cultural and historical patrimony.

3. The Skill of Designers and of Users

To ensure safety one has to appeal to the skill and the

experience of all people involved in the execution and use of the project, right from the conception to the end.

The ~~persons~~ responsible must accept the financial consequences it implies for there is no common measure between the cost of a disaster and that of its prevention.

4. The Training of the Responsible Persons

A particular effort should be made to ensure the training of architects, scenographers, designers, technicians, managers and users. A continuous training should enable them to adjust themselves constantly to the evolution of theatre arts and technology.

5. Set of Regulations and Technical Innovation

New rules should be worked out to make possible technical and scenographic innovation, the creation of new spaces, the use of new equipments and materials (e.g. multivalent theatre..., movable tiers... polyester..., etc).

6. Unification of Regulations

The national sets of regulations should be simplified and should favour the development of cultural exchanges between countries.

7. Promotion of Research

The national and international public and authorities should ensure the means to promote research of new materials, equipments and production techniques. They should also favour the normalization of safety controls and tests.

## B. An International Commission

The Architectural Commission of the OISTAT takes part in the works which would ensure the coordination and adjustment of the national sets of regulations for the promotion of theatre arts and technology.

In furtherance of the OISTAT's declaration, Helmut Grosser, its recent German president, has published a sensational and long article titled "Wer macht Theater - Wie lernt man das?"<sup>(10)</sup>

published in the German Buehnentechnische Rundschau, special issue of 1980, translated "Who makes theatre - How does one learn it?" published in Theatre Design and Technology of Summer 1982<sup>(11)</sup>.

In it, Grosser advances the view that the directional plumbline along which our technical theatre profession should be orientated are the Building construction "Codes and Safety-Regulations on Assembly Places"<sup>(12)</sup> which also cover administration and organisation.

These Assembly places can span over such monumental buildings, to use Nigerian examples like Mapo Hall in Ibadan, the National Theatre Complex in Lagos and the small Auditorium at the University of Ibadan Staff School. The same professional skills are required of the responsible technical staff for their effective and safe operations. This is equally true for other professions touched by the same question of "Who makes theatre and how does one learn it?" For instance (again to use Nigerian illustrations), it does not matter where the actor acts, whether for an audience at Ibadan, Lagos or in a village square, the same training is needed for becoming a good performer. Similarly, the costume designer designs

with the same skill for the costume to be worn in all those locales.

Helmut Grosser based his publications on the German, Swiss and Austrian theatre organisational systems which have some similarities. The publication claims that a journal, the Deutsche Oper Berlin<sup>(13)</sup> (The German Opera Berlin), in its Number six edition of 1978, had listed a total of 127 different theatre occupations, carried out in that building in Berlin. Out of that list, at least 70 were within the frontiers of artistic - creative - technical professions.

The significance of the survey of the development of theatre studies and of Helmut Grosser's article to our study is the realisation of the fact that scientific theatre studies have evolved through systematic growth in phases. These areas in Nigeria have to experience the evolutionary developments if their potentials are to be maximally tapped.

In this 20th century the justification for scientifically trained and skilled theatre professionals cannot be over-stated. Quite apart from the material considerations, Science is an integral part of Culture and to put up a lukewarm attitude towards any of its branches would amount to discrediting and denying knowledge. Or what do we make out of the definition of culture as given to us by sociologists and anthropologists as: "man's inventive adaptation to his geographical and social environment biologically, emotionally, and intellectually"? Culture, on the one hand, includes moral, religious and aesthetic values and, on the other hand, skills gained

through science and its applications. In as much as culture can no longer be seen, in its traditional sense, as a high personal cultivation of thought and feeling, in a like manner can science not be seen as a Frankenstein monster in the theatre. All we need do is to distinguish between Pure Science, Applied Science and Technology. Through this, a proper approach to solving the problems of the University and Culture on the one hand and of the Departments of Theatre Arts of the Universities supposed to be turning out graduates trained with professional skills to meet the immediate needs of our time and place, on the other hand, could be more easily achieved. Nigeria, today, is unfortunately biting hard on the rinds of the fruits of neglect of the sciences in the past years of her oil-boom economy. But how long shall the present calamitous conditions prevail?. We are aware of the problems inherent in and associated with our insistence on the professional approach to theatre education in Nigeria. Some of the problems, we recognise, are economic in nature. Nevertheless, the universal economic problem is not peculiar to Nigeria in the community of developing nations. We are also aware of the scrambling for the "yeastless cake" - doled out to the Universities by the government and its competitive sharing among the faculties. This gives rise to a pathetic situation in which those courses or subjects that have been elevated to the level of - "super-academic disciplines" get the lion's share of the meagre grants at the expense of training more of the needed professionals. And, should they emphasize professional training, then they stand the risk of



being stigmatized as not being Universities in the 'true sense'.

But where lies the wisdom in the proliferation of Universities in the Nigeria of today? Wouldn't the Universities and the communities they are to serve benefit more from "the fewer the happier" - a possible 'Varsity-Planning' - panacea? How about having a smaller number of Universities' Theatre Arts Departments, but having them properly staffed, and adequately infrastructured and sufficiently funded, for effective research activities, instead of the present poorly integrated proliferation of programmes and courses?

While we are also conscious of the burning questions of specialization and the lowering of standards, the need to inculcate some degrees of specialisation cannot be compromised. It is not for nothing that Michael Polyani has advanced the view that

to do away with specialisation of knowledge would be to produce a race of quiz winners and destroy our culture in favour of a universal diletantism <sup>17</sup>.

The recognition of this fact has, perhaps, made the USA adopt the philosophy of "graduate - specialist - system" whereby specialization is deferred to the postgraduate years. But the American significant set objective of achieving cultural unification had been grossly missed by the same belying generosity of the broad-based undergraduate programmes.

The failure of the system to meet the target could be attributed to the over-liberality of the liberal education which allows random course selection by students who are taught, sometimes,

by narrow experts. However, most important, seemingly is that the "credit - codes" are maintained. Compensation could be sought for the lapses later in the Graduate schools. Yet, it would have been better if the undergraduate programmes could at least turn out semi-specialists instead of non-specialists at all. Or, is the dictum "half bread is better than none" not acceptable to the American mind? But for Nigeria we would expect that at that level it should be possible to pursue a major subject to some degree of proficiency while the accompanying, relevant, subjects could be limited in number and could be pursued to levels not as deep. The University of Sussex has adopted that kind of scheme.

Even in the Universities founded in Europe by the religious societies, centres for training the clergy were established. These centres eventually became the theological schools out of which grew what may be called the earliest professional schools in the Universities.

In England the Universities developed very slowly into centres for professional studies. In fact, the developments of medical education, for instance, in the British Isles occurred largely outside the Universities, in the institutions which owed their foundations to professional guilds like the Barber Surgeon Guilds of London, Dublin and Edinburgh.<sup>(18)</sup> The development of professional education in other fields followed the same pattern. The Inns of Court were the professional schools founded outside the Universities for the training of English lawyers. The initial resentment of the

English University to absorbing professional disciplines is highlighted in the case, according to Adesanya Ige Grillo, of the formation of an Engineering School at Cambridge not very long ago which generated as much heated discussion as when the railway was first brought to that city<sup>(19)</sup>.

In Germany, too, until most recently, 1984, technological and scenographic professional theatre training were offered mainly in the conservatories, special institutes and seminars. But the reformation that started in the late 1970s, because the German students of those institutions felt discriminated against and underrated, for their qualifications were not tagged "University ... degrees," forced the government to transfer most of such programmes to the newly constituted Universities of Technology. Thus, the erstwhile only "Seminar fuer Theater-technik" - Institut der Deutschen Theater-technische Gesellschaft" (Seminar for Theatre Technology - Institute of the German Technical Theatre Association) gave way for the establishment of the new Department of Theatre and Entertainment Technology in the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Technology, Berlin as perhaps the only such Department in Germany today.

In Black Africa, it is of interest to note that the first Institutions of Higher Education founded in West Africa, e.g. Fourah Bay College in Freetown, or Higher College, Yaba in Lagos, were aimed primarily at producing professional men - the clergy, teachers and doctors. The argument for Classics and liberal education

crept in only recently<sup>(10)</sup>.

In Nigeria, a former British protectorate, the many inherited British biases governed the preindependence attitude to Higher Education. But with the attainment of independence in 1960, changes started to drastically take place and the American influence in particular was gaining more grounds. In fact the first post-independence University of Nigeria at Nsukka was established on the American model.

Professor E.J. Alagoa in his paper "The Universities and the Inter-relationship of the Arts"<sup>(21)</sup> has advanced the view that: "It is possible to contrast African culture and western European Culture on the basis of the integration of the various art forms. Western European Art tradition has had periods of integration, and the call for total theatre is a contemporary movement for the integrated use of the arts. And while it is more likely for an African artist to be both a sculptor, drummer, masquerade dancer and repository of oral tradition, African traditions also recognise specialists in specific art forms."<sup>(22)</sup> And, on the funding of the universities and the setting of priorities, Alagoa observes that, in this scientific age, the rulers have laid it down that University resources must be used in the development of the scientific disciplines and professions as against others in the ratio, three to two. In such a situation academic leaders have themselves tended to distinguish between useful and not - so - useful arts. The distinction

has sometimes been between cultural research whose results and uses are for and immediate or visible. Among these are the performing, creative-and fine-arts which have sometimes appeared to enjoy greater prestige, but only in the sense that they are more visible and have been thought to confer distinction on their patrons. In the University situation, however, the artists themselves have often had a hard fight to have their creations accepted as proper evidence of work deserving consideration by promotion committees.

According to Alagoa, the Institutes of African Studies and Centres of Cultural Studies of Nigerian Universities are usually conceived as places where the arts may be practised in an integrative manner, and persons of different disciplines can make contributions to each other's work. He also identified the other ways in which Nigerian Universities have attempted to establish the arts but not so clearly geared towards integration or inter-relationship. Rather, they have been oriented towards instruction or direct creation. In this category are the various departments of Music, Fine Arts, Theatre Arts, Dramatic Arts, or Performing Arts in Nigerian Universities.

The interrelationship of the arts has one lesson for Nigerian Universities, the Nigerian governments and all organisers of cultural institutions. That is, that they must experiment with new forms of organisation and operation systems that would combine research with practice and experimentation in new art forms as well as publication in several media.

We require research for traditional and modern forms of performance and for their preservation.

#### The Universities and National Culture

The Universities should be used for training and specialisation in areas which the public institutions cannot or do not yet treat adequately because of their peculiar structures and problems.

In research, the Universities must play a predominant role. Most of the government agencies and some private cultural groups list research as an interest, but none of them can assemble the types of intellectual equipment that the Universities are able to mobilise for the purpose. In practice, the best endowed research scholars are to be found in the Universities, and their organisations and structures are much better suited to research endeavours than most government agencies. This is not to say that all cultural research should be based in the Universities, but that the government agencies with funds for research should as much as is practicable utilise the talent and intellectual resources to be found in the Universities.

In the area of performance and creation, the universities must be the pace-setter and standard bearer. While they have a duty to research into what was in the past, they must also use the traditional materials as the springboard for advancement into the future. They must experiment and create new forms for the present and preserve elements of the past and the present for the future. In all these

matters, the modern academic artists should keep in touch with reality. They would need to consider the problem of the inability of some of their creation to reach the local audience. That is, whereas the local travelling theatre companies draw huge crowds, the University companies can attract no more than a select audience of the University people. Is it that they cannot fathom the popular spirit or grasp the pre-occupations of the masses? The evidence is that there is a gap of communication to be bridged.

The worn-out suggestion that western education and colonisation have estranged us from our root can no longer be accepted as the answer for our own ineptitude, because Western education and its technology pervade a wide segment of our national life.

The pressure to change in all spheres of our education and world outlook was mounting daily more intensely; yet the British influence lingered on but, as situation warrants, it could relatively be traded off. This was, perhaps, in the case of theatrical education not quite easy. Even though Geoffrey Axworthy gladly accepted the sought-for Rockefeller Foundation's generous grant for his setting up of the first School of Drama at the University College, Ibadan in 1962, yet that was not sufficient to dispel the fact that, with him, while "the hand was Esau's, the voice was still that of Jacob". Therefore, Axworthy's British outlook, in spite of his immense tolerance, could not be easily traded off for the American dollars. Whereas the educational system of the University of Ibadan has its antecedence in the University College, Ibadan and in the University of London,

yet the historical background of the development of theatrical traditions in the British Universities and those of Nigeria are not quite the same.

Contemporary dramatic and theatrical activities in the English language started in Nigeria with the foundation of the University College Ibadan in 1948. Almost simultaneously, the students of the English and other Departments started their University College Ibadan Dramatic Society, partly, perhaps, to buttress their study in drama courses. The society sought to expose the students to all the areas of dramatic arts. Professionalism in the areas was, as time went on, aimed at, especially in 1962, when the Rockefeller Foundation's grants aided the take-off of the School of Drama, University of Ibadan, while its founding father and many of his first associates were British. These were later joined by American scholars, teachers and practitioners. The indigenous members of staff that were recruited, or brought back home had some parts of their theatrical training in France, Britain and in America.

As a result of the position of the School within a Faculty and the fact that its staff and students were, to some degree, looked down upon by their counterparts in the other disciplines, Departments, Faculties and by the University Community as a whole, the yearning for acceptance on an equal level and the prospects of better long-term funding led to the absorption of the School of Drama into the academic scheme proper and with its transformation into a full-fledged academic Department of Theatre Arts, in 1970. Thereafter, a new



line of development ensued.

New students were admitted on the basis of general University Entry Requirements for the pursuit of academic degrees in the University and in the Faculty of Arts in particular. The Diploma programme which had, since 1965, been admitting students with 'O' Level qualifications and without the higher University 'A' level entry qualifications, continued in the new department. But the students in the would-be professional programme felt underrated, too, as in the previous period before 1970. Perhaps on account of the changing climate of opinion in Nigeria, the interest of a good number of them was geared towards using the Diploma in Drama certificate in obtaining admission into the regular degree programme.

In Nigeria the craze for degrees cannot be over-emphasized for the fact that greater importance is attached to monetary and material gains in any degree accompanied occupation than the contributions to a nation-building that professionals make to the society. Hence, everybody seeks to get into the University to acquire, at any cost, a University degree as the surest way of getting a well-paid job that also offers other amenities such as recognition in the society, special influence and security. And so it seems, to some extent, that the programmes that promised to train artists, professional performers and theatre artists turned out to be producing mainly "academic paper-theatre artists" or "paper - professionals". But, <sup>to</sup> the best of our knowledge of the reality of theatre, theatre exists first and foremost in the practice.

In defence of the contributions of Science and Technology to the fostering of our culture, Dennis H. Irvine, three decades ago, in his article on "The University and Culture" re-emphasised the fact that there can be no controversy over the need by the Humanities of the Sciences, which offer incomparable aids to understanding the objective nature of life. The contention now is, whether or not our Universities' theatre arts curricula do permit the scientific contributions to be made, particularly in the areas of Theatre Design and Technology.

In Nigeria there is the danger that "academic - theatre" might take over. And so the essence of educational theatre which, in the main, is to teach the aesthetics and skills necessary to equip a prospective theatre artist has not been fully grasped, for, according to Gassner:

"There is only one way of learning something about play production, and that is to observe it in practice or still better, to work at it."<sup>23</sup>

Willard Bellman, too, emphasizes that:

"One of the most important teaching devices must be the production of theatrical pieces of high artistic quality."<sup>24</sup>

Today, the various types of theatrical organisational and artistic set-ups abound in Nigeria. The major ones could be classified as:

1. The Educational - University, Colleges and School - Theatre;
2. The Community - State and government-owned Cultural Centres.
3. The professional - Traditional- Travelling - Theatres
4. The Amateur - Institutional, Societies and Club- Theatres.

The four categories have their good representative in Ibadan and

they could be grouped together as the contemporary Modern Nigerian Theatres. They could be seen as the off-springs of an amalgamation of the various influences of the Missionary Churches, and schools, colonial cultural activities and administrative interests, indigenous cultural heritage of the peoples- immigrants and the free-born alike-and of the agitations of the nationalist movements of the pre-Independence eras.

It is amazing that the 'gurus' of the contemporary Nigerian theatre practice are unanimous about their misgivings on the mode of training theatre artists receive in Nigeria today. They agree in principle with the views expressed by Michel Saint Denis mentioned earlier. One of such 'gurus' was the late Chief Hubert Ogunde, the father of contemporary traditional Yoruba theatre movement, who, as a great theatre playwright, director and manager, has said, if he had gone to a theatre school, he would have become alienated from the Yoruba culture and thus lost his uniqueness and originality. Demas Nwoko has never minced words on his disapproval of the anticipation and feasibility of producing really competent professional theatre practitioners for Nigeria through the current approaches of most of theatre arts programmes of Nigerian Universities. To buttress his views, Nwoko has organised several workshops aimed at the demonstration of his philosophy. In fact, in the planning of his New Culture Studios, Nwoko's prime objectives include the provision of professional training in the ways he deems it cardinal to our growth.

And, Gbenga Sonuga, one of the most enduring and persevering of Nwoko's protégés and a graduate of French and Drama of the University

of Ibadan, showed that:

If the contemporary performing artist is to be proficient as required, he certainly has to go through a training that is both vigorous and long. His discipline can be likened to that in the martial arts. He must of course have the basic qualifications - a sound mind in a sound body, and the additional one of talent. While a Crash programme training might be adequate for the rank and file, Officers do take a long time to attain the required level of proficiency 25.

Even Ola Rotimi's delicacy and precision in directing stem from the professional training he received in American Universities.

The case the present writer would like to make has again been vindicated in part by Judith Smith in her study of the Yoruba theatre in Ibadan when she affirms that scenery, lighting and effects are the first motivating forces that brought many spectators to the theatre(26).

In the Nigerian life of today, the spectacles presented on the TV-Screens and in the movies are a great motivation for the people to want to see the presentation; they even prefer, if possible, to see them in real life performances. Consequently, elements of spectacle, effects, and fantastic magic, possible only with technology and scenography and which are accomplishable only through a proper blending of training with experiments, should feature constantly in the contemporary Nigerian live performances.

One of the ways towards the achievement of that main objective in the educational theatre is the recruitment, by the school, of a sufficient number of artists and craftsmen of high quality who would lend their abilities to the productions as part of their teaching

responsibilities. The product of this fusion of students, artists and craftsmen should be of very respectable artistic merit and thus provide quality artistic experiences for the student and for all participants.

It should be recalled that, at the inception of the School of Drama, the Founding Father, the late Geoffrey J. Axworthy, also planned for, and even executed the plan of training local performing artists within the facilities of the School of Drama, the Arts Theatre, so as to bring the traditional local performer up, at least in the use of modern techniques, to enhance his creations. Such an experiment successfully produced a stage adaptation of Amos Tutuola's The Palm Wine Drinkard performed by Kola Ogunmola Travelling Theatre after the group's training in the School of Drama for a period of over six months<sup>(27)</sup>. The success of this first attempt has not been repeated in the history of theatre training in Nigeria. Even our most acclaimed prolific writer, poet, playwright, actor, director and academic, Wole Soyinka, and his associate, Segun Oluşola, in the Players of the Dawn, an erudite broadcaster, gaily praised the unparalleled success of The Palm Wine Drinkard (28).

The uniqueness of the School of Drama is reflected in its achievements within the short period of its inception. It attained its golden age right then in 1963.

But, very unfortunately, its imminent decline and demise had been, unnoticeably, signalled as soon as the war started by the academic-theatre conscious staff, aimed at turning the School into a full-

fledged academic department, was won in 1970 (29).

Ever since then, the vacuum that the fall of the School has created in the development of the Nigerian theatre at Ibadan seems not to have been filled. This is manifested in the fact that, since the successful production of Ogunmola and The Palm Wine Drinkard, hardly any or the hundreds of the Diploma and degree holders subsequently turned out by the Department has been able to answer the call to the theatre in proper dimension or raising a thriving performing arts troupe.

Today, after a period of about thirty years of formal theatrical education in Nigeria, it is not difficult to count on the ten fingers of the two hands the number of active and good theatre groups and set-ups by the products of the theatre arts programmes nation-wide.

We may have to charge the existing performing arts training departments in the country to court for self-reassessment. They have to redefine their roles, set objectives and aims to be achieved within a specified time, given necessary support. We have got to address ourselves to the question of whether or not the talented person, in order to attain the highest possible level of creative output in his area of endowment and to be able to receive the commensurate gratifications, has to be trained in a University or possibly elsewhere.

For every motivator trained in the University, we need ten activators, for every academic theatre-graduate, we need ten professional theatre graduates.

Hence, in order for a true Nigerian theatre to evolve, we first need to train real professional actors, dancers, and theatre technicians who can construct the sets, repair the equipments and keep the show going every night. At this stage of our development, we need the "doers" more than the "theoreticians", everybody has to be able to do something well first before the imminent Third World War would stamp out millions of us when, eventually, the remnant would have to do so many things, for shortage of people, in order to keep live going.

Nigeria has at present about 105 million people, but less than 50% of her youth can manipulate basic tools of any kind. Then, where is the rationale behind the "jack-of-all-trades" approach currently supported and encouraged in our higher institutions of learning? Let us move theatre education out of the Universities, if need be, to where the spirit of professionalism would be the watchword. Perhaps the technological Universities, and the Colleges of Arts, Science and Technology might even be more fertile grounds. At least Inter-Disciplinary programmes with the Faculties of Technology and Special Diploma programme which could be tailored to contain the potentialities for the turning out of middle-level manpower would immediately benefit from such interdisciplinary cooperation. And for this, the present writer would recommend that 75% of the training period should be devoted to technological and practical stage work while the remaining 25% should be sufficient for the coverage of the basic theoretical groundings in the philosophy, aesthetics and social sciences of the theatre as relevant to the areas of specialisation in view.

At the degree levels, it would be proposed that the general education courses be spread over the length of study with a declining tendency, thus allowing for the courses leading to specialisation to be receiving greater attention and increasing emphasis towards the final years. Therefore, at both the Bachelor's and Master's degree levels the writer would strongly recommend the adoption of the full professional Diploma, Bachelor of Fine Arts and Master of Fine Arts programmes. Such professional programmes would facilitate a

mastery of the skills belonging to the respective fields and the production of true theatre artists.

The German model of training, especially in the areas of Theatre Design, Scenography and Technology, deserves mention here, too. The German contributions to the works of the ITI and OISTAT speak for themselves. Besides, the current Nigerian adopted system, the 6-3-3-4 model of education seems to be in perfect agreement with what obtains in Germany. While the entry requirement into Anglo-American degree programmes at large is the fulfilment of the general education prerequisites, the German system, in addition to that, demands pre-study practicum or apprenticeship ranging between one to three years in the allied and related fields. This, later, would be followed, after the fourth semester of study, with another one semester internship. This period permits the student to apply whatever he has gained in the study now in practical terms in the situation of prospective future employment.

The English Sandwich programmes seem to offer this kind of alternation between theory and practice and thus allow realistic growth.

For the future development in the areas of theatre technology, architecture and scenography in Nigeria, it would be advisable to prescribe pre-study, practical experience in addition to the general education backgrounds. One would, of course, not be dogmatic about approaches to excellence for there are many paths that lead to the destination of true enlightenment. The future of the Nigerian theatre holds in store exciting prospects. Imaginative planning at the pedagogical, research and training levels is therefore necessary.



THE EMERGENCE OF THEATRE, SCENOGRAPHY, TECHNOLOGY AND  
THEATRE ARCHITECTURE IN NIGERIA: THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

There is a consensus by the various scholars on the history of Black African theatre. It is agreed that, over five hundred years ago, all kinds of professional entertainers - story tellers, musicians, dancers, jugglers, acrobats and masqueraders - flourished in Black Africa. This rich cultural heritage flourished particularly in the great Mali Empire which extended from Senegal over to Nigeria. <sup>31</sup>

Even today, the social and cultural lives of this zone would be almost meaningless without their traditional drama, an embodiment of history, religion, ritual, festival, story-telling, song, music, dance and displays, constituents of the contemporary Black African performing art aesthetics, now being threatened with suffocation by the Western civilization and mass media. But, on the other hand, the liberation efforts and the experience of the patriotic nationalist movements inspired the contemporary dramatists to new idioms, new sources of dramatic materials and political themes to draw on. Hence the contemporary Nigerian theatre which thrives mainly on scripted plays, directed by directors, rehearsed by actors and staged in specially designed and technically equipped buildings, has a relatively short history in Black Africa. Among the scholars who have written on its history is J.P. Clark, who claims that;

Of the origin of Nigerian drama very little is known that is reliable and precise for the simple reason that no comprehensive study has been made so far of the subject either by the old government sociologists or by the new drama experts of today. (32)

Yemi Ogunbiyi, another authority, amplifies:

The origins of Nigerian theatre and drama lie in the numerous traditional, religious and functional rituals, to be found in practically every Nigerian society. What is, however, not clear, and therefore remains speculative is the question of the precise evolutionary growth of Drama from rituals, that is, if at all it did. One of the main reasons for this uncertainty was the lack of written records and the faulty oral traditions in those days. Hence, the fragmentary and inaccurate dating and another reason is to be found in the guild and lineage system and cultic nature of the performances. (33)

Clark, Ogunbiyi and others have attempted to classify the Nigerian drama and theatre into two broad groups, namely, traditional and literary species. (6) The traditional forms have been broken into three parts, namely, the dramatic ritual, the popular tradition and Yoruba Travelling Theatre. Since one of the main aims of this study is to investigate the function and state of theatrical designs: architectural planning, scenography and technology we look at:

#### The Early Traditional Theatre Forms: Ritual Theatre in Nigeria

The dramatic rituals are defined as such traditional festivals and ritual ceremonies held in celebration of cult or ancestral heroes, where drama is patently discernible; serious masquerade plays as <sup>ively different</sup> distinct from light ones, etc. (34)

Professor J.A. Adedeji, in his very important study of the traditional theatre, traced its source to the Alarinjo theatre, (4) first known as

Éégun Alaré "egúngún" (masquerade) an ancestor worship during the reign of Alaafin Ogbolu, at Oyo, Igboho at about 15<sup>th</sup> C. Leaning on the accounts of Hugh Clapperton and Richard Lander, Adedeji claims that this was a courtly form of entertainment, which was said to have evolved from the dramatic roots of the masque theatre in three developmental phases of ritual, festival and theatre characterised by song, music and dance. It thrived on the visual elements of lavish costume, masks and extraordinary spectacles. The masque-dramaturg outfit depended heavily on the ingenuity of the carver of the masks for his artistic inspiration which turns him to be an animator. Adedeji states:

They got masked actors (or ghost-mummers) ready and secretly dispatched them to old Oyo to precede the king's emissaries, (4) ... they retired into a background hall for the usual refreshments that follow the religious ceremonies ... it takes place privately in the royal reception hall (Aganju) at night. (35)

Also, indications of the use of different spaces were given thus:

Performances were enacted in any of the following places, depending on who had commanded the performances:  
Court performance: (the palace quadrangle or inner courtyard, or the piazza in front of the palace ;  
Alagbaa's performance: (the Ode in front of the gabled frontage of his compound; lineage-heads, chiefs and other important persons performance: frontage of the compound).

On staging, Adedeji informs that:

No raised platform was necessary for any of these performances. An open space was all that was needed. A "circle" was always formed by the spectators as they assembled round the open space (arena) to watch the show. The "stands" were important features - the "royal" stand, "(in the case of a royal command), "promoter's stand," and the "orchestra stand." The

stand was placed very close to the "booth" (dressing room) of the actors. Sometimes not too far away from the promoter's stand. The actor's "booth" was normally an improvised rig-up that could give shelter and privacy. In certain cases setting up a booth was not necessary; for example, at a royal (portico) which was used for this purpose; especially during itinerant visits, the troupes improvised their own dressing-rooms by changing in their "agò." No scenery was necessary except that, occasionally, the genius of a masque-dramaturge manifested itself in the use of symbolic scenery. But generally, the objective in staging was not the simulation of a locality but the creation of an atmosphere." (36)

In all, realistic acting and costuming were natural occurrence and all combined to give the masque in performance their variety and vitality. Also, the areas of Theatre Organisation, Publicity, Presentation and Staging have developed in the Alarinjo theatre for Adedeji accounts that:

the theatre was organised by three types of promoters: the first was the Alagbaa of the egungun society, who invited the troupes to perform. The second was a promotion by the court; when the players were required to entertain the court or the populace, the invitation came from the Oba, the Baale or the Chief. The third was when the troupe leader himself planned his own itinerary and toured the various towns and villages without having been previously invited. The publicity arrangement varied in respect of each term of promotion. There were no formal notices instead, the troupes announced their shows through contacts and processions.

In each case, the 'bata' was used in the publicizing, and in the accompaniment of the "actors" who are costumed in the 'agò' and carrying their "eku" (dressing-up bags). The choice of programme varied considerably, depending on who was promoting the performance that was in the form of a "variety show" while the troupe manager

relied on a large "repertoire" to pick and choose from.

The economic factors determined largely the timing and the duration of the shows since the promoters had to consider how much money the troupe could expect .

The Alarinjo Theatre became instituted as permanent court entertainment already at about 1610 when the final return to old Oyo had been accomplished. This paved the way for the subsequent professionalism.

Alarinjo Theatre, as a travelling theatre, as a result of the forces of Islam, Christianity and Western civilisation against it, has faded out. <sup>37</sup>) But its undying influence is visible on the popular contemporary (travelling) theatre forms.

#### The Late Traditional Theatre Forms (The Popular Form)

The popular tradition is defined as the art that is intended to be popular, commonly approved and widely liked by the "common" people in an ever-growing urban culture, and the form can involve the expression of physical pleasure and joy, as found in the plays in which amusement and entertainment are cited as the foremost functions. Typical examples of these are the Yoruba Alarinjo Theatre, the dramas of Igbo, Annang, Ibibio, Kalabari, Efik, and most of the eastern Nigerian traditional festivals, rituals, and dramas, a subject on which M.J.C. Echeruo, Kalu Uka, Ossie Enekwe and Meki Nzewi hold similar views. Zikky Kofoworola has shed light on the recent studies on the Hausa traditional drama and theatre, the Kwagh-hir and

the Bornu Puppet shows.

In all, except for the Hausa drama, it appears that the incipient focal point of most forms of traditional drama in Nigeria is the masquerade.

The performances are held at different times for and by groups, societies and professional bodies. And J.P. Clark states:

Most of the rituals dramatized at those festivals may involve the representation of spirit, ancestral or mythic heroes either in a symbolic, and therefore non-mimetic representation of the powers of those ancestral figures, or in a more dramatic impersonation. And always, (most of) these dramatic presentations are overwhelmingly interwoven with songs, drumming, extensive improvisation and dance. (13) In addition, the wealth and variety of masks, costumes and make-up is an aspect of Nigerian drama acclaimed by even those who do not as yet acknowledge the existence of this art so expressive of our culture. In fact, foreigners marvel at different times when they come individually or collectively in contact with these traditional arts. Such is the anthropologist, pro-consul and resident, P.A. Talbot, who was caught with surprise and awe at experiencing the Akan play Utughu or the spider play of the Ibibio. (18)

Chief Ulli Beier was also excited on watching the annual ritual imprisonment of Opatala at Oshogbo, so was Robin Horton's experience of the masquerades at the Amagba and the New Year Festivals of Bugama, as well as the delight of the couple, Mr. and Mrs. Herskovits, on their discovery, in Dahomey, of "The Lover and the Initiate" showing a similarity with the old Greek story of Alcestis. (39) Through these semblances the foreigners to our culture have come to the assumption that the Africans must have borrowed from those cultures even at the time that contact was totally remote, if not

completely ruled out. In the same vein Adedeji, while studying the commedia dell'arte, as a student in Britain and in the U.S.A., remembered the Egúngún playing in his home town in the extant past.

And J.P. Clark argues that:

The implication is not that one group of people borrowed this and that property from another but that there can and, in fact, there do occur areas of coincidence and correspondence in the way of living among several peoples separated by vast distances and time and who apparently are of distinct cultures, practices and persuasion. For example, the orchestra and the leader-chorus arrangement of characters occupies as much a principal part in Nigerian theatre as it did in Greek theatre. But this is not to say one is debtor to the other. It is a matter of correspondence and coincidence. (40)

The Early Modern Theatre Forms: The Concert, Opera and Musical Drama of The Victorian - 19th Century - Lagos.

... as early as early as 1839, the first batch of immigrants, freed slaves and their children, who had acquired some form of western education, had started to arrive and readily provide a vigorous impetus to the realisation of both the church and the British government. (41)

Most of the immigrants, freed slaves from England, Brazil, Liberia and Sierra Leone, in addition to the general education, possessed craftsmanship and experience in popular entertainments existing in the Diaspora. As they settled, they demonstrated their appreciation of those values which to them, have become symbols of higher societal status and acculturation. And so they imported the Western and the European form of the Music-Hall consisting of concerts, Opera, dance-acts, 'pop-concerts', drama and occasional acrobatic presentation. This has been classified as the Literary Tradition of

the Victorian Lagos period, the early modern Nigerian theatre tradition, ushered in the 1840s, characterised by the influences of slave trade, colonization and church missionaries. Consequently, the developments in Lagos - Nigeria followed the colonial British patterns. The influential ones among the population, which had grown from 25,000 to about 38,000 in 1860, yearned for recreational centres and held in October 1866, a meeting to discuss the setting up of the Academy meant to serve the emerging Victorian New Nigerian Lords.

#### The Academy

The Academy was set up in a small house on Awolola Street, and was opened on October 24, 1866 as a social and cultural centre for public enlightenment to promote the arts, science and culture. This Academy was also the name of the group that had its membership made up of civil servants who had been trained abroad or at the C.M.S. Training Institution at Abeokuta (42).

It held its first public performance of a music-concert in November 1866 under its patron, Bishop Ajayi Crowther, while J.P.L. Davies was the President, and Robert Campbell was Vice-President, Curiously, the first forms of public entertainment had nothing to do with christianity whereas all of the promoters were Christians.

Adedeji affirms:

the entertainment indulged in by the so-called elite is a concert modelled after the Victorian Music Hall. In England of this period, this type of entertainment was frowned upon by the Church and regarded as a "Pop-art" patronised by the lower-middle-class. (43)



The untimely demise of the Academy, however, occurred in 1867, in spite of which its members continued to organise concerts throughout the eighteen seventies. Some of the groups that eventually emerged during 1867 and 1910 were Lagos Grammar School Entertainment Society, 1872, The Lagos Philharmonic Society, 1873; Lagos Esprit de Corps, 1876; The Brazilian Dramatic Company led by P.Z. Silva 1880; The Rising Entertainment Society, 1891; The Melodramatic Society formed by Herbert Macaulay in 1881; The Orphean Club, 1892 - 1896; The People's Union, 1904 the Lagos Glee Singers, 1910; and the Annual Coker Concerts organised by Professor R.A. Coker of the "Mozart of West Africa frame".

For the Lagosians, the Coker's Handel Festival and the End of Year Performances were the most-awaited with great expectations, especially by the artists, music- and theatre-fans. They were always a challenge for they take long periods of preparation, with much worry, labour and anxiety.

The chief difficulty, however, in the productions of the time was the lighting of the stage and hall. There was as yet no electricity in Lagos and lighting must have been specially necessary for performances which did not begin before 8 p.m. A production at Faji School, in April 1882, was criticized on the account that it was "dingy, sombre-looking". The Lagos Grammar School Concert of May 9, 1882 was diversely criticized on the grounds that the style of decoration was "truly rural, a mixture of the Arabic, Gothic, ancient, modern - and the grotesque, with the latter chiefly dominating" (44).

Two kinds of lamps that appeared to have been used at these concerts were the

the  
 Suspending and Chinese lamps, as they were called, and their use depended on the size and shape of the halls.

### The Phoenix Hall

The Phoenix Hall, founded by the Association for Promoting Educational and Religious Interest, sited in a building on Tinubu Square, the seat of the Lagos Philharmonic Society, became the venue for most performances. It was a good-sized public hall, more accessible to all and especially to those who did not want to use the church-school rooms. Other venues include the Government House, the Court Hall, other makeshift building where now and again bold, even when unsuccessful, experiments were attempted. The productions were consistently well lighted. Foot-lights were even used in 1885 in the production of "The Departure for California" (15) And Herbert Macaulay, also at his first independent production, with Governor Fred Evans as the patron, in 1885, too, had richly illuminated the hall with chinese lanterns. "The stage was transformed into a miniature drawing room featuring a fountain which during Macaulay's Solo "Come down by fountain," began to spray profusely. (16) Difficulty arose, naturally, when they attempted to stage elaborate concerts involving large casts. For instance, the production of Gilbert and Sullivan's Trial by Jury in August 1886 had the advantage of having a stage-designer, one Mr. W.C. Lawson, the Colonial Engineer/Surveyor, who was able to provide "a gallery specially constructed" for the 140 persons in the choir. This gallery

was called "a happy innovation on our stage management"<sup>(47)</sup>

Among the great successes of the time was the 'Queen's Grand Theatrical Entertainment' held to mark Queen Victoria's fiftieth birthday on May 22, 1882, in the Breadfruit School's room by the Brazilian Dramatic Company under the patronage of the German Consul, Heinrich Bay. The stage on the occasion, was said to have been tastefully decorated. In one of the 'End of Year Performances' held on December 21, 1886 Moliere's The would be Lord was produced 'on an artistically put-up and brilliantly lighted stage'. There was a complaint in June 1889 that, though the set was well lighted, "the body of the hall was only a shade better than Egypt's darkness". It must have been a great relief for "Cherubino", when he found a change at the Handel Festival, for he avows:

the stage, my lords, ladies and gentlemen, was for once brilliantly lit, and the variegated lamps with their lights showed the decoration to perfection. The venue was the Breadfruit School room and it was extravagantly decorated.<sup>(48)</sup>

The principal motive behind these concerts and choral societies was "to enhance, as its proper value, the appreciation of the efforts and to introduce the habits of civilization gradually into our midst."<sup>(49)</sup> Thus the British Government and the missions, according to Adedeji in his "The Church and the Emergence of the Nigerian Theatre," quoting Ayandele, adopted the doctrine of the three Cs- Christianity, Commerce and Civilization. But the nature of these Choral and Dramatic societies was at variance with the desire to "civilize". The small "cultured" elites outside the missions became curious over

the importation of European manners along with Christianity at the expense of indigenous culture. The elite groups consequently demanded for Yoruba Literature, standard orthography, inspired indigenous living, insisted that certain aspects of the African / Nigerian culture should be interspersed into the church services. This paved the way for the indigenous African Church in the vernacular.

Dr. Mojola Agbebi, formerly David Vincent, spearheaded the movement which included the Association for the Promotion of Education and Religious Nationalist Movement of which James Johnson and Herbert Macaulay were the acclaimed fathers. The missions, and some of the 'educated' and cultured elite were antagonistic to the nationalist's endeavours and to the use of their church school rooms for the native performances. The mission's hostility led to the anti-missionary, anti-European wave and the first church schism of 1886.

According to Professor Echeruo, it is not surprising that in these circumstances there was a demand in the papers for a national public hall. It was felt that, if the church was for its own good reasons opposed to the indigenous entertainments in the schools, then the community ought to build its own hall to enable these performances to continue and that the initial response of the well-to-do section of the Lagos public would, in other circumstances, have been enough to guarantee that there would be one. (50) Yet, the mission schools continued to produce their culturally isolated elite groups. They taught English Literature and, inevitably, Shakespeare's work which were also

produced. The female counterpart of the Catholic St. Gregory's Grammar School, St. Mary's Convent, in 1894, produced a three-act drama, "Ernschiffe Hall," on a stage said to have been elaborately set up as "a stately mansion."

Whenever the school rooms were used for the performances, makeshift constructions in form of temporary stages were erected which were dismantled at the end of the performance to give the classroom back to its normal use. The stage in some cases had to be screened off as a demarcation between the performers, the audience and the scenes. The lighting here was still poor and, in most cases, very inadequate. The mission in 1887, in response to the high rate of attendance at these performances, built a new school-room big enough to seat 800 people.

#### The Glover Memorial Hall.

As a matter of concern for the dire need of the people of a public hall, the Lagos Observer in 1882 and 1883 respectively, desperately solicited the cause by suggesting that:

A plain commodious building would not cost much and can be let out for meetings, concerts, entertainments, etc; the income may be sufficient to pay expenses in part and keep the hall in repair that a special hall that meets all the requirements is needed ... we want 6d galleries, 3/6d balcony seats-stalls, and, if you please, boxes too.

The original promoters of the hall believed that support for it would cut across all lines and that the "European friends" of the Africans would join in the campaign. But alas, only a few groups would contribute and, surprisingly, even Professor R.A. Coker, whose

music certainly would have profited from a spacious, purposely designed assembly hall, with good acoustical and lighting facilities, was recorded to have contributed only £10. (51)

In fact it took the initiative of the Danish Consul and agent for the Banner Brothers, Mr. Frank Hood, to call meetings in 1884 to discuss the scheme for the erection of a Public Hall, Reading Room, and Library at which thirty-nine gentlemen, made up of 28 Natives and eleven Europeans, including Mr. Hood as the Secretary, were present. Hood stated that:

I have two plans prepared, first a Hall to seat 800 persons, length 100 feet, width 42 feet, height of wall 22 feet; on one side a ladies' retiring room 20 feet by 20 feet, adjoining which and running along the side of the Hall would be the library and Reading Room, 20 feet wide and 68 feet long. On the other side of the Main Hall would be a gentlemen's retiring room 20 feet by 12 feet, adjoining which would be an office 12 feet by 7 feet, 6 inches. The entrances are two: at the side of the Main Hall to Reserved and Front Seats covered by a porch 7 feet by 14 feet, 6 inches; and a front entrance, but by the side entrance only to the seats by the Front and Reserved seats. Stage with gallery at rear extends through the whole width of the Hall, and has exits through the different retiring rooms and is entirely distinct from the body of the hall ...

The roof was to be of corrugated iron, the seats removable so that the Hall could be used as a ballroom; the lighting would be by suspended lamps burning either Colza or paraffin.

The second plan was on the same principle but was to be built with an eye toward accommodating future needs. The Main Hall would be enlarged to a length of 120 feet, a width of 64 feet, and the walls would be 24 feet high. It would seat 1,100. The small Hall

was estimated at a cost £900, the large one at £1,400; in both cases the land was estimated at an additional £300.

The second plan was adopted and a twelve-man sub-committee was set up but, strange enough, excluding Mr. Hood, in spite of his efforts - an "over-sight" which he felt deeply and which caused his withdrawal from the movement. The Committee eventually was completely ineffective for over a year. "Rameses" had to appeal to the gentlemen to work again with Mr. Hood to "avoid the affair becoming another instance of the want of perseverance in the Africans." But not until after the death, in 1885, of the much-loved John Hawley Glover, was the scheme given an indirect face-lift. It was then decided to merge Glover Memorial Committee and the Public Hall Committee to work toward a Glover Memorial Hall. (52)

On the 21st June 1885, the day the Committee fixed for the cornerstone laying a sudden change of the site from the known 'Opposite of Court Hall' to the 'old Customs Warehouse' on the Marina was announced. Plans of a new Glover Hall became plans for remodelling and landscaping the old ware-house. But, again, it took the columnist, 'Janus' of the Lagos Standard in 1895, one-man campaign, to draw the attention to the misplaced trust of the people in their Trustees who could not, after ten years of work, complete the remodelling of the building supposed to be the "first architectural display in West Africa." Ironically not until another Royal Jubilee Celebration, the sixtieth year of the Queen's

Reign, was the completion of the hall finally decided upon. Even then, not until the authorities transferred the control of the hall from the Native Promoters in 1898/1899, that the Government would hand over the money promised for its upkeep and only when the present trustees agreed to include the Colonial Secretary, the Colonial Treasurer, the Director of Public Works and four European Merchants, with the addition of two Natives on its board. However, one African member of that committee saw the action as a stigma and was quoted: "We are duty-bound to furnish the Hall and Gardens; the expense will not exceed £300. Why we should shirk responsibilities and in such a shameless manner beats my comprehension. It would have been the pride of our country and race if the Hall and Gardens had been completed by us."<sup>(53)</sup>

However, the Trustee even completed and installed electricity in 1899, and with Carl Johnning's Fund bought sixty-five new chairs to complete its furnishings. The official opening concert was given by Professor Coker in Herr Johanning's - "The Jebu March" - composition, on May 12, 1898. The hall was burnt down by fire in 1899. Herbert Macaulay, a Civil Engineer, using his engineering background, improved the acoustical problems of Glover Hall. He also transformed the St. Peter school-room into a Music Hall, "an atmosphere carefully cultivated."<sup>(54)</sup> And, in scenography, his collaboration in the production of a cantata, "The Twin Sisters," performed by the St. Paul's Choristers on the Breadfruit School's stage featured



a village green and harbour, complete with gypsies, castanets, tambourines and triangles (55) <sup>55</sup>

Macaulay's other scenographic and technical debuts were found in Coker's Jubilee Concert, the Cantata "Joseph" and in the Wesleyan Sabbath School's drama "Absalom" performed in oriental costume. A report had it that:

the three sets on the Wesleyan Tinubu Schoolroom stage represented "a room in Absalom's house, a room in King David's house" and "a gate to the city." (56) <sup>56</sup>

Similarly, a two-evening gala organised by the Lagos Cricket and Recreation Club, featuring a concert- "Dead March," and a tragic drama "Sir Thomas More," directed by Charles Foresythe, depicting "an apartment at the Royal Palace, a prison cell and a Court Scene" were designed by Macaulay, who also collaborated on the production of the cantata, "Belshazar's Feast". The critique of that time spoke of

... the clever manner in which the Queen's apartment was put up and the dexterous way the writing on the wall was effected.

And, of the operetta "Whittington and His Cat" at the Breadfruit School-room, the critique delightedly reports of

Scarlet curtain screening off the stage, flags were spread to separate the wing of the building from the main floor, thereby providing a green room for the actors (57) <sup>57</sup>

The innovative Herbert Macaulay had also, in 1903, introduced to Lagos the art of cinematography, but he soon had a competitor in the businessminded European Merchant, Stanley D. Jones, who, in his

bid to attract more audience and business, created the most elaborate stage lighting for a stage show that Lagos had ever witnessed. He was reported to have used, for the first time, a follow spot in the Nigerian theatre. But the innovation of cinematography was another factor that, ironically, backfired against the growth of live concert and dramatic entertainments. Nevertheless, the Lagos People would sacrifice almost everything, inclusive of material, finance and man-power not just to be at par with their European counterparts, but to display the special musical qualities of Africans and the accumulated dramatic potentials, as verified by Lynn Leonard, that

the Lagosians' interest in full-scale musical and dramatic productions was not the result of a slavish desire to impress the English people living in Lagos then; it was the result of an accumulation of musically and practically experienced people who, like Herbert Macaulay, had learned over the years to make the most of existing facilities and who would improve the scope and quality of their efforts. (58)

The cultural revolution started by the nationalist leaders like Professor Coker, Herbert Macaulay, Dr. Randle, James Johnson, Dr. Obasa, Dr. M. Agbebi, Emmanuel Sowande of St. Jude's Church, Ebute-Metta, Lagos, J.G. Kuye of the Native Baptist Church, D.A. Oloyede of the Bethel Church, and A.A. Obadina of the United Native African Church was to motivate and develop the first truly Nigerian Theatre, the Yoruba Operatic Theatre, the so-called "Native Drama." This was an experiment of blending the African with the European cultures to produce a genuine native African Entertainment. These

factions of the St. Paul's Anglican Church of 1901, jointly formed the "Egbe Ife" Drama Group" which performed for the first time in 1903, in the Bethel School room; on April 12, 1904 at the Glover Memorial Hall and as the first Native Church Drama to be seen in Lagos featuring "King Elejigbo and Princess Abeje of Kotangora." (59) It was followed by their greater success, "The Jealous Queen, Oya of Oyo", in 1905, performed at the same venue. King Elejigbo, as written by D.O. Oloyede, was a further development of the erstwhile Wesleyan Entertainment Society's "The Embassy of the Dahomians to the Egba King" performed in 1882. Subsequent successes of the group include "Penelope" and "Kakanguwa, Oba afi Haramu Sanra". The "Egbe Ife" was later, in 1908, absorbed in the Bethel Dramatic Society. (60) They produced a number of Yoruba Operas... The enthusiastic efforts so much attracted a critic as to prompt such comments as:

Let the African aspire to correctly delineate native life, customs, traditions, feelings, passions, on the stage at which he will be completely at home and he will have the chance of gaining the interest, respect and sympathy of a European audience, (Lagos Standard, 27, April 1905)

vindicating that:

we are a musical race, and though it may seem a bold assertion, it is a fact that this beneficial gift of the creator has been acknowledged to fall more largely to our share than any other nation of the world. (61)

All we need is a little bit of the creator's gift of technological thinking, imagination and perseverance to be added to the already inherent endowments and the Africans would be "another special race

of God."

### The Ilu-Pesi Hall

A Youth Club called the "United Native Progressive Society" organised fund-raising performances and activities for the building of the Ilu-Pesi Hall built at Ẹnu-Ọwa, a meeting point of the people for discussing all the burning issues of their time. It was completed in 1911 after one year of construction works which began in 1910. (62) Ilu-Pesi Hall was the pride of the natives dedicated to their use as their cultural centre. For the people the Ilu-Pesi Hall superceded in everything the Glover Memorial Hall with its European Cultural settings and vestiges of colonialism. Unlike the Glover Hall, Ilu-Pesi Hall became an outward token of the new spirit and will which had evolved with the younger generation under Dr. Ọbasa and the exigencies of the present day politics. (63)

By 1910, the "Lagos Glee Singers," a long established group of veteran performers of English leaning, had come up with a production of "Awon Iwefa Mefa" by I. Akinyele, co-directed by Dr. O. Ọbasa and his wife, Ọla Ọlajumoke Ọbasa - nee Blaize. The Ọbasas were the intense nationalists whose production followed the patterns of D.A. Oyedele's King Elejigbo to wit, the disillusion of the European culture, concerts and cantata.

Reviewing the effects of the ~~various~~ growing types of entertainments, some government officials deemed it necessary to introduce a legislative device for their checking. And so, "The Theatre and Public Performances Regulation Ordinance" of 1912 was

brought about, to be published in the Government Gazette, for ratification by the Legislative Council. (64) The implication of this was that the theatre of the day catered, essentially, for the tiny elite group who could afford to pay the gate fees which had increased since the introduction of the ordinance.

However, the native dramatic literary activities experienced, in 1915, a significant year for, despite the ordinance and the First World War in 1914, "Obagbade" and "Esin-Ile Oyinbo" were successfully produced by the Young Men's Choral League.

The renaissance of theatrical activities in Lagos began with the Aladura Movement in 1929. At such a period of great economic depression, when the people were in need of spiritual, material and social security, the church was timely on the scene and it quickly exploited the situation for catching converts. The Movement became a solace for the people.

Eminent among the religious and theatre revivalists were A.K. Ajisafe of the "native-airs" (Native Air Opera) and of the United African Methodist Church. Ajisafe's steps inspired the followership of such renowned theatre artists as E.A. Dawodu, Ajibola Layeni, A.B. David, C.T. Onimole and A.A. Olutoye. And so, from King Elejigbo's premiere in 1904 to the end of 1920, more than twenty native dramas were staged in Lagos.

The Later Contemporary and the Most Modern Theatre Forms:

(a) The Yoruba Traditional Travelling Theatre

1. The Hubert Ogunde Theatre

In 1931, The Church of the Lord was founded by Josiah Oshitelu at Ogere. The Late Chief Hubert Ogunde was a member and its Choir-master. Ogunde thus started his theatrical career there while he was composing for the annual church's entertainment activities. Ogunde resigned from the Police Force to devote full time to the theatrical concert works. Hence, Ogunde came to the limelight in 1944, when new kinds of performance venues and practices began.

Professor Efun Clark submits:

Ogunde's arrival on the scene in 1944 was to determine the course of Yoruba theatre for over three decades. Freeing the so-called "Native-Air Opera" from the strict confines of the church and monotonous church rhythms, Ogunde imbued the "Opera" with a sprinkling of Yoruba Music and dances. Ogunde resigned from the Police Force and decided to go professional. With only £9.00 (₦18.00) in his total savings after eight years in the force, he inaugurated the African Music Research Party, marking the advent of modern professional theatre in Nigeria.

And not to confine himself to Lagos, he hit the road and carried out extensive gruelling tours of the country.

Besides the church and school rooms, Ogunde performed in other venues such as the Glover Hall in Lagos. Ogunde's theatre, because of its staging outfits, techniques and tradition, could be safely called "Contemporary Yoruba Theatre" and Ogunde himself as the acclaimed father of the Yoruba Travelling Theatre Tradition.

Press reviews and critiques pointing to the fact that Ogunde already in 1946 used modern stage lighting and stage scenery in

his productions abound. For instance, in a letter to the Daily Service by the expatriate officer, Major Anthony Syer, on seeing a rehearsal of the Opera, "Mr. Devil's Money," billed for the 6th May 1946 at the Glover Hall, ~~describing~~ writes: *though all in all it is that:*

The singing is excellent. Dance formation, lightings and stage setting are concrete proofs that the African is no more behind as many people think (65)

Ebun Clark confirms the use of modern European technical theatre equipments such as an electronic sound amplification system. She writes:

When Ogunde returned in September 1947, he arrived with £2,000 (₦4,000) worth of theatrical equipments.

In addition to the technical gadgets, lavish costumes and make-up, Ogunde used as notable visual elements realistic scenery, on which Chief Ulli Beier, on his first experience of "Garden of Eden" in the Glover Hall in 1951 in Lagos, comments:

It was a charming performance. The backdrop representing the Garden of Eden was executed in a school boy manner but nevertheless very attractive. I left, charmed and intrigued and slightly puzzled ....

And a review of the Daily Service of January 10, 1950 also attests:

Hubert Ogunde and his popular theatrical play have done it once again. This time, at a repeat performance of their play "The Black Forest" last Friday night at Glover Hall, Lagos, where the audience were thrilled, not only with an excellent native Opera but with "refined African Music" played on "foreign" and native instruments combined ... In Music, sceneries, lighting, costumes, presentation and make-up, the Black Forest is a Credit to the composer - Playwright, Mr. Ogunde, who is now generally accepted as the Saviour of native music and drama in Nigeria. (66)

From the foregoing, the need for higher technology in the modern

Nigerian theatre becomes more apparent.

## 2. The Ogunmola Theatre

Hubert Ogunde claims that Kola Ogunmola started his theatrical career in 1948 and Chief Ulli Beier had met Ogunmola in 1952 at Ikere-Ekiti in one of the schoolrooms performing his "Joseph and his Brethren." Beier was, perhaps, still puzzled over the experience of the production till 1953 when he watched again Ogunmola's first performance at Osogbo to the point that the next day he, Beier, organised an Open-Air performance at Ede to enable Dow McGrow, the Editor of Nigeria Magazine, to take the photographs of the performance which later appeared in Vol. I, No. 44 of 1954 of the magazine and the piece by Ulli Beier in the Journal of the African Music Society (Vol. 1 No. 1, 1954).

Ogunmola moved to Osogbo in 1955, from where his first performance at the University of Ibadan in the same year was arranged for the Rockefeller Foundation Representative in Nigeria who had earlier discovered Ogunmola in his performance at Osogbo and being highly impressed, negotiated, in 1961/62, for a grant which gave Ogunmola with his company a one-year period in 1962/63 at the School of Drama of the Ibadan University. During that time Ogunmola was able to work on a new play, The Palm Wine Drinkard, adapted from a novel of the same title by Amos Tutuola. He got acquainted with more complicated stage techniques, experienced other productions and demonstrated his skills to the students. According to Beier:



The same grant provided money for a lorry, generator, lights, basic costume and a revolving production fund that would enable Ogunmola to go fully professional at the end of the (one year) period. (67)

On the production of Palm Wine Drinkard, Ulli Beier comments: "Demas Nwoko's production had added some tightness and speed without interfering with Ogunmola's basic style of performance. His costume-design and sets were brilliant and spectacular, thus giving the play a very wide appeal. There was a great deal of humour in these designs that blended well with the fare of much of Tutuola's writing.

Ogunmola's critic - Segun Oluşola - revealed that:

They employed all theatre devices, classic and modern costumes, settings, lighting, perfect timing, acting, sound effects and stage craft.!

... a series of original contrived chairs and benches which elicited a stilted appreciative vocalization. As the actors left the set each carried a part of the stage props that would have taken a whole team of stage hands five minutes more (68)

The production, a marriage of Nwoko's visionary scenography with Ogunmola's expressive acting, produced an ecstatic theatrical experience magnificently accomplished. But very unfortunately, the energetic Kola Ogunmola, not too long thereafter, was struck by a protracted illness from which he came back to the stage briefly and only just to take his last applause from his enduring faithful fans - who finally lost him to the ugly death. At Fakunle Major Hotel at Osogbo, Ogunmola's reappearance will ever be remembered and cherished. He has left an indelible mark on the Nigerian Travelling Theatre tradition.

### 3. Duro Ladipo

Duro Ladipo was born on December 18, 1931. He started his theatrical performances, like his predecessors, in the church and school fooms. Of particular importance was Ladipo's innovative introduction of the talking drum into the Easter Cantata at the All Saints Church, Osoḡbo in 1960. Though he was derided by the same church, however, Ladipo, on invitation by the Mbari Club, Ibadan, then barely six months old in December 1961, was able to perform at a Christmas cantata, using the talking drum. Excited at the establishment of the Mbari Club at Ibadan, he embarked on a similar project on his return to Osoḡbo. The Club was opened on March 17, 1962. The people added "Mbayo" to Mbari to read "Mbari-Mbayo". With aid from Chief Ulli Beier and Susan Wenger "Mbari Mbayo" was later transformed into an Arts Gallery and a meeting point for young artists seeking to develop their talents. Other activities of the centre were art exhibitions, festivals, competitions and publishing. Quite a few Mbari-Mbayo books were published.

Duro Ladipo's repertory includes Oba Koso, Oba Moro and Oba Waja. ḡgun Oluḡola has emphasized the lack of "stagecraft" in Duro Ladipo's productions, as was the case in Oba Koso. One of the strongest points in Duro Ladipo's productions, however, is the use of authentic costumes. Even that has been criticized as having suffered from an "incongruous costume design" - "undisguised, unintentional historical anachronism of dress" (ḡḡ) Also, the lack of adequate physical structures impaired and hindered the theatrical works of Duro Ladipo.

and of many other enthusiastic theatre groups of the tradition, a situation which Ogunbiyi appreciates thus:

Certainly, one of the obstacles in the way of evolving a vibrantly rich theatrical tradition in Nigeria has been the marked absence of theatre structures and buildings owned and managed by individual theatre groups, that is, usable structures, where they can quite freely "show" and do their works in their own distinctive ways. (70)

Ogunbiyi claims further that:

Traditional Yoruba Theatre knows its limitations (that is, in the technical sense of lighting effects, stage props, etc). However it accepts those limitations and works within them because it does not constitute serious problems, either for its practitioners or its audience. What it lacks technically, it makes up for artistically ... (71)

Lack of scenographic and technological infrastructures simply negates the aesthetic spirit of the tradition that thrives more on the realistic, symbolic and spectacular magic of the theatre, particularly when treating historical, ritual, festive, cultic and contemporary issues.

The contemporary Yoruba (Travelling) Theatre of the late Duro Ladipo and the hundreds of their imitators has been grouped together as the Popular Yoruba Travelling Theatre Tradition. Biḡdun Jeyifo claims that there are over one hundred of such groups in a "Movement" conglomerated in the Association of the Nigerian Theatre Practitioners of which Ogunde was the President till his death in 1989.

Since the studies on Nigerian drama and theatre started in the Universities, we have to turn in that direction now for further inquiries. Inevitably our overview will rely on samples rather than

attempting to discuss all the Universities.

b. The Literary Theatre from 1950 - up to date

The contemporary Western influenced modern Nigerian drama and theatre has been characterised by its literary tradition, using principally the English language as its medium of communication. This form has its genesis in the educational institutions but is primarily deeply rooted in the Universities - beginning with the Nigerian premier University, the University of Ibadan.

(i) The Development at the University of Ibadan -  
The Cradle of Modern Nigerian Theatre

The University of Ibadan has its antecedents in the University College, Ibadan founded in 1948 in accordance with the ordinance passed by the Nigerian Legislative Council of the same year. The ordinance stated that the purpose for the founding of the College was to advance learning and research and to provide instruction in all branches of a 'liberal education' under a scheme of "Special-Relation" with the University of London. Although the scheme made provision for an academic programme leading to an Award of the Diploma of London University, the provision of the Inter-Universities Council for Higher Education in the colonies ruled out the study of the Drama as an aspect of "liberal education" for courses leading to a degree. (72)

However, as providence would have it, Kenneth Mellamby, the first Principal of the University College, Ibadan had on his first Academic Board of October, 1948, "such an exciting amalgam of staff as Tom. B. Child, a Chemist and an enthusiastic photographer, and Randall Hogarth,

a Senior Education Officer, both of whom were amateur dramatic enthusiastic theatrical producers and they contributed greatly to the development of dramatic arts at Ibadan. (73) Hogarth's students had, at the end of 1949/50, formed the University College Ibadan Students Dramatic Society, centred in the English Department, and with the 'Hoi Phrontistai', another group in the Classics Department, they produced plays relating closely to their studies. While the Dramatic Society produced Sophocles' Oedipus Rex in 1949/50 and Aristophanes' The Birds in 1952; the Hoi Phrontistai produced Greek and Latin plays as practical manifestations of their classical studies. (74)

However, at Ibadan, according to Peter Konstam, 'not until 1954 was the more ambitious work begun with the production of Bach's cantata Kommst du süsse Tode Stunde (come, thou sweet hour of death). And, in 1955 Purcell's Dido and Aeneas was produced. The setting for the opera consisted of the Trojans of Carthage and the Carthaginians in Act I and the Witches' Den in Act II. The transition from Act I to Act II was said to be like going on a long journey into a distant fictional world which took the scenographic ingenuity of a Mr. Pilcher to depict visually. Konstam accounts:

the change of atmosphere was uncanny and effective. The rather abstract waves in the harbour were really wet - that had been finished thirty minutes before the curtain went up on the first night and the paint had not dried. The curtain was only half opened for we could not afford to get ourselves a bigger harbour ... For most of the students this was their first experience of opera. The experiment, and the like of such made Ibadan such a remarkable place. (75)

In 1956, Handel's oratorio, Judas Maccabeus, was performed, followed in 1957 by another of Handel's compositions, Acis and Galatea, for which Katherine Hope designed the backcloth in the absurdist style, which was said to have provided a good deal of hilarity in conjunction with Pilcher's abstract visual aids to enhance the understanding of music for the upliftment of the emotional responses and for the fascinating interpretations generated. For the musical comedy White Horse Inn designed by Katherine Hope

there was fitting appreciation in the gasp of delight that went up from the audience as the curtains opened on the lake scene. The back-cloth to the sketches between Sigismund and Gret was particularly good, it caught just that spirit of fairy-like fantasy and gaiety that was the essence of the play. The pastel shades on the scenery helped to emphasise the brilliant colour and variety of costumes.

"Elucidative, and communicative functions of scenery to a stage performance can be maximised through the stage lighting and visual effects vindicated in the concentration of lights on the town hall scene, against a dark background, which clearly brought out the rowdiness and the farce of the motley collection of councillors. And, by dimming the light to a deep blue on the tableau of dancers and chorus, a very pretty effect was also achieved" - Christine Clinton attested. The main venue for the performances was the Arts Theatre, University of Ibadan.

#### The Arts Theatre

The Arts Theatre of the University of Ibadan has its own history. The Original Master Plan (Lay-Out Plan) of 1948 for the

present site/size of the University College, Ibadan contained a provision for an Open-Air-Theatre. However, the changes in the programme of activities of the College embarked upon by Mellamby's successors led to modifications in the physical plans and so, the Open-Air-Theatre disappeared and was replaced by an Arts Theatre which was completed in 1955.

Geoffrey Axworthy, and the development of Theatre in Nigeria

Geoffrey Axworthy, who has been destined to influence the course of events in the theatrical development in Nigeria, arrived in the country in 1956 as a lecturer in the English Department of the University and on his discovering the Arts Theatre at Ibadan he avows:

The founding fathers of the University College showed unusual foresight in this direction that they built the Arts Theatre, the best theatre in Nigeria. What thought lay behind this action is, it seems, already lost in the mist of time; a daring thought, however, in the context of British-type Universities, whose policy has been until very recently, if not ignore the arts, at least to do nothing to encourage their practice (1976)

Axworthy also met already flourishing theatrical traditions of the Yoruba Popular Travelling Theatre groups of Hubert Ogunde, Kola Ogunmola and Duro Ladipo who were already doing African plays. Among the amateur groups were The Players of the Dawn founded in 1958 and led by the two broadcasters, Segun Olusola and Christopher Kplade, some Nigerian and <sup>other</sup> African-University graduates of the same interest and encouraged by the British Council's aids and facilities. The British Council also organised and ran Extra-Mural Drama

workshops in one of which Axworthy, in 1959 in collaboration with the University College Ibadan Dramatic Society, helped in producing Gogol's The Government Inspector and Sophocles' Antigone involving also the two leaders of the Players of the Dawn. It was during one of such workshops that Axworthy discovered Joel Adedeji, then the president of the British Council's Extra-Mural Drama Society, who became a prominent pioneer in the development of theatre at the University of Ibadan.

Among the groups on campus were The Music Circle; The Ibadan Operatic Society and The Film Society. All of them depended much on the same facilities of the Arts Theatre and their demands necessitated the mapping out of proper plans for the adequate use and handling of the plant. The task fell on the then Head of the English Department, Professor Molly M. Mahood, who consulted Geoffrey Axworthy to make the recommendations submitted to the Senate for the setting up of an Arts Theatre Management Committee (A.T.M.C.). On approval of the recommendation, Axworthy and Mahood became the Faculty's nominees while the Dean of Arts was made Chairman of the Committee which was responsible to the Senate as constituted in January 1957, "to manage the Theatre and plan its further development to aid the promotion of cultural and dramatic activities of academic interest." This gave further stimulus to the students and staff alike. Geoffrey Axworthy, in the same year, 1957, helped in founding the Arts Theatre Production Group (A.T.P.G.), a group made up largely of expatriates, staff of the University and some of their friends resident in Ibadan, with the



purpose to "awaken interest in theatre and drama as entertainment and serious art".

Axworthy chose to produce, as the first production of the Arts Theatre Production Group in April, 1957, Andre Obey's Noah, a realistic play considered a safe introduction to the modern theatre, especially for those who had never seen a play staged before, and according to Axworthy, a play is not a 3D-illusion but a game of make-believe in which the audience is as deeply involved as the players". But, the absence of the rainbow, among others, and the failures in the scenery show how much realistic scenery and effects have to contribute to support the transport of the 'message' to the audience; hence, Mahood's lamentation.

It is a pity that this was the weakest part both of the play and of this production ..... the scene-shifting was awkward, and we were cheated of the rainbow. Katherine Hope's animal masks were so delightful that the mind casts round for a play in which they might reappear. (77)

The second production of the Arts Theatre Production Group in the 1957/58 session was Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice directed by Geoffrey Axworthy in December 1957. This involved elaborate and spectacular scenic construction. The then <sup>Accountant</sup> Bursar of the University, Mr. Harold Preston, one of the founding members of the group, reports that:

the Arts Theatre stage was extended via an apron into the auditorium.

and that

There was a great permanent sort of gallery set at the back which never changed, no matter whether the scene was Belmont

or Venice. There were also spectators in costume, as part of the production, sitting around.. in the portions of the wooden gallery at the back. In fact the prompter who was in full costume, was sitting like that and the whole thing had a splendid aspect to it.

The construction of a gallery of that magnitude calls for the knowledge of 'statics' and 'structure of materials' so as to ensure the proper dimensioning of the weight-bearing parts of the entire structure for the safety of everybody on stage.

Ring Round the Moon, one of the great successes of the London Globe Theatre around 1956, was produced by the Arts Theatre Production Group early in 1958.

"The point of the play turns upon two brothers, being identical twins in every thing except character, and the roles of the two brothers, Frederic and Hugo, must be played by one actor to emphasize the interchangeability of one with another, the entry of Frederic left stage must be nearly simultaneous with the exit of Hugo at the right side." The production of this fairytale with undercurrents benefitted from the ingenious stagecraft of the indefatigable Katherine Hope which proves her to be a designer not only for musical and operatic theatre but also for all other forms. She demonstrated the possibility of shifting all that ... rare menage-a-trois, a witty play, a breath-taking setting and near perfect cast to the Ibadan Arts Theatre; amplifies J. Peckman.

In February 1958 Geoffrey Axworthy's judicious production of Mozart's The Magic Flute in a more intimate pantomime for the small

Arts Theatre stage, featured Katherine Hope's customary aplomb visual elements in the two simple, carefully designed settings and John Palfrey's expert manipulation of no less than eighty changes in about one hundred and sixty minutes. A general problem concerning the visual realization of their plays was the obtaining of the correct props, authentic costumes and make - up for which the skills of design and technical production were solicited from the expatriate theatre enthusiasts who were usually members of staff of the University. For instance, in the production of Irwin Shaw's The Gentle People in April 1958, the hardship experienced, according to a member of the student Dramatic Society Mr. (now Professor) Fola Aboqaba was, among others, the creation of sets. Then they received the support of one Mr. Driver, an administrative Staff member of the University. Aboqaba testifies that:

For the first time we had fairly good sets, we even had a boat and a pier and we had costumes, and the make-up was much better. (78)

And Molly Mahood adds that:

The play was clearly written for a revolving stage and its many changes of scene set problems which Geoffrey Axworthy solved with the ingenuity we have come to expect of him; a number of simple straight forward sets alternated with a brilliant evocation of the Brooklyn waterfront. (79)

The play, acted "as a cynical farce, had managed to achieve a telling blend of the wistful and the absurd". With Aig Higo, the lighting man and his team's skilfulness in scene shifting, the pace in good stage craft was set. But Geoffrey Axworthy did himself hurt in the

production of Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream, in April, 1958, which "is a light entertainment, an airy nothing of moonbeams and fairies, elegant courtiers and the funnest group of Elizabethan hobbledehoyes ever assembled by Shakespeare." Hence Michael Ranson, a critic, saw that:

the costumes and the set were good in parts, but it was in their inconsistency that the weakness of the production lay. Had the contrived artiness of the designer been cohesively applied, the production might at least have been all of one kind. In fact, the play was of many kinds and on many levels: the classical music of Mendelsohn, the surrealist back - cloth of Athens as seen by a futuristic artist of space fiction, the highly symbolic but not displeasing set of the wood, the orthodox doublet and hose of Theseus, the off -one-shoulder up-to-the-minute gown of Hippolyta; the distinctly unclassical dress and shoes of Helena, the general lack of attention to costume below the knee - the list could continue. (80)

The lack of coherence, unity in style and the non-observance of the importance of authentic scenery, set, costume and props in a period production has thus been clearly established. It shows that for a production to succeed, it must be closely knit and consistent in all its ramifications.

Also in 1958 Gogol's comedy, The Government Inspector, was produced. In comedy, especially high ones, unlike in farce, the appropriate scenographic backing goes a long way to aid the crystallising of human experience in a brief moment. But in this production, however, one of the great things the theatre can, and should, give was missing. And as G.B. Stapleton points out, there was a lack of style and clear direction, culminating in the

scenographic deficiency that could have been avoided. He asserts:

Too often, in this production, this complete belief in or identification of the character portrayed was lacking ... of the sets, the room in the mayor's house was the better, but both were too clean; as indeed was the whole production. (81)

The impact of the ageing of the scenic elements of the decor to enhance plausibility is thus given credence.

In the production of Sophocles' tragedy, Antigone, in the 1958/59 session, the implication of the wrong use of visual scenic objects, such as masks and props, which turned tragedy into the absurd, was exhibited. According to Arnold Bradshaw:

Greek tragedies were acted in masks, certainly but these were not simply the symbol of make believe disguising the actor, their main function was to compensate for the disadvantages of distant view in an open - air theatre, holding at least fifty or sixty times as many people as our Arts Theatre. Granting, however, the validity of using masks for this tiny auditorium as an experiment they could only have been acceptable if the broad principle of which they are only one small detail had been recognised. That principle is that in Greek tragedy there is no attempt at realistic illusion. This implies the minimum of movement, the barest of gesture, and only the broadest vocal modulation.. But in the Antigone here the actors had simply put on their masks, made with so much care and ingenuity and then gone to it in the familiar 'realistic' style. The result: absurdity. The absurdity of donning riding-breeches to play water - polo. (82)

With Axworthy's eventful introduction of Wole Soyinka's two plays - The Swamp Dwellers and The Lion and the Jewel in February, 1959, a new wave of indigenous writing, which gradually replaced the foreign plays, to which the attention of the society had been wholly devoted, began. Geoffrey Axworthy and Kenneth Post directed the two plays

which, according to Axworthy, triggered off a "literary boom" in Nigeria, as it evoked in the students a sense of personal ambition to write more plays on such themes; which, because of their challenging production, led to the rebirth of a true University College Ibadan Dramatic Society (83). And the two are considered to be among the first Nigerian plays deserving of serious dramaturgical and critical attention. Una Maclean has dubbed the production as "Words, Words, Words". Other important critiques are "The Right Lines" by Professor Mahood, and "For what audience?" by Phebean Ogundipe, a Nigerian expert in Literature and Drama. On the scenography and production, Una Maclean states:

The setting of a bamboo hut open upon the swamps was suitably simple but it is difficult to understand why the prevailing red light, which one must evidently accept as a commonplace of evenings in that region, should have altered so much in intensity from one moment to the other. (84)

In Mahood's opinion, "plays of this lineage are not about particular characters performing particular actions in a particular time and place; they are about some emotional experience of great weight and their characters, setting, plot and language are the modes of expression of that experience. ... The Swamp Dwellers is not a play about the Niger Delta; but disappointment and frustration ... it has an African setting but it is written for an audience reared on Yeats and Synge." (85)

The Students' Dramatic Society's production of Bertolt Brecht's The Good Woman of Setzuan, in 1959 at the Arts Theatre, suffered from

the lack of virile technology because the set remained static throughout. The production, in Gordon's view, suffered from "artificial time breaks between the scenes."

The whole structure of the play demands dynamic scene changes: no slow fade - outs and not a moment for the attention of the audience to wander .. The script requires constant action ... The montage of scenes and juxtaposition of ideas cumulate towards the point which the playwright proposes to make which is after all the idea of theatre. (386)

In 1959/60 the Fire Marshal at Ibadan closed down the shallow stage of the Arts Theatre for being unsafe. As a result of the closure it received a face-lift. It was modified, extended and re-equipped to permit it to function as a proscenium stage. Prior to the improvements, the experience of the users includes unforetold hardships emanating from the imposed limitations by the nature of the stage to dramaturgical and scenographic realizations. During the time of reconstruction the Students' Dramatic Society embarked on taking round the campus a band of touring players and stage hands with three one -act plays and presenting them in the dining halls, to show that a play can be presented anywhere an audience will gather and that "anywhere" becomes the new theatre. Here, however, extensive scenery cannot be used, save for the simple screen which could serve as scenery, when placed at one end. The actors were entering from that direction through the overflow of the audience which partly occupied the fourth side of the hall.

A Dance of the Forests, Soyinka's contribution to the Nigerian Independence celebration in 1960, was performed by The 1960 Masks in

the Arts Theatre on September 20, 1960. The decor for that production was mainly cut-out trees supported by few branches of leaves dispersed all over the stage to symbolise the forests. (87) J.P.

Clark's first play, Song of a Goat, was first performed at the Mbari Club house in the same 1960, and was discussed severally in different modes. Una Maclean's and Robert G. Armstrong's critiques that appear in the Ibadan Journal, October, 1962 (88) and March, 1963 (89) respectively, sound more analytical and critical than the others. The poetic "melo-drama" shows how "incest rends a family asunder in circumstances where simple monogamy generally prevails." Una Maclean avows:

Acting and production, on the occasions of the first night at Mbari, left much to be desired. Some of this was attributable to the place itself, self-consciously simple cultural centres must expect to suffer the defects as well as the joys of simplicity. The night sounds of Ibadan slid easily in over the slim mud walls, the low seats upon whose backs the posterior section of the audience were obliged to perch afforded scant comfort, minimal visibility. But the polished impression which shone for a subsequent play in the same evening, by the same actors failed to shift the suspicion that Song of a Goat was indeed inadequately served. (90)

Armstrong saw the play, or dramatic poem, as opening a new era in Nigerian writing because of its dealing in purely local and personal terms with a human problem and thereby managing to achieve universality.

Yet he opines that:

The production at Mbari Club, Ibadan, was scarcely a production at all. The director did nothing to mitigate the play's technical weaknesses (surely the job of the producer). (91).

The visual impact of the realistic slaughtering of a goat might



perhaps have been more effective if carried out off-stage like in the classical Greek Drama.

In 1961, the production of That Scoundrel Suberu, the Nigerian adaptation of Moliere's hilarious farce (Les Fourberies de Scapin) co-adapted by Dapo Adelugba, the then president of the Students' Dramatic Society, with Alfred Opubor, Brownson Dede and Ayo Amu, dispensed with set and scenery. Molly Mahood claims that they did a great deal to restore our faith in students' acting and in Geoffrey Axworthy who collaborated with Christian Momah in producing the play and that Axworthy's delightful epilogue, delivered by (that scoundrel) Suberu, rounded off one of the best evening entertainments that the Arts Theatre has given of late (92) After the successful performances of the play in the Arts Theatre and Trenchard Hall at Ibadan and in the Cinema Hall at Oyo, the Dramatic Society later took "Suberu" on tour of the country. At Ijebu-Igbo Town Hall it was staged as an arena production with the audience on the four sides and in the balcony. And, the stage for Suberu was variously a Town Hall, a Law Court, an Open-Air Cinema, the table-tops of a school dining hall, a studio of ENTV in Enugu. (93) Consequent upon the successes recorded in its 1961 tour, the Society was encouraged to embark on other tours in 1962 and in 1963 respectively.

Other productions, through which Axworthy sought to bring the best in world theatre to Ibadan and to motivate young Nigerian theatre enthusiasts to develop a modern Nigerian/African approach, include

Ibsen's An Enemy of the People, 1960, Arthur Miller's The Crucible, in 1961 and John Dryden's King Arthur and His Knights, in 1962, produced as a comedy with content relevant to the prevailing circumstances in Nigeria then, using the play-in-a-play ~~drama~~ dramaturgical techniques.

Axworthy was greatly aided in achieving success by his able lieutenant, Martin Banham, a graduate of the University of Leeds, who also arrived at Ibadan in 1956 as a Lecturer in the same Department of English. The first concern of the two was to demonstrate "that Dramatic Literature was something written to be acted and enjoyed but not just to be dissected and memorised, with the footnotes and that there is a potential audience for Drama and Theatre in Nigeria, if only the right kinds of plays are produced and offered at affordable prices and at the right times. (94.)

In order to prove those possibilities, in collaboration with the Department of Extra-Mural Studies and the Institute of Education, there were many experiments undertaken which include the taking away of the drama from the classroom to the stage, the initiation of training workshops for teachers in schools in theatre arts with a stress on their cultural relevance and the mounting of courses for artists and practitioners, and on campus the development of various students' dramatic groups into a new one called the University College Ibadan Dramatic Society out of which grew later the University Travelling Theatre.

Axworthy's experience ranging from his Dramatic Society days at the Oxford University, his pioneer efforts at the University of

Baghdad, Iraq and his interactions aided the harmonization of the activities of the groups in and at Ibadan and he helped to give impetus to the official recognition accorded Drama at the University.

#### The School of Drama

The demand and challenges for an independent University of Ibadan brought the Visitation Panel led by Sir Charles R. Morris, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leeds, in January 1961 to the University College, Ibadan. The Panel was entertained to many nights of theatrical activities organised again by Geoffrey Axworthy. In its subsequent report, the panel focussed on and gave conspicuous credit to the Arts Theatre. According to Axworthy, it was the Visitation Report of 1961 which first suggested that drama should not be left to the fortuitous presence of enthusiastic volunteers, but should be properly organised by the University. (95)

This was followed, in 1962, by a handsome grant of £200,000.00 from the Rockefeller Foundation of America towards the setting up of a University School of Drama for the first five years. The School's aims and objectives were to carry out dramatic training designed to develop the use of such media as theatre, film, radio and television in Nigeria and to train Nigerians for positions of responsibility in these fields. The first intention of the School, therefore, was to train teachers of Drama for the Nigerian Schools who were to go and sow the seeds.

The School opened in October 1963 and this event coincided with the transformation of the University College, Ibadan to the University of Ibadan when it became<sup>an</sup> autonomous, full-fledged African University. Geoffrey Axworthy was the first Director of the School and Martin Banham was his Deputy. Other members of staff included European and the American Peace Corps theatre specialists. Notable among them were William T. Brown, the first Technical Director, Peggy Harper, the first choreographer, Marie-Lou Frederick, a Yale-trained scenic and costume designer, Mary Caswell, a part-time Wardrobe-Mistress, Tom Herbert, a Music and Movement specialist and Bob Moulthrop, the Acting and Directing specialist. The few Nigerians on the staff included Joel Adeyinka Adedeji as Speech and Educational Drama Specialist and Demas Nwoko as a designer. The present writer had been on the ground and was more attached to Mr. Brown as a trainee and workshop assistant in Technical Theatre, among other voluntary services rendered from July 1963 to May 1965.

The School of Drama admitted in 1963 thirty students into its first two-year programme for a Diploma in Educational Drama. The late Kola Ogunmola and his theatre group had been brought in in the 1962/63 session to the School as a demonstrative model to enhance the practical stage laboratory exposition and teaching, while he, too, was to equip himself better as the leader of the first trained professional travelling theatre outfit. In May 1963, The Palm Wine Drinkard by Amos Tutuola was produced and designed by Demas Nwoko and performed



'The play opens in Lanke's compound set amidst a calvacado of palm-trees—suggestive of something sinister'



The Sleeping Lanke is awakened by whispering spirits.

Fig 35. TWO SCENES FROM THE PALMWINE DRINKARD.

by Kola Ogunmola Theatre Company as a maiden project of the same School of Drama. Wole Soyinka reviewing the production avows:

The costume and masks - Nwoko's especial forte - interpreted Tutuola's bizarre adventure with an imagination that matched his.. The episodic style avoided a total break with dramatic continuity and the designs, the set's simple neutrality especially, overcame the resistance which is always present initially in epics as prodigal with place and motion as The Palm Wine Drinkard. (66)

Soyinka draws attention to the judicious use of 'space' in play making . The production was, among other purposes, an experiment to demonstrate the viability of a professional modern theatre tradition under the aegis of a University.

J.P. Clark's The Raft was first staged on the 9th April 1964 starring Wole Soyinka, Ralph Opara, Segun Olusola, and Yemi Lijadu, a performance at which His Excellency Leopold Sedar Senghor was a guest of honour. On the production, Ben Obumselu informs that "if not for Wole Soyinka as producer over-reaching himself once, the production and the set were unobtrusively effective." (96)

A facsimile of a raft, on a raised platform, overlaid with bamboo poles, to represent the logs of woods of the raft was attempted.

The main import of the play was the spectacular effects generated by the set and costume. In fact, the costume of three of the protagonists, reminiscent of the Ijaw man in shirt and wrapper, the Yoruba man's buba and sóró (jacket and trousers) and the Hausa man's dansiki and trousers made a European member of the audience to see the representation of Nigeria and the four major tribes of

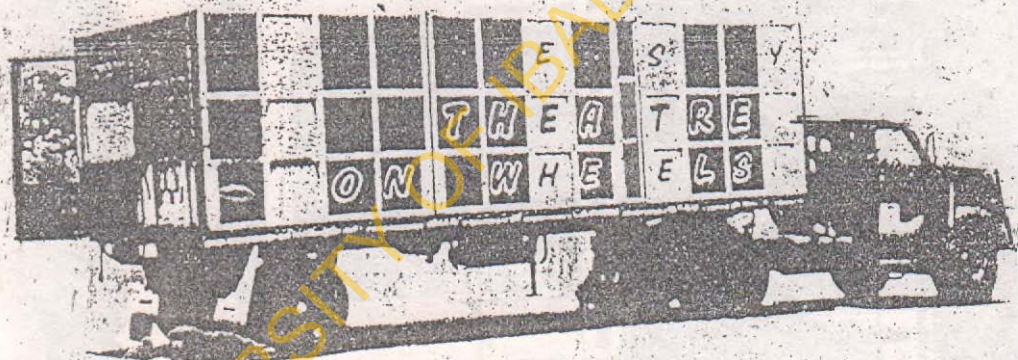
the Federation in the play.

The climax, so far, of the tradition was reached in 1964 when the travelling theatre went on wheels. For the commemoration of the 400th Anniversary of Shakespeare's birthday (1964) seven excerpts from his plays were chosen, to aid the students in schools in literature studies, and, above all, to familiarise a large proportion of the population with the Elizabethan theatre practice in its unique and spectacular forms. Axworthy pursued vigorously Public Relations that fetched generous donation in materials, cash, and kind. Among these were Shell Company's provision of a trailer - bed; the United Africa Company's, (the UAC's), supply of the lorry - head; (the engine-truck) that pulled the 'Shakespeare's festival' round the country; the British Council's financial support and the University College Students' Dramatic Society's, with the School of Drama's, collaboration in this joint festive venture. Soyinka's Kongi's Harvest witnessed, in 1965, the Ibadan School of Drama's golden age of stage - design.

The Diploma in Educational Drama was eventually replaced by a general professional Diploma in Drama programme which ran side by side with a one-year Certificate in Educational Drama programme. And, on the future prospects of the School, Axworthy states:

Our plans for the future include professional training in dance and drama; the creation of an open-air dance arena in which visiting and local dance groups may perform under advantageous viewing conditions; design and construction of a low-cost model school theatre, made of local materials to replace the appalling 'hole-in-the-wall' stages now being used, and of a "flexible" School of Drama Theatre in which experiments in new forms of staging to suit the needs of Nigeria's own playwrights and actors may

Fig. 36a: THE THEATRE - ON - WHEELS.



The original wagon (30 feet long)  
which toured Nigeria, 1963 & 1964



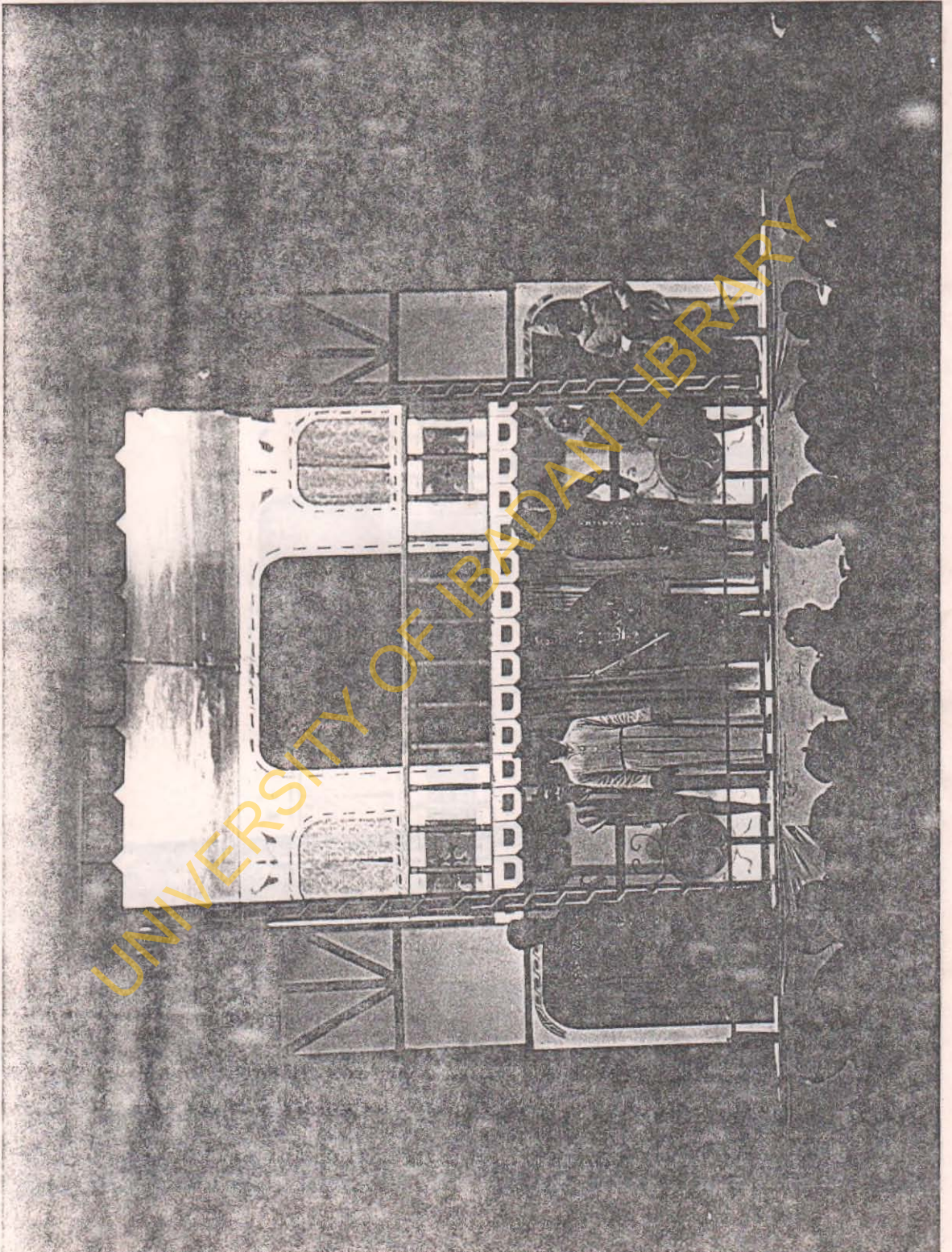


Fig. 36b The Theatre-on-wheels-Shakespeare Festival 1964

be explored. The field is wide open for exciting developments - the only limitation is money. Given the necessary support we are confident that the School of Drama can make a significant contribution to the theatre of tomorrow. (97)

Axworthy aimed at research, development and study in film production, the tape-recording of Music, Dance, and Ritual drama throughout the country to provide essential materials for the scholars in anthropology, religious studies and African drama all over the world, and, possibly, as a basis from which the creative artist may develop new forms of theatre. And the Ford Foundation of America in 1965 gave another grant for the training in Film Production.

Geoffrey Axworthy's farewell production of Peter Schaffer's The Royal Hunt of the Sun was produced and performed by the Arts Theatre Production Group with some students of the School of Drama in the cast. It ran from 9th to 11th of March, 1967. With the spirit of leaving the last memorable event behind, Axworthy exploited all the resources of the theatre, especially scenery, set, light, property, sound, costume, make-up, and movement to their fullest, in such a way that had been rarely seen on the Arts Theatre stage at Ibadan. Axworthy's ingenuity as an acclaimed and talented director matched that of Demas Nwoko's designs for the set and costume for the period production set in the Mexican and Incas episodic war times. It called for some research in order to satisfy the required authenticity of period productions. For that purpose, Nwoko

employed the craftsmanship of the Dugbe Market tinkers who used old drums to manufacture the armours called for, along wooden models that Nwoko provided, almost authentically, and very cheaply too. There was Nwoko at his best in costume design and Dexter Lyndersay to bend and exploit all the technical infrastructures at his disposal, to achieve an impact of visual grandeur in set design and to place the play on multiple-levels.

(iv) The Wole Soyinka Age

Wole Soyinka's history with the University started with his student days that began in 1952. After his Leeds B.A. Upper Second Class Honours degree in English in 1957, he took a play-reader's post with the Royal Court Theatre in London. In 1959, Soyinka returned to Nigeria and joined the English Department of the University College Ibadan as a Rockefeller Foundation Research Fellow in African Drama. He moved from University College Ibadan to the University of Ife and from there to the University of Lagos where he was a Senior Lecturer until his appointment as the new Director of the School of Drama, University of Ibadan, in 1967. By then Soyinka had become a well-known poet, dramatist, actor, academic and Nigeria's most prolific playwright. Soyinka had just spent some weeks on his directorial desk when he was arrested, sent into detention and eventually released in 1969. On his return he assumed the headship of the Acting Company which Dapo Adelugba had been asked to organise in his absence while Dexter Lyndersay was the Acting Director (1967-1969) of the School.

Soyinka cherished the training of professional actors and the founding of the School of Drama Acting Company (SODAC) in 1967/68 - renamed University Theatre Arts Company (UTAC) in September 1970 at the transformation of the School into a Department of Theatre Arts. By April 1971 the UTAC had been disbanded due to administrative and financial reasons. Soyinka, on account of his disagreement with the "politicization of academic matters," resigned his appointment from the University in 1972, although he had left Nigeria for Great Britain since July 1971.

Wale Ogunyemi's Kiriji, an historical play of the Ijaiye War, directed by Dapo Adelugba in 1971, called for authenticity in the areas of costume and props which were the vehicles of visual communication that assisted in making the production a spectacular one, through the fierce battlefield actions of the play.

(vi) J.A. Adedeji's Era

Joel Adeyinka Adedeji was discovered by Geoffrey Axworthy in 1958 in the British Council's Extra-Mural Drama Workshops in Ibadan. With a British Council scholarship he studied Speech and Theatre at Rose Bruford School of Drama from 1959 to 1962. He proceeded to the USA on a Rockefeller grant to study further and eventually obtained the Master's Degree of New York University in 1964, in Speech and Theatre. He returned to Nigeria in 1964 as one of the few pioneer Nigerian members of staff of the School of Drama. With his trail-blazing doctoral thesis on the "Alarinjo Theatre", he

obtained the Ph. D. degree in Theatre Arts of the University of Ibadan in 1969 and in September 1971 he became the Acting Head of the one-year-old Department of Theatre Arts.

Adedeji saw his major contributions as being in three developmental stages of theatre in Nigeria, namely: theatre in education, 1971-73; theatre in the community, 1973 - 79; and theatre in business, 1980 - 1985. The first phase was to be found in the eventful annual Departmental Productions of "festive" magnitude, especially from 1971 to 1980, featuring "big" plays with "large" casts in which all the students of the department were expected to participate in the various capacities characteristic of play production exercises. The members of staff were to support the director to give the production and the performance a semi-professional touch.

Elroy Flecker's adapted Hassan directed by Bayo Oduneye in 1972 used the Institute of African Studies courtyard as both the stage and auditorium like its precursor, Kiriji, in 1971. The environmental scenographic concept created an atmosphere in which the surrounding sculptural plastic and graphic art works added to the picture and experience of prodigal exploitation of a museum - like locale. Here, the actors, and the large cast, were outside in the open-air, free to unfold themselves in the oriental roles they were engrossed in.

Another important programme of the Department of Theatre Arts,

University of Ibadan at that time was the children's Saturday Theatre for Young People (STYP), in which Dany Lyndersay championed. She left her indelible mark for lavish productions in the early seventies. She produced Tolkein's The Hobbit in October 1971 and Frank Baum's The Wizard of Oz in 1972. (98).

The 1973 to 1975 period was Adedeji's 'Semi-Business' phase when the Unibadan Masques was launched as a departmental project in which students augmented some few paid actors for the entertainment of the community thus fulfilling the business aims and also serving as a model for the education of the students under the Management of Dexter Lyndersay and his deputy, Wale Ogunyemi.

In November, 1973, J.P. Danquah's The Third Woman was directed by Joel Adeyinka Adedeji as the Departmental production for the University of Ibadan Department of Theatre Arts in a kind of festival of the scenographic extravaganza befitting such an occasion.

In 1974, Wale Ogunyemi's Langbodo was directed by Bayo Oduneye. The design concept was based on the topographic range of the play itself. And, again, The Ijaiye War, a historical and almost legendary play by the same playwright, was directed by Bayo Oduneye, in 1976, adopting the staging techniques of selective realism.

In 1978, for Mrs. Aina Tomori's production of Esther the present writer's scenographic contribution portrayed the fantasy of the fictional world, reminiscent of the Walter Disneyland's shows, of funny and attractive scenic effects, masks and properties to the children's delight.

The third developmental phase in Adedeji's scheme was his plans for the Unibadan Performing Company to be absorbed in the Profit Units of the University of Ibadan, then CEREMAC: Centre for Resources Management and Consultancy, to operate within the stated objectives:

The Company should be a profitable revenue-yielding centre, but should also aim at the restoration of the premier University to its pre-eminent position in the field of theatre.

While Adedeji was on sabbatical leave in 1980, the new company took off under the Artistic Directorship of Bayo Oduneye with Timothy Olujide Malomo as the Business Manager. In Adedeji's three models, there was no mention of Scenographer and Technical Manager to match up the potentials of his teams of experts. And in spite of their zeal in other directions, neither Soyinka's nor Adedeji's efforts attained the level of maturity and impact of Axworthy's developmental prototype. Unfortunately, even Axworthy's Theatre-On-Wheels project of the golden days of the School of Drama was later in their hands buried in the "administrative and financial" graveyard.

In 1976, Rov. Ikpa's production of J.P. Clark's The Raft was designed and executed by the present writer. It has been chosen as one of the illustrative plays with the aim of demonstrating the importance of technology in the theatre. In essence, the simulations of lumbers were set afloat on a vibrating, springed and castored wagon, to facilitate the necessary dynamic movements, especially during the violent tides that despatched the crew, one by one.

In 1976, Joel Adedeji took over the directorship of the Unibadan Masques and appointed Yemi Ajibade, an Artist - in - Residence in the Department, as his Deputy, while Timothy Olujide Malomo was the Business Manager and Laolu Ogunniyi was the Production Manager. With that team the Unibadan Masques was moved away from being a laboratory of the Department to a business-oriented professional resident travelling theatre company. It started off with a subvention of ₦20,000.00 from the University but faded out with deficits.

In 1977, Wale Ogunyemi's Langbodo was chosen as Nigeria's entry for FESTAC '77 and it was directed by Dapo Adelugba in a festive and ritualistic style with a production staff and cast selected from all over the country. Here a fusion of the past, the present and a glimpse into the future of a nation at political crossroads was attempted.

In scenographic terms, Mount Langbodo was basically, represented by a mass of static mould in Agbo Folarin's model as a centrepiece without prejudice to the intricate nature of Langbodo dreamt of and conceived by the director. The onus of creating a Mount Langbodo of Wale Ogunyemi's dream, visited by Adelugba's vision, to be a dwelling place, dynamic topographic features, symbolic of the geographic zones of the country, the habitation of the tantalizing, gruesome ghosts and spectres, were the tasks Agbo Folarin and the present writer assisted in solving.



(iv) The Dapo Adelugba Spells

Dapo Adelugba's career in the theatre has a long history dating back to far beyond his active days at the Government College, Ibadan (1951 - 1957). Already in 1961, Dapo Adelugba, as the Student President of the University College Ibadan (Students) Dramatic Society (UCIDS), had co-adapted, co-directed and played the lead role in That Scoundrel Suberu, followed by several other ventures. After his undergraduate days, he proceeded on a Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship to the United States of America where he obtained a Master's degree from the University of California in Los Angeles (UCLA) and returned to Nigeria to become one of the first Nigerian members of staff of the former School of Drama of the University of Ibadan. He became the Acting Head of the Department <sup>of Theatre Arts</sup> for the 1979/80 and for 1980/81 sessions respectively. He was promoted to the professorial rank of Arts Director with effect from October, 1978. He became substantive Head of the Department for the 1985/86, 1986/87 and 1988/89 sessions. He was redesignated Professor. He became the first academic member of staff from the Department of Theatre Arts to be appointed the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and he served as Dean in the 1989/90 and 1990/91 sessions. He has served on many national and international cultural, theatrical and educational advisory bodies.

Dapo Adelugba in 1977 directed Langbodo by Wale Ogunyemi, as the Nigerian Entry for FESTAC '77. Adelugba has served twice as Chairman of the Oyo State Council of Arts and Culture from 1977 to 1979 and from 1980 to 1983. His publications include some books, and the

LACE Occasional Publications noted for its interviews with luminaries in all areas of the performing arts. Adelugba has brought the different areas of the theatre to the limelight and he has invested theatre practice with honour, dignity, recognition and motivation. His strength is the encouragement he has given to others. Next to Axworthy's, perhaps, is Adelugba's total devotion to the theatre as vindicated in Robert W. July's An African Voice.

(vii) The Femi Osofisan Days

Femi Osofisan succeeded Professor Adelugba first as the Acting Head of Department on August 1, 1988 and with his promotion to the rank of a Professor in the 1989/90 session (with effect from October 1, 1985) he became the substantive Head of the Department in 1990, a position he held till April 1992. He subsequently resigned from the Headship in July, 1992.

Femi Osofisan had been known from his student days in the University of Ibadan Dramatic Society when he wrote and directed his first notable play, "Oduduwa Don't Go," in November 1968. The same play was directed in 1969 by Dapo Adelugba for the School of Drama Acting Company. In 1973 Femi Osofisan completed his Ph.D. Thesis on "The Origins of Drama in West Africa: A Study of the Development of Drama from the Traditional Forms to the Modern Theatre in English and French". Since then he had been noted for exciting new plays and productions.

Ironically, all the Heads of the Department discussed above seem to have recognised the need for new physical forms of theatre, but not the need for proper training of the scenographers and technicians to man such new theatre plants. In spite of Adedeji's claims of a realist's conception of education, the technological and scenographic areas of the field have only been sandwiched between universes of "appearance" and "reality". Adedeji's so called new curriculum smacked a transcendental imbalance and seemed incapable of yielding up new processes <sup>to</sup> really provide schemes of relevance that acknowledge the effectiveness of experience, proper training and "as in design that can meaningfully discover the reality of a common core that binds artistic and intellectual processes for positive action" (100)

### C. The Developments in other places

This section, as earlier pointed out, is a mere sampling of the rich variety.

#### 1. At the Obafemi Awolowo University - Ile-Ife

The Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife was established in 1962 as an African University "For Learning and Culture." The University's Institute of African Studies was a fertile ground for pursuing research in Nigerian and African Culture and creativity in form of exhibitions, dramatic productions, concerts in its various units such as the fine arts, dance, drama, music, archaeology, etc.

The Institute was first based in town near the Oranmiyan Shrine at Arubidi to foster the link between town and gown. Towards these objectives, the University appointed Ola Rotimi, a graduate of Boston and Yale Universities, U.S.A. with an M.F.A. degree in Play-writing and Directing, as a Research Fellow in 1966, who soon became the Head of the Drama Unit. Rotimi quickly founded an amateur theatre group called Ife-Players, in 1967, consisting of artisans, farmers, students, teachers in town and University people. Ife-Players' first base was a courtyard - building appropriately converted into a theatre-in-the-round, later named Ori-Olokun Centre. Ola Rotimi's "Cast the First Stone" in 1967 was presented there.

In 1968, under the directorship of Professor Michael Crowder (190 - 1998) the Institute initiated the Ife Festival of the Arts (IFA), an international festival featuring, prominently, dramatic performances, music, dance, sculpture, paintings and other art works. When Ola Rotimi's The Gods Are Not to Blame, an adaptation of Sophocles' Oedipus Rex, was performed, it was a huge success; thereafter, the Ife-Players was renamed Ori-Olokun Players and it became the nucleus for all research activities of dance, music arts, and in experimental theatre of the Institute of African Studies. Ola Rotimi became its Artistic Director while Akin Euba was its Music Director and Peggy Harper became the Dance Director. They were all Research Fellows and Ola Rotimi's research pivot was on the creating of a theatrical medium in which a University Professor as well as a semi-literate or roadside mechanic could both sit side by side to watch a play in an expressive

but relatively simple language and have maximum satisfaction. Rotimi's repertory includes historical tragedies such as Kurunmi (1969) based on the Ijaiye War of the 19th Century and Ovonranwen Nogbaisi (1971) based on a British punitive expedition to Benin in 1897. Plays by other playwrights were also performed by the Ife Theatre and these include Oladejo Okediji's Rere Run, Babalola Fatunwoye's Wahala and Adegoke Durojaiye's Gbekude; Comish Ekiye's The Family, Aime Cesaire's Le Roi Christophe, Kole Omotsho's The Curse and many more.

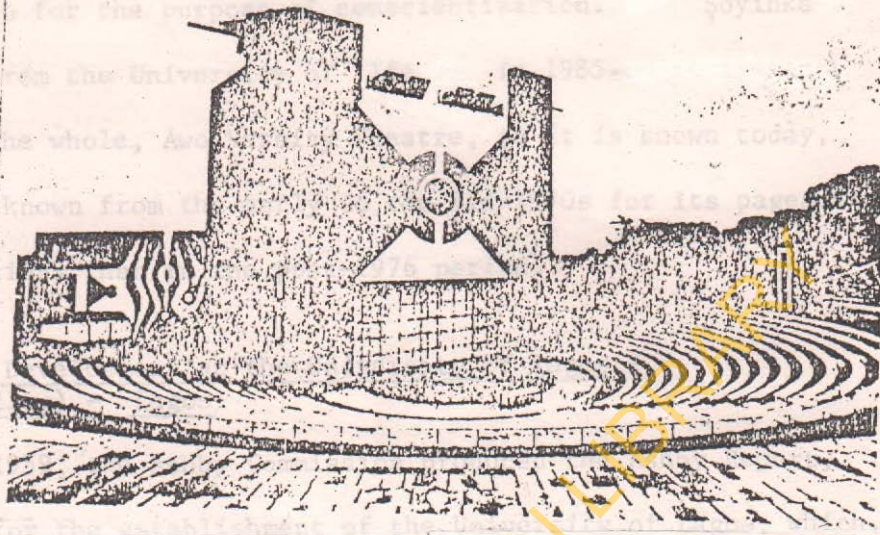
In 1973, the University assumed full responsibility for the Ori-Olokun Players. Its name was changed to University of Ife Theatre and its ensemble was placed on the payroll of the University and with an initial grant of ₦34,000.00. Ola Rotimi forged the Ife Theatre into a professional travelling theatre, recognising talents and capabilities rather than paper qualifications. The University of Ife Theatre toured extensively in Nigeria and abroad in countries like Senegal, France, Germany and USA. Thus it became the first truly professional theatre company sponsored by a University in Nigeria. Its Arubidi base gradually became less popular as the performances of the group were moving to the lecture theatres in the University, most notably Humanities Auditorium I, and later to the Cafeteria of Fajuyi Hall - a male hostel. And by 1975, at the completion of the Pit Theatre, and Oduduwa Hall, especially with the latter, the group had its own architectural imposition that seats 1,200 spectators, facing its proscenium stage, behind which is the amphitheatre which accommodates more than 3,000 people, not particularly reflective of the

African or of the Nigerian theatre visions. Of course, Ola Rotimi found the object a monstrosity that could not respond to the handling of plays by a director. This is a sharp contrast to the Pit Theatre - which he helped to design. The Pit Theatre combines, in simple form, the architectural elements of the proscenium stage on its one end, while the features of a courtyard stand between that end and the technical service area on the other end. The two sides were left wide open, for they cater for the supportive ventilation and the spill-overs of audience. The actual pit area is in the middle and serves the arena staging techniques, said to be Ola Rotimi's favoured approach in productions involving huge casts and lavish costuming. Ola Rotimi - "an adventurous playwright and a powerfully creative producer"<sup>(100)</sup> - has given the Nigerian audience entertainment that reflects the past, present and a glimpse into the future. Ola Rotimi is, according to the award-winning Yemi Ogunbiyi, "... a man of tenaciously stubborn artistic conviction, with an eye for details in the theatre and a sagacious ability to know what can and will work theatrically."<sup>(101)</sup> Among Rotimi's able lieutenants were Segun Akinbola as the Technical Manager and Olu Akomolafe as the Business Manager.

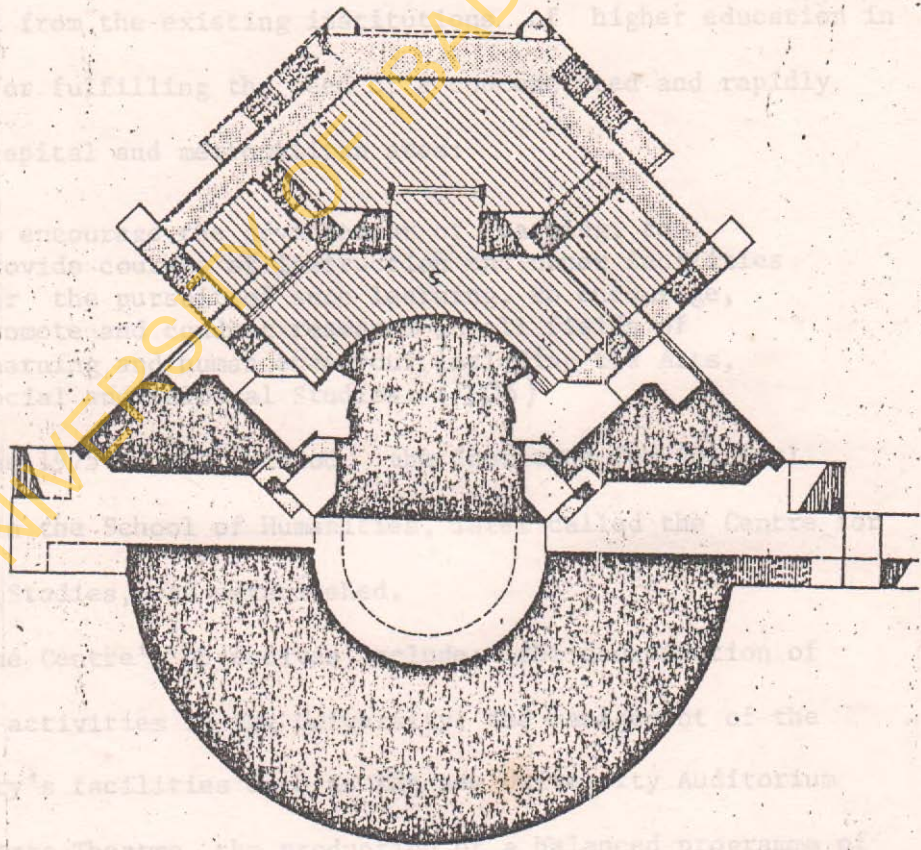
With Professor Ojetunji Aboiyade as the new Vice-Chancellor in 1975, the Institute of African Studies was reformulated. Four new separate academic departments of Fine Arts, Music, African Languages and Dramatic Arts respectively were to emerge besides the Institute. The Dramatic Arts Department offers today academic programmes

ranging from the one-year Certificate, to the Bachelor and Master's degrees. Wole Soyinka was appointed to head the Dramatic Arts Department while Ola Rotimi was left with the nurturing of his baby, the University of Ife Theatre. But controversy arose over the relationship of the Ife-Theatre Company and the Department which perhaps led to Ola Rotimi's exit from Ile-Ife in 1977. From then on Wole Soyinka inherited both the Department and the Theatre Company. And, as was to be expected, changes followed. The constituent members of the theatre company were too unripe for Soyinka's own sophistication and medium which were at variance with Ola Rotimi's. Hence purges ensued.

Soyinka's first production was followed by the premiere of his Death and the King's Horseman (1976), followed by Fenton Blair's Biko's Inquest (1977), Opera Wonyosi (1977 and 1978) and Requiem for a Futurologist (1982), with casts comprising staff and students but still under the name of Unife Theatre Company. The best assets that remained of Ola Rotimi's outfit (one of such talents is Tunji Ojeyemi) were turned into demonstrators or "experimental rabbits" in Soyinka's academic laboratory based in Oduduwa Hall. Soyinka, in response to the apparent yearning and loud demands for the resuscitation of the missing link between the University Theatre and the community, introduced, in 1982, his short-lived Guerilla Unit of the theatre in those tense political days during the Second Republic that presented the 'Before the Blowout' sketches. An 'experiment', indeed and a demonstration of



ODUDUWA ASSEMBLY HALL - amphitheatre



ground floor plan

FIG 37: THE ODUDUWA HALL, OBAFEMI AWOLowo UNIVERSITY ILE-IFE



Soyinka's awareness of a mass popular theatre as a powerful codification for the purpose of conscientization. (102) Soyinka retired from the University of Ife in 1985.

On the whole, Awo Varsity Theatre, as it is known today, was better known from the early to the mid-1970s for its pageantry and productions than in the post-1976 period.

2. The Development at the University of Lagos - (Unilag) - Lagos

In 1959, the Ashby Commission produced the Ashby Report, the basis for the establishment of the University of Lagos, which, in conception and development, is to be, in a sense, unique and different from the existing institutions of higher education in Nigeria for fulfilling the need of a concentrated and rapidly growing capital and metropolitan area:

to encourage the advancement of learning, to provide courses of instruction and other facilities for the pursuit of such learning, to encourage, promote and conduct research in all fields of learning and human endeavour including the Arts, Social and Cultural Studies. (103)

During the 1975 to 1977 period, the Institute for Cultural Studies in the School of Humanities, later called the Centre for Cultural Studies, was established.

The Centre's objectives include: the coordination of cultural activities in the University; the management of the University's facilities such as the new University Auditorium and the Arts Theatre, the production of a balanced programme of

the arts, with emphasis on Nigerian traditional culture and experimental works; the maintenance of a liaison with national cultural bodies, and, above all, the carrying out of research in various areas of arts and culture with emphasis on the performing arts (dance, music, and drama), fine arts, ceramics, textile designs and graphics, and the development of a museum and an archive for the arts.

For the realisation of these objectives, Research Fellows were appointed to man each of the units of the Centre while a Director who was to oversee all the units together was also appointed.

The first Director of the Centre was Professor E.J. Alagoa (1975 - 1977), followed by Professor Akin Euba (1977 - 1980), Professor Laz Ekwueme (1980 - 1983), and Professor (Mrs.) Egun Clark (1983 - 1989).

Professor Alagoa's quest to fulfill the research objective of the performing arts area prompted him to set up a performing troupe. He got Mr. Bayo Oduneye, a stage director from the University of Ibadan, on secondment to start off the troupe in 1977. The newly completed Arts Theatre and the main Auditorium of the University became the venue of activities for the troupe. The first production of the troupe, after a year of grooming, was Wole Soyinka's The Trials of Brother Jero directed by Bayo Oduneye who only stayed for that one session with the Centre.

The directorship of the Centre changed in 1977 to

Professor Akin Euba and Professor Laz Ekwueme in 1980. The two are well known musicologists already, who understandably piloted the ship of the Centre along the lines of musical presentations.

Finally, a change in the emphasis came with Professor (Mrs.) Efun Clark who took over from Professor Ekwueme in 1983 and reorganised the Centre to now have six units, namely: the Performing Arts, Auditoria Management, Fine Arts, Documentation, Research and Administration. Each of the units is headed by a sectional head functioning under the overall director. The headship in the Performing Arts Unit was rotated between the two research fellows, Bode Osanyin for drama and Uwa Hunwick for Dance, respectively. They blew "new-winds" into the Centre, though they were first producing their own written plays - such as Bode Osanyin's "The Shattered Bridge" in 1979, Uwa Hunwick's "The Election Fever" also in 1979 and the many subsequent ones. The troupe's outings outside Nigeria include their participation in the Horizons Festival in Berlin (1979), in the Africa Musical Festival in Venezuela (1981), in the International Festival Cervantino in Mexico (1982) and in the German Arts Festivals of 1983 and 1985 respectively. (104)

The scenic backings for all these productions were mostly provided by Mr. Abayomi Barber, a fine artist, of the Fine Art Unit while the technical realisations fell under Mr. Duro Oni and his assistants, one of whom is Mr. Ogundero, who, like Mr. Duro Oni, was a graduate of the Diploma in Theatre Arts Programme of the University of Ibadan. Mr. Oni has, in recent years, added on an M.F.A. degree in lighting to his earlier Diploma qualification.

The development of "live" theatre at the University of Lagos so far has been a mixed story of woes and optimism. The situation, ironically, was in contrast to what obtained in the old "Victorian" days of Lagos. The pathetic situation has once been lamented by Professor Egun Clark thus:

Witnessing a display of cultural expression often comes last in everybody's priority-list. Students even rate our performances for which fees do not go beyond N1.00 against their meal ticket.

It would be fair to say that the development of theatre scenography and technology at the University of Lagos is at the evolutionary stage. But, with the Faculties of Engineering, 1965; Environmental Design, 1971 and later a unique and very fertile, but yet unploughed farmland, 1986, for the growth and development of Theatre Design (Architectural Planning, Scenography and Technology) has been, perhaps unknowingly, created.

3. The Development at the Ahmadu Bello Univeristy,  
Zaria (A.B.U.)

The University, was established in 1962, named for the Sarduana of Sokoto, Sir Ahmadu Bello ( ), the premier of the Northern Region of Nigeria during the First Republic.

The Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria took off at the premises of the former Nigerian College of Arts and Science, Zaria in 1962. The University, in response to the Unesco Report on the promotion of research and studies in cultural affairs in Africa, set up the Centre for Nigerian Cultural Studies to conduct research and

documentation into all areas of Nigerian arts and culture, particularly of the northern states. The Centre was initially at the University's outreach campus at Bayero College, Kano which later became the independent Bayero University, Kano (BUK). Kano is very important in the social, cultural, religious, economic and political history of the North and it has been, for long, the seat of Islamic Studies in West Africa.

Michael Crowder had by 1972 moved from Ife to A.B.U. as the first Director of the Centre which first embarked on research into the areas of Museology, Archaeology, Performing Arts (Dance-Drama) and Music and for which Research Fellows were appointed to man each unit. Dexter Lyndersay and his wife Dany, were recruited from the Theatre Arts Department of the University of Ibadan in 1972, to start off the Performing Arts wing of the Centre.

The first production of the performing troupe of the Centre, under the collaborative efforts of Dexter Lyndersay and Umaru Ladan, (19-- to 19--) was an Hausa cultural play titled Sheu Umah followed by an historical drama on the sixteenth century king of Borno Empire, Mai Idris Alauma produced in 1973. The Play was presented in public places in Kano and later at the main campus of Ahmadu Bello University at Zaria. Immediately after the production, because Bayero College had become B.U.K., an autonomous University, the centre was moved to Kano. While Ladan possessed the knowledge of the Hausa culture, Lyndersay supplied the scenographic and technical attributes to grace the productions which were beautiful

blends of traditional and modern theatre practices.

Another area in which Dexter and Dany Lyndersay left their imprint at ABU was in the establishment of a Children's Theatre programme, which dared the production of Hausa Opera and a drama titled "Solama" before their return to Ibadan in 1974.

To succeed the Lyndersays was Andrew Horn who steered the course of the company towards an emphasis in dance-drama. According to Peter Badejo, the Company's choreographer and dance-drama coach, this emphasis was in order to assuage the linguistic barrier apparent between the predominantly non-literate, mostly Hausa-speaking, society and the English-speaking performers.

The trend of development is influenced by the contact and relationship between Andrew Horn and Michael Etherton, the Head of the Drama section of the English Department who had had some experience in the University of Zambia of a kind of popular theatre - which he tried to pursue successfully in Nigeria. One of the products of the effort is the ABU-Studio Theatre which can accommodate 350 people, the Studio is built on the prototype reflective of an Hausa compound. It is a joint design concept between the theatre directors in the Drama Unit of the English Department and the architect, Steven Ehrlich, a lecturer in the School of Architecture of Ahmadu Bello University. The structure, situated on the main campus, has since 1975 been serving the students as a workshop for their drama classes during the day and serving the whole town-and-gown community as a performance and

auditorium space at night for the palette of African plays. With this, for the first time in Nigeria, a theatre structure that took the traditional culture and the social structure of the people, the community strata and the wishes of the actual users into the adopted concept emerged. This brings the familiar environmental backing to support the transmission of messages to the people who then would naturally feel more involved in the whole process and experience. In other words, popular theatre moves in the familiar environment of the people, in the mode, techniques and practice relevant to the masses. This, simply put, "is to relate the theatrical architectural forms to the mode of drama being evolved in a developing society." And here lies the major contribution of the trend and experiments to our present area of study namely, the developing of appropriate theatre structures.

The fact that the A.B.U. Performing Arts Troupe was not strictly tied to the apron strings of a teaching or academic "laboratory" <sup>afforded</sup> it a total dedication to polished presentations on stage of the research findings as found in the production of "Queen Amina of Zazzau", "The Man Behind The Mask" and "Fadaka War" - dance dramas created, choreographed and produced by Peter Badejo. The three productions have been performed at the National Theatre in Lagos and, in July 1982, at the Festival of Nations in Sofia, Bulgaria.

Another move to take theatre to the people, especially to the non-indigene in the residential areas, typified by Sabon-Gari,

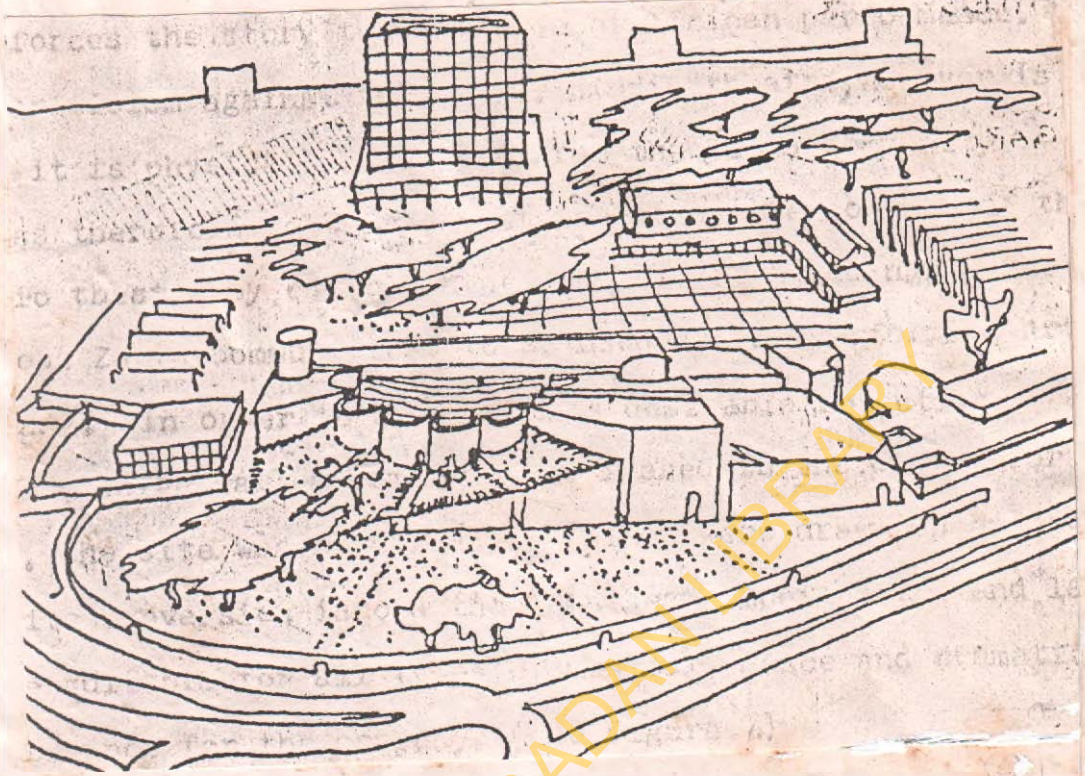


Fig. (a) A SKETCH OF A.B.U. ARTS THEATRE

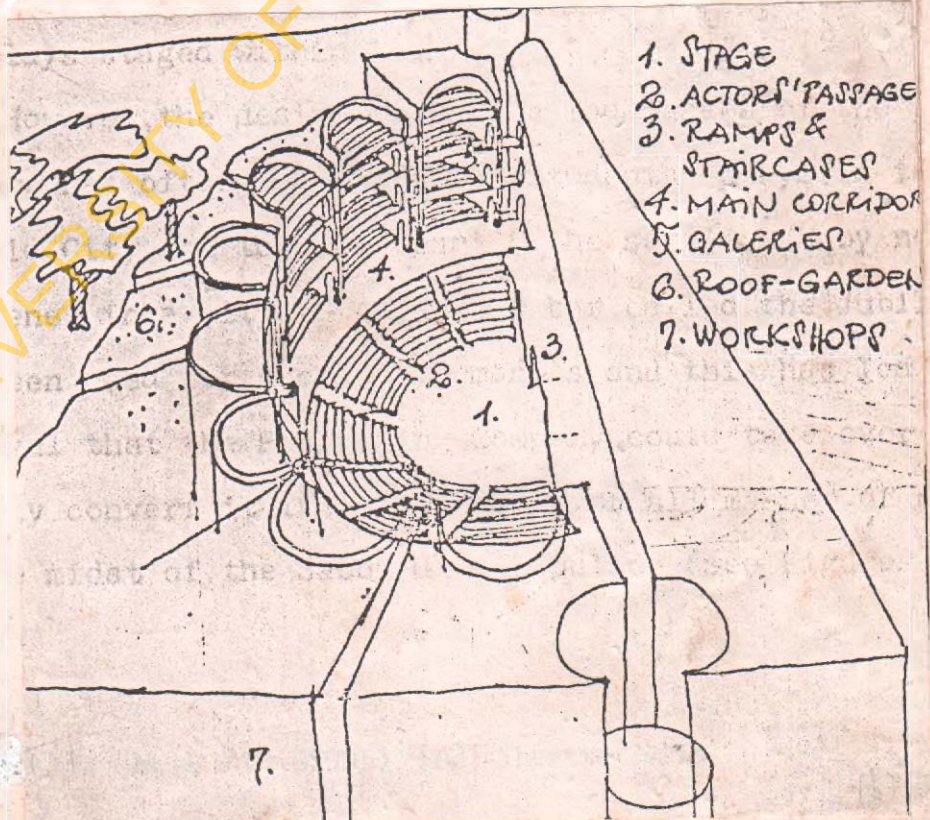
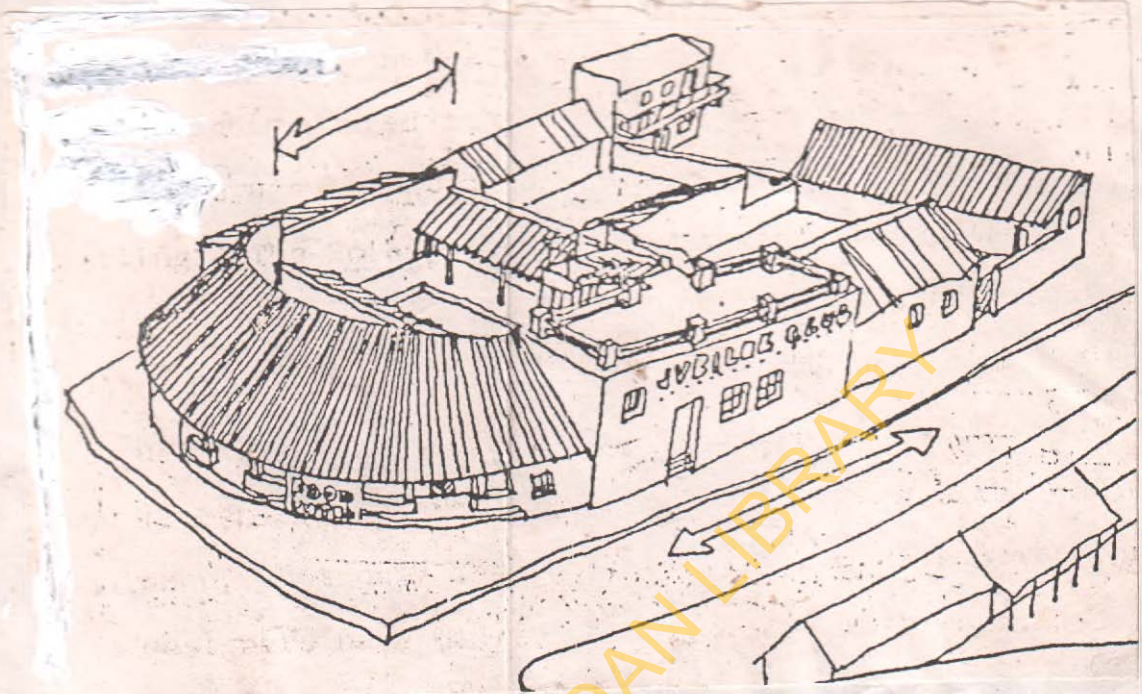
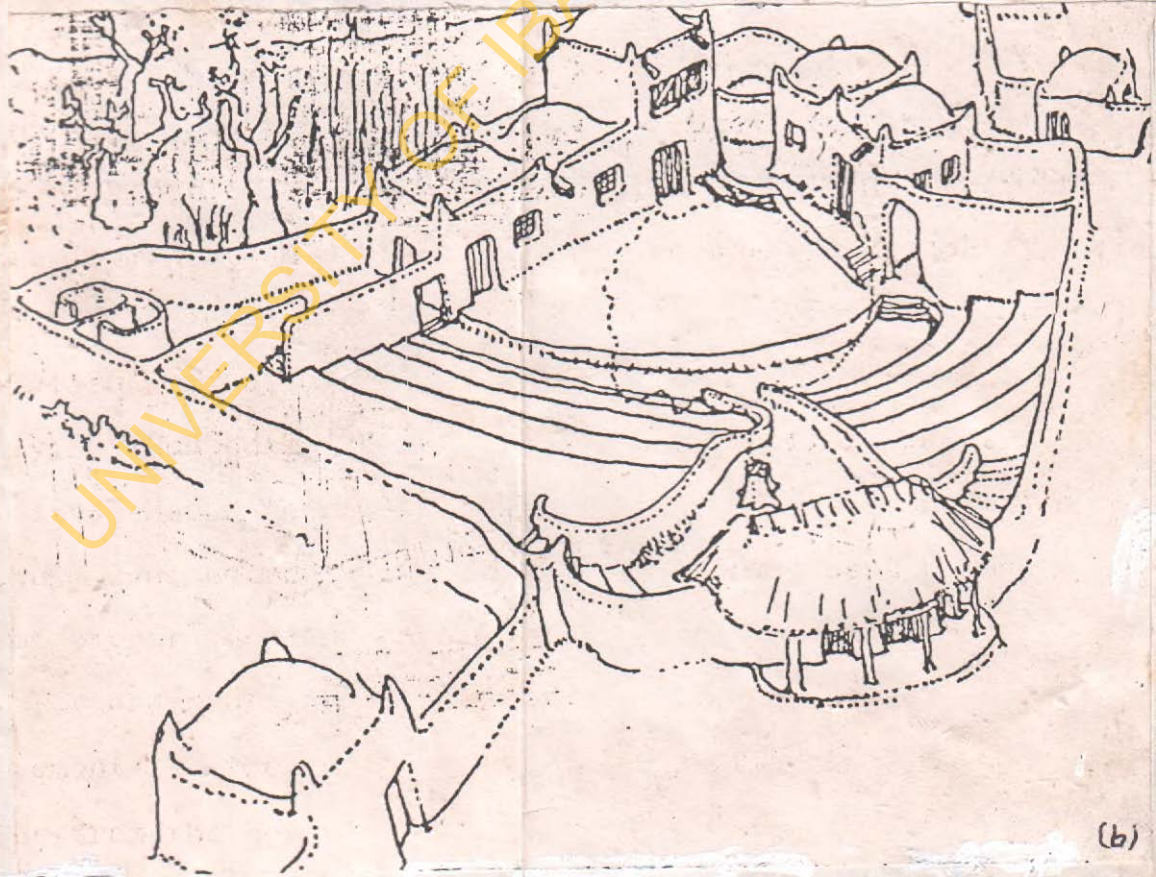


Fig. (b) A SKETCH OF THE INTERIOR OF THE ARTS THEATRE





(a) JUBILEE CLUB, ZARIA, SABON-GARI SKETCH



(b) SKETCH OF A PROPOSED THEATRE CENTRE IN ZARIA CITY

is the students' performances that took place in some hotels and club houses. The Jubilee Club is very prominent among them. The successes recorded there prompted the Centre's acquisition of the club that was cheaply convertible into a multi-use-theatre that is not be tied to a specific mise-en-scene atmosphere but <sup>as</sup> fashioned/ a neutral architecture that allows timelessness, flexibility and independence for the plays to hold in them.

Another theatre complex designed by the architect Peter Magyer is the large A.B.U. theatre, an Assembly Hall seating about 1,000 people. It is a multi-use-theatre-hall, whose concept was formulated on premises similar to those for the Studio-Mud-Theatre. With these, A.B.U. Zaria has the highest numbers of theatrical performance venues of all the Universities in Nigeria; a conglomeration of various theatre design trends, reflective of traditional and modern architectural principles. Not too short is the Centre's list of productions from 1972 to date, which range from serious plays to hilarious farces. Travelling with its productions, television and radio recordings have earned the troupe the recognition as a centre offering community services and creating the awareness that theatre is an instrument of cultural propagation and emancipation, which is now very highly cherished by the Northerners, unlike in the past when it was frowned at and virtually forbidden by Islam, as it was seen as a "frivolous pastime." Now it enjoys sponsorship by government agencies - the Federal Department of Culture and the National Television Authority. Some

other projects were the plans for the conversion of an existing large walled compound, leased by the Centre, into an amphitheatre with all the accoutrements of a stage suitable for musical, dance and dramatic presentations to accommodate about one thousand spectators at a time.

4. The Development of Theatre at The University of Calabar

The University of Calabar was established in 1975 in response to the Ashby Report of 1959 which had recommended an even geographical spread of higher institutions of education in the Federation by the 1980s.

The young University's first Vice-Chancellor, Professor E.A. Ayandele, who at the time of his appointment was of the Jos Campus of the University of Ibadan, seemed to have carried his experience of the Department of Theatre Arts at Jos, then headed by Sonny Oti to Calabar. In the Eastern part of the country then, except for the Music Department and the Drama Unit of the English Department of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, there was virtually no avenue for theatrical activities comparable to the established Ibadan and Ife traditions. And so, in 1976, the Department of Theatre Arts and a theatre company evolved at the University of Calabar having Dexter Lyndersay, a man with experience from Ibadan, as the pioneer Head. Dexter and his wife Dany now fashioned a company consisting of a musical band and a dance troupe both to serve as a "laboratory" for the academic department, and as a professional

travelling theatre company. The two units were welded together under the same name of the Calabar University Theatre, the C.U.T.

The activities of the two units started in a small Assembly Hall - the African Club, an improvised Garden theatre (a court-yard theatre) covered for protection from weather elements, and later in the newly completed Assembly Hall with a proscenium stage and a seating capacity of 750.

The technical aspects of the company's productions (i.e. lighting, set design and costume), similar to Ibadan and Ife practice, were executed by the staff members of the department, thus giving them the opportunity of semi-professional practice while also serving as models in practical accomplishments for the students to learn from. Dexter Lyndersay himself, a man with a strong technical theatre background, had had the objective of training serious theatre practitioners who can hold their own artistically on stage, television, or in any theatrical medium and who would know, through sound academic work what they are doing.

#### The New Breed and Scenography

Since the beginning of the 1970s, a new generation of theatre artists and scholars began to surface on the Nigerian theatrical scene. This new generation includes Femi Osofisan, Bode Sowande, Bode Osanyin, Zulu Sofola, Ahmed Yerimah, Kole Omoṣho and Meki Nzewi. Since their growth is void of confrontations with the power of colonisation, they reflect in their plays mostly

topical issues on the modern Nigeria and Nigerians.

There are many experiments going on in the recent time by the very adventurous and avant - garde Nigerian theatre artists aiming at freedom from the conventional and definite styles, trying to play down the accoutrements of production. Meki Nzewi at Nsukka with his researches in dance drama: Lost Finger, involving the local traditional artists in that mythological dramatization in which scenic elements are almost completely discarded is a good example. Only costumes, make-up, props, music and sound, lighting and optical visual effects have prominent roles to play. But yet their subtle and proper blending demands a mastery of their intricate nature.

There are also the curious experiments at spontaneous play-making and the experimental approach to the popular theatre of Michael Etherton and Brian Crow at Ahmadu Bello University and environs where some staff and students volunteer to work with the young peasant farmers in a district of Samaru-Sare town near the A.B.U. , Zaria. In these exercises, the problems of the farmers are situated in a wider social analysis in play-making situations.

The scope of contemporaneousness in the individual playwright's works determines the range of scenographic supplements needed. These can vary from the representational, realistic, naturalistic, presentational, abstract, absurdist to symbolism. In all, the director determines the interpretative style to adopt for these productions and since the function of scenic design

is mainly a supportive one, it has to be in harmony with the dramaturgical concept of the director and the other visual components in order to have a coherent and unified production. The fulfilment of that task is a test of the ingenuity and dexterity of a scenographer.

The final scenic work that the audience sees is a product of many revisions. Many compromises are made due to the dramaturgical interpretation of the director, the physical limitations of the stage and economic factors. They determine how much of a good design could be realised on the stage.

The University of Ibadan's leadership in the areas of our study, especially since 1976 can be verified in the numbers of her graduates functioning now in the fields nationwide. (105) Theatre, architecture, scenography and technology have made theatres elsewhere in the world formidable instruments of pedagogy, cultural actualisation, refinement of peoples' conscience, and for the living Nigerian theatre, they can do more.

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- (5) Ogundero at the University of Lagos.
- (6) Taiwo Adeyemi at the University of Benin, Benin City.
- (7) Molinta Ẹhendu at the University of Calabar.
- (8) James Olusọla Aborisade, the present writer, an Arts Fellow in Theatre Architecture, Scenography and Technology at the University of Ibadan since 1976.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ON THE AESTHETICS OF THEATRE, DESIGN,

SCENOGRAPHY AND TECHNOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

The germ-cell of theatre since its inception from ritualistic dances is the play-culminating in stage performance. But for the production to be effective, the visual elements and the physical components of theatre arts are indispensable.

Definition of Theatre as an Art Form

Today, many theories on arts, aesthetic(s) and theatre abound. Susanne Langer has defined art as "the creation of forms symbolic of human feelings," (1) while the art of play production - theatre making - has been defined by Gassner as: "a composite art" consisting of such elements as the actor, the settings, the properties, the costumes, the lighting and others which must, however, serve together, not separately, to form a unit art work (2).

George Kernodle, another authority, states that the theatre is a "synthesis of all the arts, yet it is a complex art in itself" (3). And, Willard Bellman amplifies that modern theatre is a variable art which seems to change its forms at every turn and thus make it seem contradictory, even antagonistic to each other. (4)

On the whole, the mounting of a play is an art which, like other forms of art, revolves on certain aesthetic and ontological

premises of which John Gassner affirms:

indisputably, play production is an art and all its aspects can be subjected to the principles of aesthetics; that is the aesthetic principles one happens to consider valid (5).

### Aesthetic, Aesthetics and Theatre Arts

According to Webster's New World Dictionary,

aesthetic is of, or in relation to aesthetics, of beauty, sensitive to art and beauty, showing good tastes, artistically.

aesthetics is the study or theory of beauty and of the psychological responses to it. It is the branch of philosophy dealing with art, its creative sources, its forms and its effect (6).

To Demas Nwoko, aesthetics means:

the positive essence of an experience of beauty and goodness ... The purposeful drive in life towards the attainment of aesthetic experience (7).

Williard Bellman opines that:

aesthetic of theatrical art pertains to the sensitive, questioning, organising mind, particularly when the mind examines the self and the life we lead. The process in which people seek to understand themselves (and their fellow men), when they ask themselves where they are, what they are doing, where they are going. And that is the nature of theatre art.

Deducing from those definitions, we can then propound that aesthetic and aesthetics in the theatre, deal with the creative sources of theatre, its forms, effects and the psychological responses. It concerns the sensibility to the art of theatre,

showing good taste of theatre and its artistic theatrical goodness.

### Aesthetic Experience

According to Demas Nwoko, "aesthetic experience is the commodity - if we can rightly call it that - which is most sought after in life. It is, in fact, man's pre-occupation through life, as it is the most desired which man lives for" (8).

Bellman opines that aesthetic experience is a unique kind of human experience in which a special virtual world is created in which the observer simultaneously experiences and contemplates his experiences (9). Therefore, it becomes obvious that only the arts have always been the source of man-made aesthetic experience. And theatre as an art form has validly been a unique source. Man has achieved with it an imitation of the creative process in nature, while still aspiring to the attainment of infinite goodness with it.

Aesthetic experiences have been grouped into two main categories, namely, the aesthetic perception and aesthetic appreciation. While aesthetic perception may be referred to as aesthetic theory, its appreciation may become applied aesthetics. The two groups have been broken down further into instrumental and non-instrumental aesthetic experience by Olscamp (10).

Based on Olscamp's views, the instrumental experience pursues a goal which is the audience response to the meaning an object induces in them and not what that object immediately is. Illustratively, a door frame refers to a house just like a crucifix will symbolize affinity



to christianity, church or to the Lord Himself. At the instance of instrumental aesthetic experience, "the focus of attention shifts from the perceived object, and it assumes the function of a sign of the object signified. For an intelligent completion of the process, the audience, in identifying that other object, should have an awareness of the relationship between the two objects.

The non-instrumental aesthetic experience would now, on the other hand, impel the audience to scrutinize the door frame as an aesthetic object by its own standing and its relevance to the particular scene on the stage. For aesthetic perception or appreciation to happen three basic pre-requisites must be fulfilled by the object, namely:

1. The object must have qualitative or distinctive features. Had the door frame not the proportional feature, it would not have passed for the symbol of a house, symbolizing a house, entrance into a building; nor would an ordinary stake without the distinctive crossbar pass for a cross to symbolise the relationship with Christ.
2. The plausible appearance of the object rather than the material from which it is made. The door-way can be constructed out of lumber all through or be made of framed canvas or baft. So also could the cross be made of ordinary sticks or from lumber, iron or plastic.
3. The make-believe quality is important. The plausibility rate is higher when the two illustrative objects above are fabricated

from materials that will lend their appearance of real life object. It is when they look convincingly distinctive, that the audience can muster their aesthetic judgement of appeal, or lack of it, - whether they accept the representations or not.

### The Virtual World of an Art Work and the Theatrical Art

All art works are artistic representations of virtual objects found in nature; they exist only as art for the sake and only in and for the audience's mind. When real objects existing naturally, in the world, outside of art, are brought into the virtual world of art, the natural real objects now assume "virtual" characters. For an illustration, when in "The Good Ideology for Naira Republik," real machineries loaned from the Department of Mechanical Engineering and used as part of the set, on the stage, became "virtual machines" as part of the virtual environment of the Gari-factory created on stage. Therefore, the virtual users - the actors - of the virtual machine on the stage - the virtual world - convey to the audience something about themselves and about the machines through their conscious use of the machines. Therefore, anything put on stage should have a purpose to serve. Even when it is mistakenly put, to the audience, it would appear as if it is deliberately put and it would only appear as being mistakenly put when the item is conspicuously out-of-the-way so that it destroys the entire theatrical situation and picture.

When an actor is on the stage, his body and emotional resources

turn into virtual existence and becomes part of the virtual character being created in the virtual world of their audience.

### The Nature of Theatrical Art

The theatre art, unlike the other arts, uses living beings as its principal medium of expression. The word 'virtual' is used here metaphorically, though it has scientific meanings. In physics in the science of optics, there we distinguish between the 'real' and the 'virtual' images. When we look in the mirror, the image we perceive is the virtual image. Our mind, through our eyes, is the device for the existence of the virtual image as long as the object is before the mirror. In a similar way exist the virtual elements of the scene whereby the scenographer creates a virtual environment for the play while the director and the actor creates virtual character, who uses the words of the playwright in his conscious use of his body and emotional resources, yet has not turned into the real person he seeks to create.

Consequently, virtuality bestows on the artist the artistic freedom since the virtual world exists for the sake of artistic expression only. The artistic freedom and the virtual world need not be bound by the limitations of real life, not even by the logic that life imposes upon us; as Adolphe Appia once wrote:

'If the mystic yearns for heaven, the artist yearns for the dream, and his whole productivity bears its influence' (11).

Appia, apparently, was referring to the unlimited freedom the creative artist has in the world of virtual reality expressed in metaphorical terms.

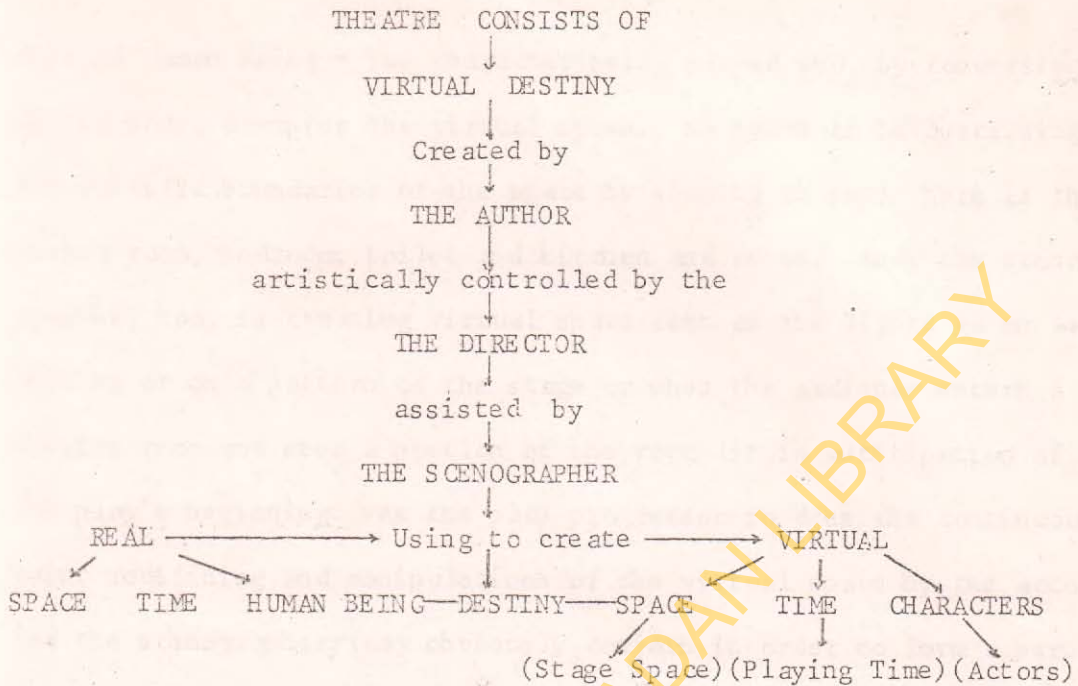
The fullest advantage of artistic freedom could only be taken by first appreciating that all art works are aesthetic expressions are only prerequisite for understanding <sup>the</sup> mastery of the particular aesthetics of the art of Scenography. Peculiar to the arts are their typifying symbolic processes. For instance, while music art has the typifying principal symbolic element of virtual time, painting's space; theatre, principal symbolic device-element <sup>is</sup> the "act" for the presentation of its virtual world. Susan Langer has defined an "act" as:

an indicator for the audience that something has happened internally or externally in a virtual character, in his virtual world, and that that something forms part of a virtual history in the mode of dramatic action (12).

This implies that a completed play is virtual history, made up of an 'act' or 'acts' that move the production toward its inevitable future referred to in real life as the "destiny". The destiny remains in real life, however, obscure and unclear, whereas, on the stage, the intended purposeful virtual world of art, the virtual destiny, may be made clear and it can become the source of potential insight into our own unrevealed destinies.

### Art and Virtual Space-Time

In our real world space-time exists. In art, virtual-space with varying virtual-time exists. Both space-time of the 'real' and of the 'virtual' world are in analogous relationship with each other. In the real world, we have real human beings but in the virtual world of the complex theatre we have the abstraction of the real human beings which becomes the "raw materials" - the actors from which the virtual beings - are being created.



**Fig 40:** Relationship between theatrical artists and their materials  
 The above diagram shows the interlocking relationship that exists between theatrical artists and their materials.

The scenographer exists in a dependent relationship. His artistic effectiveness depends very largely on the work of the actors. The interrelationship of the author and the actor remains the same even in the collective theatre group of the non-scripted plays. The uniqueness of the theatrical art depends on the arrangement of the virtual elements - the manipulation of the abstractions - resulting in the virtual destiny, labelled the theatrical mode.

#### Space-Time Relationship Among Director, Scenographer and Actor

A look again at the previous diagram will show an overlap in the works of the actor and scenographer. The actor creates the

virtual human being - the character being played who, by conversion of his body, occupies the virtual space. He seems to be describing the specific boundaries of the space by seeming to say: here is the living room, bedroom, toilet and kitchen and so on. And, the scenographer, too, is creating virtual space seen as the lights go on on a setting or on a pattern of the stage or when the audience enters a theatre room and sees a portion of the room lit in anticipation of the play's beginning. As the play progresses so does the continuous joint redefining and manipulations of the virtual space by the actor and the scenographer; they obviously conjoin in order to form a part of the symbolic unity of the production as an art work. The responsibility for the ultimate unity is taken by the director who maintains the artistic control over the whole interpretive effort.

The starting point for both the director and the scenographer was the same overall view of the virtual space, but the two persons' concerns soon diverged. While the director concentrates on moving the actors, sometimes masses, in order to give dramatic meanings to the space, the scenographer was busy on the creation of setting, lighting, properties and special effects to enhance the intended space relationship. To buttress this we may take Death and the King's Horseman for an example. The present writer, who, up till the first Dress and Technical rehearsal, was the scenographer for the 1987 Ibadan production, started with the director on the overall geography of the play, the old city of Oyo in the old Oyo Empire

where the swirl and flow of the violent death associated with the death of Eḷeṣin Oba was threatening. Considering the movements that the characters of the play must make to express the tragedy to the audience, the director and the scenographer had to evolve a concept of space within which every actor had to operate in order to create his own virtual space. The Resident, for instance, was most interested in those details of space that made up his world, the distance from his residence to the Oba's palace, surrounded by the potent danger, the inaccessibility to Olunde, and most dangerous of all was the imminent demise of Olunde, and the infinite swirling space that enveloped the whole play. To portray this effectively and plausibly, for instance, the intimacy of the down-below cell, the hiding place, in the Resident's residence, had to be especially balanced with the infinity of the city and the Oba's palace with care that was a great concern for the director and the scenographer. In fact it was at this juncture that the communication problem aggravated to total disagreement because the scenography did not or could not see the hiding as a kind of cell underneath the residency, but more as a psychological prison yard, standing on its own, depicting the conflict of the colonial mentality and the strangulation of the black man, expressed in Olunde's bi-cultural exposure, ending in the tragedy.

#### Space - Time Analogue

We live in a real space-time matrix. "All of life is encircled

by the three dimensions of space. We are able to perceive space and time as a result of primary symbolic transformation, a form of abstraction, which enables us to 'think about' things (13).

The abstractions turn into symbols that are likely to be laden with emotions. If we take a play in production as an ever-changing and often vast sculpture, in four dimensions - height, width, depth and time - we would realise that, for the play to exert its symbolic effectiveness, there must be an analogous relationship between the play and the human perception of space and time.

Since time is expressed through change, then change is movement. While movement on the one hand is the function of the actors, on the other hand if they - actors - are to be effective, light must move with them. Thus the space varies with moving light and thereby acquires a symbolic value of its own. To that movement, a unique combination of virtual space and virtual time, populated by virtual human beings, the scenographer can add images in projections to the setting to create a virtual world of incredible artistic expression of which there are two general forms. One is for the artist to directly confront the human dilemmas and the other is for him to perhaps "insulate" the audience from the unpleasantness of such a confrontation. The "insulation" approach is very much used in the world of comedy and fantasy in the theatre. It is often served with a tint of irony, realising the unpredictability and absence of total orderliness in real life.



### Art as Symbol of Expression

Artistic experience is conveyed through the non-discursive artistic symbolic medium of expression which means that an artistic expression is a symbol or symbols. While a "Symbol" is the result of "abstraction," "abstraction" is the transformation of "raw data". Hence, the theatre is an art work and machine for it is made up of different component parts - which are created through the complicated process known as 'creativity,' otherwise known as "symbolic transformation".

### Symbolic Transformation

Symbolic transformation is dualistic in meaning. On the one hand it pertains to the transformation of the sensory data into a recapitulative form for the mind and on the other hand it signifies the climax or the highest momentum in the evolution of an artistic concept. At that moment, the wholeness, the completed and finished production of the artistic inspiration, flashes to the artist's mind - showing all the component symbols knit together. While, the process is inspired it can extend over a period of time. Mordecai Gorelik, appreciating this, states: "The artistic idea is all-important and it is seldom born the instant one reads the script. It has to have time to incubate" (14). This process of creativity reaches a climatic moment known as "flash of insight". Without this "flash of inspiration" there can be no art work. At that moment a here-to-fore

"unrealized organization of symbolic material" in the artist's mind that brings him into some new insight, takes place. By a successful eventual externalization of some substantial portion of this new perception, the product becomes an art work in which certain aspects of the artist's perception are reflected in symbolic terms.

### Symbolic Analogy

Between an artistic symbol and life itself there is an analogous relationship. The choice of a symbolic device by an artist is guided by the feelings that there are some special relationships - "analogous relationships" - existing between the symbolic device and the human state or condition or feeling he (the artist) seeks to express.

The analogy, sometimes, may be as natural as in the green traffic light which signals "safe" when it is green; "danger" or "stop" when it is red and warning to be ready to "go" or to "stop" when it is yellow. The traffic light, and the analogue of the green light meaning "safe to go" or "right of the road" function together to form an analogue of "symbolic device".

### On Solving the Communication Problem in Interpretive Art

Open to man are two forms of expression for the result of his inquiries. These are the discursive and non-discursive forms of expression of aesthetic experience.

## Discursive and Non-Discursive Expression.

### Discursive Form of Expression.

The discursive form of expression is analytical, implying a temporal examination of an event on a second-to-second basis. Here the event or the phenomenon is taken apart for its relating component parts to become accessible to systematic scrutiny. Or, in the case of an object, it can be subjected to spatial examination whereby its component parts would be dissected. In either case, temporal or spatial, any attempt to present in sequential manner, the findings of the examinations, has to do with words, no matter in which language - Yoruba, English or German. The language as the "raw material" can be used by both discursive or non-discursive forms; for example, the Yoruba language can be used discursively to write a careful analytical paper or used non-discursively to write a poem.

### Non-Discursive Expression

Not all of the results of man's findings can be presented analytically. Then, the findings cannot be presented in sequential entirety. It takes the experience for concept to be perceived and that must be assimilated as a whole unit. Most of all, art works fall under this form of non-discursive form of expression. Its intent is simultaneously to generate a special compound of experiences, reflections and insights.

But, valuable information on the amount of activities invested in the creative process of an art work can only be disclosed by a special total experience known as "aesthetic experience". The core of the purpose of an art work cannot be revealed by any discursive but by the non-discursive form of expression. Hence the moment the director meets with the collection or group, combination of contributive artists, to discuss the art work in progress, an attempt at a non-discursive communication is being made. They arrive at such a "production meeting" "symbolic" agreements. But such meetings are often the sources of the worst kind of misunderstanding, for, at a time when each member thinks he has communicated clearly and completely with the other member, they are unconscious of the poverty of the disseminated information. The product of such a committee, a dangerously risky franchise, subjected to ever compromising, can only be of lower artistic standard.

Art works have peculiar qualities, some of which are:-

1. Symbolization of a complex and closely integrated concept in such a manner that the art work and that which it symbolizes have become synonymous. The art work then becomes organic in nature. Thenceforth, if anything should happen to any part of the living-organic-thing, that thing happens to the whole being, not to the part alone. The effect of what happens transmits through the entire organic nature of the being. Therefore, any alternation or change

in a part of an art work would equally affect or destabilize the whole creation.

2. All works of art contain elements of presentational and representational symbols signalling to things outside the art works themselves and at the same time there are others that function as icons, that cannot be associated with feelings and emotions.

3. In order to retain the audience's interest in following the artist throughout the journey started with its beginning, the art work, now being the production, must possess the quality of thematic variations or else it soon becomes uninteresting and boring, leading to audiences' quick resignation from participation. In Scenic Design, it is the designer's intuitions, emotions and feeling that dominate in this regard by bringing the properties of mass, colour, proportion, composition, style, balance and age into creative and dynamic play, allowing it to grow into a pleasing, lasting work of art. Haig-Khatchadourian avows that "a work of art expresses the artist's feeling or emotions, his past experiences, his temperament or individuality or personal qualities (15). Demas Nwoko amplifies that "art sets out to give the audience an aesthetic experience which exercises their emotion, opening up new dimensions of visions of life which they would never have discovered on their own..." "Ideally", "a successful artistic work is supposed to take you, as a member of the audience, unsuspectingly through the journey, and when you arrive at the end of the journey it leaves you stark

asked as you were at the beginning (16).

Consequently, what the audience sees is what the designer - artist - has previously perceived in his mind, his otherwise concealed virtual world, which in the theatre, is greatly influenced by the precepts and "codes" set by the play.

This art work is communicated to the audience in a non-discursive form. However, before it gets to the audience, being an inspired original art work conceived by the original artist - the playwright, now in form of a script; it has to be examined by the interpretive artists of the theatre for the apprehension of the playwright's intentions. The playwright's intention is the original insight, a non-discursive central element of theatrical art called the "Master Symbol," otherwise called "dramatic metaphor" - the unifying factor in the interpretive art and a piece of dramatic composition.

Mordecai Gorelik understands dramatic metaphor as that "probably, which sums up, for each setting, all the thoughts which the designer may have (17). The interpretive artists (actor, director, scenographer) therefore must use the master symbol as their guide towards the determination of elements that have to be included in the production and which of these need further development or change. "It is the touchstone of the symbolic devices in the various artistic elements of the theatre, namely, scenery, lights, costumes, properties, etc. contained in the script in which is the origin of the

master symbol. Therefore, each of the interpretive artists must gain a perception of the script, and subsequently of the master symbol, through the sharing, in communicative terms, in the "production meetings", at which the production is guided towards its artistic conclusion.

Though the "production meeting" is abstract in nature, yet it has the advantage of preventing the director or the scenographer from jumping immediately to a visual concept. The main function of the Master Symbol, then, is to serve as a testing background against which the developing visualization of the various artists can be tested.

#### Discussing Theatrical Art Works

Theatrical art, as an art work cannot be dealt with analytically or discursively because discussing theatrical art works is a rather subjective matter. Therefore, we cannot afford to get into the position of having to "explain" any art work because there is no substitute for the art work itself. We can only discuss an art work when the same is present but never in absentia. Finally, we can only ask questions ourselves and about others that we can deal with in discursive language or with conscious use of metaphor, artistic analogy and symbolic devices.

When working on theatrical forms such as Opera and dance, which are rather complex, the problems of interpretive art become aggravated because it is almost impossible for an individual artist-designer to

want to accept the gross responsibility for judiciously satisfying all of the script's requirements.

In such a situation, perhaps, the fairer way out is the formation of a "production team" despite the negative sting of "Kunst per Gremium" - art per committee - (scenographer pattern) syndrome it reflects. The alternative systems are: the "Art Work by Delegation", the decentralised "Collegium-System", the "Scenographer - Director" and the "Collective Artists' Systems".

#### Art Work by Delegation

The practice in many modern European houses and typical of America is to form a "collegium" of artists in which case each artist is allocated a well defined area of responsibility. There are designers of scenery, lighting, sound and costumes and occasionally a special designer of masks or a special "creator of effects" (18). This apparently logical division of labour is, in theory, sound.

The major disadvantage of the pattern is that most of the artists are reduced to the level of mere craftsmen for they are forced to resign larger or more artistically challenging responsibilities to others.

In this kind of decentralised system, the rate of failures compared with success would be higher. Here, it is easier for the critic to quickly detect the flaws in which the action of the piece



ran one way while the setting ran the other, the costumes which may appear glamorous, could be of no avail to the characters virtually wearing them. These flaws can be due to obviously ill-rehearsed or uncoordinated aesthetic communication considerations apparently not geared towards the achievement of an infallible artistic unity about which Bellman avows that "Without Unity, there is no art," instead, there is "disaster".

#### Director-Scenographer Pattern

This concept is founded on the theories of Appia and Craig which still flourish in most of European and in some American play houses. The scenographer is given all the prerogatives over the visual design elements such as set, lighting and costume design. The pattern strives to achieve a unified production in which projections, masks and moving scenery play integral kinetic roles. The onus of unified production lies on the close cooperation between the director and the scenographer for they have to complement each other's artistic efforts. The pattern's advantages include the drastic simplification of the communication problem since only a few artists are now involved who now feel more fulfilled in their desires, as they derive more ego-satisfaction.

#### The Non-scripted Theatre: Collective Creative Artists.

In non-scripted theatre the whole group is responsible for

the creation of the Master symbol. The symbolic material is generated within the group itself. The group is then an original and not an interpretive group of artists and the so generated master symbol is made available to all involved in the process of externalization of a production.

Here the utmost human dedication is demanded of the members of the company. This is an artistic commune where the members work together for many hours daily to create theatrical art works. The group mutually devises the artistic concept, unfolds it with absolute precision using various forms of non-discursive expressions such as pantomime, music, dance, poetry, drawing, sculpture, etc. Constant feedback ensures effective communication and individuals have the chance of specialising from time to time in different areas such as Scenography, Choreography and the like. The scenographer in this case can only emerge from the group not from outside, as he must have been a member of the group and has developed the master symbol together. He becomes specially concerned with spatial expressions and a total view of the production.

The main disadvantage of this system, despite the fact that it has offered the most reliable solution to the communication problem, is the amount of human resources demanded. A very long time, always, is usually required to get a production ready.

This kind of organization may, to some extent, be compared with the traditional Nigerian theatre group where the level of literacy

prohibits the use of scripts. In such groups mostly, however, the actor-manager and leader of the group provides the artistic impetus thrown open to the naturally gifted members to be developed into a master symbol.

Biḡdun Jeyifo has stressed that, today, the "Opera proper" is a minority tradition, though some of the acclaimed masterpieces of the Travelling Theatre productions such as Qba Koso, Moremi and Qba Moro are a revised version of that mould. The dominant style is that of the free, improvisational rendering of roles, without set dialogue and speeches, and within a general plot outline and transitional sequences, well-rehearsed and clearly established. Jeyifo's claim can be vindicated by an answer to a question by an investigator who asked the deceased Iṣṡla Ogunṡla, an acclaimed actor and leader of his own group that:

Investigator: Was that how you produced Efunsetan Aniwura?

I. Ogunṡla : Yes, Yes, Well, there seem to be advantages for each mode ... But with the improvisation of a play each production is different from others (19).

No matter which form of theatrical activity, with or without script, is embarked upon, the contributions of other artists and craftsmen such as scene painters, costume cutters, and mask builders, in the aesthetic process of production, are indispensable, hence they must have a clear apprehension of the master symbol.

#### A Brief Survey of the Scenographic Process

The exit point of the scenographer's work is the communication

with the director. They both develop and populate the virtual world. The scenographer continues by looking for the symbolic materials and items contained in the script and from the director, and if it is the collective theatre group's effort, he scans for material from the interactions of and with the group. He needs his research findings, the physical space, and information from the attended rehearsals prior to the commencement of the work. He develops and formalises his own edition of the master symbol from all those resources. An extra-ordinary amount of provision is required of the scenographer. The scenographer proves his worth in his special apprehension of the master symbol and that is his special forte: "He concertis his individual perception of the master symbol into a visual space-time expression that is an organic part of the total production" which takes place and is heard best in a special kind of "world", in an atmosphere totally free of the hampering realities of every day existence.<sup>(20)</sup> This is the world of virtual reality (21) the stage for which the scenographer's creations follow his interpretation of the blockings (22). The culmination of his ingenious contribution is the emergence of a four-dimensional "sculpture" which Appia once analyzed, abstractly as consisting of "the living and moving actor, the inanimate setting, costumes, other visual elements to be united together with the plastic lighting" (22). His principal mode of expression from now onward will be visual through colour sketches, floor plan and model" (23). His plan, like drawings meant as communicative devices, should

externalize his concepts. After this, the execution of the design concept follows. The communicative process now shifts base slightly towards the various artists / craftsmen more than hitherto, whereby the communication is a two-way traffic. For their thorough perception of the plans, specification and interrelationships of the executed scenography, they must have been part of the aesthetic process and have had their own mastery of the master symbol. This is facilitated by the formal production meetings augmented by individual conferences.

#### The Production Meeting

A production meeting is nothing less than a communicative get-together in which artistic information is exchanged in the process of play production. The sum of the remarks and interchanges that go on before and after the script has been decided upon. Or in the collective theatre groups, the efforts made in meetings at arriving at a concept to be developed further. Production meetings called at intervals, are made known to all concerned via a production calendar. All those departments ranging from the key production personnel to the business department do attend the meeting.

Moving near to the end of his task, the scenographer now can think of the development and refinement of lighting cues, he actually had been thinking along designing of the scenery. One of the crucial purposes of lighting is its close interrelationship with the actors'

movements which complete the scenographer's symbol and thereby bring the entire effort to fulfilment in the theatre or in any other performance venue.

### Aesthetic of Theatre as a Machine

The theatre building, the machinery within it and the human organization that runs the plant are all bent on the common goal: the produced play. All of the identified elements above constitute the determining factors for the effectiveness of the expressive function of theatrical aesthetics. Hence, it would be in the right direction to see theatre as a machine whose component parts must function together for maximum efficiency. This depends on the innovative ingenuity of the director, scenographer and the technologist. The scenographer needs the approval, patience, challenge, encouragement and cooperation of the director and of all other collaborating partners. The facilities of the plant, whether complex or simple, have a great influence on the scenographic translation works.

The Italian Theatre left for us a legacy of important scene shifting devices, most of which we have been unable to work with in Nigeria owing to the constraints of the planning of the few theatres inherited, in Nigeria.

Suffice it here to say that we are aware of the many theories on "aesthetic distance", the desirability of giving theatre the

elusive expressiveness of music, the primacy of the "laws" of design, the subjugation of the living actor to a production pattern, the subordination of the production to "formal beauty" (24), and, above all, the semiotic theories applied to the theatrical arts, especially to the area of costume design while their practical and pragmatic values to scenic design are still awaiting the approval of world-acclaimed Scenographers. The present writer would rather uphold the popular and the acclaimed views on the functional aesthetic theories of the theatre, which infer that all elements must be made to supplement one another for the expressive purpose of the production.

Consequently, since much of aesthetic theory is "scientifically dubious or highly personal" (25) for, while abstract beauty can be discussed abstractly, dramatic art, which is not abstract, cannot be subjected to abstract theories, and since ideas are concrete and could be tested concretely by the audience, then it stands to reason that theatre as an art, which employs words and living people, cannot be discussed in abstract terms. Moreover since dramatic art is a relative art, not an absolute art, it is intended for effects, derivable through multi-dimensional ways. These ways are but subject to changing social conditioning or circumstances such as the aftermath of warfare, exacerbated class conflicts, social tumults in the society, emancipation, reorientation and reconstructions. In such circumstances the insistence, for

instance, on the value of unity of style in any single production might become a subject for debate because the effects of unity or disunity are functions of varying and changing circumstances.

## THE THEATRE AND ITS ELEMENTS

### The Nature of Drama, Theatre and the Play

There seems to be synonymity; or analogy, in the nature of drama and the nature of the theatre.

### The Meaning of Drama, Theatre and Play

According to Webster's New World Dictionary, Drama means:

Literary composition that tells a story, usually of human conflict, by means of dialogue and action to be performed by actors; it is also the art, or profession of writing, acting or producing plays. It is plays collectively. And Theatre, amongst its many meanings, is the dramatic art or dramatic work; drama.

The great critic Ferdinand Brunetiere says that:

... Drama is the representation of the will of a man in conflict with the mysterious powers or natural forces which limit and belittle us. It is one of us thrown living upon the stage, there to struggle against fatality, against social law, against one of his fellow mortals, against himself if need be, against the ambitions, the interests, the prejudices, the folly, the malevolence of those who surround him.

John Gassner succinctly asserts that:

Drama is a way of regarding humanity, individually or collectively; a way of observing it in moments of maximum tension; an art of human



experience so that its dynamic processes - i.e. those that determine or change human destiny will become evident. It is a kind of poetry of action, or of process. Drama is a form of dynamics. In play, theatre is the art of "acting out" something; it even does not need a special building and stage...

The theatre becomes more complex as soon as it has complex matter, as a well defined play demands of it. Its contents and story have to be translated by a constantly changing and yet distinct stage picture for which it has to develop individual acting, expressive ensemble performance, acting levels and a background. The treatment of the dramatic material is highly influenced by such factors as variations in different times, places, the nature of the particular play, the qualifications of the ensemble members and the conditions of the physical stage form and structures.

#### The Drama and Theatre Forms.

Oren Parker and Craig Wolf are agreed that the theatrical form in its simplest description is the communication of ideas between two groups: performers and audience. In other words, the theatrical form means the assembly of audience and performers in a place - theatre - whereby the performers present the audiences with ideas which, in turn, constitute the performance. The performance can exist in a variety of physical forms.

The three major types of dramatic and theatrical forms are the literary form, or drama; the musical form, including Opera and

book musicals; the multi-media and for want of a better name, audio-visual form, which is non-verbal communication that places emphasis on sound and sight and not on the spoken word; for example, ballet, modern dance, and recent experiments in visual sound. And, all three types of theatrical forms of course, can be united into a new form called total theatre or joined in such combinations as dance-drama or choral-readings.

Opera, in the past, had a scenery that for most part was a background of theatrical realism and painted atmosphere. But today's Opera demands, in contrast, modern stage design's interpretive form, colour, and light which relates much more closely to the emotion of the music and the theme of the libretto. In the USA the musical theatre has two extremes: the light-hearted musical comedies and the heavier fare of "Grand Opera". The strong book-musical such as West Side Story becomes near - Opera in its musical dimension, with its "book" or "libretto" drawing a strong contemporary parallel to the classic Romeo and Juliet theme, retains a popular appeal through its more accessible use of dialogue than Opera's recitative.

The philosophy of modern scenography and theatre technology is manifested in the intricate stagings of musicals and operas of the past few decades which bring visual unity and non-verbal support to an already powerful theatrical form.

Illustrative of this are, the performances of Laterna Magika in the Czechoslovakian theatre of Josef Svoboda and his ilks which

have proved to be one of the novel concepts in audio-visual theatre. Here a new and imaginative theatrical form is created by the combination of the media of dance and pantomime with moving picture projections.

The recent penchant for spectacle, exemplified by such world hits as the productions of the Cats, Star Light Express, Phantom of the Opera and most recently the Freudianna ~~got the~~ audience dazzled with innovative style, brilliant pyrotechnics which testifies to the imperishable presence of the scenographer in the world of theatre.

In fact the need for the scenographer has become more acute for, as Parker and Craig have testified, the audio-visual theatre is now almost entirely a visual show in which technical advances in the handling of lights and the electronic productions of sound have opened new vistas in this type of theatrical experience.

And, for the future, already Jacques Polieri in Paris has proposed another audio-visual sound and sight theatre form in which the performers are totally eliminated or uplifted to an unprecedented and unexperienced dimensions by the use of light projections. We had better prepared ourselves now for the impending developments in those phenomenological and innovative areas before they become incomprehensible for the non-technological Nigerians. We, therefore, must follow the rest of the world on the race by training creative scenographers and skillful technicians who would need only to adjust to whatever new tasks arises for they would have had a solid general grounding in all the related fields.

### The Theatrical staging styles.

"Style" means "the arranging of stage movement and the elements of setting in order to create pictorial beauty".

Play production can be approached using two popularly known basic styles. These are the illusionistic-realistic, and the non-illusionistic, non-realistic styles of production. The modern Art History seems to see the two styles in terms of functions of the classical and the romantic periods. The two are as dissimilar in nature as the terms actor and performer are dissimilar to each other. While the actor acts or plays things of the past, assuming and transforming himself into the character of the aged personality, the performer is present and is original. He does not ape another person. He performs by himself.

### The Illusionistic, Representational Style.

In the illusionistic style, the production neither attempts to arrange experience nor stylize it, but to represent it. The aim here is to establish the illusion of naturalness, as though it photographed people who are unaware that they are acting a part in a play. Everything about the characters would be as it would normally be in a real situation, expressing themselves in quite natural speech and movement, especially in the historical and play where authenticity and accuracy are required, realistic treatment will be more convincing. In Scenographic terms, however, only photography or filming could offer the most perfect reproduction of realism. On the stage, the scenographer is limited and has to introduce some degree of stylization, resulting in artistic selection and arrangements of details of content, costume, movement, gesture, facial-play, backgrounds, as the films do.

Electric light enables observance of little gestures and the moderate facial play. The staging technique is preferred for plays of topical vitality, for social drama, which stresses the plain reality of common people and their environment and for comedy which demands a sharp focus, though stylized realism, but subtly done so as not to break the illusionism.

#### The Non-illusionistic Presentational Style.

The non-illusionistic, presentational, style seeks to enact the play primarily expressively, rather than to project literally the content purely as theatrical experience. The production depends more on formalism, stylization and on the use of symbol for an actual object, in short, "presentation" instead of "representation" of content. A complete suspension of disbelief and a child's capacity for "make-believe" is expected of the audience. The main concern of the style is to frankly confront the audience directly with the issues at stake but not with the imitation of reality. Here the playwright has the freedom of expressing his thought the way he chooses and using any method he deems most appropriate to convey his ideas. He can, among such methods, adopt the "story teller" or "chorus" or the "newspaper", "newscaster or reader" method to educate the audience in advance or during the course of the production of the inner thoughts and actions of the involved parties. This is typical of the Epic theatre. The Greek theatre is the best example of presentational theatre style of the Western world in which actors performed most of their works on a

platform (the eccyclema), facing the chorus. The permanent setting called scene building backed the platform. The actor was not within the set which had served only a suggestive function rather than an environmental purpose.

The bulk of the world's drama of the classic, oriental, neo-classic, romantic, expressionistic genres is non-realistic while the post-Ibsen bulk of drama is realistic in presentation of production. Scenery has varied from light, to medium, through stark and complete departure from realism, for example, the 'logs in The Raft, the "Polo Club" in Opera Wonyosi and even the mountain in Langbodo were stark abstractions, while the Resident's house in Death and the King's Horseman, the market stalls and the entire picturisation were a total departure from reality, but yet reminiscent of the anticipated background. Symbols can also be used at such instance of detailing a scenic background to enhance the illusion. As visual art works, scenery styles conform to the same degree of reality as do production styles. Scenery style, indeed, is the most important visual element supporting the overall production style. According to Gassner, the fact remains that drama has generally combined illusory and non-illusory elements quite freely without consistency or adherence to pure aesthetic theory.

Finally, we may blend elements from different styles to form a new one, as in the "Living Newspaper" which combines realistic scenes with non-realistic ones, dramatic vignettes with lectures or demonstrations.

A good Scenographer should be capable of designing different kinds of plays in the various known styles and for the different kinds of physical theatre forms, structures and venues.

#### Types of Drama and Theatre Productions.

Drama is formally classified into four groups: tragedy, melodrama, comedy and farce. It is possible, however, to add a fifth one which may be given a loose denomination as "serious drama." This, like the other kinds of new plays born in the last one hundred and fifty years, does not fit into any of those old four categories.

#### Tragedy

Tragedy or tragic plays look at life not only seriously but in a mood reminiscent of exalted fascination. Typical of tragedy or tragic plays that exalt our spirits with pride as a man who could venture to haunt his spiritual destiny in spite of the challenges of the cosmos are great plays of heroic content or religious or historical festival plays. John Gassner, classified, these into:

- a) Classic Greek Tragedy: Synonymous with the Classic Greek Drama is tragedy. It has a compact structural unity of time and place.
- b) Neo-Classic Tragedy: Though it has dropped the choral or lyric elements, yet it is similar to Greek tragedy, and in the observance of the unities of time and place it is even stricter. For all its classic formality, however, neo-classic tragedy is romantic and is most effectively performed by the French.

In Nigeria, perhaps the staging of Oba Koso by Duro Ladipo, an historical play, and Zulu Sofola's King Emene, The Wedlock of the Gods produced at the Arts Theatre, University of Ibadan, between August and October 1976 respectively could be cited as examples of this type. The themes of these plays called for settings reflective of the prevailing tragic moods in which the agglomeration of geographical and environmental details made pungent comments. Stylisation of the scenic elements and the infinite changes in stage lighting - subtly - to evoke the culturally threatening atmosphere could be fully exploited. May Saidat Odofin's production of Wole Soyinka's The Bacchae of Euripides in July 1985, may be one of the best examples of the scenographic adaptation of a classical play for the contemporary Nigerian stage. The various effects deployed, include the romantically painted backdrops, gauzes and wings which formed complements to other components to mellow the tragic intonations.

### Comedy

Some plays that evoke laughter could easily be tagged comedy. The way of looking at life with the mind but not so much with passion is the central theme of comedy. With such light-heartedness, smiles, if not laughter, makes life easier, lighter and more tolerable. The audience are encouraged to make detached observations instead of being emotionally involved.

Another kind of comedy gives us more thoughtful laughter as we see sophisticated characters making a game of their disagreements trying to impose logic and philosophy on the changing patterns of human relation. Yet, comedies of great poetic or intellectual refinement may contain episodes of sheer horse-play.



c) Aristophanic Comedy:

This style also known as "Old Comedy" is hyperactive, exaggerated and boisterous. The style may be described as poetic burlesque or farce with a strong resemblance to the musical comedy. The basic style is non-illusionistic. Contemporary musical comedy and the Gilbert and Sullivan Operettas, American Musical Comedy, musical revue are examples of this style.

b) Non-Aristophanic Comedy: This New Comedy type was started in the Hellenistic period in Rome. It is non-lyrical, non-fantastic, and unpolitical. It has properties of comedy of character, domestic comedy, romantic comedy and finally of comedy of manners. It resurfaced in the medieval "interludes", Renaissance Comedy, Commedia dell'arte, Spanish cap-and-sword plays, Elizabethan romantic comedy, "Comedy of humours," the comedies of Moliere and his school, Restoration Comedy, 18th Century Comedy and thereafter. All lend themselves to staging in non-illusionistic styles using presentational devices. Perhaps, our experiment with The Royal Jester by Smith Cooper directed by Sam Ayivie at the Arts Theatre, University of Ibadan in 1986, qualifies for this genre. One of the challenges of the production was the depth of research demanded for the development of a "local colour" concept of a 15th to 16th century European setting to the embrace of the Nigerian audience, as designed and executed by the present writer.

Melo drama

Melodrama has much in common with farce. The tasks of productions of this kind are exaggeration, a predominance of physical

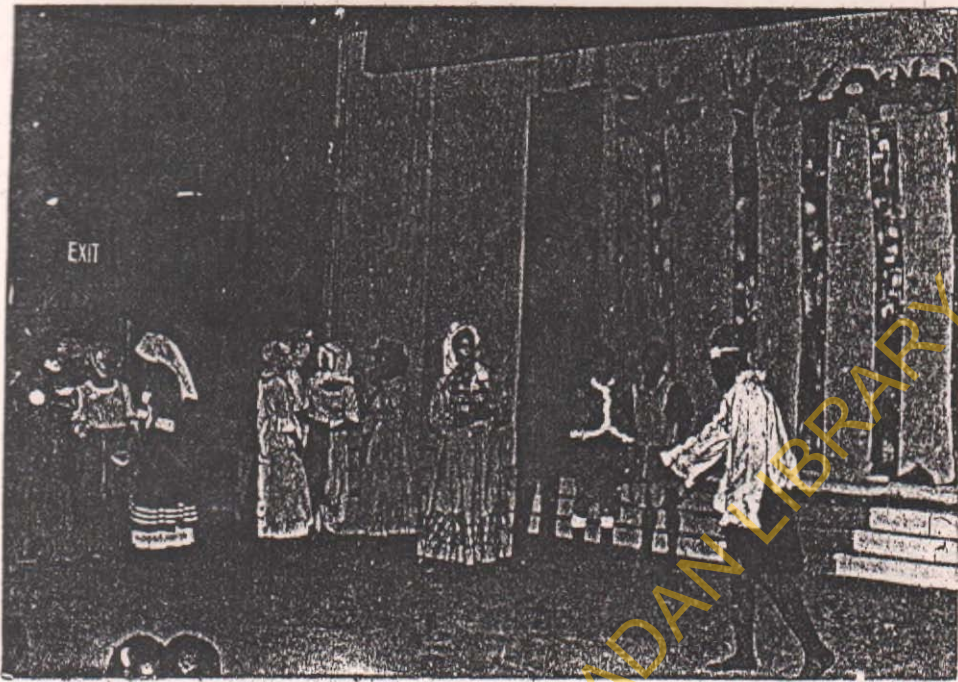


FIG 41: THE ROYAL ESTER IN HIS SCENIC BACKGROUND



FIG 42: THE ROYAL ESTER IN ANOTHER SCENIC BACKGROUND

movement, concentration on action without weighty characterization and realistic social topics. Here fluidity and swiftness, stress, tempo and atmosphere are the propelling attributes.

The musical Opera, dance-drama and ballet treat us to forgetting our everyday drabness, and permit the blood of romance, conveying sensuous beauty charged with fine feeling and ecstatic lofty ideals, to flow through the marrows of our bodies and our brains and to lure us into a brighter mood of a burdenless life rather than to be under the stranglehold of dull facts. We also have many recent plays which confront us with the disruption of the modern world and at the same time expect us to laugh and to tremble at the cruelty and terror lurking behind its meaningless chatter. We have the plays of realism, romance, and disruption as additional kinds of plays which are parallels to the older two extremes of tragedy and comedy.

#### Farce

This kind of play presents the miscalculations and deliberate schemes of human beings in such a funny, ridiculous manner that we can get nothing less than hearty laughter, especially when we perceive ourselves as buffoons and fools for taking life unduly seriously. Farce is basically a more obvious way of evoking laughter than comedy. Its farcial spirit has a grosser and broader comic variance. It is laughter for the sake of laughter, not minding how stupid or arbitrary the object of the action appears. In this kind of farce we are presented with gross exaggeration of incidents and character.

Moses Olaiya Alawada - Baba Sala - and many of his imitators are the patronizers of this kind of play in the Nigerian contemporary

e) The Medieval Morality Drama: This is exemplified by the medieval morality plays like Everyman. It personifies abstractions like Vice, Good Deeds, and Riches and uses them as the characters of the play: Its nature is allegorical. In the Nigerian theatre there exist at least two versions of this universal play which have become well known. One is Wale Ogunyemi's Eniyan and the other is the late Duro Ladipo's Eda. It is didactic and ethical drama, in the sense that it demonstrates some lessons. Hubert Ogunde's "S'eranko - S'enia" is another example to show the essence of 'man and the universe' and the powers existing between the heavenly beings and the worldly deities. The challenges for scenography was the creation of a set to portray the mythological and ritualistic manifestations.

f) Romantic drama: is exemplified by the medieval mystery and saint plays, The Elizabethan drama, the adventures plays of the Golden Age in Spain, and the later works of Schiller, Goethe, Hugo Rostand and Ibsen of the pre-realistic plays. In form, it allows for freedom of movement. It is generous in adherence to the unities of time and space. It permits a liberal mixture of comedy, horse-play, tragedy, melodrama and lyricism, and it is not formal. The emphasis is placed on expressiveness rather than verisimilitude, it deploys all non-illusionistic devices. This style is essentially exemplified by the works of the late Chief Hubert Ogunde, Geoffrey Axworthy's production of Amos Tutuola's The Palm Wine Drinkard in 1963 and Nkem Nwanko's Danda in 1964 respectively.

The elements of commedia dell'arte that surfaced in the

neo-classic French staging in which dance developed into ballet, could be found in Dapo Adelugba's production of Langbodo by Wale Ogunyemi; in February 1977, as the Nigerian equivalent of the style. Adelugba's use of subtle mutations of acting, singing, dancing and mime required equivalent scenographic contributions for the setting for this universal play to reflect the heterogeneous cultures and traditions of such a 'vast country' like Nigeria. The primary problem of this type for contemporary productions is that of fluidity; for the episodes must flow so freely and continuously that theatre magic would be ensured. The set must provide a variety of acting areas whether through a permanent setting with different acting levels, or as an easily transformable unit set, or several scenes on a revolving stage, or a space with stage platforms and an ingenious use of light.

g) Realistic drama: Its nature is well represented by the features of illusionism. It adheres strictly to the peep-hole theory that the characters observed on the stage are non-theatrical. The production must create a sense of verisimilitude. Its arrangement of life on the stage must seem lifelike and plausible: whatever artifice or heightening is employed must be made to appear unobtrusive or natural. For examples, in Ifoghale Amata's The Witches produced at the University of Ibadan Arts Theatre in June 1976, the illusionistic-realistic design concept adopted portrayed the nostalgic and

intricate intimacy between the underworld, and the ordinary world, particularly the occultic Nigerian societies. It was presented in a central perspective method of the Baroque theatre.

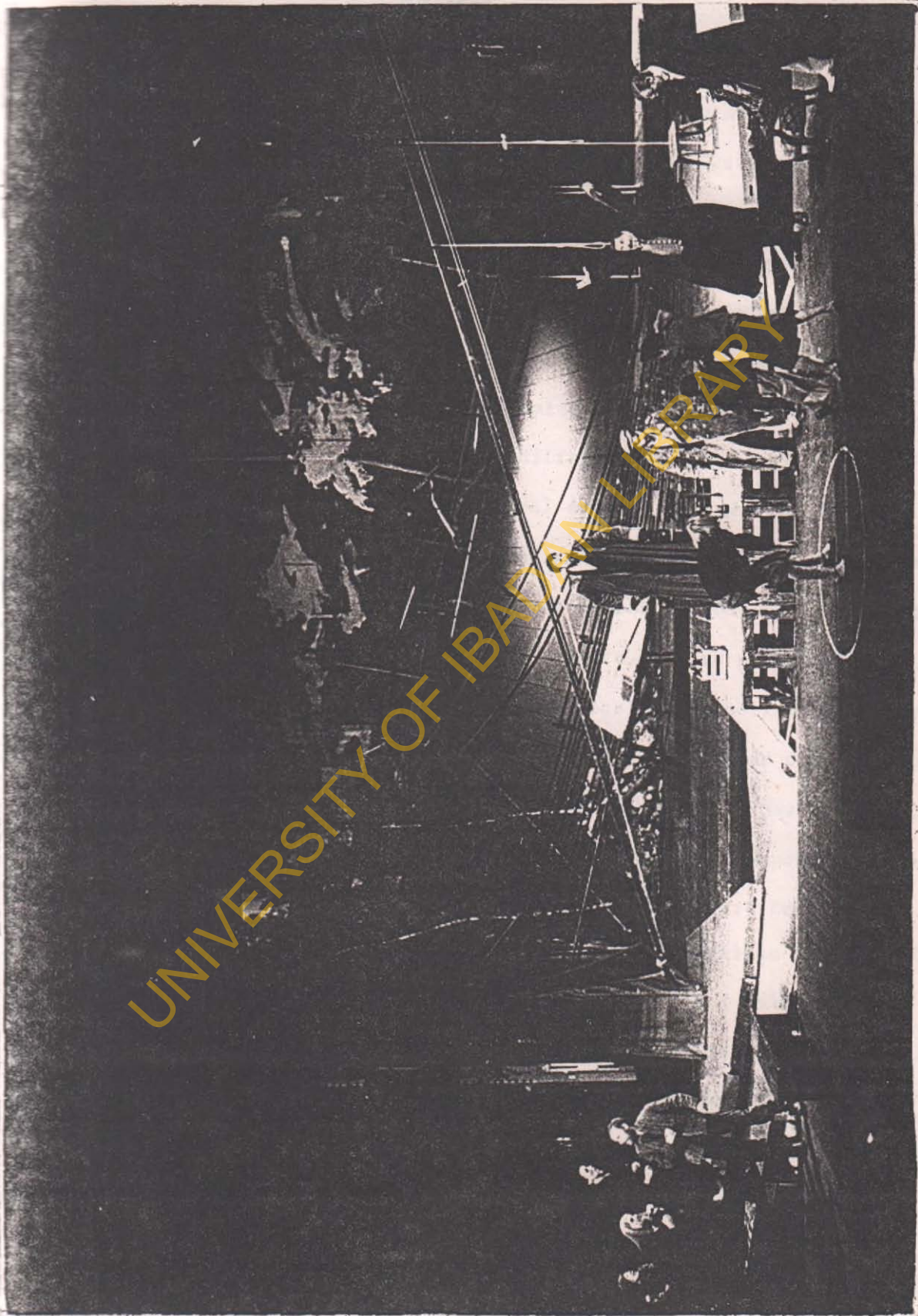
(b) Naturalism: The tenets of naturalism follow closely those of realistic staging, and strives for greater verisimilitude, with less selectivity so that the stage may be more cluttered up with details: actors ignore playing on a stage. Literal "truthfulness" is an example of the adoption of this style as found in the staging of Yoruba historical Efunsetan Aniwura by Ishola Ogunsola at the Arts Theatre, University of Ibadan in September 1976.

(i) Selective Realism: Selective realism evolves from the reaction against excessive naturalism. It selects its realistic effects. Impression of reality, with only as much realism as is necessary or intended. The effect is achievable through common sense, taste and recognition that theatre creates illusion, not duplication. Concentration on the meaning, or point, "spine", of the dramatic experience and economical and clear expression of the same is essential. Perhaps, an acceptable equivalent example in the Nigerian staging using the style was Roy Ikpa's production of The Raft by J.P. Clark, as was produced in the Arts Theatre, University of Ibadan in June 1976. The uniqueness of productions of Eugene Ionesco's Exit The King by Femi Fatoba, Ibrahim Hussein's, Kinjeketile by Yemi Ajibade, Wole Soyinka's The Bacchae of Euripides by Saidat Odofin are living examples.

2) Symbolist drama: The Symbolist Staging grew out of the reaction against naturalism and selective realism in the 1890s. The apostles of the style, in the main, were Maeterlinck and Andreyev, Appia and Craig. The concentration of the style was on atmosphere and symbolization of reality, that, of the inner reality of the play, instead of realizing a concrete background or environment. The style is basically suggestive. In its extreme form, symbolism frankly turns one or more characters into symbols of some force of factor and their behaviour is deduced by what they symbolize. Symbolism can be illusionistic or non-illusionistic.

A climax was attained during and after the First World War when symbolism and stylisation led to expressionistic staging in various forms as in schematization of background to convey the mechanization of acting and of life by mass production. Another version of the approach is the "Jessnertreppen" - (Jessner stairs) reflective of the name of the inventor-director, Leopold Jessner, in which vehemence and fiery declaration in the performance, with figures leaping down and running up platforms, of pyramiding themselves out of the darkness towards a lonely figure on the apex or peak of the platform or other object, is the characteristic feature. The style is most appropriate for dramas of social conflict, revolutionary mass action and personal violence.

The third form of the style is characterised by deliberate distortion and fantastication. Examples are the distortion of a tree



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Fig. 43. AN EXAMPLE OF AN EPIC THEATRE SET: BERTOLT BRECHT'S: THE CHALK CIRCLE



demonstrational drama, as found in the American "Living Newspaper" and in the "didactic plays" of Bertolt Brecht. Epic theatre is characterised by telling a story about central characters surrounded by social situations which they exemplify. The acting is basically presentational mingled with stylized satire. The major concern of Epic theatre, is not aesthetic unity, but for the larger milieu which consists of diverse strata, represented in many episodes, exemplifying many trends. The different episodes are treated with different styles, one might be symbolic, another factual (with statistical data or documentary films flashed on a screen another nearly realistic. Treadmill could be deployed for rolling out some of the episode as frank demonstrations of some point and socially related vignettes. The stage effect is more presentational, theatrical and functional but not than aesthetical or symbolistical. The dynamics of the industrial world is presented in a manifested predilection for mechanical contrivances exposing mechanics. This style has fascinated the present writer to the point of adopting its essential component elements to the production of his play, "The Good Ideology for Naira Republic." Also, epic-theatre traits are evinced in some of Femi Osofisan's plays such as Who's Afraid of Solarin? Similarly, Bode Sowande tried to flirt with the style in his Flamingo. However, so far, Dapo Adelugba's 1988 production of Opera Wonyosi (Wole Soyinka) and 1977 production of Langbodo (Wale Ogunyemi exemplify to muster the various elements

of the style together into a swinging kind of psychedelic, dynamic, matured, theatrical experience as witnessed in his production of Wale Soyinka's Opera Wonyosi for the fortieth anniversary of the University of Ibadan at convocation in November 1988, and in his earlier production of Wale Ogunyemi's Langbodo for FESTAC 1977. Adelugba's directorial approach is certainly different from Soyinka's which seeks to integrate the aesthetics of the symbolists and psycho-analytical theatre schools. In fact, those traits of the so-called 'psycho-drama' for the psychological therapy have been found already in Soyinka's Guerilla theatre experiments at Ile-Ife in the 60s-70s. Still, Epic treatment does not have to be harnessed to any particular kind of politics, so long as it follows the philosophy that theatre can - and should - convey the various elements of a social complex. The recreational theatre nurtured by most community (Arts Council), Amateur - and Workshop theatre groups often shows some psychological overtones too, even though their artistic successes are usually limited, which affects their box-office returns, which however is not their strong aspiration. The groups, nevertheless deserve commendation for they serve as a strong source of audience development for the other theatre groups.

m) Formalism: By turning all forms of expressionism into "theatricalism", with the aim of theatrical effects, but not realism, 'Formalism' could be achieved. It strives to reduce the setting to a merely formal background in a decorative, but modifiable mode while

It is subordinated to the playing area. The enactment of the play is on an unenclosed playing space for creating the effect of "theatre" instead of a display of a bit of life in a box-set. Jacques Copeau attained the most remarkable success with various formalistic attempts in his Theatre du vieux Colombier. Other variations of formalism found in the stage background consist of simple draperies, a few archways, backed with curtains that can be opened to reveal some vistas, a terrace or garden, while the action proceeds before the archways. Ill-equipped theatres can favourably use the style of formalism to a great advantage. The contribution of the scenographic approach to this production is the convincing distillation of period, mood and place in a setting that aspires to train the mind to imagination by the use of unconventional and unremarkable austere scenic elements.

a) Constructivism: The uniqueness of the movement is characterised by plain theatrical action, presentational acting and settings which consist of numerous levels produced by ramps, scaffolds, stairways, girders, and floors, such as found in the scaffolds of a building under construction or in machine shops designed purely for functional uses. Obvious banishment of illusionism is evident in such features as the playing of forest scenes on girders, ramps and ladders, evoking dynamic "bio-mechanical" rather than introspective behavioural responses; the general effect being conventional instead of illusionistic and the ideal manifestation of the theatre's ability to

reflect the tense, active and extrovert world of the machine age. For Soviet Russia especially, the style was beneficial in her bid to catch up with the Industrial Revolution as every new machine or factory was regarded as a step toward socialist reconstruction. America also welcomed the style as it touched on her industrial civilization. May be, in order to boost the industrial growth and awareness for technological advancement, a so-called third-world country like Nigeria should explore this theatrical style, too, at least in its "modified constructivism" mode. This modified version of constructivism expresses the streamlined modernists' modernism in architecture in which metal and wood play significant roles in scenic design. Stairs, ramps and balconies enhance effective movement and plasticity in acting. The normal, the actual, and the "modified" constructivism died soon as a movement that did not attract the masses, not even in Russia.

o) Theatricalism: The works of Tairov, Vakhtangov, Cocteau, the Habima Theatre and others are excellent examples of theatricalism. It induces creativity in scenographers and directors alike. For instance, Tairov created a symphony of movements by using choreographic principles in the acting, leading to high stylization and theatricality in the projection of the play. Habina Theatre's grotesque technique used between 1918 and 1924 was labelled bizarre, sensible and intelligent. Vakhtangov's technique has been credited as playful and colourful orientalism and complete joyous theatricalism.

Theatricalism, as used today, can be infinitely resourceful, if the danger of turning it into a fast formula for all production can be recognised.

p) Demonstrational Style: The best, latest and most successful example of the application of theatricalism is the American "Living-Newspaper" style. This style avails itself of every device of the theatre, so long as it serves to exhibit and clarify social or economic matters, to produce frankly demonstrational theatre, for a purpose rather than for its own sake.

Yinka Adedeji's production in April, 1984, of Barrie Stavis's The Man Who Never Died was a successful attempt at this style which called for a scenographic concept that allows for the maximum audience's involvement. The solution found was the creation of a setting whose seeming visual austerity helped to draw the attention of the audience on the actor and, as the critics say, to "allow the play to speak for itself."

q) Epic, Demonstrational, Constructivism, Impressionistic - Combined: "The Good Ideology for Naira Republik", the 1983 Departmental production of the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Ibadan, could be classified as the amalgam of the Epic, Demonstrational, Expressionistic, Constructivist, theatricalism, combined, which demanded a Scenographic concept that would facilitate an unbroken dramatic flow, peculiar to the episodic nature of the theme of the play that centres

on the Nigerian life. The solution for this was designing and construction of a revolving stage (disc) to aid the achievement of the fluidity to avert the distracting long scene changing that could arise. This experiment proved that the traditional building materials— mud, wood, foliage, palm branches, sticks, ropes and iron-scrap—are unique.

r) Dance Production: "The Revenge," a dance performance created and produced by Oduke Sarkeyfio in December 1977 demanded a scenographer's contribution that ensured absolute freedom of movement of the dancers/actors on the stage. The solution was to carve up the stage floor and space volume into interesting functional, unclustered patterns large enough for dance purposes, and the use of stage lighting and audio-visual effects cannot be over exploited.

Another dance, "Nonyelum" by Fidelma Okwesa, was produced in 1978, at the Arts Theatre, University of Ibadan. This Dance Drama called for a scenic background in which the elements of colour, mass, line, pattern and projections lasted far beyond the realm of theatre.

s) Oriental: The oriental theatre is typically characterised in the main by stylisation and symbolism. Therefore, when considering reproduction or adaptation of oriental theatre on the Nigerian stage, the determining factors might include the communication problem of clarity to the ears, production facilities, and the cultural relevance.

Invariably, we can summarise that the motives for man's desire to go to the theatre, to watch any of the several kinds of plays are to experience theatre in reality, for colour and romance, for exaltation, for a hearty laugh, for thoughtful laughter or an understanding of the disruption of the modern world.

Each kind of play is a reflection of the playwright's attitude and view toward life. The playwright uses those personal experiences to shape the intent and mode of production.

Our cursory overview of the predominant styles of the theatre show how infinite the resources of our beloved art are. Theatre affords a flexible and still developing means of expression. Its means transform, translate and augment the written play, into living and dynamic dramatic experience in the hands of creative artists, who fuse together a number of elements such as a stage, in general, but not always in a theatre building; the scenery, costuming and lighting, with the acting and directing and other elements that demand the contributory services of other experts for proper tailoring together of all with organizational zeal.

While the majority of Nigerian plays of the 20th century had been produced along the realistic style, using mostly the proscenium theatre stage form, yet most of the set-design and sceneries for them have lacked the fervour and the attributes of a "dwelling place" that Jean Cocteau has identified. Thus, the prevailing back-cloth painting in general use, was neither of a perfect realistic setting nor of the naturalistic style meant to depict folkloristic themes

and motifs. And yet the style has long reached its peak moments and in fact had overstayed its time; hence the call for a revolt against it on Nigerian stages as elsewhere in the theatre arts conscious world where the successive styles of the symbolists to modernists approaches have created magical spells on the audience globally.

Testifying, Hugh Morrison in 1963 in his article, "Stage and Settings Today," states: "...Naturalistic interiors had reached their height in the theatre" and that "good taste was rampant" and that "theatrical designers were exploiting the elements of space, contrast, colour, and level to their fullest extent." Morrison then challenged the contemporary theatre designers to make more use of modern painting techniques, and to think more like sculptors and that they must cultivate a more selective eye and think more imaginatively in terms of only what is necessary for the play.

Even though the need for imaginative and creative scenography for the Nigerian theatre has been recognised by the rather few conscious minds, nevertheless, the practice of scenography in Nigeria has yet to be developed. One of the few conscious men is Agbo Folarin, the painter/artists, who had suggested that "Scenography is not just the ability to put rostra and flats on stage but the art of the stage architect, the scenery, lighting and costume designer brought together." But, invariably, the problem of unimaginative theatrical designs could be traced further to the doorsteps of the Nigerian directors who have always accepted



whatever the untrained, amateur designers presented them. The results were mostly art works that could only be classified as non-illusionistic by accident. Since this situation was not only peculiar to the Nigerian circumstances alone, as it has happened everywhere, so Sean Kenny lamented over the situation when he states that: "the acceptance of art in the traditional formulas and from the standard moulds" was a "... dangerous habit pushed on us by the conditioning of the experts who are too often satisfied with a few flats set up as the old box set". (48). Kenny added that the more limitations imposed on a theatre company, the more they try to "improve" on the standard form of presentation rather than seeking new innovative forms. The relevance of this to the Nigerian situation is particularly to be felt on the ill-fatedly conceived theatre structures of the universities. The educational theatre which among others is to serve as a tool for imparting knowledge, to help in the development of cultural values, as part of a programme in general education, has not been adequately equipped to meet the obligations. Worse off are Travelling Theatre Groups which have to adapt their performance techniques and styles to extremely varied staging and physical conditions of the village, the make-shift platform stage of the small town community centres, the courtyards of well appointed private residences, the dance floors of night clubs, hotels and restaurants as opposed to the regular proscenium theatres of the secondary schools and universities. Instead of these groups to seek for new forms of presentations they

942

have succeeded only in evolving "remarkable conceptual unity in staging techniques" - which they derive from what Jeyifo has termed "the basic aesthetic premise of a non-illusionistic, non-mimetic approach."<sup>(49)</sup> This is visible in the accidental stylisation of decor and scenic-properties effort of the troupes. Deducing from the discussions held with some of the groups, we gathered that the travelling companies themselves are much aware of the consequences of the restraints offered by the physical limitations of the performance venues on the realisation of their performances. Nevertheless, they have come out with an interesting combination of conventions of staging and movements which are fairly well fixed. But, unfortunately, the conventions have best ensured that whatever the production context or dramatic material, there is a set of standardised patterns of movement and gesture into which they can be adapted." (50)

And so, the productions become more improvisational and extemporised theatre for which scenery may not be a necessary "dwelling place."

While Morrison and Kenny were both commenting on the English theatre situation of the 1960s, Agbo Folarin and Biodun Jeyifo were restating the circumstances prevalent in the Nigerian theatre of the 1980s, showing that there is little change in the state of scenography and the theatre of Nigeria, up to the present time. We shall now look more closely at the selected illustrative plays and analyse them to buttress the views expressed in this chapter.

End Notes to Chapter Seven

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41. Gassner, Op. Cit., p.57
42. Op. Cit., p. 61
43. Ibid. p. 62
44. Op. Cit. pp. 65 - 67
45. Hugh Morrison "Stage and Settings" quoted in S. Hunter's "Contemporary English Scenographer Sean Kenny" pp. 20 - 21
46. Ibid.
47. Agbo Folarin: "Modern Scenography in Western Nigeria" in Nigeria-Magazine, Vol. 53, No. 2, June 1985, pp. 14 - 24
48. Sean Kenny quoted by Hunter in "Contemporary English Scenographer"
49. Biodun Jeyifo: The Yoruba Popular Travelling Theatre of Nigeria, Op. Cit., p. 17
50. Ibid. p. 19

## CHAPTER EIGHT

SCENOGRAPHIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL ANALYSIS: DESIGN AND  
REALISATION OF THE ILLUSTRATIVE PLAYSPlay Analysis

From the long list of productions that the present writer has worked on in the past fifteen years, he has chosen five illustrative plays to buttress the viewpoints expressed in the study on the need for modern technology in Nigerian theatre. The plays are:

1. The Raft by J.P. Clark;
2. Madmen and Specialists by Wole Soyinka,
3. Death and the King's Horseman by Wole Soyinka,
4. Opera Wonyosi by Wole Soyinka,
5. The Good Ideology for Naira Republik by James Oluşola Aborişade.

The Raft by John Pepper Clark

John Pepper Clark wrote in the early sixties The Raft which was first produced in April 1964. Then came Soyinka to take the role of stage ministrant and he presented it to the delight of no less a personality than His Excellency Leopold Sedar Senghor, a special guest of honour, on that ceremonious occasion on the 9th of April, 1964, at the Arts Theatre, University of Ibadan. It was the world premiere production of the play.

Wole Soyinka, the director, starred in the production along with Segun Oluşola, Yemi Lijadu and Ralph Opara. They were the four

characters that first depicted Kengide, Olotu, Ogro and Ibobo of the play, written in poetic form.

The play is made up of four scenes. The settings and effects have been described by Clark thus:

Scene One: Tide - Wash

Night on a creek in the Niger Delta. In the milky light the shadow of a cabin is squatting on a raft (which may as well be the board or stage itself). Through the near end of the cabin showing a cross-section like a pyramid and a shade darker, one or two figures can be seen lying about, half asleep and with yet an inner shade of dark to them. Above them flickers a lamp. Outside is the shadow of a man shuffling and mumbling something to himself. The others would like him to stop but he seems altogether lost in some discovery known only to him. (1)

We quickly discovered that Ogro, indeed, "has made some discovery" which he soon made known to all. He exclaims: "Now listen to me. I think we are adrift." This he confided first in Ibobo, who, of course, could not hold it to himself but quickly alerted others:

"Olotu, Kengide, are you asleep still? Wake up, We are adrift."  
(p. 93).

They go round and round in circles and soon get on each other's nerves but for the pacifying and imploring Ogro who sues for sanity as they continue to entertain themselves with inane obscenities. (Olotu has already whipped out a bamboo pole and is all set to punt (p.101).

Ibobo: Stop! You stir up more trouble (p. 102)

Ogro: Oh, doesn't he know? Ten such poles tied end to end will not plumb the floors of Osikoboro?



FIG 44: THE WRITER'S 'VISION' OF THE SETTING FOR THE RAFT

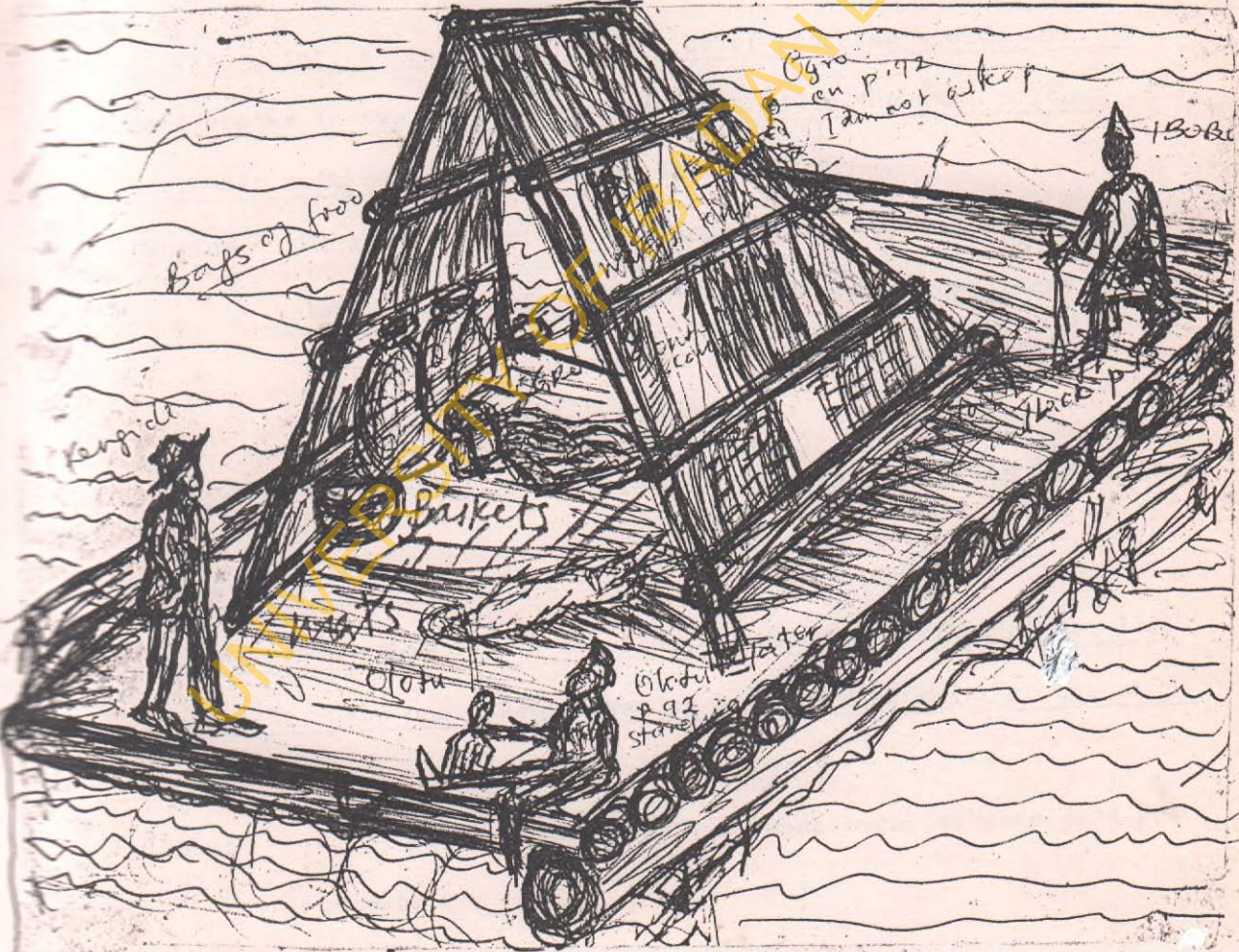


FIG 45: THE WRITER'S FREEHAND SKETCH OF THE RAFT



Olotu flounders on with the plumbing, all the others looking on, each in his own shade of shock - till the first scene ends in a gentle fade out.

Scene Two - Wind Lash

Ogro: And we are water-logged here in Osikoboro - the confluence of all the creek. (p. 104).

Kengide: It's moving. It really is moving. (p. 111)

Ogro: Now give a loud shout, boys, our raft is moving again - behind a big bellyful of tornado - oh - shout for joy.

At this point, a loud crack, then a brief cracking sound, and the raft breaks in two, the portion with the billowing sail pulling furiously away, on it is Olotu (p. 111).

Kengide: We are all adrift. And lost Ogrope, we all adrift and lost. (All this while Olotu, now swept completely out of sight, has not stopped crying: Help, I can't leave the logs (p. 112).

And so the raft drifts on till late afternoon into Scene Three.

A  
Scene Three: Iron and Fire:

Late Afternoon: Low slants the sun, and the raft drifts on (p. 113)  
(Meanwhile, Ogro has taken to waving his tattered shirt to the ship)  
p. 117).

Ibobo: Ogro, Ogro, are you mad? Oh what uncalled home dead has come to him.

Ogro has already flung down his instrument and plunged overboard)

(p. 118).

**Kengide:** ... I think he has got caught in the mortal arms of that stern - wheeling engine.

And so they dispersed one by one until we hear the call of land in Scene Four when the raft makes for port while the day was almost gone.

Scene Four: Call of Land (p. 119)

Day almost gone and the raft makes for port ...

The two survivors reach the destination of which they are prevented from landing by a sudden fog which descends over the harbour'.

**Ibobo:** Now we are two, I said it is left us two now, whereas only this morning we were four out of a happy gang that started out seven strong. I hope we make port safely. (p. 119)  
I can't tell where we are.

**Kengide:** It's the fog; fog has come upon us

**Ibobo:** Fog? I saw lights only a wink ago

In that direction. Now, I can't even see the Mirror in my hand. What shall we do now? Now, what shall we do?

Burutu is over there. I know it - I smell it and we are going past like this, unable to stop, seeing nothing, nothing - Oh hear the hooting of owls (p. 132)

Oh, mother, my mother, won't I give you burial home?

**Kengide:** Shout, shout, Ibobo, let's shout

Bobo: To the World - we woodsmen lost in the bush.

We are adrift, adrift, and lost, Ee - ee - ee

Both together hand in hand, one holding the flickering lamp, the other  
cupping his mouth shout. together into the night, into the fog, over the  
waters, that long squeal as used when women go wood gathering and by  
nightfall have still not found their way .. Ee .... ee ... ee ...  
at the same time and above all there is the long hooting of horns and  
of men crying and calling out to one another in fear and in the distance  
and rush) END.

According to Ben Obumselu's review of the play, "they were set  
on a "Symbolic Voyage, pointless and mean in its detail!"

Soon the crew discover that they are adrift,  
they get on each other's nerves, go round  
and round in circles, entertain one another  
with inane obscenities, are despatched one by  
one by violent tides and man's cruelty. When  
two survivors reach the destination of which  
they have dreamt so wistfully, they are  
prevented from landing by a sudden fog which  
descends over the harbour. ( 2 )

Obumselu could see and had found other meanings in Clark's The Raft. He believes that Clark's intentions are simpler and more universal and compares them by saying: "they are rather like Beckett's Waiting for Godot. The whirlpool of Olokobora, and Ibobo's crie de coeur: "we are adrift, adrift and lost" have a distinctly existential ring. And, "there is a further element" - Obumselu continues, "some of Mr. Clark's ideas about public entertainment provoke one to remind him that when we go to the theatre we expect to have a stimulating evening. No matter

need be regarded as morally improper. But there is the artistic test .... risqué materials, like everything else, must be taken up in an imaginative whole and were transformed into the stuff for imaginative delight."

Obumselu, however, did not stop there. He claimed that Clark has neither close observation of <sup>the</sup> nature of society nor possesses an ear for the music of poetry and that the usual critique of Clark's plays is that "he has not quite found the kind of verse suitable for the presentation of dramatic action." etc.

Yet, Obumselu evaluated the production as a considerable success, although it was by no means a triumph and he was of the view that Soyinka, as producer, "over reached himself once" but "otherwise the production and the set were unobtrusively effective" for a production that had the advantage of a spirited and felt interpretation."

But John Pepper Clark considered Obumselu's critique "a castigation of himself". In a later response, Clark, in his peppery way, unravelling the mysterious obscurity purportedly found in his work, nearly "spat fire for fire" and in an almost threatening manner avows:

"Let me assure Mr. Obumselu here and now that I considered the matter most sufficiently. The characters in The Raft and in other plays of mine are neither "poetic personages" nor the kind of Cockney he has in mind. They are ordinary Ijaw persons working out their life's tenure at particular points on the

stage. And they are speaking in their own voices and language to an audience, members of whom they expect to reach with a reasonable degree of sympathy and conviction ...

Clark continues:

In other words, the task for the Ijaw, and I dare say, any Nigerian or African artist, writing in a European Language like English is one of finding the verbal equivalent for his characters created in their original and native context ... And this is a matter of rhetoric, the artistic use and conscious exploitation of language for purposes of persuasion and pleasure. (3)

If that was all John Pepper Clark was trying to tell his audience, then the worthiness of the exercise of producing the play would have become debatable. The seeming or relative barrenness and, perhaps, the obscurity in the successive moments of the play have misled, and could still mislead the audience to make different deductions but, perhaps, not the one intended by the playwright. Though there is no crime in that and, in fact, that, in essence, is one of the worthy attributes of a good play.

But, some people have gone to interpret the play as meaning the Nigerian body-politic of the post-independence years in which Kengide, Olotu, Ibobo and Ogorope have been misconstrued to mean the representative tribes or regions of the federation. Olotu who dispersed away from the raft - "Nigeria" - was prophetically seen as the portended secession of the Eastern Region that became Biafra. What could have been more a reliable interpretation than that for the true existence of Biafra, even for the length of time it did exist, and as it does

still, in the minds of her most committed architects?. Can't we see even Femi Osofisan as one of such interpreters if we read the programme notes of his Another Raft, a play, after two decades of the demise of Biafra, which had its premiere at the Arts Theatre, University of Ibadan, from June 9 to June 13, 1987? Writing in protest to, or as a critique of, Clark's The Raft, Osofisan states:

In 1964, the Nigerian Playwright, J.P. Clark, now known as Clark-Bekederemo, wrote his play The Raft which came to symbolize the troubled situation of our newly independent country. So many events have occurred since then to take the nation many times just on the brink of sinking, but miraculously we have kept afloat. Nevertheless, even as the decades drifted past, the storms have not ceased, nor have we been able to steer ourselves out of the fog of those initial errors. More and more obvious, as the '80s roll to a close, the need seems to have become truly desperate for ANOTHER RAFT. (4)

However, Femi Osofisan, playing a mediatory role between Clark, Obumsele and the audience, sees that the misconception in The Raft lies in the missing elements of tragic suspense that would have elucidated the hidden, unpronounced or advanced cause of the drifting of the raft. Also, Osofisan sees faults in the characterisation of Clark's The Raft and argues that:

"From the on-set, The Raft is marred by faulty conception, for there is no tragic suspense such as would have been possible, for instance, if the drift of the raft were sequential to some internal or external stress. Further on, that "in the context of the play itself, none of those characters is invested with any particular characteristics as to be symbolic." (5)

But, were it not for the advantage of a spirited and felt interpretation to which the set has contributed immensely, this play of words and words would have bored and disgusted the audience.

Our choice of this play as one of the illustrative plays for demonstrating the roles of scenography and technology in the theatre stems from the potential and unique challenges it throws to all arts of the theatre to contribute their quota to enliven by providing flesh for the otherwise bony body of The Raft which is made up, essentially, of words, words and words. This being the delight here has been demonstrated by the present writer in his design and execution of the set for the 1976 production at the same Arts Theatre, University of Ibadan which differs considerably from that for the 1964 production.

#### Towards the Designing of the Scenery for The Raft

Harold Burris Meyer and Edward C. Cole have advanced the view that:

The verbal descriptions of the settings may be so meticulous that they leave no feasible alternative approach to the scene designer. Stage business seems so precisely stated and so inherently right for the action that the director's task becomes one of supervising the actor's adherence to the stage directions. The plays by George Kelly and some by Eugene O'Neill are notable in this respect.<sup>(6)</sup>

Clark has given a precise description of the setting, locale, atmosphere, mood and even style for the production of this "poetically" written "symbolic voyage" of his "ordinary Ijaw persons - working out

their life's tenure at particular points on the stage" - on The Raft, even when the characters are not "poetic personages," as Clark would insist.

The essence of the excerpts from the play is to indicate and aid the establishment of the scenographic master symbol. The physical realisation on stage of all the movements referred to, such as "we are adrift" (p. 93); trees drifting past; bowl spinning, whirl-pool; plumbing the floor of Osikoboro, was, no doubt, part of the stimulation the audience, who have come to the theatre for a stimulating evening to be entertained visually and to be taken on an illusionistic symbolic voyage, enjoyed. This calls for creative, artistic and technological ingenuity. The impacts would serve to educate the audience that the arts of the theatre are multi-farious and that, in fact, the theatre is a melting pot for all the sciences.

In considering the design of a setting for a contemporary play, to the scenographer, certain factors are very crucial: the period, time and place of production; the physical nature of the stage and performance space; the talent and skills available, often students, to constitute the essential craftsmen and crew members of the production team; the elements of economics; the legitimate aspiration of a people to certain images of themselves to identify with, for the survival of drama rests on its ability to help to identify with and strengthen the aspirations derived from a close observation of nature. And, because the spirit of the play is to show a people at the cross-roads, lost in the tide and to their world of helplessness, and since the purpose of the production is to promote drama and to pioneer in theatrical productions which deal with the culture, and



the day-to-day struggle of a people, the response from the audience will consequently depend on the director's and scenographer's ability, personality and maturity to do justice to the playwright's intentions. Important is the collaboration with the designers of costume, make-up and lighting crew and, in other cases when lighting is handled by somebody else, with the lighting designer.

(a) Economics

Unlike the 1964 production, seen by Obumselu and His Excellency, Leopold Sedar Senghor, at a time when money was not yet our problem, the 1976 production was a Students' Production which suffered from lack of funds. In his design approaches, however, the present writer has always pushed monetary constraints to the back so as to leave room for creativity. Not until he has arrived at a concrete concept before he starts "surgical operations" on his design. Then he can see what could be cut off without disastrously damaging his concept.

For the mechanism to put The Raft into swinging movement, juncated automobile parts, drive mechanism, springs, rail lines, motors, gears and switches, for dynamic effects created by the set when in motion, were procured from junk-yards.

Other materials that were cheaply bought were mats, baft for the masts, a hurricane lantern, a pan for attesting the direction of drift, while paints and nails were relatively expensive even at that pre-SFEM time. Nature's endowment with bamboo demanded only the price of the manual labour of the students to fell them from near the Arts

Theatre. Generous were some Hausas at Sabo, Ibadan, who donated some ropes used for the tying together of the logs on the raft and for the thatching of the cabin.

Some students slept without their bed-sheets for some nights because they offered them to simulate, in the production, the waters of the creeks. Other materials and properties were gathered from scraps and from dung-hills. Under creative lighting, plastic, montage-like effects were achieved, with our taste for selective realism.

(b) Performance Space

The Arts Theatre proscenium stage is best suited to this kind of play which calls for fantasy. The picture frame provided an excellent hideout for the structural details and gadgets that were put together to stimulate the emotion of the audience. The effect created on the proscenium stage for this kind of play could not be achieved on any other physical space form. The long voyage, sometimes fast and sometimes as slow as the snails, as the tide directs, depends on the depth of the stage. However, with the diagonal placement of the raft, a little longer distance of the journey was simulated. This was highlighted by the varying intensity of the lights that revealed, with zooming effect, the three - dimensional, plasticly modelled structures on the stage in a naturalistic (realistic) style.

Scene shifting is favoured in that The Raft was conceived of as a mobile, dynamically swinging unit. It has to move with the tide and current, whirl-pool and storm as the weather conditions on the delta creeks dictates. The time of movement of The Raft should not interrupt but contribute to the tempo of the play.

The technological realisation of the scenic design employed the principle of the galloping-horse movement or of the automobile jumping in and out of the pot-holes of the Nigerian roads - thus simulating the raft on the move and afloat.

For this, an understructure was assembled together of the standard platform frames of 8' x 4' x 6". Attached to the base of the raft, of a total dimension of 16' x 12', were castors. The frame was covered with platform tops. On this at six points were fastened tension springs from obsolete automobiles. On top of these were arranged the logs of wood and finally the cabin. The springs provided the galloping, swinging, pendulous and vibrating movements while the castors provided the translational movements. The rotational movement, to respond to the whirl-pool, was accomplished through a circular disc mounted to the centre of the basic structure to which was attached an electric-motor which then turns the whole system round and round in circles. The part of the raft on which Olotu was when he was washed away to the sea was delicately attached to the larger part. At the point of drifting, a stud joining the two together was simply pulled out, and his part, equally castored, was

pulled in the direction of the drift by the stage hands standing in the wings.

The whole stage was covered by a raked frame-work, slanting upward to the cyclorama - where it creates the impression of the horizon. The framework was covered with bed-sheets, attached to it in wave-forms to simulate the waves of the water when lighted from underneath with rows of footlights, on which sky-blue colour gels were put and with breeze from table fans placed at intervals by the footlights, moving waves, with blue water, was simulated as broken mirror pieces in water trays, also under the structure, under the breeze from the fans throw about reflections and shadows.

The design elements such as form, mass, colour, brush strokes and texture, to create supportive emotional tonality to enhance dramatic expression of the play, were used to make the setting, a visual composition, respond to the stimuli of the various isms of the visual arts. Also, dedicated attempts were made to augment the expression of the play with the use of symbolic properties, aimed at eliciting emotional response from the audience, signifying the nearness to Burutu.

The milky sky, the foggy night and the crying owls, the "drifting past trees", the steel - wheeler of a ship that chopped up Ogro like Okro chips or Suya bits were all projected on the cyclorama. Olotu's fast drifting into the sea was simulated by his fast disappearance through the scene-dock door into the space behind the cyclorama.

And since there were only four characters, reduced to only two towards the last third part of the play, the attention of the audience was primarily focused on them throughout. Therefore, the whole setting, and especially the costume, had to be designed and executed with a great deal of precision and detail for the purpose of easy delineation and to ensure the continuous attention of the audience. The design must be very resourceful, for as Dany Lyndersay avows:

The costumes, individually and in groups, become central to the design image, exerting a primary and profound power of suggestion to establish geographical and domestic place, mood, period, climate and sometimes even time of day. They must complement the director's vision in creating stage pictures with colour, contrasts, focus and above all meaning. (7)

We maintained a convincing unity in the performance by ensuring that the atmosphere surrounding the play was gloomy so that the produced mood in the four scenes of the play ranged from heavy, light, sombre, ominous, with little or no moment of gay or frolicking fun due to the persistent fear of the tide, storm, whirl-wind that beset a journey started in the night and ending in the fog of the second night. The use of colour, intensity control distribution and movement of lights, the mechanical functions of the raft, aided the mood achieved.

The list of Properties (based on the 1964 edition of the text)

- (1) Hurricane - lamp mentioned on p. 91 and p.110 by Olotu.
- (2) Bowl or pan, p.97, mentioned by Ogoro and Ibobo on p.100

- (3) Mats mentioned by Olotu on p.110 and later turned into sail poles for mast.
- (4) Tin or can mentioned by Ogro on p.105.
- (5) Mirror
- (6) Baskets mentioned by Kengide on p.103.
- (7) Bags of gari mentioned by Kengide on p.103.
- (8) Musical instrument - (i.e. flute) mentioned on pp.113 & 114. for Ogro.
- (9) Ropes (mooring)
- (10) Paddle, p.97, mentioned by Kengide.
- (11) Watch, Olotu's watch, mentioned by Ibobo, p.97.
- (12) Meal mentioned in the description of scene two, wind lash, p.103.
- (13) Match mentioned by Ibobo, p.95.
- (14) Plates
- (15) Cooking kits
- (16) Three groundnut shells mentioned by Ogro, p.106.
- (17) A bat that hit Ogro, mentioned p.110.
- (18) Somebody's hat that flies off, mentioned by Kengide, p.410.
- (19) Bamboos for crossbars mentioned by Ibobo on p.111.
- (20) Ogro's tattered shirt being waved to the ship on p.117.
- (21) Pouch of Kola, mentioned by Kengide on p.126.
- (22) Cigarette tin, mentioned by Kengide on p.426.
- (23) Broken piece of mirror, mentioned by Ibobo on p.130.

The production of The Raft has drawn the attention of many, particularly the students of the University of Ibadan, Department of Theatre Arts, to the potentialities of Technical Theatre in the process of play production and it has also increased the awareness of both theatre makers and theatre-goers on the possibilities of scenography and technology when properly harnessed to enhance the love for live performance on the stage.

#### Scenographic and Technological Realisation of Soyinka's Plays:

- (1) Madmen and Specialists;
- (2) Death and the King's Horseman, and
- (3) Opera Wonyosi

There is a peculiarity in the staging of Soyinka's plays which is discussed in this study. In all, Soyinka had rigorously pursued the neo-classical unity of time, inspired by adventurous dramaturgical techniques, leading to exploratory and dynamic scenography, innovative technological realisation, achieving a concentration of dramatic action. Hence, the devotion of three of Soyinka's plays that cut across most theatrical genres for the illustration of the demands and contributions of scenography, technology and architecture to the development of modern African theatre.

Most influential for our considerations are Soyinka's leadership in African theatre and drama of English expression. As Oyin Ogunba confirms, Soyinka, who had been writing since the late 50's, was already, by 1974, widely recognized as Africa's foremost playwright, some would even say that he is the most significant literary artist of contemporary Africa. Vindicating, just about a decade later, Ogunba's confirmation received world's ratification by bestowing on Soyinka the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1986.



THE YOUNG WOLE SOYINKA IN A DRAMATIC ACTION *Frank Spe*

BRECHT - *THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN*

presented in the Arts Theatre,  
with Elizabeth Osioma and Wole Soyinka.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DRAMATIC SOCIETY



Almost all of the modern African playwrights, even John Pepper Clark-Bekederemo, Ama Ata Aidoo, Sarif Easmon, Joe de Graft, Ola Rotimi, Wale Ogunyemi Femi Osofisan, Zulu Sofola, Bode Sowande, Bode Osanyin, Meki Nzewi, et al pay homage to Soyinka, while they lay claim to individual directions. J.P. Clark's controversial The Raft,<sup>8</sup> against which Femi Osofisan has written his Another Raft decades later, is an example of such individualistic efforts. Esohe Omoregie in her thesis has given a detailed account of Another Raft and has also discussed the costumes for the three Soyinka plays chosen for our case study in this thesis<sup>9</sup>

As a contrast, the present writer has preferred to include the analysis of his own maiden play. "The Good-Ideology for Naira-Republik" which had been produced twice under different theatrical production conditions, viewed from different dramaturgical perspectives of contemporary modern Nigerian theatre and through which other dimensions and impact of technology in play production were demonstrated.<sup>10</sup>

Soyinka as a skillful dramatic poet and theatrician uses the whole spectrum of human scientific acquisitions. All his plays, their technical inquisitiveness notwithstanding, have immediate relevance and are partly derived from his Yoruba culture of Western Nigeria. His materials, situations and characters are chosen from the milieu and strata of his indigenous culture, from the worlds of the gods, spirits, demons and from the realms of the ancestral dead, of the living, of the illustrious, of paupers and of the outcasts.

The colouration that Soyinka gives to his native rooted materials of festivals, music, dances, proverbs and Satire make them to transcend, in their scenographic realisations, national and continental ~~restrictions and~~ <sup>to attain</sup> universal validity. By keeping his eye on the scope and limitations of the available scenic and technical resources, he maintains genuinely inspired checks and balances that arouse a creative mind to further inquiries and advancements. The kind of "compressionistic" or "defeatist" attitude has no place in the requirements of his settings for his portrayal of the changing world and that of his society in a state of transition, where conflicting forces of the established order and of the messianic propensities of the unaccepting few, conflict of cultures, conflict of generations, and of the community's response to its own dilemma are always at loggerheads.

As Ogunba puts it, Soyinka brings all the experience of Western Culture in the dramatic art to bear on his native environment, the result being a great deepening of the tone of his plays.

There are synonimities in Soyinka as a person, his works, the seriousness of his messages and in the scenographic cum technological realisations of his plays for he delivers all with most firm commitment, consequences, and in an uncompromising and exploratory manner.

In Soyinka's stagecraft, he favours the pattern of the unit-setting which is the acclaim of the most versatile theatre makers of this century. Not only that, Soyinka is also much at home with the

kinds of Shakespearean multiple-settings - which he has pursued to the climax of scenographic and technical imagination in his use of vertical levels and places in the setting for his Madmen and Specialists. Here, we are confronted with the levels of human existence in symbolic terms.

Now, let us look at the illustrative plays in the order of their dates of production at Ibadan, beginning with Madmen and Specialists.

#### MADMEN AND SPECIALISTS

by Wole Soyinka

Oyin Ogunba, in his The Movement of Transition, informs us that Madmen and Specialists was first produced after the Nigerian Civil War that lasted from July, 1967 through January, 1970.<sup>(11)</sup> The play, he said, was probably conceived first when the playwright was in detention during the same war. However, in Soyinka - Six Plays published by Methuen, London Limited, in 1984, in the Master Playwrights Series, we learn that Madmen and Specialists was inspired by the Nigerian Civil War and that the first version of it was performed at the 1970 Playwrights Workshop Conference at Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, Waterford, Connecticut, U.S.A.<sup>(12)</sup>

The version of Madmen and Specialists we are using in this study is said to be the first complete version - which had its premiere at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, in January, 1971,<sup>(13)</sup>

featuring the University Theatre Arts Company, and the following cast:

AAFAA	)		- Femi Johnson	(14)
BLIND MAN	)		- Femi Osofisan	(15)
	)	Mendicants		
GOYI	)		- Wale Ogunyemi	
CRIPPLE	)		- Tunji Oyelana	
SI BERO,		Sister to Dr. Bero	- Deola Adedoyin	(16)
IYA AGBA	)			
	)	Two old women	- Nguba Agolia	
IYA MATE	)		- Boopo George	
DR. BERO		- Specialist	- Nat Okoro	(17)
PRIEST			- Gbenga Sonuga	
THE OLD MAN		- Bero's Father	- Dapo Adelugba	

"The production was designed and directed by the author and the actions take place in and around the home" surgery of Dr. Bero, lately returned from the wars," claims Ogunba.

Soyinka's focus in this play seems to be centred on this particular war as reflected by most of his comments that we soon shall explore.

The production in this study was directed by M.A. Adesanya in July, 1985, with the present writer as both the scenographer, design executant and staff adviser.

#### About the Play

The play consists of PART ONE and PART TWO respectively.

In Part One:

The play opens on the four mendicants. Although they assume the characters of roadside beggars, in essence, they are more than them. They are at the same time vigilante and surveillants sent from the war front to keep their eyes on the affairs of Si Bero, Dr. Bero's sister, and on the OLD MAN, Bero's father, by Dr. Bero, a medical doctor and specialist.

At the outbreak of the war, Dr. Bero enlisted and joined the army. He left behind his father, THE OLD MAN, and his sister to take care of the clinic.

The OLD MAN, Dr. Bero's father, has turned a new philosopher of cyclic movements and conformity and of the doctrine of "AS - THE NEW GOD AND THE OLD". He has elaborately enunciated this new doctrine of nihilistic philosophy, to wit, that all human beings are ruled by (and are potential victims of) "AS". He has been converted to cannibalism and he endeavours to propagate and perfect the philosophy at all times and at all costs. Oyin Ogunba, shedding light on this philosophy, states:

All this is to say that AS is the force of tradition supported by loyalists and ardent theorists who fabricate a reason to justify the status quo and preach the necessity or inevitability of evil in human society. This philosophy of despair interprets history in terms of a cyclic movement in which true progress is impossible. Thus, according to this thinking, man is doomed because probity has no place in the order of things and also because the implacable universe appears to destroy human initiative. This interpretation

of human life focuses attention on war as the constant reality, in much the same way as the character called Historian does in A Dance of the Forests. It constructs a world in which cannibalism is, and must be, the rule. (18)

Dr. Bero wrote his father from the war front of his experience of mass casualties, corpses, deaths and invalidations. This horror report could only agitate the mind of the cannibalistic OLD MAN to perceive of the human flesh as being wasted instead of its being consumed.

Thus, the OLD MAN decided to go to the battle-field to see things for himself and to dissuade the "fools" from the continuous wastage of the "meat" and convince them that they, instead, should eat it. And on getting to the war front, THE OLD MAN was deployed to do recuperative work among some disabled fellows. According to Ogunba:

he has been employed to rehabilitate war casualties; instead, he decides to indoctrinate his wards with his new doctrine. The mendicants, in particular, have come under his tutorship, and have been filled with these 'new - fangled' ideas. (19)

The foremost of those mendicants, the AAFAA, an ex-priest, aimed at the codification of the pertinent essence and ethics of the new AS's doctrine. His efforts yielded a system of codes in alphabetical order, ranging from A to I, to which meanings are attached.

In the meantime, Si Bero is being haunted by the fear over the safe return of her father, and her brother, Dr. Bero. In order to

ensure their protection she bids for the supernatural powers of the OLD WOMEN - who are witches (awon Iyá Ajéé) to whom she had to vow allegiance, initiation, and payments of royalties. Even the PRIEST prays for his friend and his son to return both soon and safe. The Old Man and Dr. Bero, as two personalities of great sensitivity, and observations of their environment, to their chagrin were struck by their discovery of the magnitude of evil in their society and this was expressed in divergent ways in the later mode of lives. The Priest seems to be speaking of this when, speaking with Bero, he says:

You know, it's strange how these disasters bring out the very best in man and the worst sometimes. In your father's case, of course, the very best. Truly noble, I couldn't believe my ears when he got up one evening, right in the midst of our argument and said, I am going to join you ... I am going to see what's going on, ... It, cannot be ... I'm going to try and persuade those fools not to waste all that meat.(20)

and Ogunba vindicates:

This war is the focus in another and probably more important sense: it is the war that has brought to light all the qualities of AS latent in virtually everyone in the community.(21)

Thus Old Man perfects his sadistic, pessimistic philosophy, using the war as a great opportunity and successfully influences a lot, even the erstwhile harmless mendicants. The worst to be affected is Dr. Bero, who, before the war, saw great nobility in his medical profession, which he also pursued with zeal and dedication. But now,

in the war, he has been changed completely. He, as the head of the army intelligence service, sees now only corpses in his patients. He discovers that the ordinary human being is weak but yet able to accommodate, and even rationalize, any form of hostility, deprivation and under-dog treatment meted out to him by his fellow men, especially during crises. All this changed him to now want to attain power to enable him to control human destiny. But, in order to achieve this aim, the main obstacle, the Old Man, in his way must first be eliminated, who, because of his powerful intellect, has exerted a great influence on the mendicants. A systematic approach Dr. Bero adopted was to get the Old Man certified a lunatic and have him in detention; the mendicants, too, placed under orders and the next group to be dealt with would be his sister, Si Bero, and the OLD WOMEN, who constitute the traditional forces, who must soon be put in their "proper" places. And so, Dr. Bero's power thirst and discoveries turned him into a gun-totting maniac, who cannot accept the OLD MAN's cannibalism, the doctrine of AS: the belief that everybody, somehow, has tasted, and if not yet, but soon shall taste the favourite food AS. Bero tried vehemently to throw these back at the OLD MAN as demonstrated in his cross-examination of the Old Man.

Bero: Why As?

Old Man: Who wants to know?

Bero: I, why As?

Old Man: We went through this before.



Though the Old Man knew how to give Bero evasive answers, had Bero been willing to listen, he would have learnt then the significance of As which is saying that history repeats itself in: As - was - is - Now: meaning that, so long as the vicious cycle continues, the human being is doomed beyond escape. Bero, who thinks OLD MAN is just quibbling, misses this important point completely. Instead, he is more disposed to the use of the gun and thus becomes the latest manifestation of As, who, putting on one of the hundreds of masks, as assumed in his chameleonic attribute, at certain stages in his journey through time, is now ready to destroy and avenge his wrath on Old Man, who has attempted to reduce his (As's) "inscrutable spirit" to definable proportions, and thereby incurred his wrath, thus, demonstrating his opposition to and suppression of individualism in his kingdom.

And just at the moment when Old Man wants to "practise" on the cripple, Bero shoots him down. But this shooting down contradicts what Bero wants to be--abstain from the eating of human flesh--for it demonstrated exactly the opposite. The consequence of it is a pollution worse in effect than that which Bero believed he had exercised himself of. "He, as it were, eats up his earlier vomit when it has become rank and putrid". (22)

The roles of the medicants in the play are various. Their functions depicted their use as if they were sub-human beings treated to injunctions, converted to experimental rabbits, for the elucidation of some obnoxious notions. Punishments belittling human beings

were dished out to them at the instance of the purported contravention of rules. Ogunba sees in the mendicants the downtrodden masses in transitional Africa. He writes: "If mendicants represent the masses, Soyinka would be saying that here in transitional Africa, as elsewhere, the rule of As in respect of the masses is dominant; the system stifles them and they seem to be eternally doomed." (23) Proving this, Soyinka makes his mendicants demonstrate their predicaments in a series of half-comic sketches and scenes:- such as in the 'trial and execution' of Goyi on page 227, the parody of the judiciary and its processes as a representative of the inhuman system which, arbitrarily, without fair trial, can impose the death penalty, as revealed in the way Bero has used his position as Chief of the Army Intelligence Service to get Old Man certified a lunatic, detained and subjected to his ghoulish treatment, and, in his own parody, Aafaa sarcastically comments on some of the recent political statements of military regimes, in certain parts of Africa, and on their tactics, love of power and hypocrisy. Posing, Aafaa recites:

In a way you may call us vultures we clean  
up the mess made by others \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The moment you say, Go, we \_\_\_\_\_

(He gives another inspection all round,  
smiles broadly, and turns to the others.)  
They insist we stay.(24)

In Part Two of the play, another pseudo - comic scene performed in more of lampoon than a parody form, Goyi, a mendicant, recalls the 'Ballad of the State Visit to the Home of the De - Balled'

(disabled), at which the corpulent First Lady distributed imported cigarettes. And, Old Man, shocked at the people's scrambling for the imported cigarettes, had composed the song:

"The Old Man was mad for days, suckers he called us. Quite right too, a good smoke is a good suck. I was not going to throw away that superior brand just to please a crackpot." (25)

That explains further the debasement of the ordinary people who celebrated the Head of State in the song:

'He came smelling of wine and roses. On his arm his wife was gushpillating ... (26)

And, as Ogunba emphasized, the essence here is to illustrate the "extreme privilege, gluttony and inebriation, a compound of grossness and meretriciousness."

This underdog position of the mendicants, furthermore, could be explicitly illustrated with the confrontation between the outspoken Aafaa and Dr. Bero when the latter, feeling that he has been ridiculed by the former, smacks him (Aafaa) across the face with his swagger stick.

Bero, proving his intolerance and his opposition to criticism, in his words to Aafaa asserts:

That should remind you that I do know how to slap people around. And you'd better remember some other things I know. You weren't just discharged because of your sickness. Just remember that ... and other things. (27)

The mendicants depict the lot of <sup>the</sup> powerless masses who can not change the situation forced upon them but who can only console

themselves with comic songs. Bero's attitude was extended to the OLD WOMEN. He regards the traditional mystical cult of the women not just as simplistic but irrelevant to him and to the present world. He neglects the necessity of showing particular reverence for the *Iyá Ajéés*, whose acknowledged ultimate closeness to the source of human life has potentials for positive and negative influences on individuals.

Si Bero has recognised these and has benefitted therefrom for the protection of the same brother while he was at the war front and now has come to disregard the powers but the consequence cannot be palatable, even for Si Bero who had some pledges.

Berò's contempt for the old women signalled his own doom for Bero threatens *Iya Ágbà* with death from his gun in which he casts his implicit trust, as his 'A' and 'O'. "He realises, too late, however, that one cannot shoot earth and expect a favourable result." And, *Iya Ágbà*, as earth goddess, withdraws the support of earth from the specialist young doctor. Thus, *As* has overrun him and has emerged triumphant again.

In Madmen and Specialists, Soyinka has treated us to yet another exposition of human weakness, criminal propensity and cannibalism. Man's lunatic mind was challenged to disgust over himself for he has not achieved more than poetic validity. Old Man died an unfulfilled being. Man is the image of the mendicants, man is blind, crippled or insane, in all its ramifications, both mentally, physically and spiritually. The would-be 'Messiahs' of the nation have proved to be

brutal and agents of gods of devastation. They have offended the earth spirits to warrant man's tragic outcome. And so, Soyinka has portrayed, in this play, the darkest moments of his society in which an all-pervading sense of despair, pessimism, and defeat has been written in capital letters to mean THE HOPELESSNESS OF MANKIND.

The Architectural, Scenographic and Technological implications of Soyinka's plays.

Wole Soyinka's dramaturgical structures challenge the tripod of our present investigation namely: architecture/space, Scenery, Lighting and other aspects of technical realisation thus:

The architectural space has to provide for Soyinka's seeming favourite pattern of single-place and multiple setting which is commonly adopted by many modern dramatists... Soyinka also experiments with new, original and borrowed ideas which he has put into use in the setting for this play that calls for vertical placements of the beings on three architectural levels.

The flash back technique deployed at times by Soyinka, permits the action to oscillate from place to place and calls for technological devices of 'mobile' movable stage floor to quickly change the places. Of great importance is a flexible lighting installation that can permit storage of light-cues, cross fades, presets and timing which could be recalled from the 'memory' as it is the common feature in modern - computerised - lighting and effects control systems.

Towards a Scenographic and Technological Realisation of Madmen and Specialists on the Stage.

Unlike the other two plays of Soyinka to be discussed later in this study, which were performed essentially on the human level of operation, Madmen and Specialists calls for three levels for the two parts of the play, simultaneously set on the horizontal planes and graduated into distinctive levels. Each level represents a world of its own with specific and significant meanings. The three levels involved are:

1. The Cellar (basement) where Dr. Bero's surgery is.
2. The ground level in front of the house where Si Bero dries her herbs and the playing - and waiting - ground for the mendicants for most of the time; and

3. A higher level where the hut of the Old Women is situated.

The whole play is broken into thirteen scenes. They are given to the three levels equally, four scenes to each level, while the last odd-numbered scene thirteen, spreads across all of the three levels simultaneously. This all-embracing scene thirteen is, both in a physical, visual and dramatic sense, apocalyptic, and explosive and it is the thin thread tying the vicious past with the impending catastrophic end.

A diagrammatic representation of the three levels with the sharing of the scenes methodically on the respective levels could be rendered thus:

Higher Level - Level Three, for Scenes 2, 4, 9, 11

Ground Level - Level Two, for Scenes 1, 3, 5, and 7

Cellar basement-Level One, for Scenes 6, 8, 10 and 12

The Settings:

Part One

Open space before BERO's home and surgery . The surgery is down in a cellar. The level ground in the immediate fore-front of it serves as drying space for assorted barks and herbs. The higher structure to one side is a form of semi-open hut. Inside it sit IYA AGBA and IYA MATE. IYA AGBA is smoking a thin pipe. IYA MATE makes a small fire.

By the roadside is a group of mendicants - CRIPPLE, GOYI, BLINDMAN, and AAFAA. AAFAA's St. Vitus spasms are designed to rid the wayfarer of his last pennies in a desperate bid to be rid of the sight. Goyi is held stiffly in a stooping posture by a contraption which is just visible above his collar. The CRIPPLE drags on his knees. They pass the time by throwing dice from the ground rattles. The CRIPPLE has just thrown the dice.

Part One of the play consists of five scenes, which are performed on Levels One and Two alternately.

Part Two :

The surgery, below the ground floor of the house. An examination couch, assortment of a few instruments and jars in a locked glass case,

a chromium sterilising unit, etc. etc.; a table, swivel chair, etc., a white smock hangs against a shelf, with surgical mask and gloves tucked in the pockets. The MENDICANTS are crouched, standing, stooping in their normal postures, humming their chant and listlessly throwing dice. The OLD MAN's attitude varies from boredom to tolerant amusement.

Part Two contains eight scenes out of which three are acted on Levels One and Two. Four out of the remaining five scenes were displayed on Levels One and Three together. And as we already know, the fifth, which is the thirteenth scene, is played on all of the three levels equally.

It is in Scene Nine that the militating forces between the levels first become apparent, for it is here that Dr. Bero, belonging to this earth of debasement signified by the basement, crosses his boundary through the ground level, trespassing into the level of the supernatural, to confront the forces of that world and thereby inviting the wrath of the powers of "principalities in the high places" on himself. Thus, the validity of the symbolic interpretation accorded the levels is reasonably granted. Therefore, the placement of scenes 6, 8, 10 and 12 in the basement, Level One, representing the "below normal human dignity level", suitably agrees with the sub-human actions executed there, which depict the depravity of mankind.



Following are the actions that take place on the respective levels:

Level One: The Surgery for Scenes 6, 8, 10 and 12.

In Scene 6, (pages 257-258), the encounter between Aafaa, Old Man and Dr. Bero. Aafaa endeavours to codify the doctrine of As in an alphabetic order.

Old Man is now in detention, intimidated by Bero. He deprives him, Old Man, of basic human choice and subjects him to his forceful impositions and will.

In Scene 8, (page 269 -273), the encounter between Old Man and the Mendicants is dominated by an atmosphere of filth and obscene mannerisms, of self-disgust, of the gush-pillating, corpulent First Lady, of suckers and of the Home of Deballed, of injunctions regarding human dignity and self-confidence as worthless, non-existing and undesirable virtues.

Those four scenes that take place in the cellar collectively symbolize the operational and analytical condition of man. Hence, the symbolism of the surgery to mean the "clinical theatre" for the treatment of human diseases which but turns slaughter-house of Old Man.

Level Two: Ground Level for Scenes 1, 3, 5 and 7

The matters touched here are given cosmetic treatment; hence, the lesser impact on the audience, compared with the intensity of the scenes on Level One.



FIG 46: THE WRITER'S FIRST 'VISION' OF THE THE SETTING FOR SOYINKA'S  
MADMEN AND SPECIALISTS



FIG 47: THE WRITER'S SECOND 'VISION' OF THE SETTING FOR  
MADMEN AND SPECIALISTS

Scene One (page 223). The encounter between Si Bero and the mendicants who Si Bero managed to put in their 'proper place', as nothing more than a group of road-side beggars, whose presence attracts no spectacle.

Scene Three: (page 239). The only significant dimension to the prevalent atmosphere on this level was the emergence of Dr. Bero on the scene. In terms of intensity, it remains similar to Scene One above.

Scene Five: (page 248). The appearance of the semi-comical priest, who comes to rattle on his memorable argumentative nights with Old Man and who was scared away by Bero's invitation to a dinner of Man's flesh.

Scene Seven: (page 252). The two different worlds in which Bero and Si Bero are now living are distinguishably exhibited in their relationship here. The gulf is widened by the divergence of outlook, interest, beliefs, traditions and emotions.

Scene Ten : (page 257). Similar in character to Scenes 6 and 8. We discern here two elements of diminution of the human stature, and of physical and mental subjection to detention. Bero's torture of Old Man advances evidence in his hard-headed inquiry for the meaning of As. While Old Man sees himself as an 'Octopus', Bero sees him as just 'another organism'. His indignation at Old Man reaches its crescendo in:

Bero: We have nothing that a petty mind can grasp. (Pause) Try if

you can, Old Man, to avoid twitching. Control belongs to a few with the aptitude.

**Old Man:** One should always expect something new from the Specialist (Contemptuously) Control, (p.279): "Tell me something new, tell me what is happening in the future" (p.282).

He emphasizes his re-current point that, if Bero is the image of the future, then nothing new or salutary can come from it.

Scene Twelve: (p. 284) Here we see the intensification of the two slavish elements that dominated. Peculiar here are the three individual speeches by the Blindman, Old Man and Aafaa.

The Speech by Blindman:

"What we have, we hold" is a reflection of his ineptitude to make a tangible, and logical point beyond that statement.

The Speech of Old Man: infers that the philosophy of As is capable of projecting a decompository impression.

The Speech of Aafaa: exhibits his absent-mindedness reflective of his want in works, and in his divisions right and left, back and fore, down and up.

Common to the three speeches is the beclouding darkness of the soul of contemptible, contemporary man, ostensibly projecting his poverty, stench and the confusion of an animal. In the scenes on

Level Two, we have exterior views of the characters - who seemed not yet to want to reveal themselves to us in full, but they later give us more of themselves towards the end of the play, when already the perilous end, with intensively packed actions, on this level had been knocking on the door, at the apron area of the Arts Theatre. It became the centre of attraction as the "inside" - the surgery, the stage - space turned into inferno of the witches' embers. And the blaze, sadistically, injected the last vigour in the audience.

Level Three for Scenes 2, 4, 9, 11.

This is the world of the supernaturals, the domicile of the "principalities in the high places" the "Upper-world" from where IYA AGBA, IYA MATE, operate. Naturally, the supernatural levels are not usually open to the earthly people, therefore, accessibility to the scenes here has to be minimised. Hence, the deliberate briefness of the scenes here. Moreover, because these supernatural beings have the usurped ability of duality, brevity and immutability, the curt nature of their speeches could be fathomed. So also could the rage of the witches for Bero's contempt, and the implication for the poor Si Bero be explained, and with the consequence of the devouring and all-consuming inferno that marks the setting in of doom.

### Properties

Apart from the design of sets for the setting, the present writer had to design the properties for the production, some of which are included in the list below.

1. Contraption.
2. Assorted barks and herbs.
3. Thin pipe for IYA AGBA.
4. Small fire for IYA MATE.
5. Props for the roadside mendicants.
6. Dice and gourd rattle.
7. Si Bero's small bag for the protruding twigs with leaves and berries.
8. Crutches for CRIPPLE.
9. Can from Si Bero for the Cripple.
10. A heavy sack carried by Si Bero and the Blindman (p. 236).
11. Bero's large travelling case.
12. Si Bero's Gourd of Palmwine which she pours on the ground in front of the doorstep.
13. Boots for Bero - (Costume Design).
14. Bero's Swagger-stick (page 298).
15. Pot of glowing coals.
16. Bero's pistol - gun.
17. A table, etc., etc.

Design Approach

The guiding principle on scene design, stated in the preceding chapters, have been applied to the design of a scenery for this production in the presentational, non-illusionistic, style in which featured some elements of realism.

In order to satisfy Soyinka's plays' scenographic requirements, one has to first learn to appreciate his rigorous pursuit of the neo-classical unity of time that informs on the level of authenticity. The first consideration here, therefore, was how to locate the basement-cellar - Level One. One possibility we saw was to use the orchestra-pit area. But then, there were serious problems already attached, for from the edge of the apron to the first row of seats is just a narrow space that could not provide the depth and the width of a cellar clinic as needed. An attempt to extend the space called for the removal of the first two rows of seats, whereby the risers of the seat rows had to be levelled up to provide for a smooth cellar floor. By so doing,

we would have reduced the available height from the new level to the apron level to less than one metre (1 meter) which, obviously, cannot accommodate even the crouching mendicant, not to talk of the Specialist Dr. Bero who had to stand at the table for operation. After the removal of the one or two rows of seats, there was still the need to remove yet another two rows, to allow for some distance from the edge of the cellar, to permit a proper view for the audience seated on the new first row. In the end we would have removed <sup>a</sup> quarter of the seat rows, meaning a substantial reduction of the capacity of the auditorium, and thus incurring a substantial loss for the Box-Office. But if

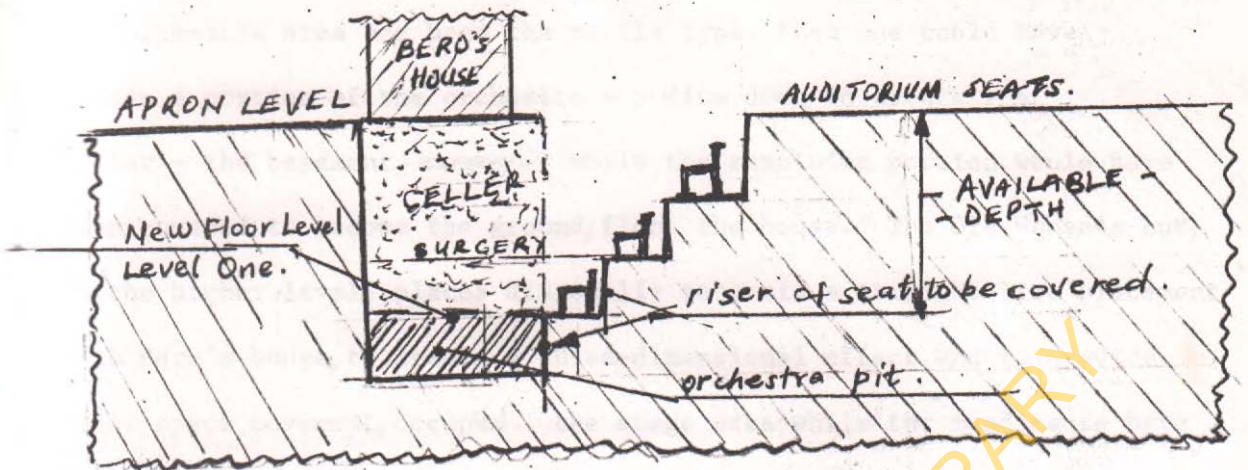


DIAGRAM SHOWING THE PROBLEM OF LOCATION OF THE CELLAR.



Madmen and Specialists

Use of multi-levels for stage.

Ramps lead up to the other levels from the main floor of the stage.



the orchestra area had been the mobile type, then one could have driven a portion of the orchestra - podium down to create the cellar - the basement - ~~surgery~~ - while the remaining portion would have been covered to become the ground, floor the house. The Old Women's hut, on the higher level, placed diagonally to avoid a straight line placement with Bero's house, to create a three-dimensional effect and to provide wider space movement, occupied the stage area; while the mendicants have the remaining area of the apron for their encounter with Si Bero, Bero's arrival and for the semi-comic priest's appearance, among other business. For the cellar to be truly under the house, it had to begin at the proscenium line going into the stage.

In the absence of the ideal modular, movable or mobile orchestra pit, apron-, and stage-floor, we had to build Bero's house with the cellar, the ground level and the Old Women's higher level from the stage floor upwards. But, yet, the problem of plausibility remained, for a cellar normally lies deeper than the surrounding ground. To make this appear convincing somehow, it had to be joined to the surrounding by ramping up the floor from the apron level, rising gradually to meet the ground - floor level of the clinic. And since the Old Women's hut was standing on a higher level, another ramping <sup>up</sup> became inevitable, especially <sup>for</sup> the movements <sup>to</sup> be feasible. On this type of design approach, George Kernodle has written:

A setting designed with close attention to stage movement is sometimes called a machine for acting.<sup>28</sup>

Lee Simonson calls it:

a plan of action, as important in controlling the movement of the actors as the architect's ground plan for ... creating and shaping lines of traffic.<sup>29</sup>

### Construction

For the construction of the set, our standard scenic units were conventionally assembled together, embellished and painted to simulate the façade of a clinic situated in the midst of a less privileged Nigerian community. The Old Women's hut was made of materials such as trees, ropes, palm branches, befitting witches believed to be condemned to inhabit most wretched dwellings within the much better surroundings of Bero and of the masses.

### Lighting

The lighting in this production had a greater impact than was usually experienced in the Arts Theatre, University of Ibadan, for this time, the set designer was also the light designer. The familiar function of stage lighting in our Arts Theatre had always been the basic function of visibility and general illumination. This production, however, demanded for other functions of light, as well some of which Richard Pilbrow calls selective visibility, revelation of form, composition and mood.<sup>30</sup> It called for eerie lighting effects especially for the supernatural world of the witches' "end time" of total annihilation occasioned by the embers of the àwọn Iyá Ajéé. Regretably, the lighting facilities in the Arts Theatre proved, however, inadequate for judicious satisfaction of these dream lighting-requirements. But, as the Blindman in Madmen and Specialists puts it, "What we have, we hold" so, we exploited the rickety lighting equipment in the Arts Theatre since the late fifties, which have since become out-dated equipment and largely ineffective for the creative lighting purposes.

Scenic Effects: The production called for various effects, especially fire, flame, smoke, gun-shots and changing weather conditions.

But the international codes, laws and regulations operative elsewhere, especially in European and American theatres, forbid the use of open or naked lights,<sup>31</sup> so we resorted to recorded sound of real gun-shots which we synchronized with the faked shots from Bero's animated pistol. For the smoke, dry - ice was used. For fire effect in the hut colour wheel with designed, red gels were mounted in front of a 1000 Watt-spotlight and rotated, hidden in the hut and was controlled from the lighting booth. Other commercially procurable pyro-technical appliances could have also been used.

On the whole, given a better equipped theatre with modern devices, Madmen and Specialists could have been more a spectacular experience for the Nigerian audience who normally love to see things, otherwise deemed impossible, happenings, magically, before their very eyes, on the stage.

By Wole Soyinka 32

The production of this play by the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Ibadan was on the occasion of a "Soyinka Festival" in July, 1987. It was the Department's contribution to a week of festivities in commemoration of Soyinka's Nobel Prize for Literature for 1986. Play was directed by 'Bayo Oduneye.

As a Departmental production, every member of staff was expected to contribute his or her quota from his or her respective areas of specialisation. Thus, the garb of designing and execution of the scenery fell on the present writer. And, being a representative production at which the Laureate himself was expected as a special guest of honour, all hands were to be on the deck. After series of discussions with the director and other members of the "joint venture", it was decided that the play would be produced in a realistic style, being a historical play based on events which took place in Oyo, ancient Yoruba city of Nigeria, in 1946. The principal characters are Elesin Oba, his son, Olunde, and one Mr. Pilkings, the Colonial District Officer. The three characters were welded together in a tragedy that ended with a threnody. Other important characters are Iyaloja, Jane Pilkings - the wife of Simon Pilkings, the District Officer, Sergeant Amusa, Joseph, Pilkings' house-boy, Bride, H.R.H. The Prince, The President and Aide-de-Camp to whom are added the Drummers, Women, Young Girls and the Dancers at the Ball.

"Soyinka", in this tragedy, as Michael Etherton in The Development of Africa Drama testifies, "is apt to make his audience aware that the complexity of human existence is contained within a

tenuous and uncompromising physical environment, and is concerned with the survival of the community and not specifically with the survival of one individual. Towards that end, Soyinka observes the unity of time and place and makes use of music and song to extend the scope of dramatic action. Hence, it could be said that in his approaches, Soyinka masterfully demonstrates a mixture of convention and bold experiment. The resultant achievements include the exposure of the irregularities in the socio-political, economic, religious, traditional and cultural aspects of African, especially Nigerian, lives as discernible in this work. (33)

In order to design Soyinka's plays effectively, the designer has first to appreciate and understand Soyinka's views on the use of stage space. Soyinka uses stage space in a functional manner which aims at the emotional, psychic and intellectual involvement of the audience in the conflict going on on stage. According to Etherton, with Soyinka, stage space becomes that "dangerous area of transformation" and the audience, by virtue of their presence at the performance, becomes a part of the action taking place on stage. The audience is seen in the role of a "Chorus" who give the protagonists strength in 'the symbolic struggle with chthonic presences'. (34)

The whole play comprises five scenes, for the staging of which Soyinka has considered one adjustable "outline-set" appropriate, to facilitate rapid scene changes, to ensure a run without intervals as follows:

The Settings -Scene One (p. 147)

A passage through a market in its closing stages. The stalls are being emptied, mats folded. A few women pass through on their way home, loaded with baskets. On a cloth stand, bolts of cloth are taken down, display pieces folded and piled on a tray. ELESIN QBA enters along a passage before the market, pursued by his drummers and praise-singers. He is a man of enormous vitality, speaks, dances and sings with that infectious enjoyment of life which accompanies all his actions.

Scene Two: (p. 163)

The verandah of the District Officer's bungalow, a tango is playing from an old hand-cranked gramophone and, glimpsed through the wide windows and doors which open onto the fore-stage verandah are the shapes of SIMON PILKINGS and his wife, JANE, tangoing in and out of shadows in the living room. They are wearing what is immediately apparent as some form of fancy dress. The dance goes on for some moments and then the figure of a 'Native Administration' POLICEMAN emerges and climbs up the steps unto the verandah. He peeps through and observes the dancing couple reacting with what is obviously a long-standing bewilderment. He stiffens suddenly, his expression changes to one of disbelief and horror. In his excitement, he upsets a flower pot and attracts the attention of the couple. They stop dancing. (page 163).

Scene Three: (p. 175)

A swelling, agitated hum of women's voices rises immediately in the background. The lights come on and we see the frontage of a converted cloth stall in the market. The floor leading up to the entrance is covered in rich velvets and woven cloth. The WOMEN come on stage, borne backwards by the determined progress of Sergeant AMUSA and his two CONSTABLES who already have their batons out and use them as a pressure

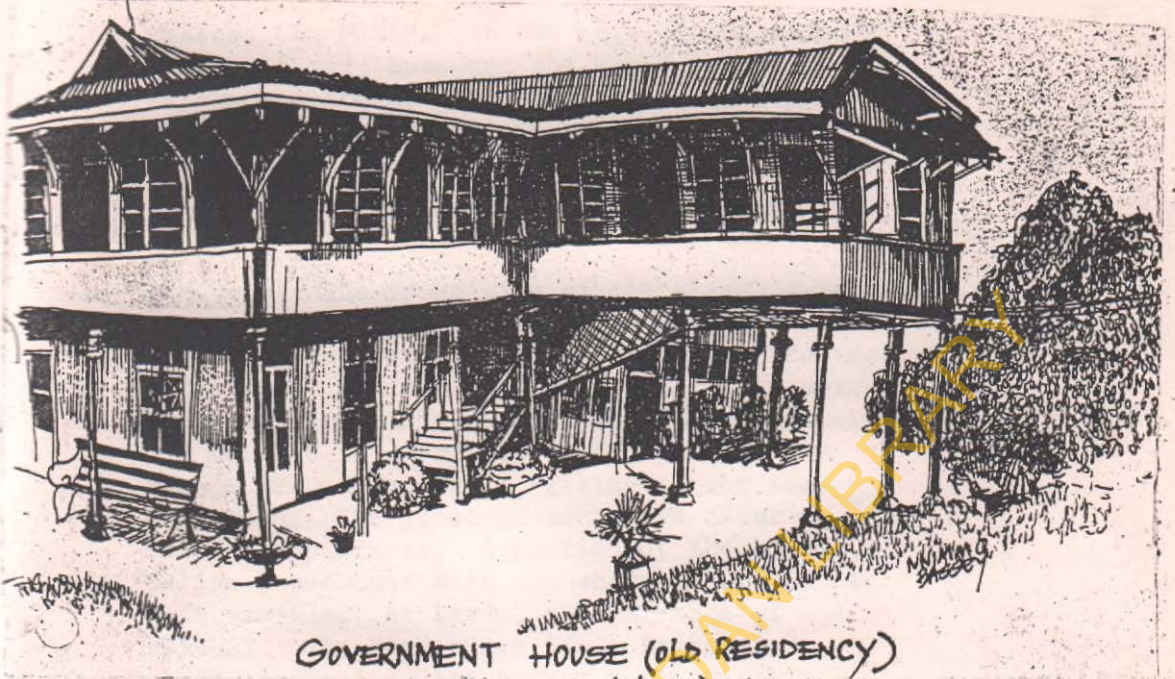


FIG 48 THE WRITER'S FIRST IMPRESSION OF THE RESIDENCY FOR  
 SOYINKA'S DEATH AND KINGSHORSEMAN



FIG 49: THE WRITER'S SECOND IMPRESSION OF THE RESIDENCY FOR  
 SOYINKA'S DEATH AND THE KING'S HORSEMAN

against the WOMEN. At the edge of the cloth-covered floor, however, the WOMEN take a determined stand, and block all further progress of MEN. They begin to tease them mercilessly. (page 175.)

Scene Four: (page 186).

A Masque. The front side of the stage is part of a wide corridor around the great hall of the Residency extending beyond vision into the rear and wings. It is redolent of the tawdry decadence of a farflung but key imperial frontier. The COUPLES in a variety of fancy-dress are ranged around the walls, gazing in the same direction. The guest-of-honour is about to make an appearance. A portion of the local police brass band with its white CONDUCTOR is just visible. At last, the entrance of ROYALTY. The band plays "Rule Britannia", badly, beginning long before he is visible. The couples bow and curtsy as he passes by them. Both he and his companions are dressed in seventeenth century European costume. Following behind are the RESIDENT and his partner similarly attired. As they gain the end of the hall where the orchestra dais begins the music comes to an end. The PRINCE bows to the guests. The BAND strikes up a Viennese Waltz and the PRINCE formally opens the floor. Several bars later the RESIDENT and his companion follow suit. Others follow in appropriate pecking order. The orchestra's waltz rendition is not of the highest musical standard.

Sometime later the PRINCE dances again into view and is settled into a corner by the RESIDENT who then proceeds to select COUPLES as they dance past for introduction, sometimes threading his way through the dancers to tap the lucky COUPLE on the shoulder. Desperate efforts from many to ensure that they are recognised in spite of perhaps, their costume. The ritual of introductions soon takes in PILKINGS and his WIFE. The PRINCE is quite fascinated by their costume and they demonstrate the adaptations they had made to it,



pulling down the masks to demonstrate how the egúngún normally appears, then showing the various press-button controls they have innovated for the face flaps, the sleeves, etc. They demonstrate the dance steps and the guttural sounds made by the egúngún, harass other dancers in the hall, MRS. PILKINGS playing the 'restrainer' to PILKINGS' manic darts. Everyone is highly entertained, the Royal Party especially who lead the applause.

At this point a liveried FOOTMAN comes in with a note on a salver and is intercepted almost absent-mindedly by the RESIDENT who takes the note and reads it. After polite coughs he succeeds in excusing the PILKINGS from the PRINCE and takes them aside. The PRINCE considerately offers the RESIDENT's WIFE his hand and dancing is resumed. On their way out the RESIDENT gives an order to his AIDE-DE-CAMP. They come into the corridor where the RESIDENT hands a note to PILKINGS.

Scene Five: (p. 203).

A wide iron-barred gate stretches almost the whole width of the cell in which ELESIN is imprisoned. His wrists are encased in thick iron bracelet, chained together; he stands against the bars, looking out. Seated on the ground to one side on the outside is his recent BRIDE; her eyes bent perpetually to the ground. Figures of the two GUARDS can be seen deeper inside the cells alert to every movement ELESIN makes. PILKINGS now in a police officer's uniform enters noiselessly, observes him a while. Then he coughs ostentatiously and approaches. Leans against the bars near a corner, his back to ELESIN. He is obviously trying to fall in mood with him. Some moments' silence.

Şoyinka, in spite of his vehement criticisms of the proscenium theatre form, the dominant theatre form in Nigeria, yet seems to be

writing his plays for the proscenium stages, especially Death and the King's Horseman. Else, how could the "outline-set" recommended by the Laureate himself, otherwise known as 'Unit-set' for multi-scene staging, be effectively used on any other stage form?

Moreover, the play unfolds in the settings involving both interior and exterior of the environments which often happen simultaneously. Parker and Wolf assert:

Because the environment of a story - dominated play is usually real, the designing problem becomes one of the selection of realistic details and forms that place the action and establish the mood. This, more often than not, has already been accomplished by the author through the choice of realistic location for the scene of the action. (35)

Consequently, the present writer had to devise a befitting concept of set to match the representational production style adopted for a play that took place on the proscenium stage of the Arts Theatre, University of Ibadan, with all its architectural and technical deficiencies which have always hampered the full realisation of scenographic dreams.

With "an out-line set" in mind, the present writer then decided to use mobile scenic units and elements, some of which can be brought on to the stage while others are so constructed on castors that they can be shifted into positions on stage. After use, they are pushed off into the wings, while yet others were pre-set, in the wing, and could be drawn into positions at will and as needed. The adopted system afforded quick scene changing manipulated by the student stage hands.

Again, if, as Oren Parker and Craig Wolf have said: "Scenery style, in fact, is the most significant visual element supporting the overall production style," then one of the essences of scenery, especially in a representational work of this magnitude, primarily, is to function in conjunction with other contributive areas of the theatre, in the establishment of the setting and the mood for each scene and thereby charting the progress of the play from the beginning to the end. Hence, the present writer's design include the following:

#### Scene One

This scene opens in a market place at late afternoon, going into the evening, at the closing stages of the market activities. While the whole theatre, auditorium and stage, was perceived as the market at large, the stage was the market-place proper on which the market stalls were arranged. The aisles, leading from outside the theatre, the foyer, into the auditorium, on both sides, became the passages into the market through which ELESIN, the WOMEN, the beautiful girl, BRIDE, and others enter.

The scene ends as the girl - BRIDE - kneels before IYALOJA at a light-fade out on page 163.

#### Scene Two

A solution to the design problem of this scene was to perceive of the apron, the forestage, as the verandah. Unto this leads the

steps of the Exit doors on the sides of the auditorium walls. A baft covered frame translucent, almost transparent, extended across the stage-opening, near the curtain line. On this was painted the large, wide windows and doors, estimating the glass wall of Pilkings' bungalow. The wall was suspended on batten and lines and could be flown down as the lights fade out on Scene One while at the same time the market stalls were carted off stage, and the flower-pot which AMUSA, the Native Administration Policeman, upsets was quickly put and removed at the desired moments. A few moments later PILKINGS emerges, picks up the pad and reads AMUSA's report while his wife goes into the bedroom to get ready for the ball and from there, she, Jane, answers her husband: "Coming darling. Nearly ready ... " (page 165). Thus, the rapid scene changing is executed without delay.

JANE comes out onto the verandah while SIMON PILKINGS, her husband, is reading Amusa's report (page 166). The play continues until PILKINGS suddenly begins to hum the tango to which they were dancing before. Starts to execute a few practice steps. - Lights fade (page 173).

### Scene Three

Depicts the frontage of a converted cloth stall from the market. The stall was erected as a hut on a low-castored platform of 6 inches height. It has entrances on two sides with curtains that can be drawn like on a door or a window. Attached, hinged, to the structure

at the front side was a step-unit covered with velvet and woven cloth. The structure was big enough to accommodate several people as it also accommodated ELESIN and the BRIDE. The structure was smoothly wheeled onto its position on the stage during the fade-out on Scene Two. The scene continues and ends with praise singer's: "If the world were not greater than the wishes of Olohun Iyò, I would not let you go ... " Lights fade slowly on the scene, the hut was pushed off stage. (page 186)

#### Scene Four: A Masque

The design of a practical set to reveal both the inside and outside of the Ball-Room-Hall of the Residency and the continuing corridors surrounding it, part of which the front side of the stage is, raised some technical questions - amongst which are the factors of time, storage space for a pre-set hall, shifting and handling facilities.

The ideal approach adopted was to have the assembled walls of the Residency flown into the left and for the same to be flown down when needed.

For the creation of the walls, standard flat-units of 4 x 12 feet were assembled together in appropriate overall dimensions and sizes. One of the walls was made to be parallel to the cyclorama and to incorporate the large entrance doors through which the prince emerges. The fourth wall opens onto the front part of the stage (apron) as part of the corridor.

To fly the whole structure four battens on lines were necessary. The rear glass-wall-flat was on the first line, the two side walls were on the second, the two continuation-walls on the third, and two pillars were suspended on the fourth line. The four battens were braced together at the top with cross-bars, meaning that the four must be operated simultaneously, to bring the walls down at the same time. The operation was handled by eight stage hands, two to each line.

#### Scene Five

The main problem of this scene is how to depict a cell supposed to be underneath the Residency. But the stage, certainly, is not below the ground floor level. In this kind of situation, it is the imagination of the beholder that now comes to play. In fact the artistic freedom could now be exploited in an expressive - expressionistic - manner by erecting a prison-like cell on the stage. A four sided, raftered, wooden-structure, foldably hinged together, which can easily be carried by two stage hands was brought on stage to symbolize the cell, to close-in ELESIN, with Pilkings' padlocks. This remains so until suddenly,

ELESIN flings one arm round his neck, once, and with the loop of the chain, strangles himself in a swift, decisive pull. The GUARDS rush forward to stop him but they are only in time to let his body down. PILKINGS has leapt to the door at the same time and struggles with the lock. He rushes within, fumbles with the handcuffs and unlocks them, raises the body to a sitting position

while he tries to give resuscitation, The WOMEN continue their dirge, unmoved by the sudden event, until IYALOJA goes off accompanied by the BRIDE. The dirge rises in volume and the WOMEN continue their sway. Lights fade to a black-out. (36).

### Resumé

In designing an historical play for contemporary production, the problems of achieving historical accuracy and authenticity remain. The way out and end result, usually, are selective and relative realism. No matter the amount of research done, and, even with best intentions displayed, an absolutely faithfully reproduction of certain elements called for becomes elusive. Militating against the ideal results are the factors of economy, finance, manpower, technical and architectural inhibitions of the performance space, shortness of time, authentic information and documentary evidences and the cooperation of the other collaborating partners - especially the director and producer who may, or may not, be open to experiments. The end products are usually those of compromises, as in the case of the Residency where we had to extrapolate from the colonial architecture and photographs to create our own. However, with well co-ordinated efforts, machine-like sets, scene-changing and effects could be harmoniously accomplished.

### OPERA WONYOSI

By Wole Soyinka (37).

### Introduction

The setting for this Soyinka's satirization of a contemporary society is

The Nigerian society, which is portrayed, without one redeeming feature, is that oil-boom society of the seventies which every child knows only too well. The crimes committed by a power drunk soldiery against a cowed and defenceless people, resulting in a further mutual brutalization down the scale of power - these are hard realities that hit every man, woman and child, irrespective of class as they stooped out into the streets for work, school or other acts of daily amnesia.

Actually, it was John Gay's The Beggar's Opera originating in 1728, to dole devastating satirical scourges on King George I and his Whig government of Britain at the time, that inspired Brecht's own (Die Dreigroschen Oper) Three-Penny Opera in 1928, which subsequently spurred Soyinka to his generic off-spring, Opera Wonyosi of 1977. While Brecht was waging his ideological war to purge the stoical capitalistic government of his post-World War I Germany, Soyinka, similarly, launches his determined onslaught aimed at exercising the oil-boomed "Naira-Republik" - Nigeria of the post-civil war era of its social cankerworms, using Bokassa's empire of Central African Republic in Bangui as his launching pad.

Testifying, Biḡdun Jeyifo submits that Opera Wonyosi is Soyinka's composite adaptation of John Gay's The Beggar's Opera and Bertolt Brecht's own adaptation of Gay, The Three Penny Opera, and Soyinka himself enjoins us to "call it The Beggars' Opera ... " (page 302).

Soyinka further unravels that:

Opera Wonyosi has been written at a high period of Nigeria's social decadence the like of which will probably never again be experienced. The post civil war years ... have witnessed Nigeria's self-engagement at the banquet of highway robberies, public execution, public floggings and other institutionalised sadisms, arson, individual and mass megalomania, racketeering, hoarding, epidemic road abuse and reckless slaughter, exhibitionism ... callous and contemptuous ostentation, casual cruelties, wanton destruction, slumification, Nairamania and its attendant atavism (ritual murder for wealth), an orgy of physical filth ... the near - total collapse of human communication, (38)



The premiere production of the play was at the University of Ife, now Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, in Oduduwa Hall on the 16th December, 1977 (and later in the third week of January, 1978), as a commissioned production for the Convocation ceremony of that year, 1977.

Also, at the University of Ibadan, the play was produced, and commissioned for the fortieth anniversary celebrations and for the 1988 convocation ceremonies and ran from 14th through 16th of November, 1988, in the Arts Theatre.

Some critiques of the play could be found in Positive Review (Vol. 1, No. 1) (a journal based in the former University of Ife), in Nigeria Magazine No. 128-129, in a review by Yemi Ogunbiyi, and in New Culture on "Theatre Criticism - Drama and the Social Order + Wole Soyinka Opera Wonyosi", by Biḡdun Jeyifo, in 1979. Jeyifo emphasizes that:

Ṣoyinka is up to the grand scale of his satiric purview. If, as many reviewers have noted, everything is paraded, danced, mimed, rendered in song, announced and argued on stage in this production, it is also necessary to note a decisively new quality in Ṣoyinka's satire. Ṣoyinka is justly famous for the telling satiric thrust, the revealing deft touch, the skillful jab, the gaily parodistic. In Opera Wonyosi, the satire is elaborately ironic, symphonic in its orchestration.

The production at Ibadan, which is bound to be somehow dissimilar to that at Ife, particularly in the scenographic areas as designers and directors are different, received Dapo Adelugba's

dissecting directorial treatment. In it, Adelugba ensured that Soyinka's *Dee Jay* persistently led us through the Spirit of the story and the Structure of the dramatic opera, portraying the under-world's characters of criminals, pimps, prostitutes and beggars in the generality of Black African states, as epitomized in the expatriate community of Bangui's New-Ikoyi area of Central African Republic. The haunting, exposing "everything negative, degrading and soul-deadening in contemporary Nigeria" was pursued to its special domicile in Ikoyi proper of Lagos, following it everywhere through the entire Nigerian population and finally betraying the "Orders" created by the military bourgeoisie, which had its first outrageous outing in the 1966 coup and had since graduated to produce the newly rich clientele of the post-civil war years on the one hand and the emergent Nigerian civilian bourgeoisie on the other hand.

The two sides became an amalgam of two "aspects of a single political and historical reality" which has a cross-continental support and acceptance, backed by the "active connivance and mutual production games of other equally guilty (or nearly so) incumbents of seats of power on the continent". (39)

The central theme and nucleus of the play revolves around the conflict between the two principal under-world characters in the play. They are Chief Jonathan Anikura on one side and Captain Macheath (Mack the Knife) on the other. Chief Jonathan Anikura is a proprietor of the business "Home from Home for the Homeless" in which he keeps

the immigrant and refugee Nigerians as trainees to become professional beggars, simulating, in costumes, various forms of physical and mental deformities. This prosperous business has earned him - Anikura - the chieftaincy title as the 'King of Beggars' for being "a master of the psychology of charity" who understands how to use the device of "something new to clutch the heart-strings and loosen the purse strings" and thus exploit the kind-hearted donors of alms to the seeming beggars.

Captain Macheath is the ring leader of a gangster group notorious for their arson, killing, burglary, raping and all forms of decadence. "Mackie the Knife" himself acknowledges and affirms this by saying.

---Never, never, have I in my humble capacity as a safe-breaker; multiple murderer, failed to share the proceeds of my adventure with Tiger Brown", and that the Commissioner, Inspector Brown, Officer of the Nigerian Police on loan to the Centrafrique Empire, the Republic in the bad old days, never, never, well almost never, organised a raid without giving me just that little hint in advance. Give and take, give and take, is what it takes, is how to live. (40)

Anikura and Mackie are desirous of a wider scope of power and areas of influence for their criminalities. Anikura seizes unto himself the New Ikoyi, Nigerian settlement areas of Bangui, as his area of jurisdiction while Mackie bases his operation in his mobile office that migrates principally in the other areas of Bangui shared by the natives and foreigners, but yet had his eyes on Anikura's wealth and in order to gain access, he resorts to 'pinching Polly,

Anikura's only daughter, right under his nose'. And so, the battle line became dangerously drawn more than ever before with each one trying to eliminate the other by implications. Mackie first insinuates Anikura's "Home from Home for the Homeless" as the habitat of secret societies recently banned in Nigeria by the military people as forces militating against the nation and its government. Such a society or its elements could be potentially dangerous to Emperor Bokassa whose empire is being guarded and protected by such a military adviser like Colonel Moses loaned to Bokassa. Mackie's efforts to use Commissioner Tiger Brown of the Nigerian Police, his brother, comrade-in-arm and business partner, to ensure the closure of Home from Home were, however, foiled with counter-accusation by Chief Anikura and his cohort, De Madam, who also are able to prove Commissioner Brown's shady deals with Mackie, and also convinced Colonel Moses that Mackie must be committed to death for the series of arsons, murders and looting he has spearheaded. Anikura was also able, by using Alatako, the lawyer, one of his beggars, to frame up a scheme that would prove Colonel Moses' Nigerian Army as a secret society, whose sole concern and interest then was to destabilise Bokassa's regime. Conscious of the grave implications and consequences of those accusations if they get to Bokassa's knowledge, Colonel Moses, therefore, guaranteed Mackie's arrest at one of his whores' (Suzie's) place. Anikura's use of the law-giver, in Colonel Moses, to thwart the efforts of the law-keeper in the Police Commissioner Brown were

Soyinka's devices to illustrate the corruption of the manoeuvring of the law and the judiciary by the underworld powers to pervert the course of justice, by the law-givers and its custodians, in favour of the undesirable elements but to the detriment of the poor, law-abiding and innocent souls in Black Africa. Even the inclusion of the coronation of Emperor Bokassa, to stand for the coronation of the monarch mentioned in both Gay's and Brecht's, was Soyinka's means of validating his attack on the generality of the exploitative, puppet African leaders who are like Bokassa. Despite the abject poverty in his self-acquired Republic of Centrafrique, the third poorest nation of the world, Bokassa could still make himself the life Emperor "at a scandalously lavish coronation ceremony, the like of which is unknown in modern history. At that event, Bokassa made the extra-ordinary Dee-Jay to read the following proclamation:

We, Our Serene Highness, newly reincarnated, and crowned Emperor Charlemaque Desiree Boky the First, Lion of Bangui, Tiger of the Tropics, Elect of God, First among Kings and Emperors, the Pulsing Nugget of Life, and Radiating Sun of Africa, hereby pronounce, a general Amnesty for all common criminals. Take heed, however, that this great condescension shall not, repeat, shall not extend to any accused or convicted of crimes of a political nature. Long live the Emperor. (4)

And the crowd applauded: "Long live the emperor, Long live the imperial family, Mackie's saved, He's saved. Saved ... "

And, reacting, Anikura dispels our surprise by saying:

Well, does that surprise you? It shouldn't. We men of influence -

of power if you like - respect one another. We speak the same language, so we usually work things out. As for you lot,

Remember, it's not every day  
The emperor's courier timely arrives.  
Repairing wrongs, sustaining rights  
And neatly installing the back-to-square-one ----- (42).

Ans so, Soyinka demonstrates that the struggle for the poor man continues. Even the beggars shuffle towards Mackie. Boky entered to end it all on page 404. END.

#### On the Staging of Opera Wonyosi

Dapo Adelugba's and Wole Soyinka's productions of the play adopted the 'Master Symbol' techniques of the "Unscripted theatre", "Living-Newspaper--theatre", and the 'Brechtian approach' in which, until the play has completed its running, updating and expansion of the plot and the structure, to incorporate current and topical issues of the day, are continuously experimented with and planted into the matrix of the play at every new staging of it.

Evidences of such ingenious adoption of Brecht's "Verfremdungseffekte" - the alienation effects-are Soyinka's spinning in of the issues of the coronation of 'Emperor-for-Life', Jean-Bedel Bokassa of Central African Republic; the inclusion of "Tai Solarin's coffin of the Body of the 100 1st. unknown victim of Nigerian road accidents, a gift to a consciencelless Nation" presented to the Lagos City Council, an incident that really occurred during the period of the premiere production of the play at Ile-Ife in 1977.

Adelugba has even expanded the 'Verfremdungs - effekt' by introducing into the list of events signifying the continuation of the army's and the civilians' acts of crime against the defenceless people since 1977, the case of Maitasine, 1982, ABU crisis, 1985; Dawodu Brothers, Lagos 1987, and Oil-subsidy, April 1988, as some of such examples of bold dramatic inclusions to enhance dramatic experimentation.

With his alienation effects, Brecht takes his audience to distant places, removed from their own immediate familiar environments and surroundings, and there presents them with ideas, facts and information in which they, the audience, can recognize similarity and parallels with their own circumstances and conditions, if not, in fact, their own selves, seen in another locale. There, then, the audience is ostensibly not geographically or directly involved but yet being tasked both intellectually and emotionally. The impact then becomes a more critical audience's participation to engender self-realisation, self-consciousness, self-analysis and self-judgement. This is clearly portrayed by Soyinka's reference to Bokassa's coronation. The would-have-been geographical location problem was solved by Soyinka's extension of the geographical locations to and beyond Central Africa, in order to validate his lashing at all other opportunistic, greedy and puppet African leaders.

Another alienation effect is to be found in Brecht's adoption of oriental production elements and influences in his works. Brecht

believes that the actor should be allowed to unfold himself freely, expressing his personality while yet distinguishing himself from the character he assumes to play. In other words, the actor, in carrying along his audience with him, should be capable of presenting rather than representing the event, idea, or the message in context; he should be able to portray how the character is, and as different from himself.

The innovative and creative deployment of the other elements of production such as songs, music, orchestra and dance by Dapo Adelugba in his 1988 production deserves commendation. Similarly, the elements of costume design, character analysis and stage lighting received judicious treatment, especially the costumes in the hands of Esho Veronica Omoregie who has done a thesis on costumes entitled "Costume Design for contemporary Nigerian Plays." (43)

As Oren Parker and Craig Wolf have claimed, "The design of the scenery, either directly or indirectly, influences the total visual effect of any dramatic production." (44) But, in fulfilling this task, the designer of a setting has to consider the movement, costumes and lighting of the actors, though their design and execution may fall in the hands of other collaborating artists, as in the case of Opera Wonyosi where the costume design was handled by Esho Omoregie who, in her thesis referred to above, has given a more detailed account on this.

The present writer's first concern in designing the production was the development of the ground-(floor)-plan of the settings which



crucially affects the movements of the large cast and the director's planning of the blockings for the trafficking of the play on the proscenium stage of the Arts Theatre. Of importance was the consideration of sight lines of the audience to guarantee a good view of the stage actions from almost all of the seats in the auditorium. Besides, other basic issues on the production elements such as the place and locale, time and period, milieu and social strata of the characters, scenic style and colour, tempo and prevailing mood, scenery changing and handling, were cleared with the director in the early production meetings and as the work progressed.

#### The Scheme of Production

The scheme of production here took cognisance of the design concept, analysis of the settings, and the kinds of scenery changing and methods of handling deducible from the play text and directorial approach.

##### 1. Time and Period

Though Soyinka wrote Opera Wonyosi in December 1977, the play's real affinities go back to his earlier work, Before the Blackout, in the worst days and darkest nights of Nigeria's first civilian republic.

While Before the Blackout reflects the power, arrogance, cowardice and institutionalized sycophancy which characterized

life in the social order of the civilian bourgeoisie, Opera Wonyosi reflects the "order" created by "the military bourgeoisie"

The fact that all these societal ailments X-rayed in the two works still remain uncured up to date validates the timelessness, almost, of the play and the sketches.

### 3. Time of Day

The scenes of the play occurred from mornings through nights thus:

#### Part One:

Scene One: Morning-Dawn: page 305. Anikura kicks awake the bundles of rags and cloth.

Scene Two: Night: Enter Matar with torch light and pistol  
"They are usually to be found here at this time"...

Scene Three: Day time

Scene Four: Day time

Scene Five: Night time

#### Part Two

Scene One: In the Whore House - Play Boy Club - Night.

Scene Two: In the Prison - Mackie's Cell - Day time

Scene Three: Headquarters of Home from Home for the Homeless  
Day time.

Scene Four: Coronation : - Day time.

3. Period: The season is all the year round.
4. Mood: This varied from scene to scene and ranged from gripping, frivolous, sombre, climaxing in the "happy-end" comedy - as in the last scene, of Part Two - Scene Four.

5. Place and Locale

The words 'place' and 'locale' are often used interchangeably. While the 'place' frequently refers to a specific point or spot in a particular area, such as in a barber's shop, in a living room, at the front of a chemist's shop, or in a king's palace; the 'locale' points to a wider geographical spread, such as Ile-Ife, Akure or Lagos. Both terms describe the scene of action of the play.

For Opera Wonyosi, Soyinka gave the specifics and details of the 'place' and 'locale' thus: The play is made up of two parts. Part One contains five scenes and Part Two has four scenes. The opening with the Dee Jay, with the Orchestra playing "Mack the Knife" in the back-ground, until the emergence of Anikura, could be regarded as the Prologue scene.

Looked at more closely, we find the following settings.

Part One

The Prolongue: takes place on the bare apron:

- (1) on page 302: The orchestra is positioned.
- (2) The Dee Jay is positioned.

- (3) The Apron is used for the prologue
- (4) The company stroll in, each in character, and promenade about the stage.
- (5) That the stage was first bare for the promenade.
- (6) on page 304 On the last stanza of the song "Mack the Knife" company disappear - Fade-out.

Scene One:

- (1) On page 305 - The beggars were sprawl on the stage floor (while D.J. speaks, the set is pushed into the position to envelop them, or they enter into the set, and sprawl on the stage floor before Anikura's entrance.
- (2) On page 305 - Anikura emerges and kicks the beggars on the stage awake. We are already in the Home from Home for the Homeless.
- (3) On pages 306 - 307 - Ahmed enters. Business with Anikura around the map on the wall.
- (4) On page 308: Further indication about the environment, in "Don't be stupid - our sector is marked by sign post of feet of garbage."
- (5) On page 309: De Madam emerges from inside.
- (6) On page 310: Anikura, Ahmed and De Madam and the costume business.
- (7) On page 313: Further indication about the kind of home in De Madam's assertion: Polly? Upstairs, of course
- (8) On page 315: Ahmed comes out of the sitting room.

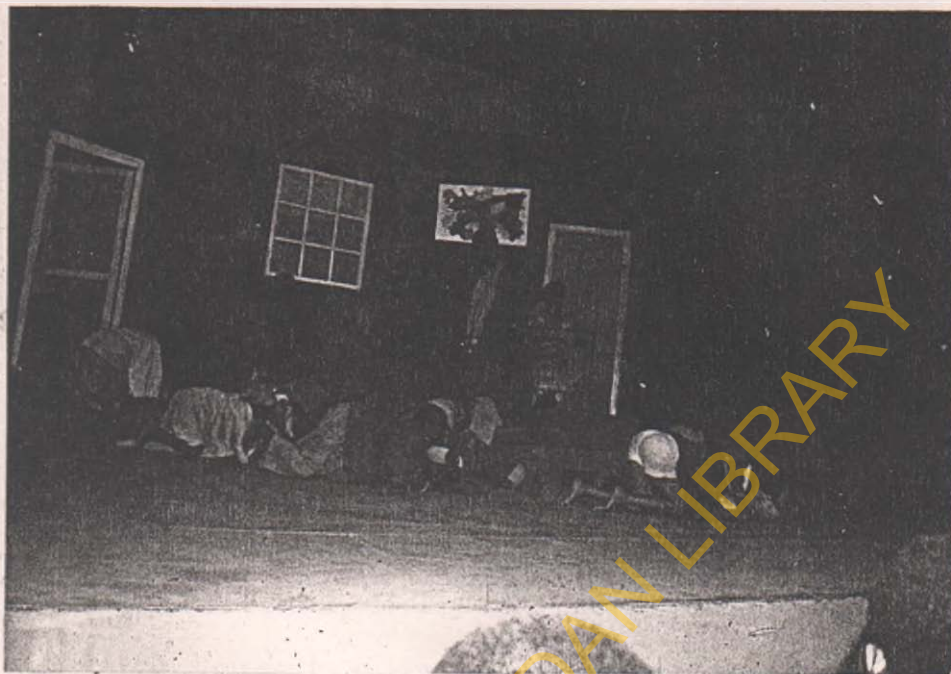


FIG. 50: : OPERA WONYOSI:- PART ONE SCENE ONE: "HOME FROM HOME FOR THE HOMELESS"



FIG. 51: : OPERA WONYOSI:- PART ONE: SCENE TWO: A STABLE - THE POLO CLUB

Scene Two

On page 317 - Deep in the Bidonville of Bangui known as the Nigerian quarter by the natives but christened New - Ikoyi by the expatriates. (page 317.)

(1) A Stable - the so-called Army Polo Club.

(2) Enters Baba Hadji ...

Jake carrying furniture (page 318).

(3) The stable is quickly made to look like a loud, over-furnished drawing-room, a room where guests are received or entertained, living room or parlour.

(4) Jake brings in a big painting of the once fashionable Nigerian native style.

(5) A big covered object is brought down. (page 319.)

(6) Matar presents a night gown: - page 321.

(7) Dare uncovers a big, slim, futuristic object, Latest in grandfather's clock, No hand but with buttons Japanese Seiko Wall Clock.

(8) Big box for boxing of the presents. (page 222.)

Scene Three

Beky's Coronation Parade Ground: page 320

(1) Set change begins with the song "Khaki'-is-a-man's Best Friend" on page 328.



52: OPERA WONYOSI: PART ONE; SCENE FOUR; THE COURT SCENE



53: OPERA WONYOSI: PART TWO: SCENE ONE: THE PLAYBOY CLUB

Scene Four is like Scene One "Home from Home" ... (page 338.)

Scene Five is like Scene Two - THE STABLE. (page 344.)

## Part Two

### Scene One:

A Whorehouse in Bangui also known as PLAY-BOY CLUB (page 352.)

### Scene Two

PRISON, MACKIE'S Cell. (page 353.)

### Scene Three:

The Headquarters of HOME FROM HOME Like Part One, Scene One (page 379..) On Moses' exit, Projection screen down and a horse race displayed for D.J's commentary, Gauze screen (Video) (p.394.)

### Scene Four

CORONATION GROUND like Scene 3 in Part One, But here it becomes PUBLIC EXECUTION GROUND (FIRING SQUARE(GROUND)) plus the following additions: (Lagos Firing Squad was at the Bar Beach.) (p. 396.)

### Effects

Along the Gang-way louveres, 500 W baby spot lights illuminate the aisles.

Pyrotechnical Effects, and various sound effects.

(1) On the right exit door a wooden plank ramp to drag out the collapsed patient.



- (2) A tumbril (contraption) or any of the carts used to carry the condemned to the guillotine during the French Revolution or a farmers' tip cart, especially for dung.
- (3) Streamers, balloons, flags, etc., some flown from the proscenium-bridge, lighting boxes and from all over for Boky's coronation.
- (4) Cloths and rags: for the human forms kicked awake on p. 305.
- (5) Note-book for Anikura.
- (6) A table and chair for Anikura for his writing-furiously.
- (7) A map for the wall, on page 308.
- (8) A signpost of garbage of up to ten feet high on p. 308.
- (9) Nigerian Currency Notes.
- (10) A whip for the third model, called Taphy-Psychotic p.311.
- (11) Shoes and other personal things for Ahmed.
- (12) Torchlight and pistol for Matar, on page 317.
- (13) Furniture and crockery, on page 318.
- (14) A big painting brought in by Jane.
- (15) Quadraphonic set.
- (16) A fully equipped banquet table.

#### On the Design-in-Action

The scenographic realisation of Opera Wonyosi, like in other productions, depended largely on the conceptual and interpretative principles and attributes of design aesthetics. These, of course,

were backed by personal emotion, intuition and taste. They all wanted in influencing the produced visual forms of the scenic elements expressed in scenic-style that depicted the degree of reality contributed to the mode of performance. The production strove at a presentational style which could not be completely free of some elements of realism, expressionism, symbolism, formalism and impressionism to boost intonations of the near-contemporary pageant play. The amalgam of those styles in a single production may be permissible under the aegis of artistic freedom and theatrical liberty.

At the forefront of the present writer's mind was the fact that "the visual appearance of a set should be completely natural for the character appearing in it, and that, upon entering the set, the character should become an integrated part of the scene not just an actor standing in front of the scenery" (44)

The principles of 'Unit-Set' for the recurrent Scenes - One and Two in Part One, and Scene Two and Four in Part Two - was considered practical and functional.

For quick scene-changing, the principles of the Jack-Knife-and wagon-stages have been exploited. Scenic - prisms, periaktoi, on whose sides the various scenes were painted, were erected on castored base to ensure the dual, rotational, translational movements desired for continuity and fluidity in the run of the play to avoid boredom and distraction that a long performance time of three hours run might cause.

The two methods of scenery shifting, according to Lynn Pectal - "without the audience seeing it" and "a vista, with the audience seeing it"<sup>45</sup> were adopted.

Of concern to the present writer at all times and at any rate was "to first stimulate the proper emotional response and not to allow a self-conscious design to overwhelm the play."<sup>46</sup> However, if the acting is stylized, the scenery must be, too. The important thing is that the audience will accept any degree of departure from the real in scenery as long as it is "consistent and in good taste"<sup>47</sup>.

After reaching an agreement on the style of the production, the present writer proceeded with the putting together of his visual impressions, first on paper in sketch forms, plans and in models for clearer understanding by all concerned in the production process. That phase was followed by the execution procedures. For we believed in Edward A. Wright's view in Understanding Today's Theatre stating that "a director and a designer do what they feel is right for the work and it is the audience that labels it."<sup>48</sup> Hence, we aimed at an end result of a unified production which we achieved through the encouragement of the director, collaboration and mutual respect among the production team.

In order to appraise the success, or otherwise, of the production, since there are no newspapers critic's writings of the set, we may allow the comments of some of the beholders, namely fellow partners in the venture, to speak.

On the realisation of the present writer's concept, Esobe

Omoregie writes:

In the University of Ibadan Arts Theatre production of 1988, the choice of locales was the exclusive domain of the scenic designer. The theatre structure itself was the Proscenium type. To facilitate quick scene changes and cut down on time wastage in between scenes, the scenic designer/executant, Mr. James Olusola Aborisade, built two-sided revolving scenic elements on stage to accommodate the scene changes. These units were then mounted on rollers. With trained stage hands, the scene changes were effected by changing the scene on display into another scene by exposing the back side of the revolve. To further cut down on time spent, the scene changes were initiated during the final section of each of the scenes, and by the time the rendition of the closing song for each scene was complete the audience had before their eyes the next "scene". This device was highly appreciated by the University of Ibadan Arts Theatre audiences. (49)

And, on the opening of the production on the 16th November 1988 the director, Dapo Adelugba, in a personal letter of appreciation to the present writer writes

My Dear Scenographer,

CONGRATULATIONS ON THE SUCCESSFUL SET DESIGN AND EXECUTION OF OUR WOLE ŞOYINKA'S OPERA WONYOSI, A 1988 DEPARTMENTAL PRODUCTION FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS.

Please accept my congratulations on the success of the opening night of our 1988 Departmental production of Wole Şoyinka's Opera Wonyosi under my direction for the University of Ibadan Fortieth Anniversary Celebrations.

Your role as Set Designer and Executant and your successful coaching of our young team of students with whom you shared the building and the scene-to-scene moving of your technologically and artistically inventive and challenging set will stand you and the Department in good stead now and in the future.

Once again, I say, 'Congratulations'.

Yours sincerely,

(sgd)

Professor Dapo Adelugba  
Room 100A, Faculty of Arts Main Building  
Department of Theatre Arts. #

In conclusion, scenographically, Soyinka's plays sometimes evince similitudes and comparison as vindicated in the locations of the cellar - surgery - in Dr. Bero's house in Madmen and Specialists, and in the cell-prison in the Residency in Death and the King's Horseman. Both places were situated underneath the ground-floor-level of houses. These requirements could prompt design of neutral scenic units to facilitate re-use and recycling thereof.

The dovetailing technique used by Soyinka is reminiscent of the one adopted in the production of Irwin Shaw's Gentle People by the Students Dramatic Society in the late fifties about which Professor Fola Aboaba,<sup>(50)</sup> a member of the Society, who took part in the April, 1958, performance of the play and Molly Mohood<sup>(51)</sup> have both written, which in Technical Theatre terms, call for technological devices for

quick and swift scene-changing and juxtapositions inherent in epic theatre staging techniques.

Soyinka's plays, architecturally, have been written for proscenium stages, no doubt, but not all for statically floored stage as we have in the Arts Theatre, University of Ibadan, with its shallow orchestra area (which has been) levelled up. The ideal stage for these productions would be modular and movable stage floor where the needed portions of the stage floor can be driven up or down or at least made manually removable, especially like in the case of Madmen and Specialists in the

"The Good Ideologist of Naira-Republik"

by James Olusola Aborisade

Introduction: About the Play

It is a fact that the writer got the inspiration to write "The Good Ideologist of Naira-Republik" from Bertolt Brecht's The Good Woman of Setzuan, but he had never seen Brecht's own play in performance before writing his.

Bertolt Brecht, whom hundreds of his admirers world-wide have written about, has been an undying fountain of inspiration to a thousand others, including even our own Wole Soyinka. One of Brecht's admirers is Tim Gordon, an erstwhile member of the academic staff of the University College, Ibadan, who has written:

Bertolt Brecht is one of the most exciting phenomena in the twentieth century theatre. His craft is wedded to his belief in social justice. And

this derived from a profound and generous humanism.

Quoting Brecht, Gordon continues:

In mankind's markets I have seen how humanity is traded. That show I, the playwright. (54).

One of the most fascinating qualities of Brecht that captivated the writer's mind are the down-to-earth simplicity in approach, the colourfulness of the language and the great master's "Verfremdungseffekte" - alienation effects -, which have been able to take the writer to China, where this parable play is set, and at the same time he was seeing his country Nigeria still while sitting on his school bench in Germany.

The main theme of The Good Woman of Setzuan is that three gods have come to earth in search of a good person in order to justify man's further existence. Brecht's gods could only find accommodation in the house of Shen Te, a prostitute.

As a reward, the gods gave Shen Te money with which she established a tobacconist's. The small business thrives. And no sooner did she start "making it" than all her relatives and old acquaintances who have been calling her names and who had deserted her come back and even unknown ones, they began to troop in in search of Shen Te's helping hand.

At the brink of liquidation, resulting from Shen Te's generosity, realising late the exploitative attitudes of her ever-present guests, she had to devise a means of saving the venture and, in order to survive, she assumes the disguise of a male cousin, who ruthlessly

rescues the dwindling business. After putting her affairs back in good order, and still willing to continue doing good, she finally set up a flourishing tobacco works in which she now provides many with jobs. Even the indolent are taught to work for their living. But the booming business and her prosperity have cost Shen Te the despising reputation of her 'shrewd cousin'.

The abortive efforts of the gods at the extraction of the puzzlement force them back to heaven without leaving us with answers to our questions and without ameliorating the situation and conditions on earth.

Brecht's concern in this play, as perceived by the writer, is the illuminating of social behaviour of the people when the issues of ethics, economics, and politics meet and conflict. But there is no attempt of his at giving judgement. Not even on the bit players whom he, Brecht, seemingly, does not aim to humiliate. Even the wedding party is only probably to show the gluttonous attitudes of the parasitic relations who eat and eat plates of baked-wares empty, and they stuff mouths and hands so full that the goodies are over-flowing their receptacles. But, when all had been emptied, they would even loathe the mere clean-up work. They are there just to eat and, when asked to work, they grudgingly respond. Agreed, they are hungry, and, indeed, "food is first thing, moral follows," but then, should they not learn to produce what they eat?

Those social comments have a direct bearing on the Nigerian situation. In the eyes of the present writer, ~~able-bodied people~~, in Nigeria, in



their thousands roam about joblessly. Is it not the lack of strong leadership who really can plan the infrastructural, social and economic resources so productively as to sweep clean our roads of the indolent lay-abouts of self-imposed underemployment? Our people, when under the sledge hammer, quickly give in — as vindicated by the squeezing power of SAP. Or are they still yielding and rearing children in thousands, making all the campaigns on family planning a futile exercise? Therefore, pressed under the right iron-hand, which a corrective military regime is supposed to be, we would be productive in the right direction.

Can't we then see in Shen Te's "cousin's" sense of accountability and shrewdness of a serious business man golden virtues that can lead the dangerously drifting raft of a nation to safer shores? To all those questions, "The Good Ideologist of Naira-Republik" was equipped to give answers. But, alas, he was not allowed because, there it is basic that the best contestant never does win a race in the virtually 'dirty' Nigerian political games. Ah! to shame, after the man died they all, the parasitical nationalists, lamented and shed hypocritical tears, which they, with their same corrupt hands have, long dried before shedding them.

However, Ola Rotimi has always warned ever before "the man died" that "the gods are not to blame". May be, we shall overcome — one day!

"The Good Ideologist of Naira Republik" byJames Olu-Aborisade

## CHARACTERS

PROF. DR. WALLAI OGBONJOWO, A Social Reformer.

THREE GENERALS

CHIEF AFENIFERE SAIYÉDERO, A Welfarist, Later a Socialist

CHIEF CHUKUNRIE OWOTULU, A former tenant of Chief Foworoye

A FAMILY OF EIGHT (The man, the wife, brother,  
sister-in-law, Grandfather, Nephew,  
Niece, Boy (depicting 8 tribes  
of the country).

AN UNEMPLOYED MAN, Mr. Òlédàrùn

A CONTRACTOR, Mr. Pákédolá Ayúndìran

CHIEF B.M.A. ATEBITARA FOWOROYE, a big Estate Agent to Chief  
Saiyedero's rented building -  
and a Politician.

Mallam PAGIDARI IGIDA, an unemployed ex-minister, radical-  
socialist.

TWO PROSTITUTES (one young, one old)

TWO POLICEMEN - One SAP, the other an Inspector

AN OLD MAN, the Textile-dealer

AN OLD WOMAN, his wife

THE EMIR, of Nako State. Mallam RIKISI RIGIMO

ALHAJI OGUNDOWO WAJERE, an industrialist and armourist.

THE WAITER.

THE PRIEST - CHIEF FEKODE

THE PASSERS - BY OF THE PROLOGUE

TWO ROAD SAFETY CORPS, 'Majamaja'

TWO TRAFFIC WARDENS, "Yellow Fever"

CHIEF SAIYEDERO'S NIGHT WATCH MAN

TWO SUPERMARKET ATTENDANTS (a boy, a girl)

A CARRIER for Chief Saiyedero

THE TEXTILE SHOP'S ATTENDANT

THE TOWNS-PEOPLE

THE VOICES

THE CLASS OF CHILDREN, ETC.

All the names are coined out of the Yoruba language and the names, though hypothetical, yet have their allegorical meanings, to which importance is attached in the tradition.

Nigeria, before and after the Civil War of 1967 to 1970, has been continuously ruled by the military, with the exception of a brief cosmetic civilian regime of the unwilling, shy and dotty president, to whom the last of the Generals handed over power. The political climate in the country had portended the imminent disaster we came to have. If Nigeria had a "Surgical specialist" - not the calibre of Dr. Bero, please, but a man of strong visionary powers, whose political slate is relatively clean and who had stood with Nigeria through thick and thin, then we would have been spared the economic calamity of today. And since only a good ideologist can

come forth with a good ideology, all that Nigeria needed was "The Good Ideologist of Naira-Republik," as the only hope of all and sundry, even if seen differently. Chief Afenifere Saiyederø has presented his nation many statements of prophetic guidance and warnings, most of which the subsequent regimes are still exploiting to make for the only good part of their records. The man advocated the creation of more states decades ago. Today Nigeria has thirty States. The 'anti-SAP economic wizard' who knew where the money for running the State was to be found, without borrowing or devaluation of Naira, even during the costly civil war, has finally left us to continue with our suffering and smiling.

The Generals then interrogate the welfarist to ascertain his ability to win elections in "Naira Republik".

To that effect, the Welfarist, by name, Chief Saiyederø, comes up with a four-cardinal programme as his election manifestoes.

The four cardinal programmes include:

- i. Provision of employment opportunities for the vast majority of the people in 'Naira-Republik' who were jobless.
- ii. Free Education at all levels.
- iii. Free health services for children between 0 - 18 years and aged ones (from 65 years and above) and
- iv. Increase in salaries and wages.

Having proved to the Generals that he is up to the task, Chief Saiyederø was given a cheque for a sum of money by the Generals

for his services which he used in pursuing his programmes by first the setting up of a Gari-Ilaju Factory in which many jobless people were employed.

Surprising to the present writer, however, is the degree to which his own prophecies have been fulfilled. He talked of the Peoples' Bank, the death of some of the political figures as a result of the heart-break from the disappointments of the 1983 elections. For example, he writes about Mallam Igida, that "He'll soon become a forgotten nuisance. He'll exist no more." He wrote about it and we later read of the show-down the Mallam gave Chief Saiyedero. He also spoke of the giving up of breath of Chief Saiyedero. All, unfortunately, have happened.

What do we conclude about the message of "The Good Ideologist of Naira Republik"? Whether, or is Soyinka's Old Man's As's philosophy in: "As was in the beginning, As is now and for ever As shall be ... World without end" could not come to pass, again?

And as Brecht's audience in China - Chiang-Kaishek and in his Germany - Berlin, also were those of Aborisade in Nigeria - Ibadan, sent back home into their "Mankind's Markets", to continue their trading without visible hope for a better future:

On the Settings for "The Good Ideologist of Naira Republik"

The Play: "The Good Ideologist of Naira Republik" is made up of fifteen settings: the prologue, three Interludes, ten scenes and the Epilogue.

THE SETTINGS :1. PROLOGUE - Page 1

A STREET IN THE CAPITAL OF NAIRA REPUBLIK

It is evening, (to the audience) Professor Walai Ogbonjowo introduces himself.

2. Scene One, Page 10: In the Supermarket

A small supermarket, The Supermarket is not yet properly installed and furnished and hasn't been doing business.

3. Interlude I: Page 19, OGBONJOWO'S STUDY, Late in the Night.

The social reformer is seen with his head buried in his NEWSPAPERS; The small study is full of books, papers, magazines, charts, maps and globes. In one corner, some cutlasses, hoes and baskets. He is crouching: doing behind his desk.

4. Scene 2, Page 20: In the SUPERMARKET

Sleeping bodies everywhere, the light is still burning. A knock.

5. Scene 3, Page 30: EVENING IN A PARK

A middle-aged man (Mallam) is watching, on the cloudy farm a tractor which is evidently making ridges over the plot, Mallam Pagidari Igida then takes a rope and knife from his pocket and looks around him anxiously for something. He then goes to Dongoyaro tree when two prostitutes come up to him. One of them is old, the other one is the niece from the family of eight. The wind predicts rainfall. Some passers-by, mostly in Hausa dresses, rush by to defy the rain.

6. INTERLUDE II: PAGE 35, OGBONJOWO'S STUDY

Ogbonjowo is sleeping. His sleeping corner is lighted brighter than the rest of the study. The sleeping bed becomes where the Generals appear to him as he dreams.

7. Scene 4, Page 38: A SQUARE IN FRONT OF SAIYEDERO'S SUPERMARKET

To one side an industrialist's shop. To another side, a textile shop. To the centre, Saiyadero's shop, it is morning. Outside Saiyadero's supermarket wait two survivors of the family of eight - the Grandfather and the Sister-in-law. Also the unemployed man and Chief Owotulu.

8. Scene 5, Page 44: THE SUPERMARKET

Saiyadero's market, behind the counter Chief Fetosaiye reading newspapers. Chief Owotulu is checking stock. He talks and takes no notice.

9. Scene 6, Page 52: YARD BEHIND SAIYEDERO'S SUPERMARKET

A few household goods, some implements on a cart. Saiyadero and Owotulu are checking some sacks of food stuffs. Some washings on the lines.

10. Scene 7, Page 58: FETOSAIYE'S GARI FACTORY

Fetosaiye has set up a small Gari Factory in Alhaji Wajere's buildings. Hurriedly constructed, a number of families huddle behind baskets, women and children predominate. Among them the Sister-in-law, Grandfather, contractor and his children. In front of them enters Emir RIGIMO, followed by his uncle, Mallam Igida.



FIG. 54: PROLOGUE - OGBONJOWO AND GENERALS .



FIG. 55: SCENE ONE: IN THE SUPER MARKET



11. Scene 7, Page 58: A PLAY-IN-A-PLAY - RAYDAY

In the Gari Factory. A table is set up and Fetosaiye comes with a bag of money; standing next to the foreman is the unemployed man. Foreman pays the wages. Mallam Igida steps to the table.

12. Scene 8, Page 62: FETOSAIYE'S GARI FACTORY'S OFFICE

One corner of the factory as an office, in the same place, at the end of the day, Fetosaiye and Mallam alone remain.

13. INTERLUDE 3, PAGE 63: OGBONJOWO'S STUDY - MUSIC

For the last time the Generals appear to the social reformer in a dream. They are greatly changed. It is impossible to mistake the symptoms of prolonged travel, utter exhaustion and unhappy experiences of every kind. One of them has had his cap knocked off his head, one has lost a leg in an accident and all three are going bare-footed.

14. Scene 9, Page 64: FETOSAIYE'S GARI FACTORY OFFICE

Just as in Scene 8 above, under point 12, however, in the meantime, Foworoye and Wajere have entered.

15. Scene 10, Page 66: IN THE REVOLUTIONARY COURT

In groups: Alhaji Ogunlowo Wajere, Chief B.M.A. Foworoye, Mallam Pagidari Igida and the Emir of Nako State, Ogbonjowo, the contractor, the grandfather, the old and young prostitutes, the two old people, Owotulu, the Policemen, the Sister-in-law, etc. The three generals appear in judges' robes, as they pass along the front of the stage to go to their places, they can be heard whispering.

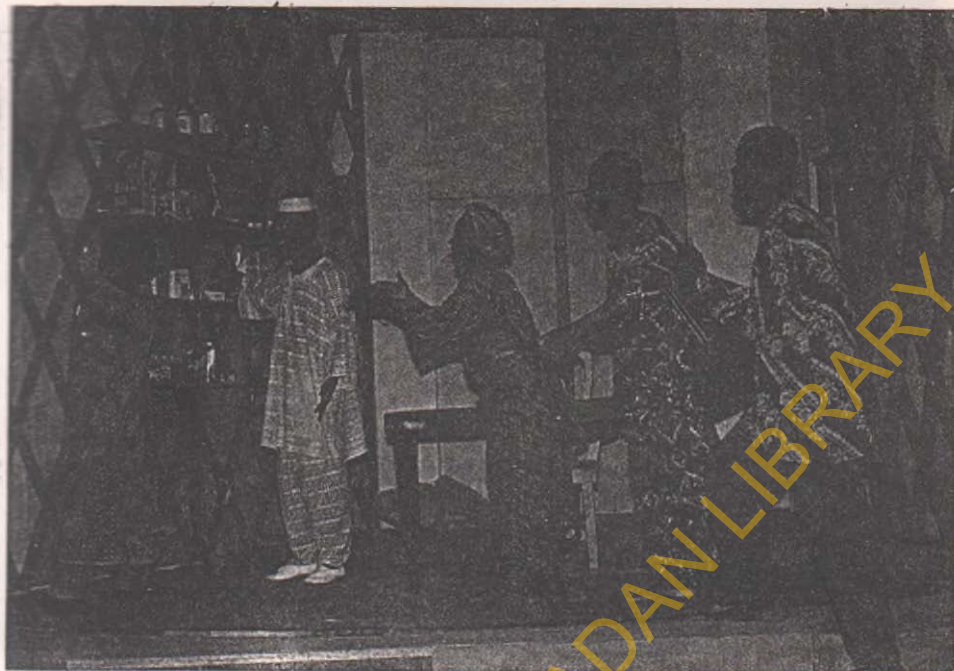


FIG 56: ...'NAIRA-REPUBLIK'-SCENE TWO: IN THE SUPERMARKET



FIG 57: ...'NAIRA-REPUBLIK' SCENE THREE: IN A PARK



FIG 58: SCENE SEVEN: THE GARI FACTORY



FIG 59: SCENE TEN IN THE REVOLUTIONARY COURT

LIST OF PROPSPROLOGUE:

- p. 4; PCB - Public Complaints Back Ogbonjowo
- p. 4; (Registration of **Business** name)  
(Tender for supply of communist books)
- p. 6; garbage mentioned by Ogbonjowo
- p. 7; Torch or lantern for Saiyadero to lead out the Generals.

Scene One: P. 10; Gari bag for Chukwunrie

Gari for Chukwunrie in the supermarket

- p. 12: Cigarettes for unemployed man
- p. 13: Shelves
- p. 14: (Boxes) Carton for the BROTHER'S wife
- p. 14: Plates for food for the brother and wife-Eba
- p. 14: Brief case for Chief Foworoye
- p. 14: Agreement - oversized-for Foworoye
- p. 16: Bottles of beer and edibles for the brother.

Interlude One

- p. 19: Late in the Night, Ogbonjowo's Study

Newspaper

Cutlasses (in one corner), hoe and baskets.

Map, Globe (world's).

Scene Two:

- p. 20: In the Supermarket
- p. 22: Draw-out of Fetosaiye's pocket is the Bill of the contractor. From Fetosaiye a Cheque of ₦40,000.00

- p. 23: The carpenter/contractor's Bill.
- p. 24: Cakes, assorted, spoken of by the boy.
- p. 27: A packet of cigarettes for the Police.
- p. 28: Various bottles of drinks for the old woman
- p. 29: Notebook for Policeman.

Scene Three:

- p. 30: Evening in a Park.
- A A rope, a knife for Mallam Igida.
- p. 31: Rain
- p. 34: Chief Saiyedero's bank (bench)
- p. 34: Ogbonjowo's tracts which he distributes about.

Interlude Two

- p. 35: Ogbonjowo's Study
- p. 37: In front of the curtain Saiyedero carrying Fetosaiye's  
clothes and mask

Scene Four:

- p. 38: A square in front of Supermarket
- Papers for Ogbonjowo
  - Bag for Ogbonjowo
  - Iron pipe for Ogundowo
  - Sack of Gari carried after Saiyedero
- p. 39: Five naira thrown to Ogbonjowo by Wajere, Ogundowo
- p. 39: Assorted textile, bales of cloth, to be shown to  
Saiyedero.

- Şaiyedero's money for the clothes
- Envelope from the old man to Şaiyedero
- Food for Qledarun and co.

Scene Five:

- p. 44: Newspaper for Fetosaiye
- p. 43: Mirror for Fetosaiye
- p. 42: Cigar for Mallam Igida

Scene Six:

- p. 52: Yard behind Saiyadero's Supermarket
- A few household goods and some implements
- A cart
- Sacks of food stuffs
- Lines for washings

Scene Six:

- p. 53: - a cheque written by Wajere
- p. 54: - sack for the elderly couple
  - Basket for the niece
  - Sack for the nephew
- Dustbin in which the two children fish
- p. 56: Twelve baskets of cassava at the backyard.

Scene Seven:

- p. 58: - Fetosaiye's Gari Factory
  - Factory machines
  - Baskets
  - Cassava

p. 59: Pay day - Table  
 - Bag of money

Scene Nine: p. 65: - A bundle Saiyedoro's clothes

Scene Ten: p. 21: - Hammer for the judges

#### LIST OF AUDIO-VISUAL EFFECTS

##### Sound

Prologue p. 1: Music before Ogbonjowo's appearance

" p. 5: Music from inside the beer parlour

" p. 9: Music to changing set, the same one as for supermarket.

##### Supermarket

Scene One: p. 18: - Music for scene change from scene one to interlude one.

Interlude: p. 19: - Ogbonjowo's study; appearance

- Projection of the generals in dream of Ogbonjowo.

p. 19: - Vanishing of the Generals projection.

##### Scene Two Supermarket

p. 23: - Police siren heard

p. 24: - Noise from the street purchasing the boy

p. 25: - Police siren of exit of the police

p. 26: - In return to supermarket

##### Scene Three: In the Park

p. 31: - Rain

p. 35: - Music for scene changing to Interlude 2

Interlude Two: p. 35: Ogbonjowo's Study

- Appearance of the Generals-Projection.

p. 37: - Song of Defencelessness, Saiyedoro.

Scene Four: p. 38: - A Square in front of Supermarket

- Loud voices from Ogundowo's

p. 42: - Sound of the farmer

p. 42: - Song of the farmer

Scene Five: p. 48: - The Supermarket

p. 48: - Police siren registering Ogbonjowo and  
police advancement.

Scene Seven: p. 58: Fetosaiye Gari's Factory, Pay Day, Play - within the Play

- The musical accompaniment to the song of the Gubers.

Scene Eight: p. 62: - The Scene as above

Interlude, p. 63: - Ogbonjowo's Study

- Re-appearance of the Generals.

Scene Nine: p. 64: - Song of the crowd led by Ogbonjowo

- Siren is heard, Igida has brought in police.

Scene Ten: p. 73: Revolutionary Court

- Gong for the generals to press on

- Music is heard

- Ringing bell for the Generals

- Ceiling opens

- Pink cloud descends

p. 73: - Generals' song: 'We are going back to the  
barracks' accompanies.

p. 74: - The Cast's Song: "We shall overcome" accompanied

- THE END.



On The Design Approach of "The Good Ideologist of Naira Republik"

Our design approach to "The Good Ideologist of Naira Republik" rests largely on various deductions by the many scholars on Brecht's Epic theatrical forms. One of such scholars is Joachim Fiebach. Deducing from Brecht's "A Short Organum for the Theatre," paragraph 61 - 67, Fiebach advances the view that:

the Epic Theatre form is like a montage, a loosely episodic structure of drama and performance, and the presentation of performance objectively, and as possible in which production and communication of works of art are considered experiments:

There were three aspects of clusters of characteristics that had been permanent features of Brecht's approach to theatre (theory, playwriting, production) since the initial advancement of the concept of Epic Theatre in the late 1920s, in particular 1926, and the adoption gest of drama and performance. (55)

Similarly Gorelik Mordecai in John Gassner's Producing the Play says that

epic theatre method in Germany before Hitler looked upon the stage performance as a sort of glorified lecture, to be accompanied by loud-speakers, comments and lantern slides projected above the heads of the actors. (56)

We learn also that, then, settings became even more functional than the constructivist variety, consisting, as far as possible, only of those elements usually used by the actors; for example, doors were used without walls, if only the doors were necessary to the action. For epic theatre, scene design became non-illusory.

George Kernodle also, in agreement with others, says that:

Epic theatre demands a format that permits easy flow from one scene to another, with many presentations to the audience, such as characters speaking from the podium or forestage and movies, slides, slogans or symbolic ideograms displayed, or projected on to a screen. (57)

In fact that "The Good Ideologist for Naira Republik" is a play in montage form which puts a wide range of socio-political issues and phenomena together by "assembling" different incidents such as the occurrences in Ethiopia, Ghana, and Chile, Public Complaints Commission, Green Revolution, Operation Feed the Nation, Environmental Sanitation, Sharia Court, Political alliances and mergers etcetera', as satirical "pop" appearances demanding some scenographic visual localisation, in certain places, for the actions. Hence for this Brechtian Epic Theatre, quick scene changes are imperative, otherwise the long play would even drag too long. Even with a fast scene-changing, the play lasts for about two and half hours.

Norman Bel Geddes advances the view that:

No matter what the nature of the play the designer should disregard period concept of architecture or locale and think only of abstract solids and voids. The voids are spaces where entrances from nowhere to within the sight of the audience can be made while the solids are the areas between these voids. (58)

However, in designing, there are two main methods, namely design by omission and design by addition respectively.

1. Design by Omission: In which we start with the real place. For example, in the prologue scene, A street in the Capital of Naira-  
Republik. It is evening. After visualising and designing fully the

actual scene, we then select from it, cut down, and reshape it for the proscenium Arts Theatre stage.

2. Design by Addition: In the same work, we had to adopt the exact opposite of the above in designing some of the scenes. Instead of cut down method, we had to build up - starting with actors and the few most important events of the play and add space, voids and shapes around the action. This we accomplished in the Interludes, Supermarket and Fetosaiye's gari factory scenes, we started with the "machine for acting" first for which the writer designed and built a revolving stage.

#### The Revolving Stage

The revolving stage was made essentially with lumber, castors, gears and wheel from a junked automobile. The drive mechanism was over an electric motor and pulley system assisted by manual operation, whenever the notorious NEPA ~~took~~ off the electricity supply.

Key

- A = Prologue
  - B, D, H = Supermarket
  - C, F, I = Interlude
  - K, M, P = Park
  - E = Yard
  - L = Gari Factory
  - N = Square
  - G = Convention
  - J = Factory office
  - O = Revolutionary court
  - Q = Epilogue
  - R = Segments
- I, II, III, IV = Segments

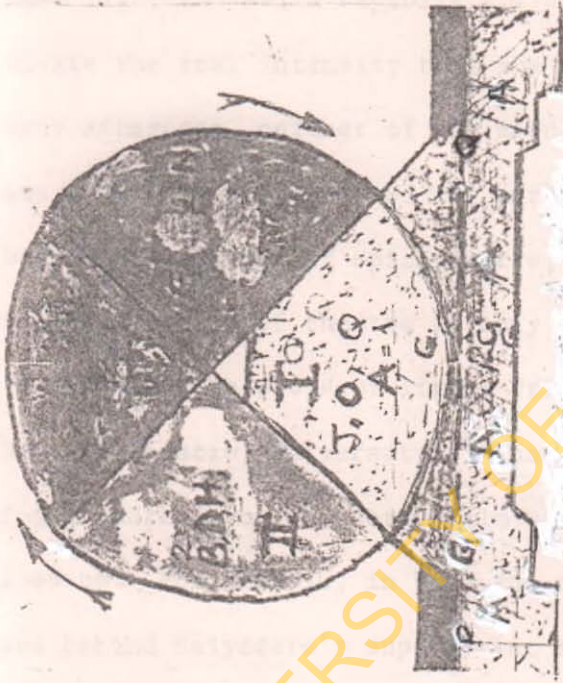


FIG 60: The Scheme of Setting



FIG 60: 'THE GOOD IDEOLOGIST OF NAIRA-REPUBLIC' THE REVOLVING DISC

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### On the Lighting of the Play

Brecht in his approach does not have a preference for romantic colour and mood lighting. He prefers the clear open effect of a lecture platform or a sports arena.

Stage lighting in an epic theatrical performance fulfills mainly functional manner more than otherwise. As it should be, we used light in "Naira Republik ..." mainly to illuminate, but not to imitate the real intensity that the sun light would produce in the sunny afternoon, neither of the moonlight nor of the beer parlour lamp as in the prologue and the park scenes. Even directors, like the founding father of epic theatre, Erwin Piscator, were not convinced that the purpose of theatre is only to tell romantic stories.

We used the pools of lights from the few available lanterns in the Arts Theatre, University of Ibadan, to concentrate the attention of the audience on the actor, almost as does the camera's intense close up. For example, in both the exterior scenes of the Park and Yard behind Saiyadero's supermarket scenes, among others, we lighted the cyclorama at the back of stage instead of filling out the picture with a painted backdrop or painted flats, and with that lighting we were able to set the actors and the streamlined setting against the expanding space and hypnotizing lighting of the sky.

On the Production of "The Good Ideologist of Naira Republik"

Scenographic and Technological Realisation.

While the Students' Dramatic Society's production of Bertolt Brecht's The Good Woman of Setzuan, directed by Geoffrey Axworthy in February 1960, was reported to have dragged, in parts, for two main reasons - the large cast and the small stage which made movement awkward at times, Dr. Esohe Omoregie in her thesis made a snappy comment on the present writer's production of "The Good Ideologist of Naira Republik" produced in 1983. She writes:

A latter-day production of a Nigerian adaptation of the play, "The Good Ideologist for Naira Republik" written and directed by James Olusola Aborisade in 1983 at the same Arts Theatre, University of Ibadan, solved the problem through the use of a revolving stage. (59)

Also, Dr. T.O. Malomo in his thesis, which was earlier than Omoregie's, has passed some comments on the production of "... Naira Republik" in connection with an audience survey he conducted for his own studies. He writes:

The survey was conducted during two different productions at two different venues on the campus. One was Wale Ogunyemi's The Divorce... The other production was a new play by the Theatre Arts Department titled "Naira - Republik" written by 'Sola Aborisade, a budding writer (and member of staff) whose primary objective in writing and directing the play was ostensibly to demonstrate his expertise as theatre technologist. He had created a revolving stage for the proscenium Arts Theatre for this purpose ... (60)

The pertinence of Malomo's and Omoregie's comments is at least, their recognition of the writer's efforts at solving the age-old technical problems that remained unsolved and that had marred many would-have-been beautiful productions. It would also have marred a production of Irwin Shaw's The Gentle People, if not for Geoffrey Axworthy's ingenious stagecraft about which Molly Mahood writes:

the play was clearly written for a revolving stage and its many changes of scene set problems which Geoffrey Axworthy solved with the ingenuity we have come to expect of him: a number of simple straight forward sets alternated with a brilliant evocation of the Brooklyn water front. (61)

Certainly, Axworthy and Mahood would have loved to have a revolving stage, too, the efficacy of which, for a multi-scene play of that magnitude they would have appreciated.

The production of "The Good Ideologist of Naira Republik", if anything at all, has provided a unique opportunity for many design efforts to have their shares in one art work of theatre. Our design was the attestation of our belief that even science, politics and statistics could be dramatized in a functional, explanatory manner suited to those topics with analyses and editorial comment thrown in.

For the pleasure of the reader of this thesis, the writer has deposited a copy of the play in the Library of the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Ibadan, since it has not yet been published.

END NOTES ON CHAPTER EIGHT

1. Clark describes the setting of 'The Raft' in Three Plays; Oxford University Press, 1964, p. 91.
2. Ben Obumelu, Critique of The Raft in Ibadan June 1964, p. 59.
3. J.P. Clark in Yemi Ogunbiyi's Drama and Theatre in Nigeria, op. cit., p. 72.
4. Femi Osofisan; Another Raft, Malthouse Press Ltd., Lagos, 1988, p.5, quoted by Eshohe Omoregie in "Costuming Contemporary Nigerian Plays", op. cit., pp. 632-836.
5. Ibid.
6. Harold Burris Meyer and Edward C. Cole; Scenery for the Theatre, op. cit., p. 31.
7. Dany Lyndersay; "Costuming Historical Plays in Northern Nigeria - A Search in Paradigm," an unpublished Ph.D Thesis of the University of Ibadan, 1988, p. 193.
8. Femi Osofisan in Another Raft, op. cit.
9. Eshohe Veronica Omoregie, "Costuming Contemporary Nigerian Plays", an unpublished Ph.D Thesis of the University of Ibadan, 1990, op. cit.
10. James Oluşola Aborishade, "The Good Ideology for Naira Republik", an unpublished play, written in 1980,
11. Oyin Ogunba; The Movement of Transition: A Study of the Plays of Wole Soyinka, Ibadan, Ibadan University Press, 1975, p.8.
12. Wole Soyinka, Soyinka Six Plays: Methuen & Co., London, 1984.
13. \_\_\_\_\_ "Madmen and Specialists" in Six Plays, op. cit., pp. 221-293. All further references on the play will be made to this text.
14. Replaced Jimi Solanke in the 1970 premiere production.
15. Replaced Femi Adelana in the 1970 premiere production.
16. Replaced Ma Bero played by Betty Okotie-Barrett in the 1970, premiere production.



17. Replaced Matt Imeson in the 1970 premiere production.
18. Ogunba, op. cit., p. 203.
19. Ibid., p. 201.
20. Ibid., p. 249.
21. Ogunba, op. cit., p. 204.
22. Ibid., p. 205.
23. Ibid., pp. 208-209.
24. Soyinka, op. cit., p. 277.
25. ~~Ibid.~~, op. cit., pp. 271.
26. Ibid., p. 210.
27. Ibid., p. 211.
28. George Kernodle, Invitation to the Theatre, op. cit., pp. 418-419.
29. Ibid.
30. Richard Pilbrow, Stage Lighting, op. cit., pp. 14-16.
31. There are over 100 DIN Norms, Laws, Codes, Rules and Specifications on Safety in Theatre & Places of Public Assembly.
32. Wole Soyinka, "Death and King's Horseman" in Soyinka - Six Plays, op. cit., p. 145. Further references will be to same text.
33. Michael Etherton, The Development of African Drama, op. cit., p. 244.
34. Ibid., p. 244.
35. Oren Parker and Craig Wolf, Scene Design and Stage Lighting, op. cit., pp. 63-67.
36. Ibid., p. 67.
37. Wole Soyinka, "Opera Wonyosi" in Soyinka: Six Plays, op. cit., pp. 295 - 407. Further references on the play will be to this text and edition.
38. Biḡdun Jeyifo, "On Wole Soyinka's Opera Wonyosi", in New Culture, Vol. 1, No.7, June 1979, pp. 45-47.

39. Soyinka: Six Plays, op. cit, pp. 296 - 300.
40. Ibid., pp. 327 - 328.
41. Ibid., p. 403.
42. Ibid., pp. 404.
43. Esohe Veronica Omoregie, op. cit.
44. Oren Parker and Craig Wolf, op. cit., p. 13.
45. Pectal, op. cit., p. 11.
46. Ibid., p. 10.
47. Parker and Wolf, op. cit., p. 53.
48. Lynn Pectal, op. cit., p.5.
49. ~~Esahe~~ Omoregie, op. cit., p. 238.
50. Fola Aboaba, Comments on the setting for Irwin Shaw's Gentle People, produced in the Arts Theatre in 1958; Ibadan, Nr. 3, 1958, p.27.
51. The statement in the paragraph above is a purely personal reading of the events of the period. There probably are other readings.
53. It the course of this study, it was discovered that there had been productions in earlier years at the Arts Theatre, University of Ibadan of Bertolt Brecht's The Good Woman of Setzpan about which there were reports in Ibadan Journal as follows.
54. Tim Gordon, on Bertolt Brecht in Ibadan, op. cit, June 1960, p. 20.
55. Joachim Fiebach, "Brecht and Soyinka's Opera Wonyosi," A paper presented in the Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan, in August, 1987.
56. Gorelick Mordecai in John Gassner's Producing the Play, op. cit., p.351.
57. George Kernodle, Invitation to the Theatre, op. cit., p. 415.
58. Kernodle, op. cit., p. 418.
59. Esohe Omoregie, op. cit., p. 185.
60. T.O. Malomo, "Resident Theatre Companies in Nigerian Universities," op. cit., p. 240.
61. Molly Mahood, on Geoffrey Axworthy's production of Irwin Shaw's The Gentle People in Ibadan, June 1958.

CHAPTER NINEON THE SEARCH FOR A NEW PHYSICAL FORM FOR THE NIGERIAN THEATRE - PART ONE.

This chapter seeks to find new concepts of physical theatre form or at least to make recommendations towards the improvement of the available performance spaces used for the contemporary Nigerian theatre.

The search for a new physical form for the Nigerian Theatre can greatly benefit from the richness of Nigerian Traditional, Folk or Vernacular Architecture. Hence, it is considered pertinent to sample the views of experts, scholars and historians on Nigerian architecture, for much is to be learnt therefrom, which can now form the basis for our further development. And this is an urgent task that we must brace up for, in order to rescue the remnants of our cultural heritage, before foreign influences would strip us completely naked, after robbing us of them all.

In this regard, Susan Aradeon's "A History of Nigerian Architecture - The last 100 years",<sup>(1)</sup> Bob Bennet's "The Development of Nigerian Architecture: Pre-History to the Colonial Rule,"<sup>(2)</sup> Bob Bennet's "The Development of Nigerian Architecture: The Early Post-Independence Era,"<sup>(3)</sup> Shim Adeshina's "An Architect's Voice,"<sup>(4)</sup> Zaccheus Sunday Ali's "African Vernacular Architectural and Cultural Identity"<sup>(5)</sup> have shed some light on our architectural heritage and, more importantly, the articles have perfectly covered the period of our study, namely, 1886 to the present time.

The architectural history of Nigeria has been classified into

the broad periods of the traditional, the modified traditional, and modern architecture which we choose to identify as the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial contemporary modern eras.

### The Pre-Colonial Era

Although the first Europeans had been settling on the West African coast by 1884, only a few of them ever ventured, until about 1904, to live beyond the coastal port cities so that their architectural influences could not immediately spread up-country. Hence, it was after Britain had achieved her colonisation of Nigeria that modification in traditional architecture evolved.

According to Susan Aradeon, the traditional built environment is in response to the diverse socio-ecological environments of the over 250 ethnic groups identified in Nigeria, whose dwelling units range from the large patriarchal extended family to the nuclear family. These nuclear family dwellings grow into compounds, enclosed within several types of walls and roofs of various structures peculiar to the many kinds of the people of the country. (6)

Bob Bennet adds that farming communities had different life styles and living requirements from nomadic herding tribes, who required temporary and mobile living accommodation. The elites of society, such as natural rulers, also had different living requirements as did the urban dwellers of Timbuctu, Ibadan, Kano or Benin. (7)

In South-Western Nigeria every Yoruba town had a wall or at

least a moat, serving a defence purpose, and as enclosure for the rectilinear arrangement of the huge compound, with only one entry and window. The palaces, within the town walls, were again separately walled but this more so for the purpose of preserving "the privacy and sanctity of the (religious) ruler who must never be seen or heard except on special ceremonial occasions" (8) Large spaces were provided in the palaces for the people for paying homage during festivals on which the rulers, in some traditional cultures, have the prerogative over certain elements, size and quality. This was the case with the European introduction of corrugated iron roofing sheets which became a symbol of royal power in Yoruba towns. Also, a variety of architectural elements have always been the focus of status differentiation in virtually all traditional societies. (9)

### Building Materials

The traditional African architecture's main building materials available especially in the tropical rain forest and surrounding areas include laterite soil, and, in order to reinforce the laterite, additives such as straw and cow dung, where available, were added and mixed. In some areas close to the desert, it was simply mixed with water and sun-dried, while, in other areas where laterite was not available, such as in the riverine areas of Niger Delta, local wood was used for construction instead of soil. (10)

For example, the Nsukka Ibo erect a post and beam structure which

is then enclosed within a mud curtain wall and covered with a high gabled roof. (11) And, the Kamberis found close to the Kainji Lake, make their dwellings with mud walls, about 15 cm thick, to support the roof's wooden framework. In many places such mud walls are further treated by plastering also with much in the interior and sometimes also on the exterior.

In addition to the above, stone, wattle and daub, fired and sun-dried bricks, imported techniques, were already in use in some northern parts of the country, from 1470 to 1812, especially in Birnin N'gazargamo and Bornu. The roofings were extensively done with foliages, which differed from region to region; hence, various types of thatch roofing abound, while in some areas of the Northern Nigeria, laterite soil was used.

#### The Colonial Era - The Period of Modified Traditional Architecture

The return of many ex-slaves, especially those of Yoruba origin, from the diaspora in Brazil, the West Indies, and Cuba to the West Coast of Nigeria, Badagry and Lagos had made a remarkable effect on the Nigerian Architecture that evolved. Those immigrant and slaves returned to the Southern part of the country with acquired skills in building trades especially the Brazilian returnees who brought along the "multi-storey" prototype of urban adaptations of compound living, the "Brazilian House," in which the principle of double-loaded corridor, with rooms on both sides, "face-me-I-face-you," a form of interior courtyard and a communal space became known.

The British colonial administration led to the emergent changes in social conditions which resulted again in changes in the programmes for architectural designs (12). It consequently led to the propagation of Western Culture with an impact felt much sooner in the South than in the North of the country. For instance, the corrugated iron sheets, which had been known for long in the South, found adoption only after the Second World War, in fact, just after Independence in the north. However, the thermal qualities of mud which enable it to retain heat longer and emit most of it at night when the air is cooler, make it much more comfortable than corrugated iron roofing when put on the walls. (13) While the Westernization process was influenced by the factors of financial resources available to the chiefs, who quickly replaced their thatch roofs with corrugated iron sheets, the traditional rulers still preserved their architectural emblems for the prestige and power they derive from their traditional royal status.

In Ibadan and in many other Yoruba towns which became overcrowded, and where the authority of the extended family has weakened, resulting in the break-up of the traditional large courtyards, thenceforth, the family members started tearing down the mud rooms to erect self-contained cement block - the modern-buildings in their steads.

The Afro-Brazilian style of building is now being patronised and introduced by the master masons. In Yoruba towns the prestige houses were often built with fired brick which had been introduced by a Sardinian in 1857. (14) Also the Baptist Missionaries simultaneously introduced that style, with its stucco work, often as it could be directly

applied onto the traditional mud wall. The spreading of the Afro-Brazilian style was quickened by the fact that most aspects of its technology could be handled by traditional craftsmen; the Hausa were also influenced by the British lifestyle and architecture whence new house forms and plans emerged. But, at the same time, the British colonial officials directly and indirectly promoted Hausa architectural style and the Hausa master masons, as vindicated in the official buildings based on British design which was adapted to Hausa technology, already known under the Fulani Caliphate in the 19th century.

The Hausa city architecture displayed also mud wall and flat or domed mud roofs so designed for defence and for prestige. The palaces were circumfenced by walls of 3.6 metres height while each compound was defined by slightly higher than a man's height wall to prevent intrusion into privacy.

In the South of Zaria, settlements comprising conversions of round and rounded to rectilinear forms are the evidences for the prestige accorded Hausa culture. It is an important factor for the continuation of the Hausa traditional architectural culture; Aradeon, in agreement with Jerome Woodford, informs. (15)

There were three most significant influences distinctly responsible for the modifications in the Nigerian traditional architecture to the present forms and these are:

- the expansion of Islam to Northern Nigeria;
- the return of the ex-slaves from Brazil and elsewhere;



- the British Colonial domination.

The spread of Islam in the Northern Zones of Nigeria had manifest influences on the indigenous architecture as evidenced in the public building - the mosque - which serves the accommodation of religious, social and educational activities and for the dispensation of Koranic Justice. The Mosque replaced the Central Meeting Square with the Central shade tree - "the Meeting Hall" for the local decision-makers.

The use of geometric figures, rectangular and circular forms, used largely on the domed roofs, visual expression and designs in building ornamentation evolved as Islam forbids representations of any living beings or things.

The Islamic influences benefitted from the imported architectural design styles of the time as found in the Middle East, a style distinctly divergent from the indigenous style of the area.

#### The Post-Colonial Contemporary-Modern Architecture

The pre-Independence periods could boast of only a limited number of High-Rise-Design of viable multi-storey office buildings found mostly in the densely populated urban centres, especially of Lagos, where land became scarce and expensive. The first of such buildings began to appear especially in the public building sector in Lagos since 1955. And one of such tall buildings on the Lagos Marina is the National House, originally known as Shell House. (16)

After the attainment of Independence in 1960, International styles, executed with imported materials (Steel, Cement and technical

manpower) have started to pervade the Nigerian architectural scene. In fact, "the Independence Era introduced an element of flamboyance to Nigerian Architecture, (17) climaxing in the recent years" contemporary late modern Slick-Tech-Style which has become a symbol of a developed society.

Most of the huge projects were designed exclusively by British and foreign firms that have become firmly rooted in the Nigerian ground, while only some were designed by the few available Nigerian architects who, indeed, had only Western traditional training. This situation acquired a new momentum after the Civil War of 1967 to 1970 and when there was the petro-dollar construction boom of the Seventies. The period also brought in the increased use of technological climate control to replace natural ventilation of the "brise-sole". (18)

As we have noted, the richness of the Nigerian cultural and theatrical heritage has not been adequately expressed on the imposed proscenium stage, the type of the Arts Theatre of the University of Ibadan. Even the founding father of formal theatre education in the University of Ibadan, Geoffrey Axworthy, and his colleagues decried it. For instance, Martin Banham in his book (with Clive Wake), African Theatre Today, discussing the subject of Architectural Planning and Nigerian Theatre, laments:

Much of contemporary theatre architecture of Africa has, however, suffered badly from the pre-occupation of European architects as to what a theatre ought to look like. (19)

The proper placement of the audience and performers in a meaningful and judicious physical relationship has to be carefully planned if the responses of the participating African audiences are not to be constrained; which, if it is, would mean strangling of the drama and the performance. (20)

Already in 1962, Wole Soyinka, in his article, "Towards a True Theatre,"(21) focused on the controversial issue of the physical structure of Nigerian Theatre. One would have expected from him, then, an essay on playwriting, directing and criticism or on the sociology of theatre, But it is significant that he wrote on the architectural planning aspect of the performance space, which shows his recognition of the central position a properly planned and well equipped theatre, manned by truly qualified staff, occupies in the process of play production. The implication of the lack is the arts being superseded in drabness and tawdry. (22) Soyinka also asserts:

It is surely because the structure controls, even manipulates the artist that it is more sensible to assist first of all the creative theatre or at least - and since we are, as in all other things, in a terrible rush, and all steps must be taken together - at least look for architectural inspiration among countries with approximate traditions and a longer professional history - or simply use that common ordinary gift of sense and refrain from employing mudmixers and carpenters to design media which must eventually control or influence the creative intellect. (23)

And, again in 1963, at the instance of Geoffrey Axworthy's and Demas Nwoko's production of Amos Tutuola's The Palm Wine Drinkard featuring Kola Ogunmola Theatre Group and the School of Drama, Soyinka repeated his demand for a new physical theatre structure thus:

And so, with the successful outcome of its first experiment, can we hope that, before the euphoria wears off, the School of Drama will grab what land is left of church and mosque acquisitions and erect a structure more suited to the experimental spirit of a Drama School?

The many excellent mechanical facilities of the Arts Theatre will be transferred to this huge, adaptable hulk in which the stage is as each play requires it, not a static slab to which every production must be trimmed. Since the students of the School will assist in building it — this is part of their training — expenses would be kept very low. Already the Theatre has been extremely fortunate in obtaining a first-rate carpenter who works as if the chisel and the plane are part of him. There seems nothing that a handful of craftsmen like him cannot do to transform a bare platform. Since my article in Nigeria (magazine) the Glover Hall in Lagos has been completed, another elegant mess with a woodcutter's after-thought for a stage. (The walls are still said to resound with the curses of frustrated Nottingham Players.) Since the School of Drama has a pioneer existence, it cannot be satisfied merely with productions. By example, it will have to stop further waste in money and energies. It is not in this country alone that theatres continue to exercise unsuspected tyrannies on producers and actors, but I think we are in a position to seek drastic liberation of the imagination. We enjoy a creative production in spite of these altars, but we continue to visualise a larger experience of the same kind, in an open shrine. (24)

In the same vein, Yinka Adedeji, though formulating his thoughts in an academic manner, demanded for a new theatre structure thus:

We therefore demand the building of a new Arts Theatre, whose stage reflects the aesthetic sensibility of the African, whose edifice serves as a place of artistic inspiration for the generality of our people; in essence, a cultural centre — to serve as the centre of enlightenment, the confluence of streams of consciousness, an assembly of artists and non-artists, a meeting point of 'town and gown' where the creative activities of artists and the ever-widening or expansive aspirations of scholars

find common ground for the promotion of community growth and happiness, a place of communication with untrammelled channels which penetrate the walls of ignorance and parochialism. The new Arts Theatre must have all the accoutrements and equipments needed for effective performance of our programme of activities: the children's theatre, the University Theatre Company, the Media Arts Centre, and the Resources Centre for interactions and experimentation. (25)

Reflective of these demands for a new physical theatre form for Nigerian theatre are the demandee's individual disposition and philosophy of the theatre. While Axworthy's demonstrates the down-to-earth and clear "brief" of a seasoned theatre craftsman, Soyinka's reflects the mind of a playwright, while Adedeji's projects that of a scholar rather than of a practitioner of Axworthy's calibre. However, all of them have their merits. There are other theatre people such as Demas Nwoko, Femi Euba and Olu Akomolafe who have also voiced out their thoughts on the burning issue of the physical Nigerian theatre. Femi Euba, for instance, in his essay on "The Nigerian Theatre and the Playwright," argues:

For instance, is there, in fact, a Nigerian Theatre, and if so, how functional is it, to the playwright, or how does he use it as his medium of effectiveness? (26)

And, with a consoling spirit, Euba states that:

At any rate, theatre in Nigeria has not quite reached a stage of development that could generate the probably much needed theatre structures for the very fact that there are not enough creative directors.

But Femi Euba strongly feels that, of all the problems confronting the playwright, the physical structure of theatre, the design of the stage

in particular, occupies a pre-eminent position. He laments:

It is quite baffling that the voice of reason which has been crying for some time now has not quite affected our sensibilities in the right direction to building a theatre to our own imaginative specifications - a true Nigerian theatre that would liberate our playwrights and therefore our plays, finally, from the structures of the proscenium setting. Rather, even with a more workable theatre like the Oduduwa Hall at the University of Ife, the obverse seems to be the choice - from the Arts Theatres through the J.K. Randle Hall to the National Theatre, and, also for crying out loud, beyond. (28)

The proscenium stage seems to cast lasting spells on its users, especially the young, budding student playwrights and those who know no other stage forms. For instance, at the Pit Theatre, Ile-Ife, Femi Euba's experience with such young playwrights was that the productions never go beyond the proscenium part of a quite adaptable theatre for both arena and proscenium; little wonder, then, that a lot of these young plays and, by extension, the playwrights themselves, never get started or develop from the level at which they began, whereas, if they had been compelled, by force of circumstances, to work in a different theatre space, being essentially an open-empty space, or at least, as another resort, in a more adaptable theatre, we might have a more exciting and developing theatrical tradition. (29)

The director or playwright, in essence, does not have to use the proscenium, but he, invariably, is stuck with it because he knows no better, as the scope of his training and exposure is limited.

This, consequently, validates again the writer's views on the fundamental need for the proper training of the theatre practitioner,

in order to enable him to develop a creative and inquisitive mind which is the only way, perhaps, to overall growth and especially developemnt. And recognizing this, Geoffrey Axworthy avows:

Our plans for the future include professional training in dance and drama; the creation of an open-air dance arena in which visiting and local dance groups may perform under advantageous viewing conditions; the design and construction of a low-cost model school theatre made of local materials, to replace the appalling 'hole-in-the-wall' stages now being used and of a 'flexible' school of Drama Theatre, in which experiments in new forms of staging to suit the needs of Nigeria's directors, playwrights and actors may be explored. (30)

Necessity, we are told, is the mother of invention. This reminds the present writer of his experience at the 'Pit' Theatre of the then University of Ife, Ile-Ife, in 1977, at the instance of the Unibadan Mosques' (the <sup>Uni-</sup>Ibadan Performing Company's) performance of Femi Osofisan's The Chattering and the Song. Osofisan had the problem of accommodating the play on the much smaller proscenium part of the theatre. After a few hours of frustration and fruitless efforts, the present writer had to suggest to the playwright and director, Osofisan, the possible exploitation of the potential of the flat-floored 'Pit' in its centre, to present the play in the arena form. Delightfully, Osofisan agreed; he tried, it worked and it greatly succeeded. It was a departure, for the first time, from the usual and conventional proscenium - staging, on which the play had been reared and to which the director - playwright was used. In his essay on Modern Yoruba Drama, Akinwumi Ishola's assessment of incantations, as in Yemi Ogunbiyi's Drama and Theatre in Nigeria..., page 402,

as popularly linked with the use of magic and of other supernatural powers in the Modern Yoruba play could be extended to cover the visual aspects as well. Technology has many "incantations" which, when properly re-cited, could invoke powerful scenographic effects as witnessed in the productions discussed in Chapter Eight of this study.

Olu Akomolafe's essay on "Theatre Management in Nigeria" attests to the continuous adoption of an outdated approach and style to the design of visual effects in Nigeria. He asserts:

Theatrical visual effects in terms of grandiose sets are uncommon in Nigerian professional theatre.. Instead, they use painted backdrops which today are rarely used in other parts of the world. University theatres continue to experiment on various stage sets, but they too are already adopting an open stage system ... About the greatest shortcoming in the Nigerian theatre scene today is the unavailability of adequate playhouses. Theatre managers need playhouses to put up their companies and the plays. School halls, hotel lobbies and a few community centres continue to be used for productions and these are far from adequate. There will be active theatre work if these play houses are adequately equipped for the purposes. (31)

Akomolafe's charge on the government agencies, institutions and businessmen to invest in the building of theatre structures will continue to fall on deaf ears as long as the economic viability cannot be assured, for no businessman would want to invest or tie down borrowed money, in a venture that does not promise profit. And the economic viability depends on the patronage. This, again, depends on the visual, scenographic and technological luring powers of the theatre's image while the bodies to be approached for finances are yet to be taught the



appreciation of the importance of the theatre in the cultural life of the nation. To this end, the availability of model, low cost, mobile theatre structures will go a long way to arrest the situation.

Demas Nwoko, in his caustic, critical, though somewhat cynical article, "Search for a New African Theatre", stresses the importance of visual elements in theatrical endeavours thus:

The theatre is first and foremost a visual expression using music, sound (sung or spoken), movement (walked or danced), design, colour, two-or three-dimensional shapes and a text to build up an association with the world of nature. There can validly be theatre without text, while text without visual expression can only become literature and never theatre. (32)

Convinced that technology has much to offer to the development of theatre and civilization in Africa in general, and in Nigeria in particular, he explains:

African culture is not incompatible with the material, technical and economic aspects of Western civilization, African culture can effectively make use of modern technology for its realization and dissemination on the scale demanded by the world today, without dehumanizing its value. (33)

Nwoko also verifies that one of the problems in the way of the development of a modern Nigerian theatre is the type of education given. He states:

While we have found it difficult to drop the titles of "pioneers of modern African Theatre", in the School of Drama, the content of the course is in every way the antithesis of creative discipline. While the pre-requisite of an academic statement is foreknowledge, an artistic statement is intuitively produced and only after birth does

an artistic expression become an experience and can therefore become a subject for academic study.

The fact that the University of Ibadan contributed so much towards the development of theatre and drama, first through its School of Drama and later through the Department of Theatre Arts, is indisputable. "It remained for some time the only training ground for theatre practitioners in Nigeria.(35) And, its theatre, at the same time, a model edifice in Nigeria, therefore deserves a critical analysis, for it played a major role in Ibadan University's laudable contribution to the turning out of some of the most renowned writers of the earlier period such as J.P. Clark, Nkem Nwokwo, the late Christopher Okigbo, and Chinua Achebe who have set the pace for the younger generations of writers.

The masters of playwriting, directing and theatre crafts, Wole Soyinka, J.P. Clark and Ola Rotimi, have been the 'torch-bearers' for the so-called "second generation playwrights" of the post-civil war years of Nigeria. This breed includes Fele Davis, Comish Ekiye, Laolu Ogunniyi, Soji Simpson, Kole Olotosho, Bode Osanyin, Zulu Sofola, Ahmed Yerimah, Femi Osofisan, Wale Ogunyemi and others. But unless the horizon of these Nigerian theatre makers is expanded and made to become capable of incubating scenographic and technological ideas and dreams - the search for a new Nigerian physical theatre form would become a futile exercise, and a mere wolfscry and an empty chauvinistic outburst.

It is not as if the cries of the many, especially those of Femi Euba and Wole Soyinka, have not been heard by others; in fact, the

"crying out loud beyond" has almost deafened such a German socialist-oriented theatre scholar, Joachim Fiebach, an expert on Black African theatre, who, at least, to the outside world, has reacted, as Soyinka's groanings must have gripped him to the point of tabling the theatre problems of Africa at the world's congress, called in Munich, Germany, in 1977, which was devoted to the topic of technology, performance and society. Fiebach's contribution was titled "Space, Methods of Communication and Functions of Theatre in Tropical Africa" which he started with Soyinka's 1960 **statement**:

...was no theatre, there was nothing beyond a precious, attractive building in the town centre. But even within that narrow definition of the word, we had expected an architectural adventurousness ... not only a sense of local, but of international developments in the theatrical field. What we found was a doll's house ... There were cushioned spring back seats - I approved this, having nothing against comfort - but it was disconcerting to find a miniature replica of a British provincial theatre, fully closed in ... (36)

The relevance of Soyinka's critique to our present study lies in his setting the precedent for what other scholars such as Martin Banham, Geoffrey Axworthy, Bakary Traore, Michael Etherton, Lynn Leonard, Joel Adedeji, Dapo Adèlugba and Femi Euba have to say on the unfavourable, unacceptable and strange architectural impositions of the colonisers on the African - Black or Tropical - Culture and theatre. Amplifying, Fiebach vindicates:

At first, the picture - frame set type, for example, the Kampala National Theatre, set the standard for modern theatre buildings and at the same time attempting

to define viewer's behaviour. Today, in every capital and the largest towns of the independent countries, one or more assembly rooms can be found, mostly in multi-purpose buildings, adapted to serve as theatres with a stage construction and an opposite audience area (town halls, University multi-purpose buildings, schools, culture centres of the former colonial power). In addition a number of special theatres of the Kampala National Theatre type have been founded respectively built since the Second World War: the Donavon - Maule Theatre in Nairobi in 1948 and since the fifties the National Theatre in Dar-es-Salaam and Lusaka, the Daniel - Sorano Theatre in Dakar with a capacity of approximately a thousand viewers (1965), and the party's playacting hall (la Salle de spectacles du parti) in Kinshasa, mainly used for theatre performances.

Soyinka compares the National Theatre in Kampala with the Arts Theatre at the University of Ibadan, stating that:

There is the Arts Theatre of our University College, Ibadan which possesses not even the outward deception of the Kampala structure, and cannot boast practicalities such as ventilation or soundproofing. As if the original crime was not enough, a grant of some thousands of pounds was expended, as recently as a year ago (1961) on new curtains and a few symbols of theatrical "arrival".

Interference from student radiograms and cross balcony yells did not activate the financial imagination into worthier ways of spending this money. Motor cars, indifferent to inadequate barriers, continue to punctuate the actor's lines with roar. It did not matter that audience enjoyment was and still is, constantly punctuated by loud saxophone blasts from competing high life bands. No, not all these considerations could persuade the controlling committee to spend the grant on erecting a barn somewhere beyond the depredations of college neighbourliness, disembowelling the present hulk actively and transferring the gadgets to the new, adaptable space where actor and audience may liberate their imagination ... By all means, let us be accomodating ... there is room anywhere and at

any stage of development for every sort of theatre. But when Anouilh and (for God's sake!) Christopher Fry ... possess audience mentality and budding student talent in traps from which the British theatre is only slowly extricating itself, then it is probably time for a little intolerance against the octopine symbol of the Art Theatre. (37)

Fiebach, upholding the same views, amplifies:

The picture - frame set did not have its own history in tropical Africa. It was originally imported by colonialism, primarily for cultural activities of its own administrative class and of settlers and for the small group of African intellectual and the commercial bourgeoisie. Today the actual development cannot yet, or perhaps can no longer, be retraced in detail. One thing is certain; in the last third of the 19th Century, middle-class European models took place in Lagos. There were similarities in the French colonies at the beginning of the 20th century, from the thirties on, mainly in schools educating Africans for lower and medium - level services in the colonial institutions. These Schools, as also did the William Ponty School, in general, poured lively theatrical life into the defined spatial and communicational relationships. In East Africa Christian missionary schools had their pupils act to European model from the twenties on.

By implication, Soyinka's views, upheld by Fiebach, also have sentimental correlations like the one we have found in another German theatre scholar. At this time of architecture, Professor Werner Ruhnau, who also has seen the spatial arrangement as being responsible for the constraints, rigidity and the victim's behaviour of the audience: reverential, passively admitting or sympathetically accepting what is happening to oneself as a viewer. Applause or laughing are actions only allowed or possible, while breaking out of the rigidly fixed row of seats or a spontaneous appraisal of the actors, are already violat-

ing the rules, inexcusable interferences with a strange product, the work of art on stage and a brazen profanation of a sacred ritual being presented in the theatre. (39) Furthermore, "as a place of communication, the theatre must have an identification tag or sign and maintain an audience relationship unique to it." (40) Even Yinka Adedeji's agreement with other scholars, is an amplification of the desirability of the theatre form to emerge from the resources located in the theatre's cultural base, invoked by the degree of a people's theatrical dispensation. This shall determine their participatory involvement and in a reciprocal manner reflect their aesthetic sensibilities, as a vital part of the theatrical expression.

"The stage," put in Antonin Artaud's words, "must be a physical place with a concrete language to communicate. Although the language is theatrical, it must express certain thoughts through its own intrinsic poetry realised through its 'mise en scene'." (41)

Could the same haunting spirit of 'mise en scene' have inspired, in Ola Rotimi, the creation of his Ori-Olokun Theatre in the courtyard architectural form, pursuing him into his "Pit" Theatre at University of Ife campus and continuously haunting him into resurrecting his African Cradle Theatre at the same beloved source, Ile-Ife?

Perhaps, similarly, the same 'mise en scene' spirit has haunted Michael Etherton, in a seemingly cross-continental manner up to Nigeria, where he was inquisitively tied together with the architect Peter Magyer to jointly beget the "foster-children" - the ABU-Studio Theatre at Zaria, the Gidan Makama Courtyard Theatre in Kano and others in

those environs which have entered our history as laudable efforts.

Since the early seventies, the architectural programming for the prestige buildings has changed radically as witnessed in the office buildings, sports halls and in the performance venues of the new cultural centres, which have replaced the palace courtyards of the kings, chiefs and emirs and the village squares.

Our studies of the evolution, development and movements in the theatre of the world have revealed the peculiarity in the nature of man all over the world and his quest for the expression of his experiences, cultural state and frame of mind <sup>as far back to about 500 B.C.</sup> through the creative, artistic, communicative, theatrical medium, applying a host of scientific and technological means to achieve his aims.

We have also found out that man's accomplishments were based on long-suffering, painstaking developments, that long periods of training, practice, research and experiments in all areas of the 'processes' of social, political, educational, religious, artistic, associational, entertainment and nutritional customs and traditions. For all those activities to hold, some specific locale had been defined called theatre, civic or Arts centres, during the ancient, classical medieval, Renaissance <sup>up to</sup> the contemporary modern periods of the 20th century, about which Alvin H. Reiss has advanced the view that one reason for the hubbub surrounding the building of arts centres is the tide of civic chauvinism which seems to sweep communities once plans for a new

building have been formulated - its battle - cry: "We're cultured, too". (42) This, in the Nigerian situation, was evidenced during the euphoric FESTAC 1977 when all the states and missions began to build Cultural Centres. But chauvinism is not the only motivation for building. Many people and policy makers charged with decision-making on new facilities see culture as a commodity, one which brings in tourist and foreign exchange and helps local industry. But the versatile Moroccan theatre artist, Tayeb Saddiki, has, at the first Pan African Cultural Festival in Algiers in 1969, given the injunction that: if you want to build a nation, begin by creating a national theatre. (43) Yet all of the critiques could not prevail on Black Africans, especially Nigerians, to learn from history and from the past errors, as Nigeria before 1977 FESTAC, in spite of all the cries and warnings, still repeated the same crime of virtually transplanting the Bulgarian State Palace from Sofia to Lagos in the guise of a National Theatre. Here, unlike in Kampala, it is not a miniature replica of the orthodox colonial master but, this time, it is a full-size copy of the neo-colonial puppets of the communist slave-driver's eastern-bloc philosophy.

How much 'stranger' would the sight in Lagos have been to Soyinka of a 'National Theatre', built when the cries for that kind of crucial national infrastructure was loudest, purposely built but not only for FESTAC '77, rather thenceforth to cater for Nigerian Arts and Culture, which is yet another calamitous tragedy "uglier" than the Kampala "miscarriage".



For instance, a look at the National Theatre in Lagos, which covers an area of 23,000 square metres and stands well over thirty one metres in height, a "misconception" which is not only estranging but grossly uninspiring for African emotional, spiritual and aesthetic sensibility and self-identification. Although the noble intention was to have it "specially designed to carry a wide range of national and international events, such as music, drama, dance, films, symposia, conventions, seminars and workshops, for which diverse facilities were to be integrated into the basic structure, so that transformation for other purposes of the venue could easily be accomplished. But the reality has shown that expectations are no more than utopian. When one asks questions about the theatrical history, tradition and the standard of technology of Bulgaria, the country of those who built it, answers could perhaps be given for the failure to achieve a full realisation of the plans. The Bulgarian legacy to the Black race of Africa is another monster child which should have been killed in its embryonic stage before its delivery in 1976. The design of the theatre differs only in magnitude when compared with Soyinka's "strange sights in Kampala". How much the present writer would have wished our people who ignorantly, in homely language, have named it as "clandestine clan's abode" - "Ilé-òrìsà" to quickly repent, otherwise the gods of Sàngó, Ọbàtálá, Olúkòso so profaned might not waive their anger and one day might just burn down the Bulgarian palace imposed on us. Its planning seems to have violated all guiding principles upon which functional theatre, especially for the tropical zone of the world, elsewhere are

based. Otherwise, what do we say of the main auditorium for about 5,000 spectators, as an in-door theatre in Nigeria, where the elements of humidity, ventilation, body odour, visibility, audibility and proximity to ensure maximum effect, should have been taken into account?

That the design is "suggestive of traditional arena type stage unique to Africa" as claimed in "Nigeria National Theatre" is non-evident, for it has a one-sided placement of the audience. The situation cannot be improved even when the 500 - seat bank, in tiers, and the addition of the 714 seats under the stage box have been fixed in their positions. In fact, in this arrangement, the relative closeness, warmth, rapport and intimacy that characterise typical African arena stage settings have been put into jeopardy in the Main Bowl of the National Theatre in Lagos. The typical African arena stage does not "swallow" performances on a narrow - long stretched platform, 36 meters wide. (43) And, above all, the rationale behind the convertibility of a theatre hall to a "stadium" for sports is questionable. Even if this is technically possible, it would be at the expense of proximity cried for and the acoustics.

The complex also boasts two standard cinema halls, each seating 700 people, with projection and sound equipment useful for both 35mm and 70mm films, for which a standard screen, instead of a mobile one, has been installed.

The Conference Banqueting Hall with its 1200 seating capacity has been provided a simultaneous interpreter system by which available languages could be selected as desired while the hearing is accomplished—

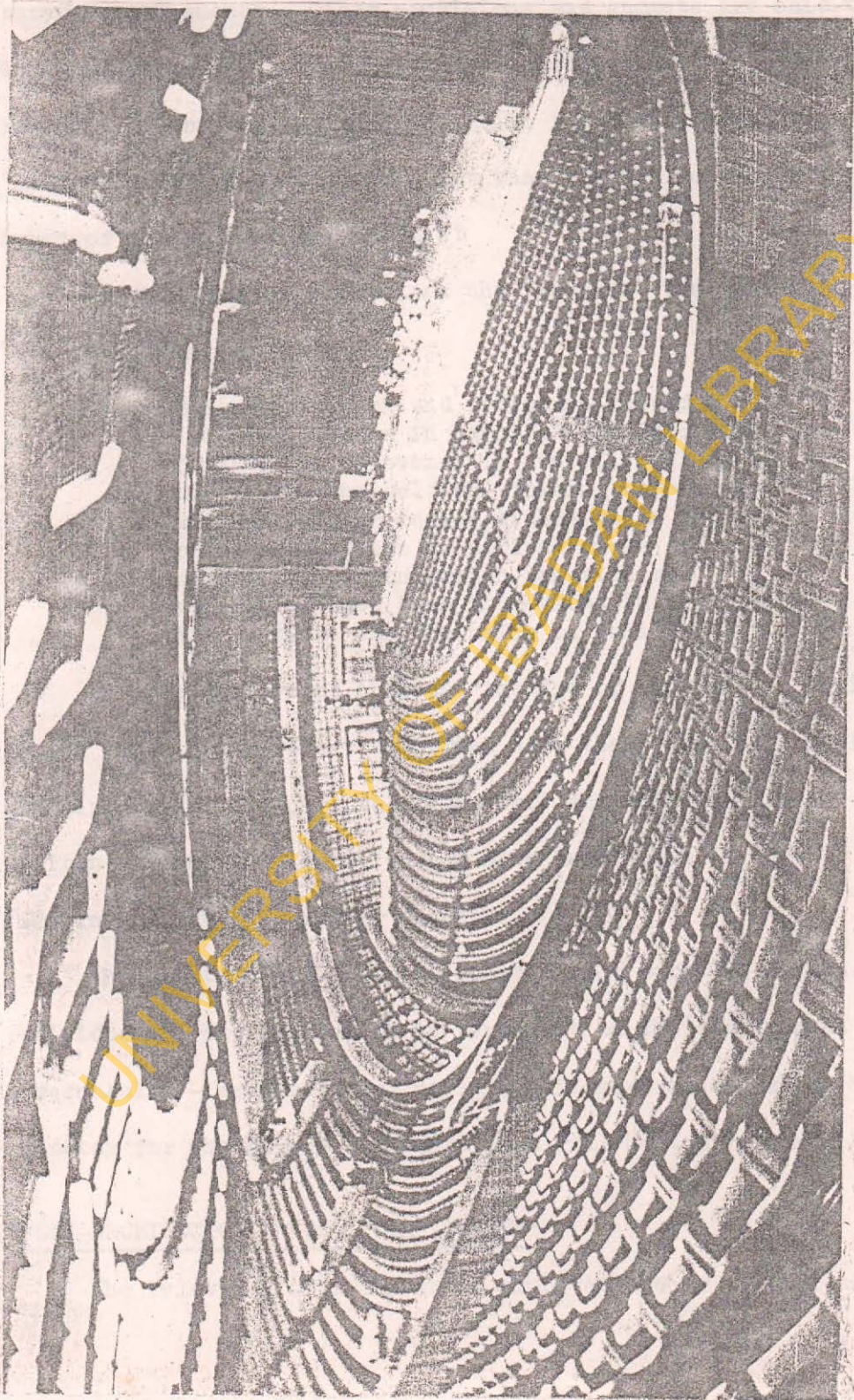


FIG 61: THE NATIONAL THEATRE, LAGOS - MAIN BOWL

through head-phones. Other provisions and gadgets are said to have been implanted. (44) However, up till today, the true creative artistic, technical and administrative functionality of the "monster" remains unrealised. But what else do we expect in the hands of manipulated bureaucrats?

Joachim Fiebach summarises the "lessons" from the two "National Theatres" thus:

The reports upon and attitudes towards the National Theatre in Kampala (and Lagos) and finally its existence in itself, reflect to the point, the self-contrasting complicated and manifold processes within which inter-relations between theatrical space and methods of communication, function and structures have been in motions in Tropical Africa since the beginning of this century. (45)

We have discovered that the theatre of the Orient, India, Japan, China and Far-East countries have their distinct distinguishing traits and physical features. Therefore, Black African - Nigerian-Theatre should have hers, call it "new", "modern", "contemporary" or whatever.

The evolution of Nigerian theatre to a point of National individuality and expression is dependent on the development of a vernacular - architectural style, albeit modernised, which has to cater for the Nigerian Theatre that will be truly ours.

#### 'FOLK-ARCHITECTURE' FOR 'FOLK THEATRE'

The relevance of traditional architecture to traditional

theatrical endeavours cannot be unrecognised. For instance, the 400-year-old Nigerian traditional theatre, exemplified by the Alarinjo Travelling Theatre groups of the Yorubas, as J.A. Adedeji's study of the movement has revealed, thrived in the courtyards of the palaces of the kings, princes and chiefs. As the house reflects the culture of a people, so also should a theatre building, which is the house of the culture of the people, do.

All of the authorities consulted have given their own concepts and definitions of vernacular, traditional and folk-architecture. Shim Adeshina even contends that the meaning of architecture goes far beyond the sterile definition offered by Webster's Dictionary. Webster has defined architecture as "the art or science of building" And, Encyclopedia Britannica, fourth edition, interprets architecture as "the art of so building as to apply beauty and utility ... The problem that architecture sets itself to solve is how best to enclose space for human occupancy." (47) Even a student of architecture in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, has described architecture as a conglomeration of engineering and arts while Shim Adeshina has added that architecture, which is both art and science, is the tool for creating environment and, hence, atmosphere and mood. (48)

However, architecture, among its other functions, provided shelter and specific spaces for man's infinite needs. It directly influences people and their lives by guiding their work, place, education, research, religion, medical care, travels and even our sleeping and eating.

The past 100 years have witnessed great transformations in styles and forms prevalent in African and Nigerian traditional architecture. In fact, the architecture that evolved in the tropical forest and grassland zones of Africa, spans over the large cities of the Yorubas, Benin (Dahomey) and Ashanti depicts the courtyards with verandahs which ensured absolute privacy of African life and also provides for the community of living epitomised by the cultural status of individuals.(49) Buttressing this point, Z.S. Ali amplifies:

A house expresses the culture of the people who use it, the spaces and the relationships ~~are~~ implied. Good architecture responds to the climatic socio-political structures of the society, building materials and the available technology of the period.

In the same vein, the terms "folk", "vernacular" and "popular" are, to Rapoport, synonymous which he defines as:

the direct and unself-conscious translation into physical form of a culture, its needs and passions of a people ... the world view writ small, the 'ideal' buildings and settlements with no designer artist or architect with an axe to grind. (51)

There are other terms such as "habitual" and "normal" and "traditional" - used in describing a group's way of life and architecture. George Gilbert Scott has been credited by L. Wode House(52) as the first person to use the word "Vernacular" at the exhibition, "Architecture Without Architects," held in New York and it is remarked that since then, additional terms, such as Wode House's "indigenous" and "vernacular" (53) have been introduced into the language to mean the same thing.

Sylvester O. Eyong's article, "Folk Architecture: A Challenge to Contemporary Urban Architecture," (54) seeks to X-ray the development of architecture since the oil boom period to the present time Nigeria. In fact, Eyong's article seems to enter the stage where Susan Aradeon's and Zaccheus Sunday Ali's take their exit.

Sylvester Eyong has gone even further to identify what he labelled as the "latent functions" of "Folk Architecture" as those that are, by implication, ignorantly overlooked or spitefully undermined and has pointed out that one of such functions is the promotion of cultural integration. (55)

For his analysis Eyong divided the country into cultural sub-groups called "archenographic groups" in which it is possible to identify desirable architectural motifs that could be retained or incorporated into modern designs and that such motifs could be common to the archenographic groups or peculiar only to a particular group or groups. (56) Eyong's analysis centres on the constitutive areas of architectural criticism, namely, "relevance" and "affordability". While Eyong's concept of architectural relevance is the role of Folk-Architecture to function as an instrument for promoting cultural integration which is closely linked to the satisfaction of some basic human needs, of which some may be common to all mankind - universal or peculiar only to a given society, community, family or individual. Certain needs may be classified as "primary instincts": breathing, eating, drinking, maintaining a comfortable

temperature, sleeping, waking, fearing, excreting (defecation, urination), and sexual arousal while some of these activities require specially adapted enclosures, others can take place in practically any type of enclosure that can permit human activity. Moreover, although some of them are better suited to particular types of enclosures, they can also take place in others. (57) Also, factors such as esteem needs and aesthetic preferences may differ significantly from one culture to the other and thence variations in the design of the enclosures.

Relevant Architecture, then, is the creation of an optimum built environment which could satisfy those "primary instincts", esteem needs and aesthetic preferences of a culture. And, in doing so, relevant architecture has to possess the underlisted characteristics:

1. It should be a true reflection of the needs and aspirations of its users. That means that it should be functionally divergent and be sufficiently flexible to respond to the changing conditions of users.
2. It should be sympathetic with the economic conditions of its users.
3. It should be readily recognised (understood) by its users, and should be both communicative and informative.
4. It should enhance social interaction among the users and provide a sense of belonging.



5. Finally, it should be able to give the maximum comfort that can be derived within prevailing circumstances.

The architectural criterium of "affordability" deals with the economic status of the potential building owner. In addition to criteria are other modifying factors of importance which include:

1. the aesthetic preferences of the building owner;
2. his esteem needs;
3. the expectations of the community to which the prospective building owner(s) belong(s).

The pre-requisite conditions for satisfying those significant differences would include:

1. site conditions;
2. level of technology;
3. types of materials available, and, of course,
4. climatic conditions.

Eyong advances the view that, for the attainment of an optimum built environment, the design process may be considered as a stochastic process by which is meant, folk-architecture which approximates for it will be rich in significant cultural motifs. In this regard, the specific examples of mud, thatch and bamboo which are now being looked down upon by the modern urban dweller have been elaborately developed by folk craftsmen as traditional building materials, through which variations of motifs could be created.

Cultural integration would be achieved in an urban setting where two or more archenographic groups converge, and if these motifs are incorporated then the varied designs would be displayed in various ways for public consumption. Through this, the stage could be set for the exchange of design ideas and cross-cultural diffusion. The motifs with their aesthetic appeals shall arouse preference for themselves among the members of other archenographic groups and thus, as time goes on, cultural integration could be attained.

The sum total of the above points is that, Folk architecture could afford a concentration of architectural motifs from different archenographic groups. This would enhance the city's cultural diversity and cultural power of taking and giving. In this regard, the various national museums in some of our large towns have incorporated the elements of traditional architecture and modern designs.

Worthy of special mention here, perhaps, is the Museum of Traditional Nigerian Architecture (MOTNA) in Jos which evinces a conglomeration of the architecture of various archenographic groups in Nigeria. Other buildings falling into this category of folk architecture incorporating modern design principles are:

1. the Bagudu Hotel in Abuja city;
2. the 'Bight of Benin' - a restaurant in the Jos museum;
3. the Emir of Katsina Palace in MONTA Jos;
4. the Presidential Guest House in Abuja City  
and the 'Palaver' huts in the Lagos museum.

Eyong, on the other hand, contends that the following buildings of national importance ought to have traditional design motifs as part of their composition:

- ° the National Arts Theatre at Iganmu, Lagos;
- ° the Sheraton Hotel in Abuja City;
- ° the Standard Building in Jos.

Eyong concludes his article by pointing to the need for basing the modernization of any rapidly changing society on her rich cultural heritage. He also points to one specific way of adapting one aspect of the material culture of a society, which is in a hurry to catch up with the rest of the world, to modern needs and that the ability of the people to identify and tap desirable latent functions of some of their institutionised folk-ways determines the success of such a programme.

Another important guide in our search is David Aradeon. In his "Views and Opinions on Nigerian Architecture and Environmental Design," (58) Aradeon's article looks into the concept and philosophy of modern day architectural and environmental needs of Nigeria. In it, Aradeon leads us to asking the question: What kinds of architects do we need; in what numbers and what are our priorities? And, on an architecture of "relevance" to contemporary Nigerian society, Aradeon asserts that the Nigerian architects have some crucial roles to play in the design of urban centres and that their services must be offered within the social and economic

reality of the society, especially now that the oil glut will be a ready-made excuse for the unwilling and culturally bankrupt decision-makers on cultural affairs.

Aradeon laments that, so far, in Nigeria, Government patronage of Nigerian architects has had very little social meaning to the generality of the people in the same way as the National Theatre, the Concrete Square of Tafawa Balewa, the Skyscraper of the Nigerian External Communications and the new Murtala Muhammed Airport have not. He contends that as long as the non-existence of a validly Nigerian architecture persists, wrong ones would continue to appear on the Nigerian soil. He, however, acknowledges the existence of a few successful Nigerian architectural designs, such as Demas Nwoko's for the Dominican Chapel at Ibadan and McGregor's and Awani's for the extension to Moremi Hall at the University of Lagos. Yet, Aradeon has, at the moment, not been able to see a distinct style of Nigerian Architecture in existence. (59). He, nevertheless, submits that the architect's basic qualification is the ability to synthesize a complex situation and the ability to explain these in the simplest, most understandable way to anybody else; and that a complex city can have a central idea and everything else reinforces this idea without competing with it. (60)

The formation of the Nigerian architect must therefore be within the Nigerian social environment through which he can be qualified to be able to translate the traditional social values into modern equivalents.

Aradeon has also identified the 'Moderns' and the 'Modernisers'. While the latter want the most modern airport in Africa, the most modern theatre, etc. the 'moderns' are the ones with 'critical attitudes'. "The Moderns have the rare ability to step out of their own backgrounds and relearn totally new strategies to new experiences while questioning the relevance of each new experience." (61)

Aradeon also criticises the students for being beleaguered by what he calls the 'meal-ticket syndrome' who see, according to him, the students passing their examinations as their one-way ticket to financial freedom and their attitude is: "You have your own, let me have mine." (62)

Demas Nwoko in his "Planning and Design of the Environment: The Failure of Government-sponsored Projects" (63) has, like others, observed that "all physical plannings have shown no valid practical or social logic on developments in Nigeria." He criticises that:

- Designs are not related to the immediate environment;
- Siting of projects is determined by political and superficial exhibitionist considerations;
- No consideration is given to the recreational needs of the people as towns are built up without open spaces;
- There is criminal negligence of the strength of structures which leads to fast deterioration or outright collapse.
- The aesthetic appearance of the environment is totally neglected.

In the same vein, Gbenga Sonuga, Demas Nwoko's student, cries out that Government sponsorship of the arts at the national and states levels has suffered some mishaps.

Sonuga asserts that, although government patronage is desirable when genuinely motivated, it is still dangerous for serious artists to hitch their wagon on to any government, no matter how popular. (64)

Also, Shim Adeshina laments that "complete separation of design and execution of buildings, as it is in force today, seems to be altogether artificial if we compare it to the process of building in the great periods of the past. "We have withdrawn much too far from the original and natural approach, when conception and realisation of a building were one and the same thing. The Architect of the future - if he wants to rise to the top again - will be forced by the trends of events to draw closer once more to building production" That was the practice of the Bauhaus, a school of Architecture founded by Walter Gropius in Dessau to prove that art and engineering need not remain estranged from each other as they had been in the nineteenth century; but that, on the contrary, each could benefit the other. From the Bauhaus's theories stem the slogan of "functionalism". (65)

Bob Bennet's "Meaning of Urban Design" (66) states that:

Where architecture is concerned with the individual building as an environment, Urban Design is concerned with the ensembles of buildings (Architecture-solids) and space (voids) which comprise a larger unit of area. (67)

Since a cultural institution of a theatre building should be integrated into the existing overall urban picture, the contributions of the Urban Designer towards the attainment of a well-integrated new physical theatre form for Nigerian urbanity and environment cannot be overemphasized.

The task of the Urban Designer includes the translation of the Planner's brief into valid physical relationships to satisfy both the utilitarian concepts postulated in the plan as well as the sensitivity of the user. The beautification of the urban environment to satisfy the socially significant, culturally valid and economically reasonable urban spaces for the population is one of the obligations of the Urban Designer. (68)

Aradeon claims that some basic elements of Urban Design have been prevalent in the development of various civilisations throughout the continuity of history such as: The Changing Gardens of Hammurabi; The Ancient City of Benin, The Pyramids of Egypt, The Ancient Aztec Cities of Central America, Greek Temples, all have displayed some relatively sophisticated comprehension of Urban Design as we know it today.

The relevance of all the articles, views and promulgations to our study resides in their demonstration of the fact that a new physical theatre form for the Contemporary Nigerian Theatre can only be meaningfully attained by Nigerian architects, Urban Planners, Engineers and Consultants if the richness and

potentialities of our "traditional" "vernacular" or "folk" architecture could be properly tapped and harnessed. Again the pre-requisites are proper professional training in vernacular architecture, theatre planning, technology and scenography.

Concrete recommendations have been made towards the achievement of the objectives. For an example, Sylvester Eyong has deliberated on mud as one of the important architectural motifs and building materials. Mud is cheaply and locally available. In addition to mud, in the forest areas, a technique known as "swish pudding" done in the middle of the wet season is employed. Susan Denyer's African Traditional Architecture (69) contains detailed accounts on this.

Similarly, Zacchaeus Ali's article contains recommendations for the African architects and even political and education decision-makers that vernacular architecture is an area where culture and technology meet and therefore deserve a privileged place in the revival of African culture and that particular attention should be paid to the following:

(i) African education, especially at the tertiary level,

should take care of African architecture so as to ensure the link between the father and the son.

Knowledge is a golden chain linking the past with the present and, of course, the future.

African Architecture should be kept alive. At least



there have to be theatre structures to suit the African conditions which are to evolve within reasonable economic circumstances;

- (ii) The privacy of African life (through the restoration of the courtyard) should be emphasized in all architectural educational institutions. The Institutes of African Studies of the Universities, which have Courtyards, should include theatrical performances.
- (iii) African building materials and furniture which are cheap and readily available for the construction of houses should be examined seriously. (70)

Mud buildings have lasted longer than four centuries. The advantages derivable include the elimination of the huge foreign debts that would have been incurred by the importation of foreign building materials (e.g. cement, steel, and corrugated iron sheets).

- (iv) The Institutes of African Studies in Africa, and particularly in Nigeria, should reorientate themselves to the preservation of our African vernacular architecture.

The Museums, Documentation Centres and Archives have preservation and propagation roles to play to justify their existence and to foster the vitality and continuity of African indigenous architecture from which shall emerge the proper venues for the dynamic African theatre

and cultural performances, a heritage that can no longer be subjected to suffocation by the powers of alienation. (71)

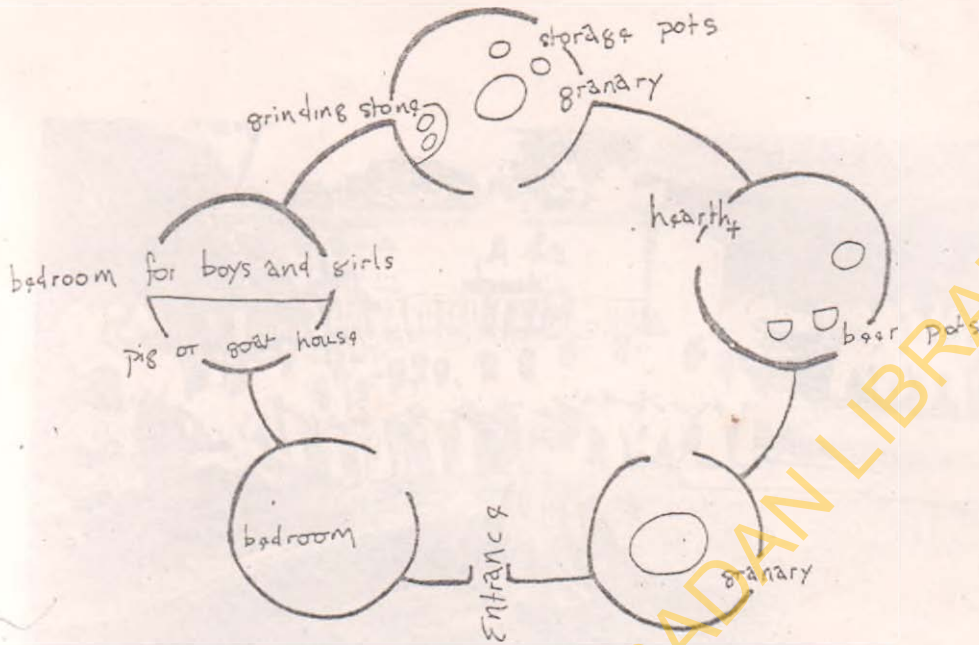
In the sphere of theatre architecture, as we have discovered, some pioneer efforts have been made, at the exploitation of the black African traditional Folk-architecture for the creation of an ideal performance environment, space and stage for the African performances. Notable among such efforts are those of the amalgamation of the theatre artist Michael Etherton and the Architect Peter Magyer in their creations of theatre spaces in the Northern part of Nigeria, especially at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

Looking critically at the following figures shall show how Hausa traditional architecture has been exploited to create the ABU-Studio Theatre and others in the northern regions of the country.

Elsewhere in black Africa, the search for new physical architectural form for African theatre has yielded laudable results. For example, in Bagamoyo, Tanzania, East Africa, we have discovered that the Traditional-Folk-Architecture has been exploited to create a novel, exemplary and innovative African theatre form. In the design, all the positive qualities and characteristic features, advantages and properties of Vernacular Architecture have been considered and incorporated. The project was greatly supported by the Scandinavian Countries' Boards for Developing Countries, through their Cultural Section (SIDA). The College of Arts in Bagamoyo <sup>which</sup> runs a 3-year general course in Performing Arts had a need for a rehearsal room.



FIG. 62. FOLK-ARCHITECTURE—ROW HOUSE (NORTHERN NIGERIA) MUD WALLS STRENGTHENED WITH LAYERS OF LARGE STONES; DOOR WAY PILLARS AND THRESHOLD REINFORCED WITH STONES, THATCHED ROOFS.



Plan (above) and drawing (below) of MESAKIN HOUSE  
(Artistic and Functional traditional architectural design)

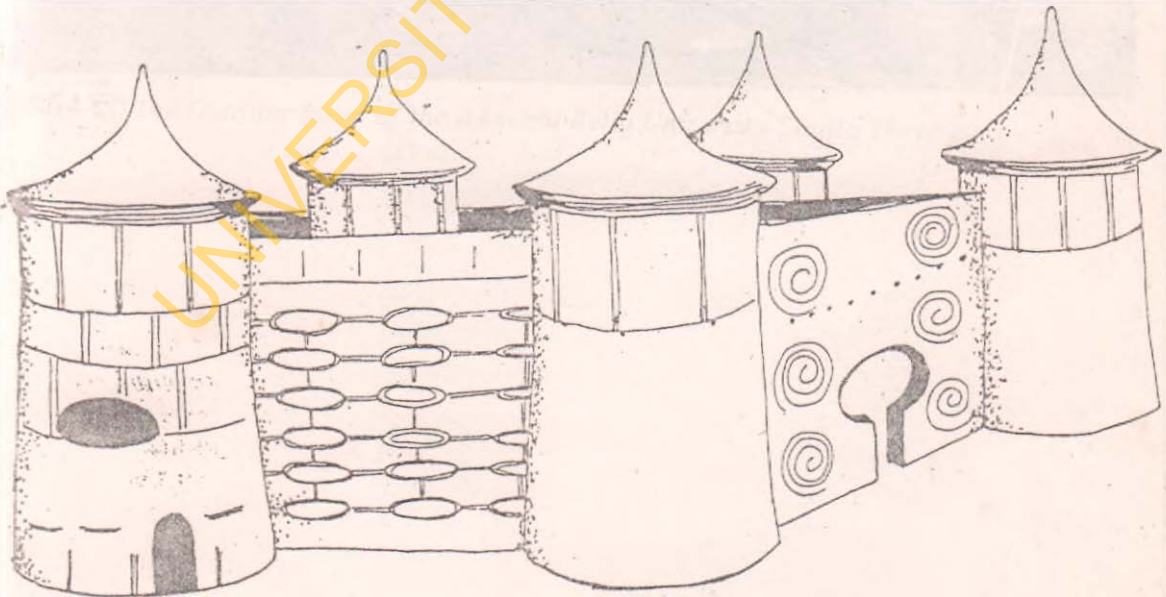
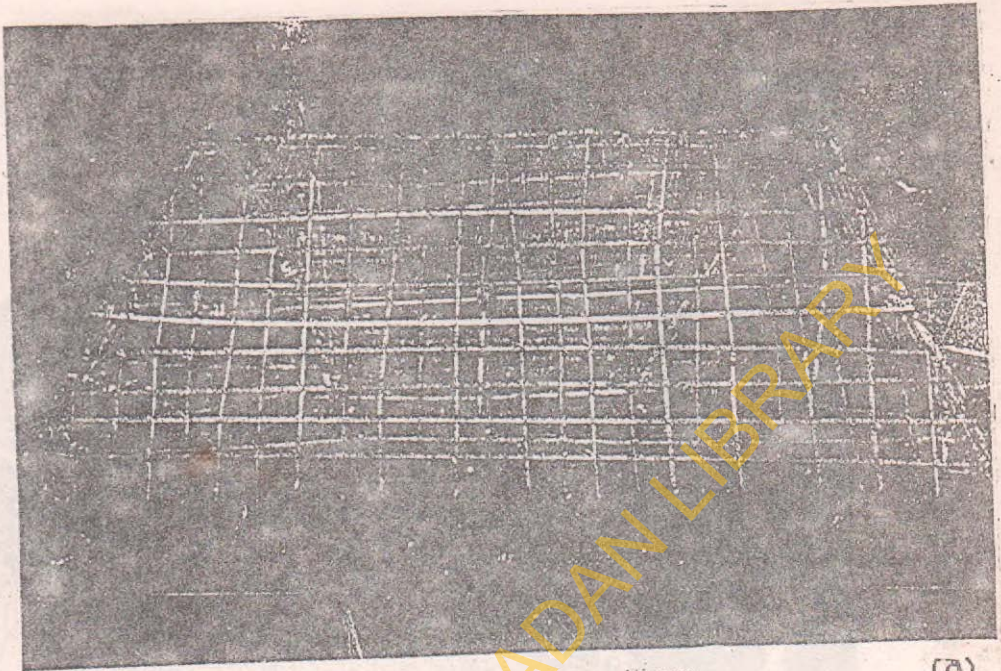


FIG 63. FOLK ARCHITECTURE FOR FOLK THEATRE  
THE BASIS OF ABU STUDIO THEATRE

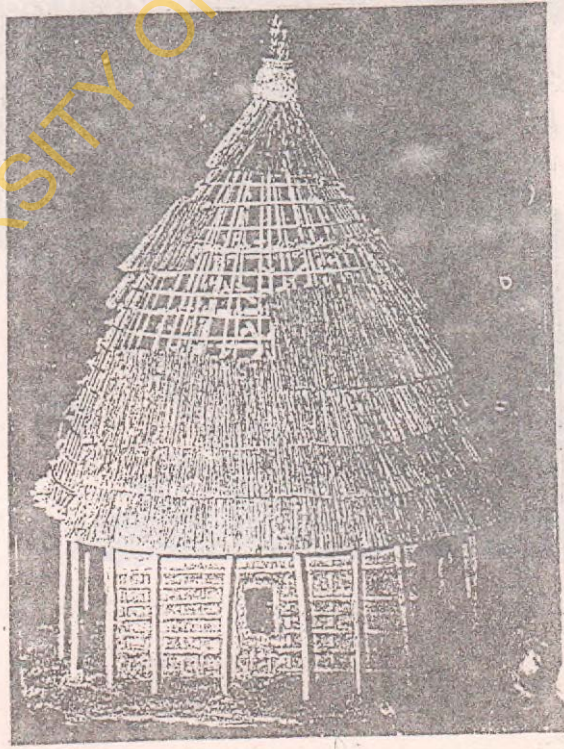


Fig. 64: The Outdoor Stage of the Ahmadu Bello University Studio Theatre.



Yoruba — Oyo State, Nigeria.

(a)



Bamileke — Camero

(b)

FIG 63: (a+b) ARCHITECTURE FOR FOLK-SCHOOL-THEATRE



FIG 65 THE THEATRE IN BAGAMOYO-TANZANIA: A PRODUCT OF FOLK-ARCHITECTURE

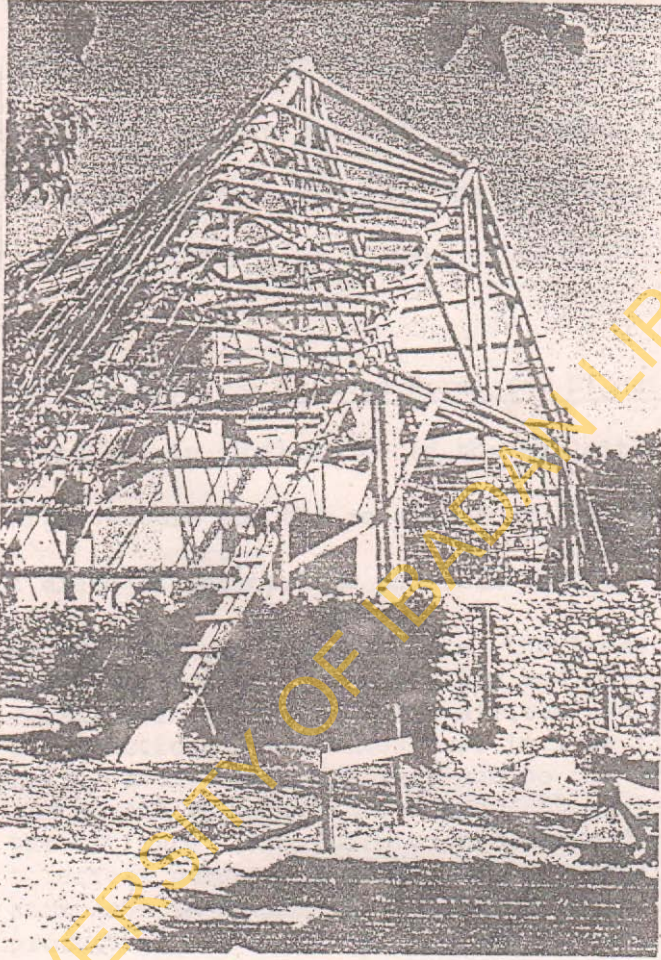


FIG 66: THEATRE IN BAGAMOYO-TANZANIA  
CONSTRUCTION WORK IN PROGRESS  
BUILDING MATERIALS: WOOD + MUD



This developed to become the theatre with two stages for which Norway provided for the building, Denmark sponsored the technical equipment. The theatre which replaces "the place under the mangroove tree" was designed in 1989 while construction which started in the same year was completed and the theatre was ready for opening performance in September 1990 as informed in Proscen, the Swedish Journal for Theatre Design and Technology (STTF), of December 1990. (72)

The recommended new physical theatre Forms for Nigeria.

To this end and in furtherance of the exploitation of the traditional folk architecture for the resolving of J.A. Adedeji's "Nigerian Dilemma" - in areas of appropriate physical theatre forms, and

in terms of particularization, the theatre must elaborate aesthetic sensibility and sharpen the creative imagination of its African audience, its functional attributes must include flexibility and must be sub-servient to the artistic tastes and thoughts it fosters. It must aid the ultimate integration of concept and percept to effect purposeful realities. The design must stimulate an imaginative and inventive style of production. The operational devices must show feasibility and permit the realization of an effective theatre. To be acceptable, a theatre must in spite of its novelty provide some basis for identification which will permit assimilation or projection to succeed. (73)

Appearing at the right and crucial moment, to garnish our ideas and stimulate our already conceived concepts for the African and Nigerian theatre is Per Edstrom's Why Not Theatres Made for People? (74) Edstrom's is a theatre compendium addressed especially to the developing nations

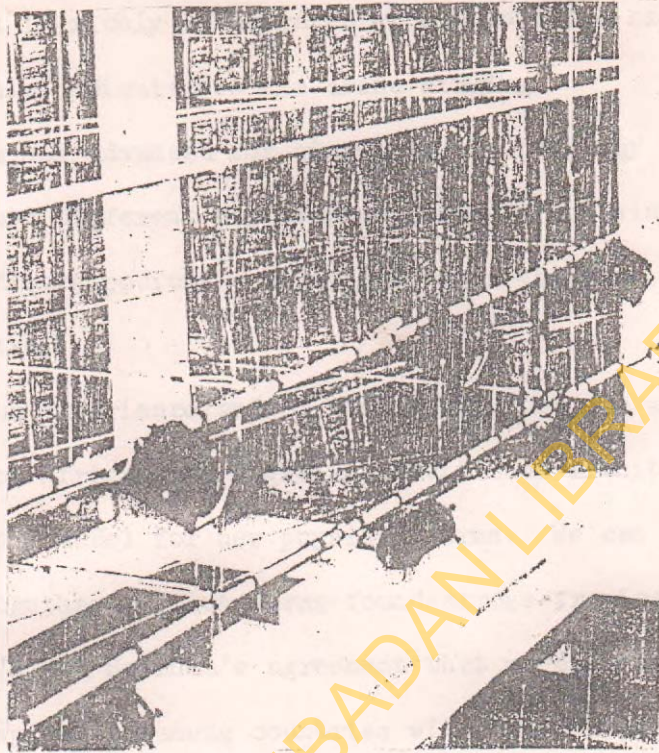


FIG 67 : MODERN SPOT LIGHTS ON BATTENS

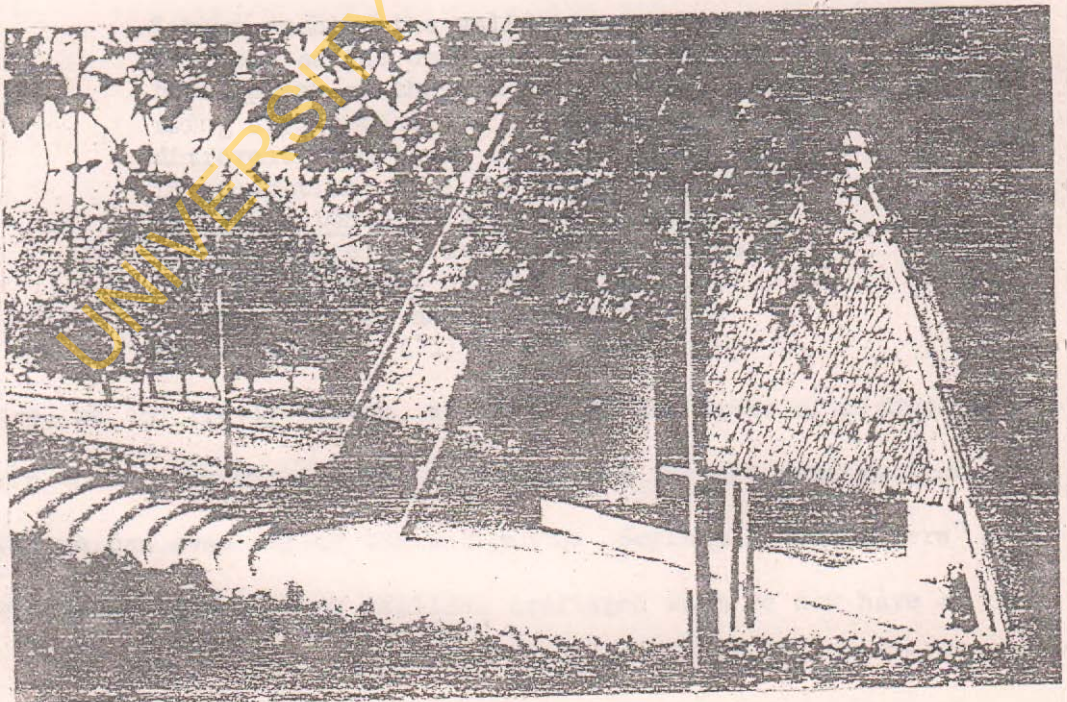


FIG 68 : AMPHITHEATRE AND EXTERIOR OF INDOOR STAGE

of the world. It is richly illustrated with hundreds of sketches and pictures but mainly dedicated to the arena staging.

Per Edstrom has advanced the view that the best way to build theatres which suit different performance forms, is by using 45 degrees angled mobile audience podiums - especially when thinking of simple, inexpensive theatres.

Based on our experience and of those consulted, we are convinced that the wealth of African and Nigerian traditional architecture can provide us with the model for new physical forms. We can select, adapt and fuse together various forms found across tropical Africa, inspite of Nwoko's and Soyinka's agreement that we can even look for architectural inspiration among countries with approximate or appropriate traditions and a longer professional history.

And Demas Nwoko has emphasized this by saying:

I have doubled the validity of a foreign art form as the base for an effective development of the art of a people. By using styles that are calculatedly different from those of Western Theatre in productions like The Palm Wine Drinkard, Danda, Akara-Ogun and The Olympik Dance, I have sought to compare the effectiveness of these styles on (a) the African audience and (b) the world audience. (75)

Hence, we can freely borrow, at least, in the areas of technology, to equip the new physical forms to emerge and for the construction of which we can even employ the indigenuous Soyinka's "mud-mixers" and carpenters, many of such skillful craftsmen whom we now have at our

disposal, need only to be guided to build from the rich deposits of the functional architectural motifs which abound.

To this end, the present writer would recommend the following design concepts of functional physical forms, structures and performance spaces for the Nigerian Contemporary Performing Arts, both for the rural and urban communities.

The recommended physical theatre forms and structures

- i. The Simplified Theatre Structure: The Primary (elementary) and the secondary (advanced) forms.
- ii. The Modular Theatre Systems.
- iii. The Mobile Theatre Systems.
- iv. The Multi-Purpose Theatre Building.

I. The simplified theatre structures

In this class of simplified theatre structures, we have thought of two types that would depend on the locality of the users. The two are low cost, simple and experimental structures, especially useful in the primary and secondary schools, particularly in the rural and semi-urban communities. While the first form could be termed the "primary" or "elementary" style, the second form could be tagged the "secondary" or the "advanced" style respectively. The two types would be built with various local materials cheaply obtainable in

some particularly hot areas, walls may not be necessary except for the built-in ventilation shafts which need brick or stone for the double walls. The roofs could be constructed of wood, bamboo or, where possible, of steel tubes dimensioned to meet the weight of both the roof and the theatrical equipment. The roof may have to be pulled down over the edge of the walls to enhance shades and cooling in the warm climate, for both the audience and performance. An open air performance venue, mostly, would not even consist of a building. All that would be needed would be some five-angled bamboo audience podiums which could be placed in different shapes to form a variety of performance space forms.

The arrangement of the bamboo podiums can be into monologue, dialogue or picture-frame theatre and can be accomplished by simply lifting up three of the five podiums and placing them on top of special saw-horses behind the other two.

Of unique advantage is the light weight of the bamboo podium which it renders the manipulation by even one actor and even during the performance, while the audience needs only to move for a moment side-ways, with their seat-cushions, for any configuration to be quickly transformed from one theatre form to another.

In addition to bamboo, planks, grass-strings for tying all together are all that are needed.

By covering the acting and the audience areas, for weather purposes, with a thatch-roof, a simple theatre building that works

SIMPLIFIED-THEATRE

FIG. 69: BAMBOO PODIUM

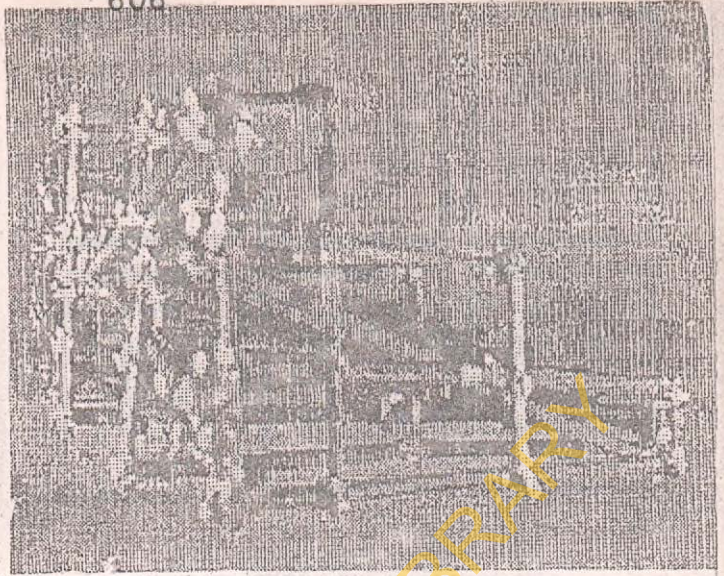


FIG. 70: PODIUM ON SAWHORSE

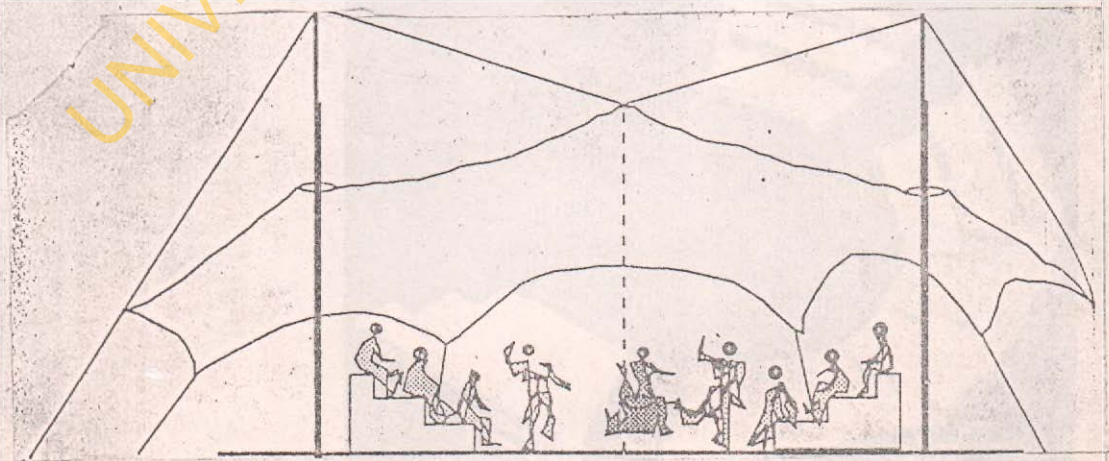
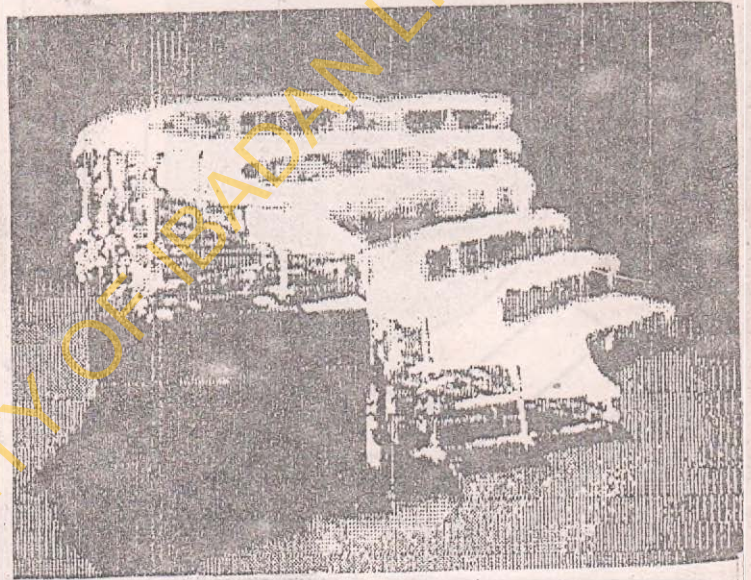


FIG. 71: AUDIENCE AND ACTING AREAS COVERED WITH TENT

FIG 72:

VARIOUS PODIUM ARRANGEMENTS

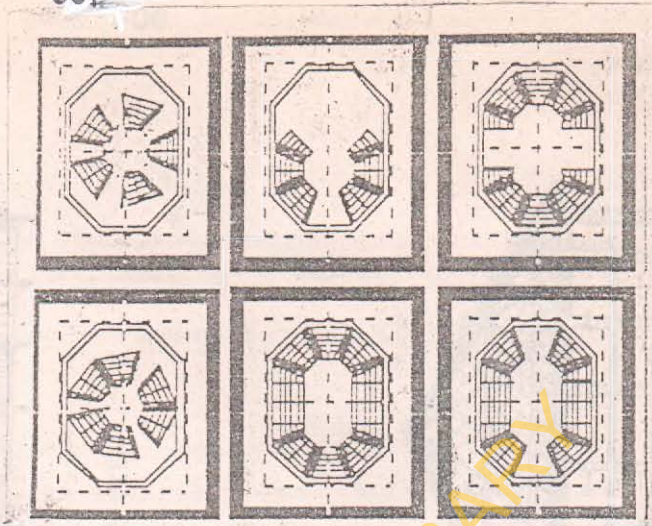


FIG 73:

THE PROSCENIUM VERSION

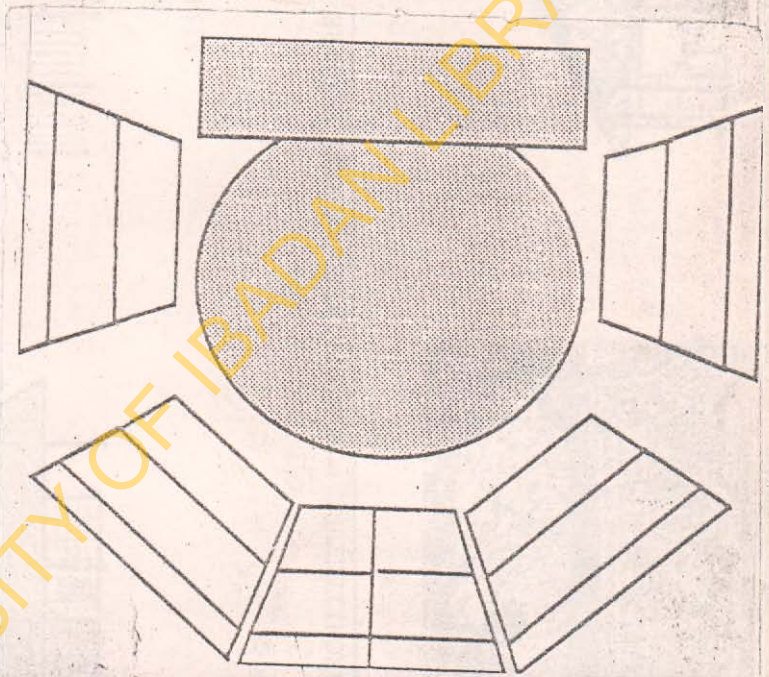
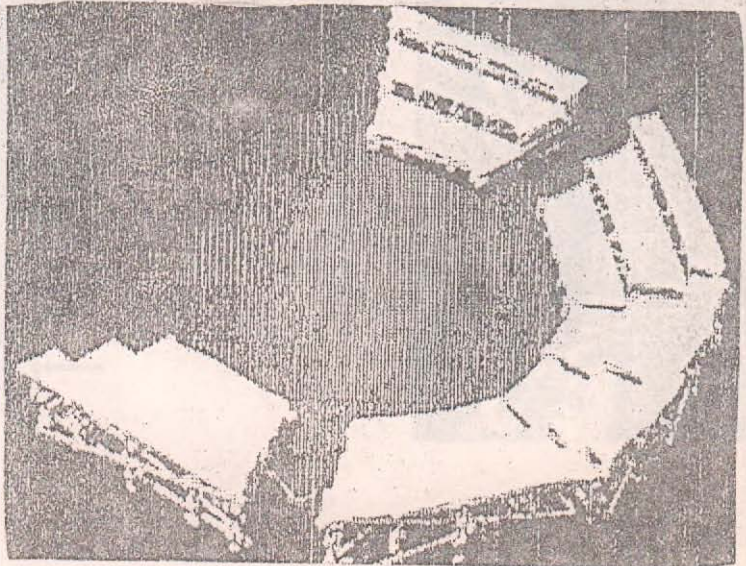
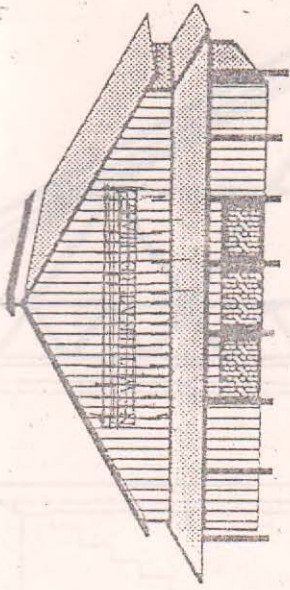


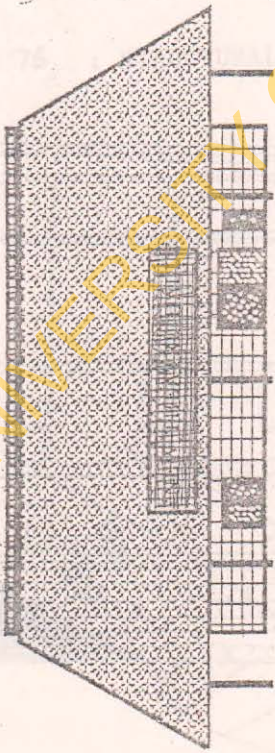
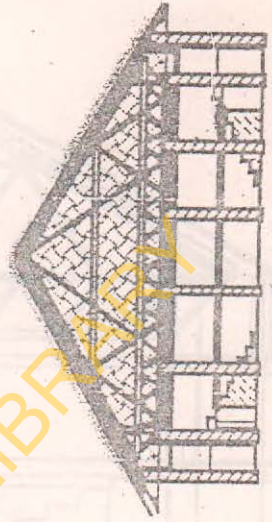
FIG 74:

THE THRUST STAGING





SIDE VIEW



FRONT VIEW

FIG 75: VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE FOR SIMPLIFIED SCHOOL THEATRE



VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE OF THE THEATRE

STRUCTURE OF THE THEATRE

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN LIBRARY



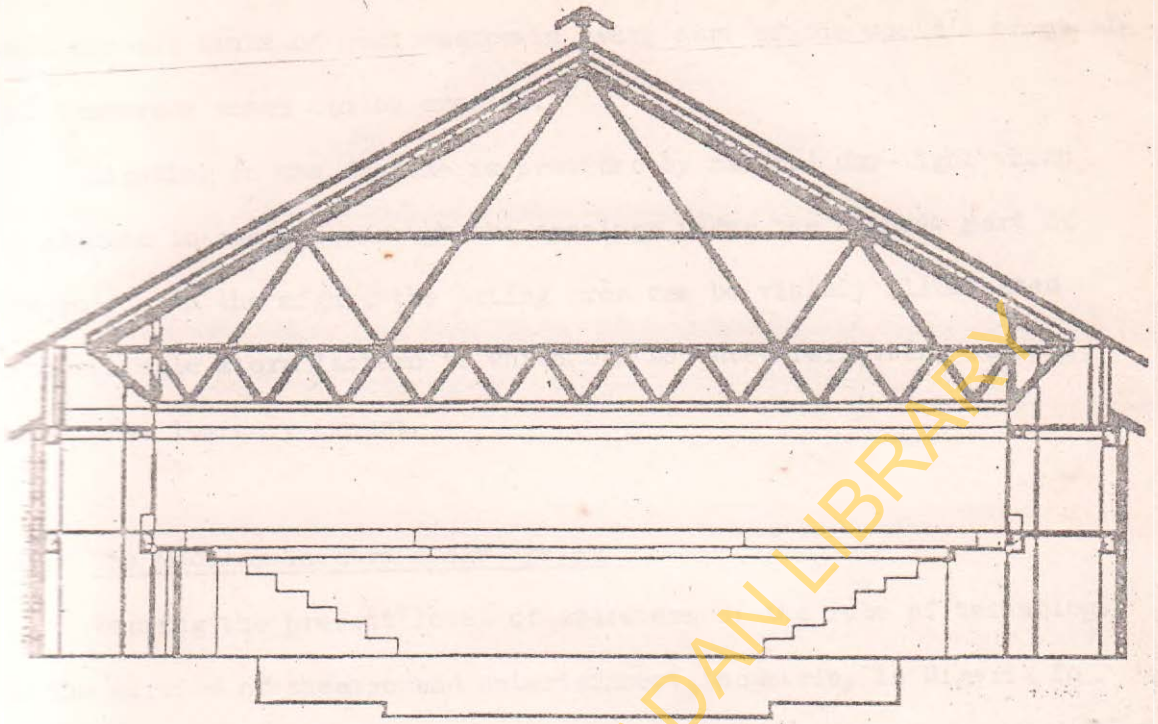


FIG 76 : STRUCTURAL SCHEME OF THE THEATRE

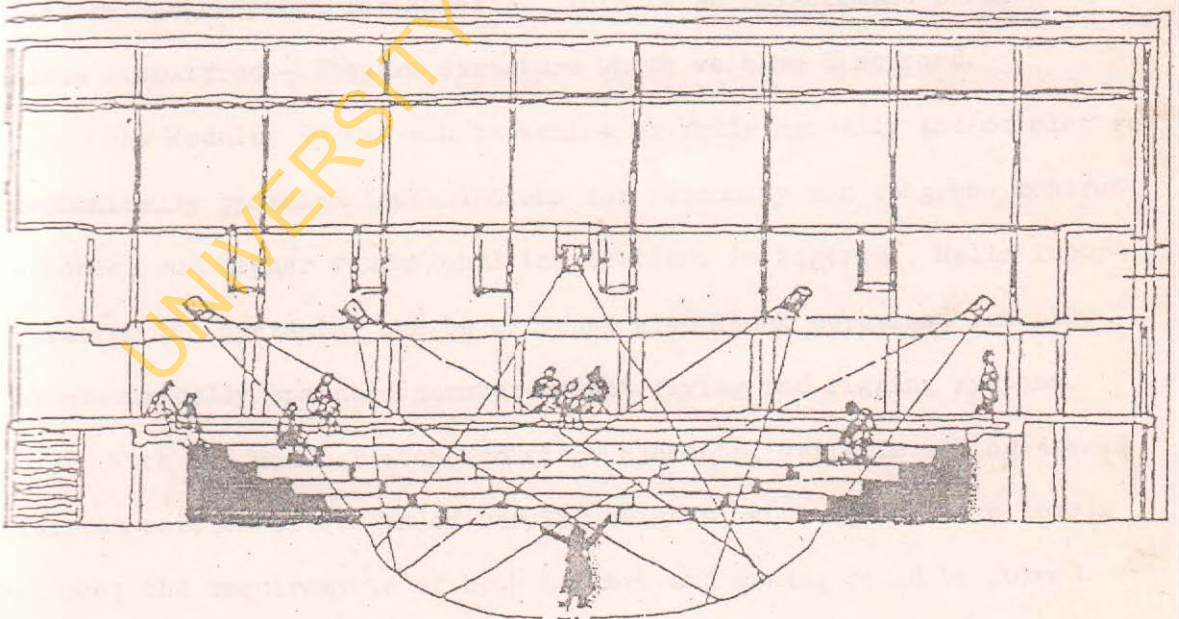


FIG. 77 : SECTION OF THE THEATRE IN USE

well for all kinds of performances in every part of the world's tropical and temperate zones can be created.

Lighting in the daytime is provided by natural day-light which is allowed to seep in through the openings under the highest part of the roof. In the night, the acting area can be visibly illuminated with a single storm lantern to which can be added reflecting screens, to aid the luminary impact.

## II. The Modular Theatre-stage System

Bearing the present level of awareness of the role of technology in the service of theatre and entertainment industries in Nigeria in mind, and considering the needs of urban areas where the power and the cost of fairly well equipped, public assembly and theatre halls could be more easily met, the present writer would now recommend the Modular Theatre-Stage-System for Nigeria. This is an advancement on the earlier simplified - Theatre structure which we have discussed.

The Modular System can be semi - or fully manually and/or electro-mechanically operated installations for community and congress centres, schools, and higher educational institutions in Nigeria. Halls incorporating the system(s) can be equipped with Greek curtains, manually or electrically operated counter-weight flying and rigging systems.

With the modular standard stage elements, variable acting areas, for composition of stages of varying heights, with one or more levels to meet the requirements of both concert and drama, could be formed.

The modules are versatile in meeting the increasing demand for practical, flexible and demountable rostra and platforms, of almost any configuration for seating or standing accommodation and as walk-way.

Two different manual modular systems could be constructed. The first one could have changeable legs of various heights which can be fixed to the underside of the platform top, of 2m by 1m standard dimensions. The legs in themselves can be bolted together to ensure rigidity and solid rostrum and platform of various configuration.

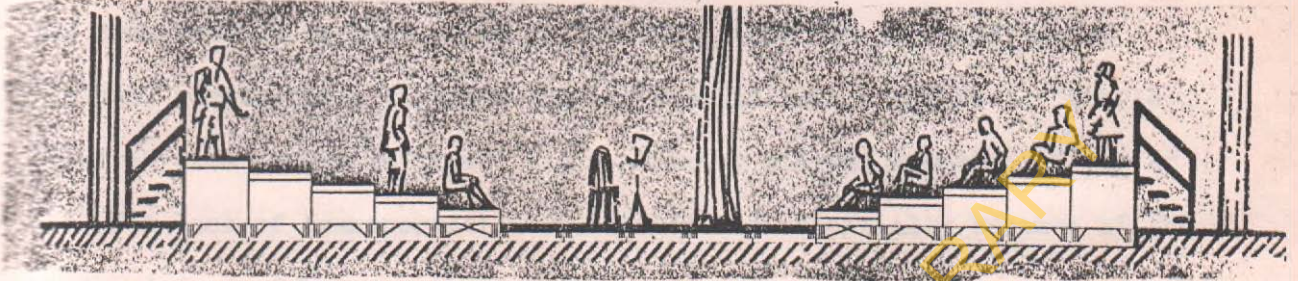
The second system could have foldable adjustable and variable legs that can even be inclined to different angles on the horizontal plane. The foldable legs could be permanently secured to the underneath of the platform top, sluable, in hall-floor space.

The two systems could be made of plywood platform tops, steel or aluminium legs. The systems are capable of carrying up to 1000kg/qm load. Among their favourable characteristics are architectural and aesthetic values, fire protection and acoustic properties, particularly for absorbing the noise and sound produced when treading on the systems. The desired variable heights when set could be secured against undesirable and unexpected sagging or falling by means of special catch-in jig and fixture incorporated in the system.

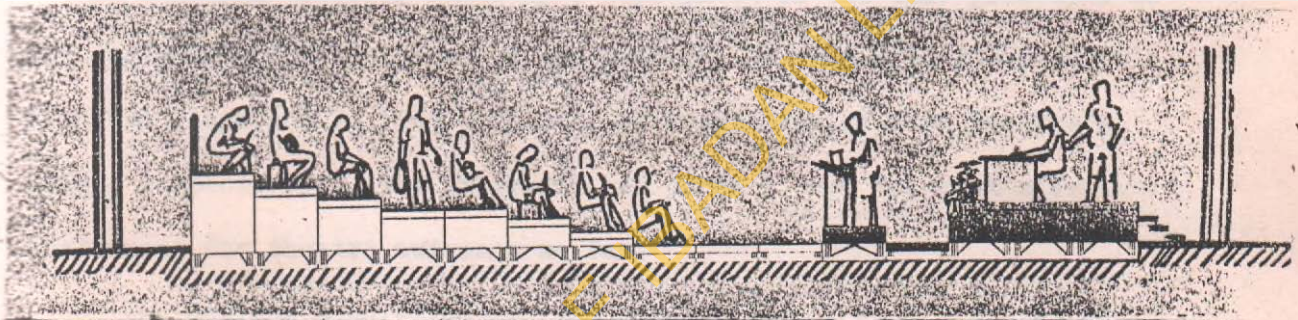
The systems could be extended by the addition of "wing sets", standard lighting and storage carriers to become great and versatile assets for schools, sports and hotel clubs. And by adding extra lighting and stage accessories, upper-stage rigging systems for scenery

and removable curtains, which can be suspended in the suspended ceilings the system becomes convertible theatre for visiting companies. The following figures will show some examples of variations of use.

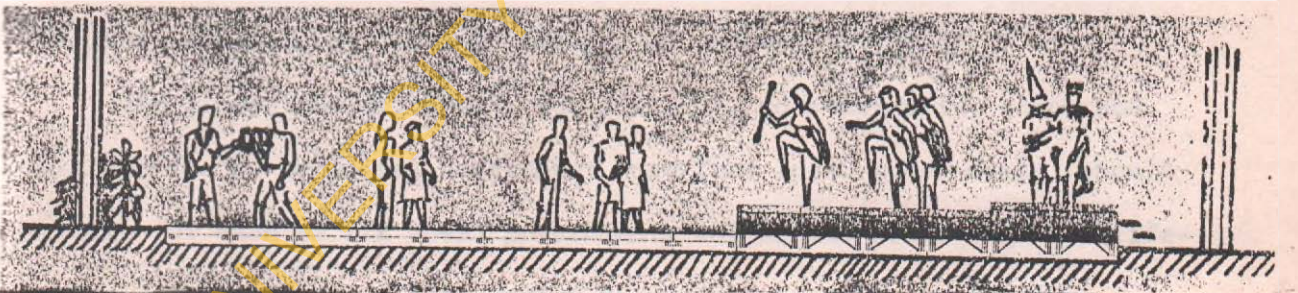
### Economy through Technology



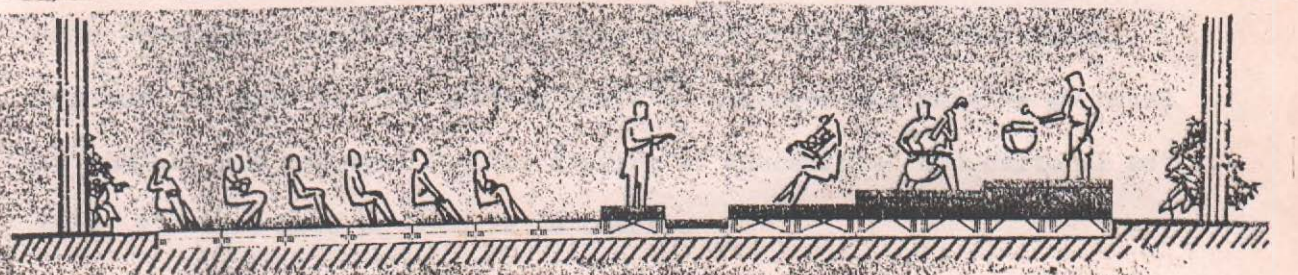
Space for Modern space - room - theatre



Congress with podium - stage



Carneval entertainment with dance - area and podium



Show orchestra on Tribune

Fig 78: Mobile-Stage-Modules in Various Arrangements

### III. The Mobile Theatre System

Our third type of theatrical installation to be recommended for Nigerian use is the Mobile Theatre System. As we have discovered, the idea of mobile theatre is not unique to the contemporary age alone, it has been used in various forms in the past, too. In the traditional African, particularly Nigerian theatre the litinerary groups as "mobile theatre" were forced to travel light, bearing minimal scenery, if any at all, for lack of transportation facilities and essentially because of the kind and form of their own productions.

We recall Geoffrey Axworthy's deployment of the same principle in the early 60's for the tours of the country, in 1964 with Shakespeare's Festival Plays and in 1965 with a stage adaptation of Nkem Nwankwo's Danda, respectively. The programme has perhaps been the most effective instrument for theatre outreach so far.

The design, sophistication and versatility of such a system would vary considerably, depending on the functions to serve and on the available funds generatable through subsidy and endowment schemes.

The present writer would, for instance, to start with, recommend that the Ibadan Municipal Government (now four local governments) should procure for each of its local governments one of the following two different systems. They could be rented to groups and schools in and around Ibadan on an advance booking and programming basis. Similarly, the Oyo State Government would be contributing effectively to the educational programme if some of such systems could be procured and made to go round the schools and colleges for the staging of educational and cultural activities. All that need be done is to compile

a list of potential users and allocate each of them times and periods when they could use such systems.

The two dissimilar concepts are the "Stagemobile" and the "Stage-on-the-Road" systems. While the "Stage-mobile" is a compact mobile stage for a lesser number of gathering audience, the "Stage-on-the-Road" is meant for larger assemblies of audience and grandiose activities. The two bring entertainment to the reach of everyone outdoors.

#### The "Stage-Mobile" System

This is specifically and specially designed for easy towing even on narrow roads typified by Nigerian roads. The stage and the canopy are integrated for effortless opening by means of hydraulics operated by levers. This guarantees labour cost saving as only two persons are required for the whole set-up.

The system can be fabricated in varying degrees of complexity, specifications and flexibility to accommodate community concerts, political events, parades, fairs and fests and for creating the traditional stage of the travelling theatre groups, outdoor-children's-shows, theatres and historical vignettes.

Even though the two systems are trailer-truck-borne, they depart in their technical conception and realizations from the Axworthy/Bill Brown flat trailer-bed of Ibadan of the 1960s.

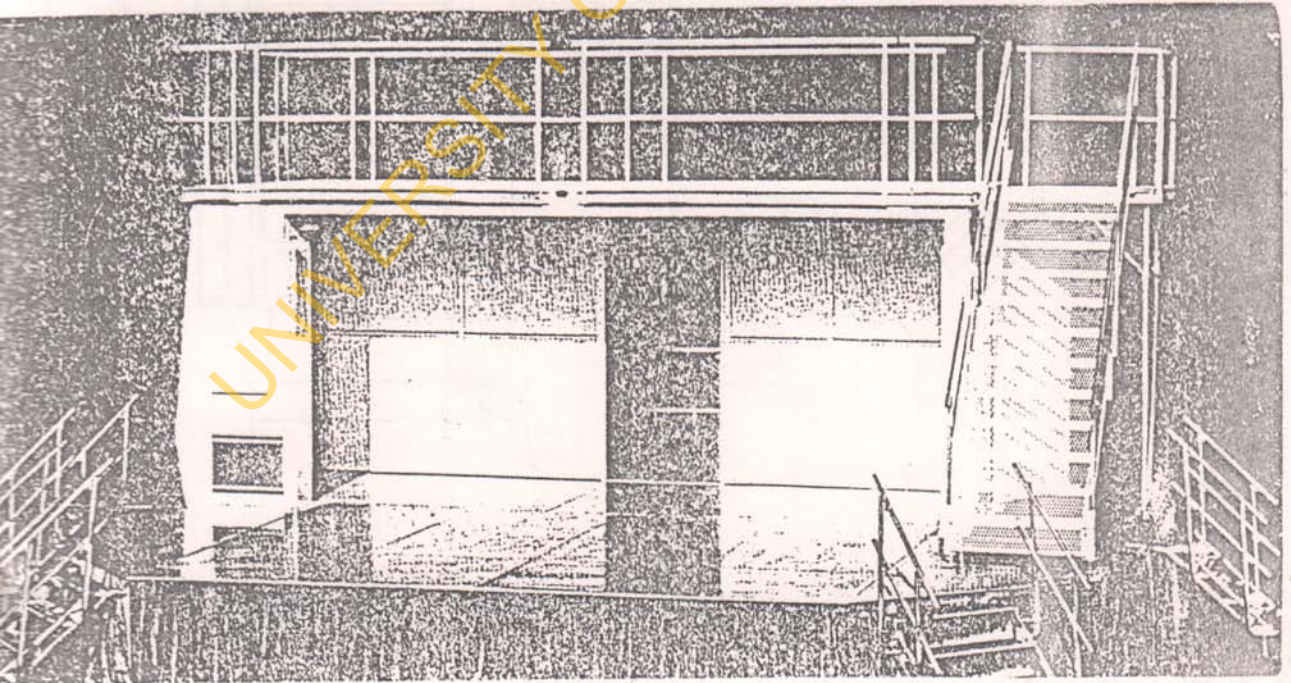
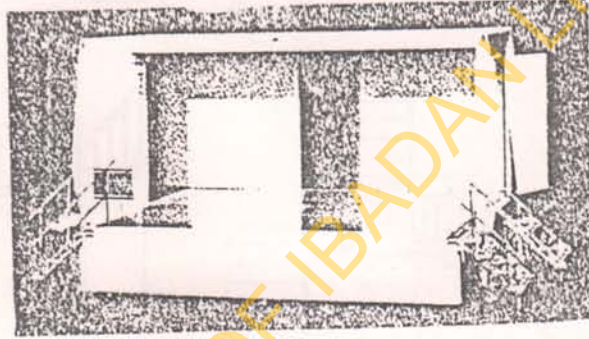
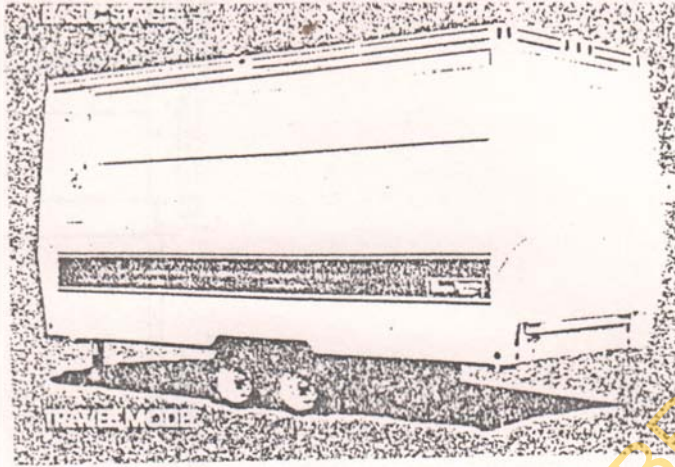


Fig. 1. THE STAGE MOBILE SYSTEM

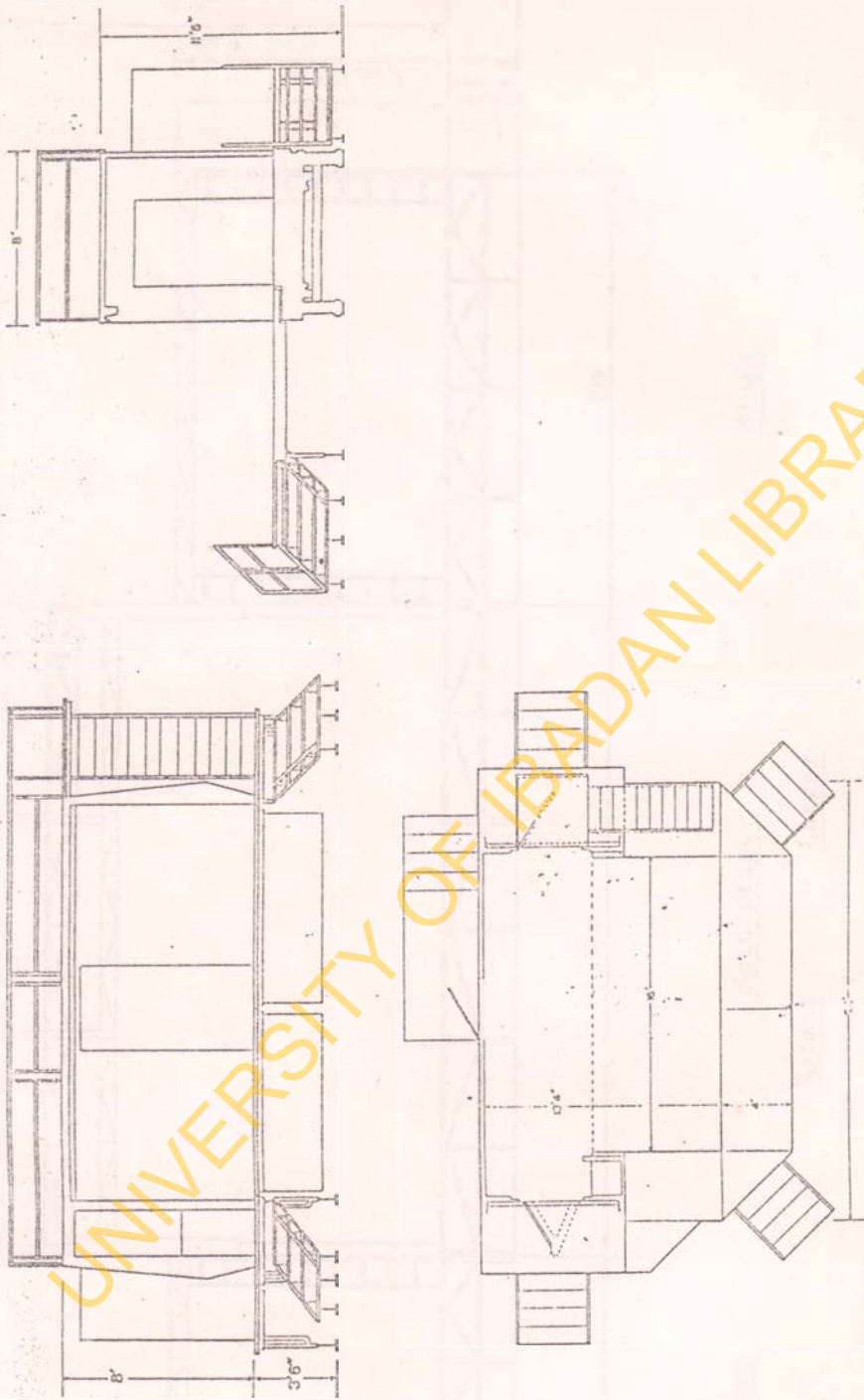


Fig. 79: THE STAGEMOBILE SYSTEM — THE ELEVATIONS



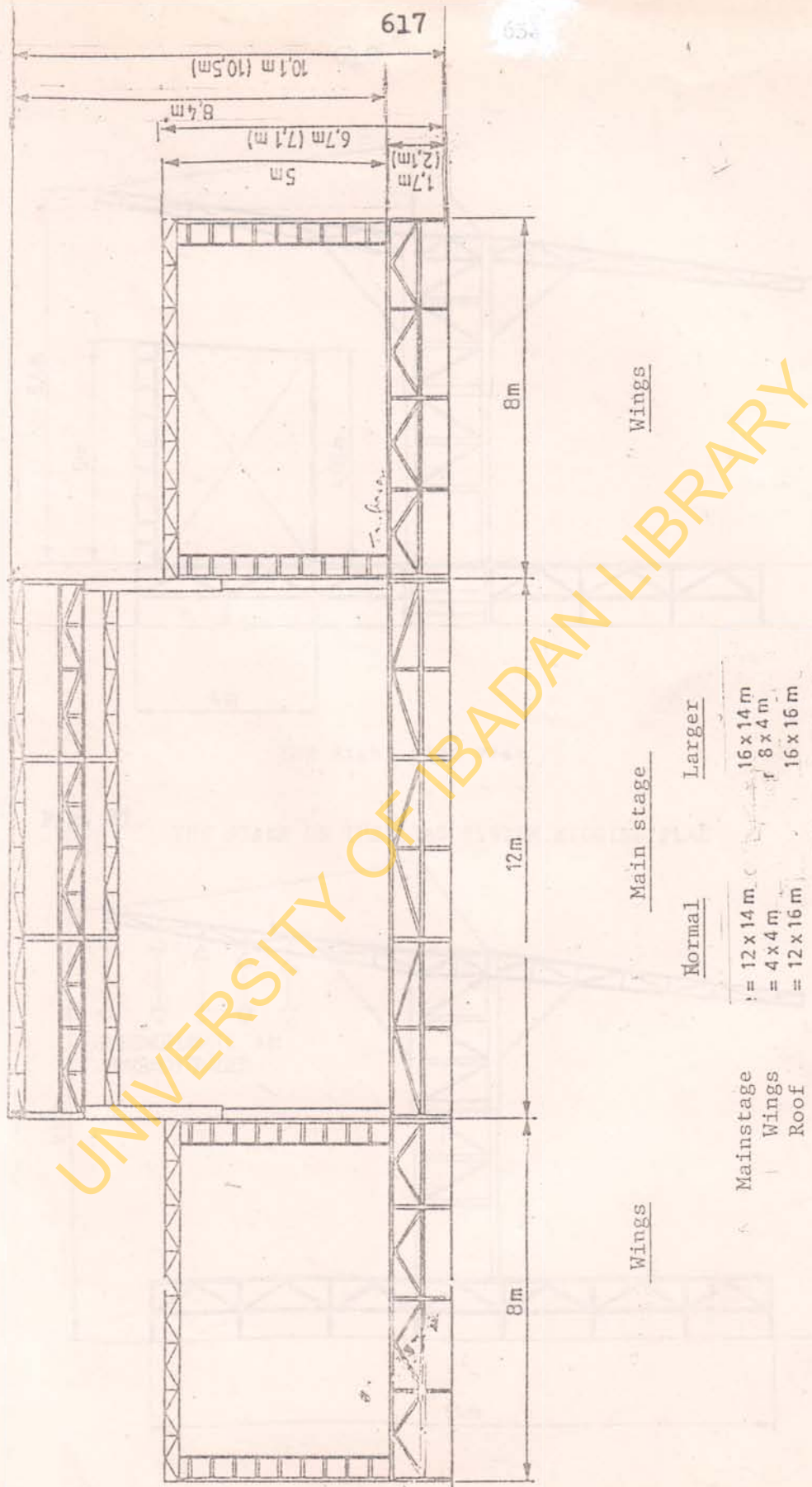
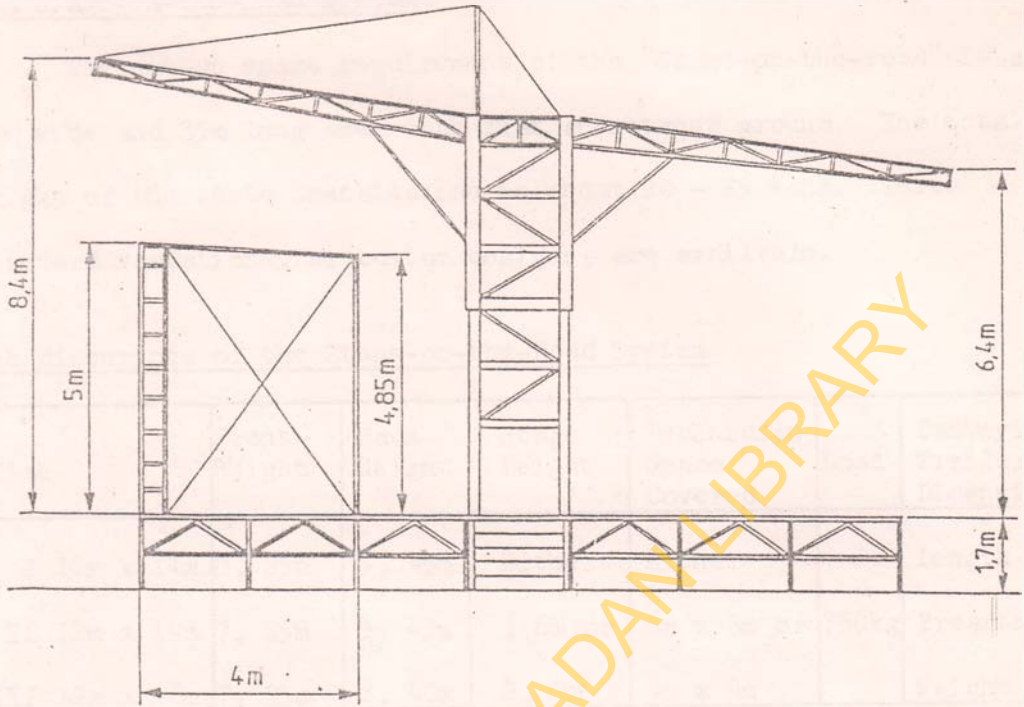


Fig. 69: The Stage on the-Road System



The Right side view

Fig. 81 THE STAGE ON THE ROAD SYSTEM RIGGING PLAN

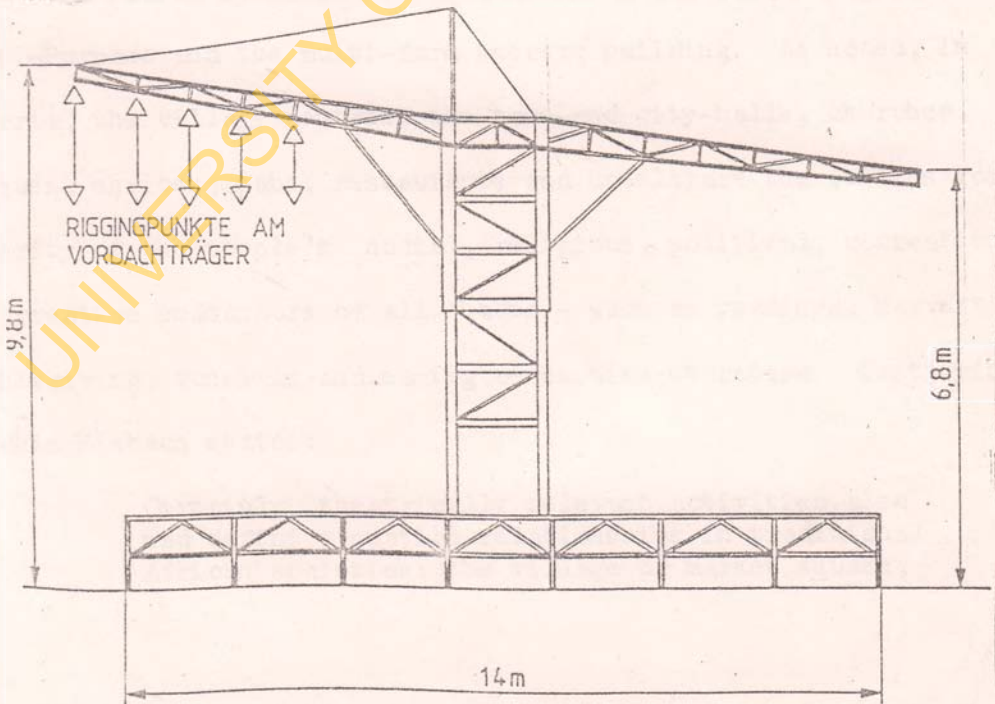


Fig. 81: The Right Side View - Section

### The Stage-on-the-Road System

The set-up space requirement of the "Stage-on-the-road" is a 25m wide and 35m long area with flat and strong ground. The total weight of the whole installation is about 20 - 25 tons. Three standard variations, or custom designs, are available.

### The dimensions of the Stage-on-the-Road System

Size	Front-Height	Back Height	Stage Height	Technician Space Covered	Load	Conveying Trailer Dimensions
I 16m x 14m	7, 35m	5, 45m	Either	Either	750kg	Length 16m
II 12m x 14m	7, 35m	5, 45m	1,6m or	6m x 3m or	750kg	Breadth 2,5m
III 12m x 8m	7, 35m	6, 40m	2, 0m	4m x 4m		Height 4m

### 17. The Multi-purpose: Multi-Form Theatre Building

Our fourth recommended physical theatre form for Nigeria is the Multi-Purpose and the multi-form theatre building. As noted, in Nigeria, the village centres, the town-and city-halls, churches, mosques, shrines, pubs, restaurants and hotels are the centres for the majority of the people's social, religious, political, recreational and creative endeavours of all shades - such as weddings, harvest and thanksgiving, funerals and naming ceremonies et cetera. Testifying, Joachim Fiebach states:

Certainly, theatrically relevant activities also had definite spatial relationships in traditional African societies: the village or market square,

where something was demonstrated, places of initiation, and fertility or other rituals, whole settlements and their surroundings within which festive or ritual processions made the most different points into space for performances and meditation. (76)

The tradition of theatrical events with the mingling and co-existence of music, language, movement, gesture, dance and musical forms has always produced active audience behaviour. Hence, the treatment of space and audience behaviour becomes an essential factor in this context. All forms of performances have, their own different classes of spectators through whom the performing and viewing are to be split, according to Ola Balogun, into "spatial roles" in the "communicative art", and "the independent representative arts". (77)

Recently, beginning in the sixties, a series of experiments are being tried out to bring about spatial and communication relationships between theatrical and cultural tradition and the climatic peculiarities of tropical Africa. In 1962, Efua Sutherland attempted the creation of an arena theatre, using her play Edufa to demonstrate a direct epic relationship with a choir, permanently. Similarly, at Zambia University, Lusaka, based on Michael Etherton's idea, open-air theatres with an amphi-theatrical arena fronted by an orchestra-like enclosure and with a stage erection, were constructed along the lines of classical models. The form in Lusaka contrasted favourably with the Little Theatre of colonial history. At Ile-Ife in 1968, Ola Rotimi and his group turned a compound of traditional Nigerian architectural design to an open-air theatre. The scene was formed by the enclosing rectangular walls of the building that form the interior with the spectators grouped around the scene area on several sides. The professional Abafumi Company,

founded by Robert Seremuga in Uganda in 1971, attempted to reproduce traditional culture and at the same time European Theatre as experienced by Seremuga, succeeding Artaud, by way of ritualistic contact with its audience ...

In 1971, James Birihamze attempted a summary of intentions and experiences from two theatres in Tanzania and Kenya. The first was a circular, large, multi-purpose hall, an assembly hall, (Moshi) of the University at one end of which was a very narrow but lengthy rostrum, extended as the stage with a small picture frame set with curtain. It was without any technical device and lights to simulate darkness.

The other (second) venue was a community communications centre (Arusha), merely with a somewhat elevated rostrum in the main hall, but without any technical amenities and with a single access to the dressing room.

The respective spatial conditions determine how the events are realized - theatrically - and they finally also determine the actual position of the audience to which the events were to be conveyed. According to Birihamze, "We must work with the people who dance and sing and tell stories. We must learn to express ourselves with our voices and our bodies - especially with our bodies - as the people do. In other words, we must learn the true African theatre vocabulary from the people who know it. Having done this, we can do away with the formal aspects of Western theatre ... The most important is ... that the theatre building and the stage auditorium arrangement are very inhibiting

to both the spectator and the performers. The spectator sees the performer from below. He is in a worshipping position ... and the spectator believes and calls the performer a great star. Stars are inaccessible to mortals. The stage-auditorium relationship should be developed and also new organisational forms such as touring groups and regional groups in Ujamaa villages and rural centres. The function of theatre in society must change: in other words, it should seek to constantly change for the better. Thus it should jointly and democratically work out its productions and discuss them with the spectators, because it is they, after all, for whom the performance is put on. It is their views that are most important." (77)

And as a caption of the Hudson Scenic Studies Incorporated of Bronx, New York in the USITT's Journal, TD § T of Spring 1989 states:

Technology has radically changed the world of theatre. When people see a show, they expect to see the earth move, the sky fall, the waters part ... or at least the floor revolve. (78)

Or, how would Soyinka have felt if he has been present in July 1986 at the Arts Theatre, University of Ibadan to watch Saidat Odofin produce his The Bacchae of Euripides but without him seeing at the end

the theme of Dionysus well up and fill the stage with the god's presence as a powerful red glow shines suddenly as if from within the head of Pentheus, rendering it nearluminous. The stage is bathed in it instantly, from every office of the impaled head spring red jets, spurting in every direction (79)

These magical feats were possible only with modern technology which has made Les Miserables, The Phantom of the Opera, Freudiana and Cats some of the world's recent mega-hits that have revolutionised the theatre. And, as Arthur Koestler, in The Act of Creation: A Study of the Conscious and Unconscious in Science and Arts, says: "The magic illusion still serves essentially the same emotional needs: it enables the spectator to transcend the narrow confines of his personal identity, and to participate in other forms of existence," (80) and this is mostly only possible on the proscenium stage.

(i) The Proscenium-Multi-Purpose, Multi-Use Theatre

The proscenium stage offers far greater possibilities for scenic "transformations." The essence of all, in the final analysis, is the creation of illusion. The scenographer is to be able to create illusions corresponding to the ideas of the author, composer, director and actor, and for this illusion to have full effect on the audience, without its attention being disturbed or diverted at any time by external influences. Hence, the methods of scenery changing have to be continuously perfected and the stage forms increasingly adapted to the requirements of the directors and to the desires of the artists. Hence, smooth and rapid scene changing which entails the appearing and disappearing of scenes very quickly and quietly in its predetermined position without any hitch. For this purpose, the assembly of the same scenery must have been completely done in a position invisible to the audience as long as it is not intended by the creative design process to be so visible. These scenographic requirements have led to

the development of different stage forms and technology of which the Opera production makes the greatest demands on both technical equipments and space allocations. For this needed multi-functional landscape, the entire hall - auditorium space - has to be made sluable movable, either mechanically, hydraulically, pneumatically, electrically or manually. The scheme for the desired mobility should make any or a combination of several of the following schematic illustrative examples possible.

#### The Multi-use, Multi-purpose Theatre for Ibadan

The idea of multiple-use or multi-purpose theatre itself is not new. The term "multiple-use," however, conveys somewhat different meanings in different ages. Every age has used its buildings for performance in ways other than those for which they were specifically designed. For example, the baroque designers fully expected the opera house to be used not only for opera, concert and drama but also as a ballroom, banquet hall, etc. However, the meaning of the term, "multiple-use" as used herein is more precise, especially with regard to acoustical characteristics and seating geometry affecting the auditorium. The reasons and all arguments to the contrary have been and still are rooted in economics:

- (i) expenditure of capital funds required to get a building designed and built;
- (ii) use factor, and
- (iii) maintenance costs, once it is operating.

The famous American theatre consultant, engineer, planner and scenographer, George C. Izenour, in his "The Case for Multiple-use



Community Theatre Design" has avowed:

The essential requirement is a building that can fulfil a social need, not create one. Practically speaking, this means good acoustics, good sight lines, and comfortable seating for all uses; pleasant, well-lighted, and ventilated public spaces for the audience; and well-planned functioning modern stage and back-stage spaces with performance conditions of the present time. Economics is usually given as the reason for (as well as against) design and construction of a theatre for multiple-use. (81)

Also the legendary German theatre consultant, engineer and scenographer, Professor Walther Unruh, has defined "multi-form-theatre" as "theatre halls in which different forms of placement of the stage and seats could be formed through the rearrangement of seat rows as Axial theatre, with or without apron, as open-podium, or stage, or also as arena theatre. The transformation is usually effected manually, seldomly with mechanically driven floor-traps. (82) To Unruh, "a multi-purpose theatre has a hall for about 600 to 1,000 seats and a stage with relatively simple technology but fully equipped to meet the requirements of visiting touring groups. They are also useful for concerts, film presentations, lectures, carnival balls and exhibitions. "They are called the arts centres and cultural centres of the community." (83)

The contemporary theatre and the performing arts in general, seem to have suffered a rapid decline in buoyancy in the last two decades as attested to by the situation at the erstwhile virile and bubbling Arts Theatre of the University of Ibadan. Certainly, responsible for this is not only the linguistic problem facing productions in the English Language, but more is the rivalling influence of the film and video production syndrome of recent years coupled with the already established television culture since independence in Nigeria, which now engages almost all of the same theatre groups that would have presented us with their materials live on stage.

The worst antagonism to the patronage of live performance has been the pathetic rage of social insecurity through the menace of armed robbers and car snatchers both in the day-time and, worse, in the night-times.

In the available venues themselves the first resentments are experienced with the lack of basic amenities that could contribute to the well-being, comfort and pleasure of the audience. Most of them have no functioning water closets; they lack adequate ventilation, and the necessary gastronomic amenities, not to think of their lack totally or in parts, are the generally obsolete and poor technical facilities, without which the simulation of the visual spectacles and fantastic effects to enliven, astound, entertain, support, illuminate and emancipate the audience's mind, on the themes of the productions, is impossible. All these attractions the film, television and video offer the audience at their convenience in their homes.

A lot of emotional outbursts  
clouding academic judgement

CHAPTER ELEVENON THE SEARCH FOR A NEW PHYSICAL FORM FOR THE NIGERIAN THEATRE  
PART TWOThe Context of our Search for a new Theatre for Ibadan

The context of our search for a new physical theatre form would include the fact that the population of Ibadan which has experienced a relative stability of about 1 million over the years would probably remain so for some time. But in Ibadan in particular, and in Nigeria in general, there is hardly any theatre, be it multi-purpose, multi-use or multi-form or any other form, adequately designed and equipped to satisfy the spectrum of contemporary theatrical entertainment and performing arts requirements of the late 20th century. Unfortunately, to compound it all, it has become obvious that our government bodies and their cultural policy-making agencies have really not seen the need in providing such functional social and cultural infrastructures, as they seem to have unanimously agreed, that it is the <sup>the</sup> custodians of people's arts and culture that should find ways and means of sustaining these aspects of our lives on their own account or else they should let them die off. These custodians, in addition to creativity, must provide the venues, also!

Except for the Arts Theatre at the University of Ibadan, which has been sited within the academic environment, thus serving the milieu it has been planned for, all other venues in Ibadan have been awkwardly located. They are almost inaccessible to the general public and the masses they ought to serve. Perhaps one can excuse this great lapse on the ground that, in actual fact, they have not been conceived as theatres for the people. Otherwise, where lies the rationale behind the siting of the Cultural Centre and Demas Nwoko's New Culture Studio Theatre in such awkward places, both on hill slopes at Mokola area, where only vehicle owners could conveniently reach.

Such cultural attestation of the people's social product and image, a "folks" or "people's" theatre, as a community artifact, should have been planted at the strategic nerve centre of the people's habitation, near a confluence of road network plied by public transport and architecturally integrated into the people's environment and urbanization.

In order to resuscitate the lost interest of the people in Ibadan for live performance, it is recommended that a new theatre should be located in the down-town heart of Ibadan city. It is incumbent upon the prospective theatre building to be sited in such a strategic point taking cognisance of the other cultural edifices such as Art Galleries, Shopping Centres, Squares, Museums, Archives, to be in good spatial relationships with the theatre in the city where it would be more accessible to many among the under-privileged masses. The privileged ones, with personal vehicles, can drive there as long as excellent parking facilities are provided. A theatre in the down-town area of Ibadan would contribute to the vitality of the city not only in the day-time, but, importantly, in the evening periods when the busy day's activities would have been over and which would consequently render the downtown area desolate. But with the eventual rich diversity of activities to be going on in the magnetic meeting areas of the city, the people would be kept much longer on everyday.

A brief for such a structure might read:

a multi-use, multi-purpose, multi-form and environmental theatre for a capacity of 1,300 to 1,500 seats, flexible and adaptable to enable it to accommodate a wide range of uses with adjustable acoustics to match the requirements of all users. The theatre should have all the necessary support spaces to enable it to function satisfactorily.

Basil Dean has, in his wisdom, described the requirements of

such an edifice succinctly thus: - "The Stage requirements are really very simple; plenty of space and height with walls at right angles to each other and free of all obstructions above, on and beneath the stage level." In addition, as Frederick Bentham agrees, "diverse mobile stage machinery and traps in the floor can be provided, later if and when any production needs them. The stage floor, if modular, can be removed wholly or in part, literally opening right up to the basement." But "this is not adaptability but flexibility" - Bentham cautions. (1) Adaptable theatres begin with something which may be called a studio theatre, a black box or even a drama space. There is a flat floor on which rostrums are pushed around to provide seating tiers and different levels .... Another use of the studio theatre is, as in a University, to study the works of the masters in the forms contemporary to them. (2)

There is no gainsaying the fact that we have got to crawl before we walk. We have got to learn from those whose long theatrical traditions have made them to carry out staging experiments. Simply put, as it has been established, there existed, and still do, buoyant black African, particularly Nigerian, traditional theatres but there was no evidence of a specially designed theatre structure. Therefore, we have to borrow from the Western experience, the planning of a modern Nigerian theatre structure or building. A functional architectural planning is

a product of scientific experiments, and experience accumulated over centuries of technological developments. Nigerian architects and designers can contribute to the aesthetic appearance of the façade of such a building designed to obey some basic principles of functional theatres.

From the foregoing, it can be deduced that an ideal stage, space and structure for Nigerian theatre will be an adaptable, flexible and multi-functional form, to incorporate the most significant and essential features of the proscenium with some degree of satisfactory space-stage possibilities.

Based on our findings above, we, therefore, reach some conclusions that if the dying live performing arts in Nigeria, particularly in and at Ibadan, have to be resuscitated, then urgent measures must be taken towards the improvement of our training programmes in the areas of scenography and stage technology and, of course, there must be made available well planned, equipped and accessible theatre buildings located strategically all over the country, beginning now from Ibadan, the capital of Oyo State of Nigeria.

#### The Planning Process and the Consultants

Among the first steps towards the planning of a theatre are the site appraisal; the preparation of a preliminary analysis of the schedule of accommodation, a tentative order of magnitude and estimate of capital costs. These analyses give information on the theatre, its equipment, furnishings, accessories and their costs, as they are prepared

by specialists. The tapping of the knowledge of the local people and general observations relating to the projected theatre would be immeasurable sources of information to all parties interested in the project. All of these steps and criteria are essential contents of the design parameters. The success of the designed theatre for the present time and for the future continuous use, would depend largely on the thoroughness of the execution and implementation of the design parameters. Hence, it is important to entrust the respective areas to competent Research- Management -, Design- and Technical Consultants for maximum accomplishments and preparation of workable briefs.

The cost of this kind of preliminary studies could be estimated and shared between the consultancy companies.

#### The Site Appraisal:

One of the duties of a Consultant is to review a number of alternative potential sites to determine their suitability for a performing arts building using, among others, the following criteria:

- (a) Prominence and visibility
- (b) Accessibility
- (c) Parking
- (d) Relationship to Downtown
- (e) Expansion or Phasing Possibilities
- (f) Cultural Grouping
- (g) Capital Fund Raising
- (h) Support Revenue Possibilities
- (i) Technical Advantages and Disadvantages



(a) Prominence and Visibility

The concern here is for the object to be easily identified by the public, evincing a kind of "public profile". The theatre of the people, "Folks Theatre," should reflect part of the moves to bridge the gaps between various social strata by being a highly visible and prominent building of significance not only to the downtown people but also to all groups in Ibadan. The venue has to possess a kind of magnetic force to attract the cross-section of the populace, as does a religious house, stadium and market.

(b) Accessibility

The success of any arts building depends largely on its accessibility to the public. Except for Mapo Hall, which stands prominently on Mapo Hill and is accessible virtually from all directions of Ibadan, all other venues are obscurely located.

All other alternative sites, Oja-Oba, Oja-Oje, Adamasingba or Bejere areas, can all be conveniently reached by patrons arriving by car, bus or on foot.

(c) Parking

Provision of a parking space for about every third patron is generally made for a theatre in Europe, for example, in Germany. In Nigeria vehicles are fewer; hence, one parking stall to every five patrons could be reckoned with. However, the frequency and proximity of public transport within minutes and weather factors should be considered.

(d) Relationship to Downtown

There should exist a dualistic kind of reciprocal relationship between the contribution of the theatre to the downtown and vice versa. A theatre, besides being a performance space, is also a meeting place, and it is at the same time a social facility for hosting the events gathering of considerable numbers of people day and night, thus popularising the theatre and aiding the building of potential audiences.

(e) Expansion and Phasing Possibilities

When planning new arts facilities, the future phasing, expansion and development possibilities are usually borne in mind, especially when resident companies are in view. Therefore, in order to forestall later drawbacks and regrets, adequate provision for all the appropriate spaces in the initial scheme must be made, even for the unknown future.

(f) Cultural Grouping

We are concerned here with the relationship of the theatre site to other cultural facilities and also spaces suitable for outdoor presentations within the proximity of the theatre. Oja-Oba would be an excellent site for the fact that the seat of Ibadan Municipal Government, a Customary Court, Central Mosque, Olubadan's Office and the overriding structure of the Mapo Hall are all within

reach. Also a transmission station of the Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State and the Radio O-Y-O are already on one slope of the monumental hill. Similarly, a cinema hall is nearby. All together offer a good juxtaposition with other cultural installations around.

An open-air theatre could be created in front of, around and in the Mapo Hall. The descending tiers of steps running down into the round-about junction of Beere, Bode and Orita-Merin roads could be used as sitting banks especially during "Street Theatre", particularly during the Egungun Orisa-Oko and other religious, seasonal rituals and other festivities.

(g) Capital Fund-Raising and Grants

The Ibadan Municipal Government ought to be the client of the new theatre and it could use its powers and influences and resources to raise funds and to impose the structure on the recommended site.

(h) Support Revenue Possibilities

Even though the thrust of the present writer's research is to see the theatre in Nigeria become self-reliant, yet, like everywhere else in the world, theatre in Nigeria needs subsidy from government bodies, philanthropists, culturally conscious organisations and friends of the arts. The amount of subsidies needed could be greatly minimized by exploiting all revenue-earning areas such as bars, restaurants, rental spaces and even selling air rights and advertisements in the theatre programmes.

(i) Technical

Examined here are the problems of site location, site features, design, structure and construction which may affect the operations of the building when completed. Equally serious problems are escape ways, ventilating and air-conditioning equipments which call for careful planning because majority of them generate noise and vibration. The control of noise, to a low level of background noise, is crucial to the full comprehension of the presentations going on in the theatre.

ia) Physical Classifications and Design Parameters

Theatre buildings are classified into three groups of seating capacities:

- (1) Small-Little-theatre seating less than 100 people with a minimum of  $100\text{m}^2$  stage area.
- (2) Medium-sized theatre seating 800 to 1400 people with a minimum stage area of  $150\text{m}^2$  and side stage areas of  $100\text{m}^2$  with grid height double the height of proscenium height.
- (3) Full-sized theatre seating more than 1400 and up to 2500 people specially designed for Opera, symphony and Music theatre presentation.

(b) Seating Capacity

We would still recommend a full-size theatre's capacity of between 1,300 and 1,500 people, even though this capacity is in no relation to the population of Ibadan city. However, in order to

ensure full house round the calendar, we settle for that size. "For optimal seeing and hearing conditions the size of audience can be limited to 800 on one floor or to 1200 in a theatre with one balcony. (3)

(c) Stage Sizes

The undefined mobile floor of the entire theatre space would permit variable stage sizes according to the specifications.

The size of the stage and requirements for moving and handling of scenery are the determinants of size of the scenic units and consequently the size of the parts into which they can be divided for transportation. The implication of the size of the stage is on scenery - manifesting itself in three ways:

- (a) the cost of building, mounting and operation;
- (b) the size of shops where scenery is built and painted, and
- (c) the relative difficulty of transportation.

The means of transportation for movable scenery affects the planning and construction and dimensioning of scenery. The loading doors on trailers, vans, and inside dimensions of cargo airplanes impose new limits on the size of scenic units - to usually less than 5' 9". All these culminate in financial and economic considerations that the scenographer and the technician have to bear in mind in their aesthetic conceptualization.

(d) Technical Systems

In the theatre, the technical systems can be grouped generally into five main areas:

- (i) Mechanical and stage equipment.
- (ii) Lighting systems.
- (iii) Sound and Communications Systems.
- (iv) Film Projection.
- (v) Acoustics.

(i) Mechanical and Stage Equipment

Grouped together hereunder are all the moving devices installed in the building, such as elevators, scenery flying equipment, devices to vary the proscenium width and length, safety curtains, acoustic canopies and seating wagons.

(ii) Lighting System

We categorise the stage or production-lighting lanterns - and instruments; decorative house lighting, performance-access-lighting, fit up, working and rehearsal-lighting and their control systems.

(iii) The Sound System

This caters for both the replay of sound effects and tapes and the reinforcement of speech or music being controlled in the sound room while ~~the sound-console is~~ for mixing and beaming into the auditorium in the theatre.

(iv) Film Projection

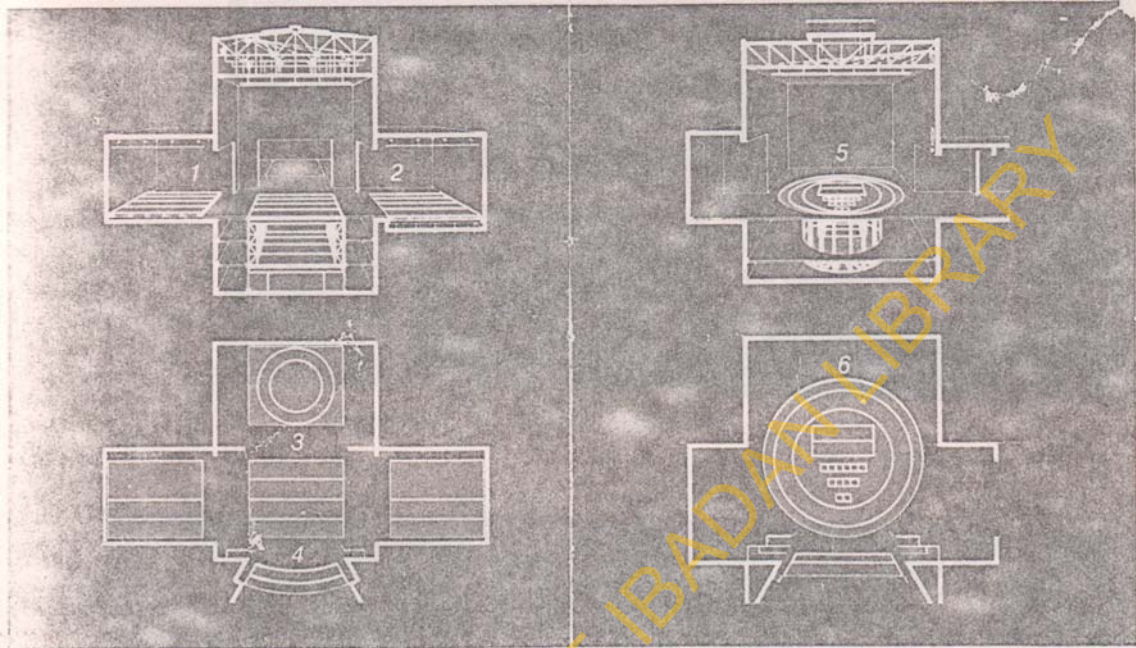
A system to allow the presentation of both 16 mm, 35mm and 70mm films is to be installed in the theatre.

(v) Acoustics

The general treatment of the theatre space as a unit space room enables an even acoustical conditioning throughout the space. The acoustics of multi-purpose space is designed for a range of requirements and environments ranging between the two extremes of richness for music and clarity for verse. Longer reverberation times are required for chamber opera and musical theatre as against drama and cinema presentations where the emphasis is on intelligibility of speech, the room acoustic of theatrical productions can be varied in two basic ways:

- (1) by designing a hard-surfaced auditorium to give longer reverberation times which can be modified by the introduction of curtains of heavy velour or banners into the room-space to cut down the reverberation time.
- (2) through electronic feedback systems by which means a dead auditorium can be enlivened by lifting the reverberation time.

The other areas of acoustics worthy of mentioning here are concerned with the minimising of the intrusive noise of an external or internal nature to the building, into the auditorium and stage. And finally the control of noise generated by mechanical systems such as ventilating and air-conditioning equipments. The acoustic consultant



5

Fig. 82: The Proscenium Theatre: Stage Floor Movements

Sliding stage systems require auxiliary stage (side stage and back stage) at least the size of the main stage. Revolving stages replace the sliding type where space is limited.

1. Side stage wagons travelling on the stage floor (patented drive)
2. Side stage wagons with lowering mechanism for flush arrangement
3. Back stage wagon with built-in-revolving system.
4. Multi-sectional orchestra lift.
5. Revolving stage with various working areas.
6. Revolving stage with lifts, masking plates, concentric rings.



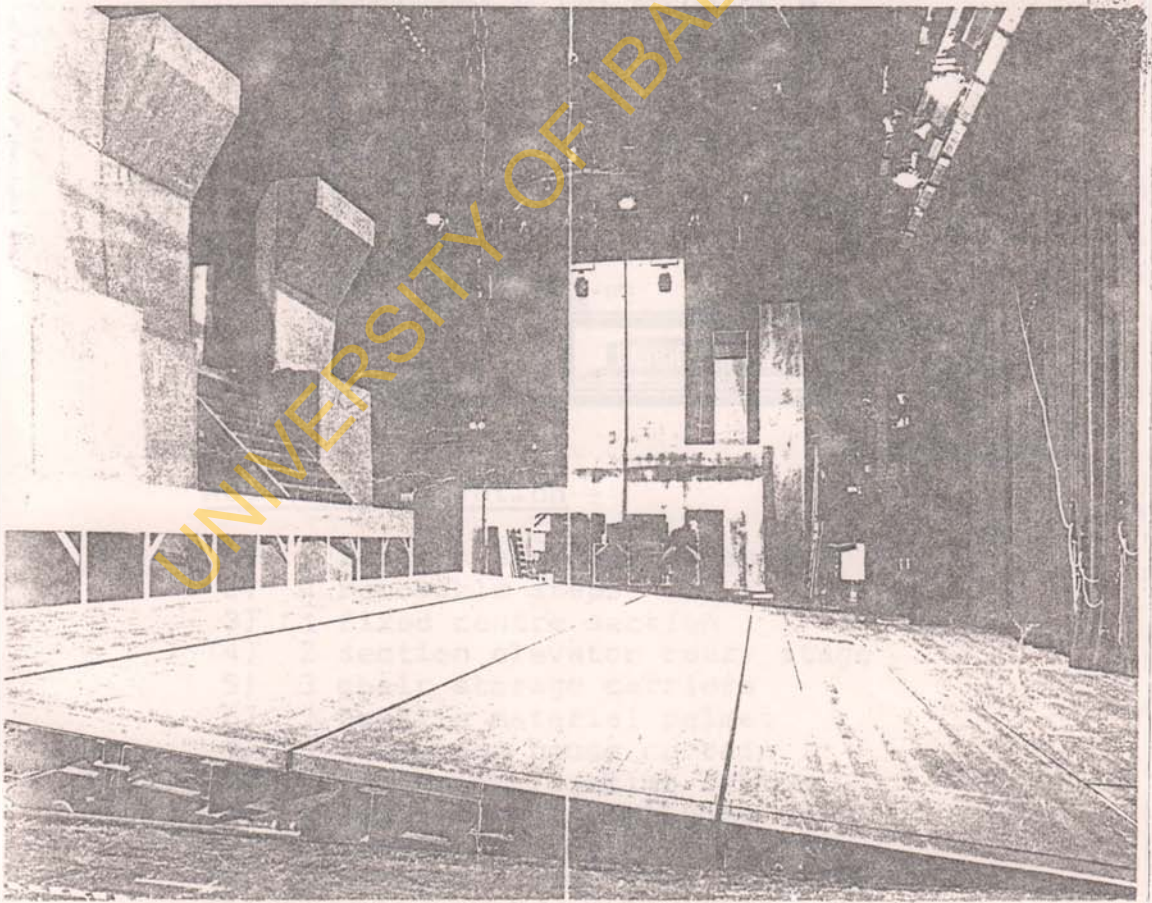
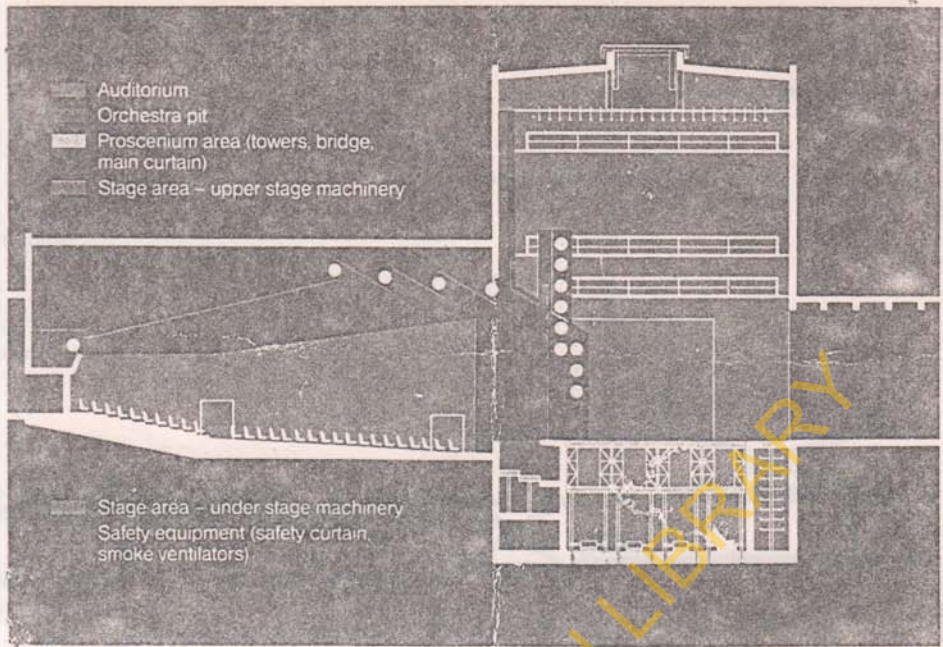
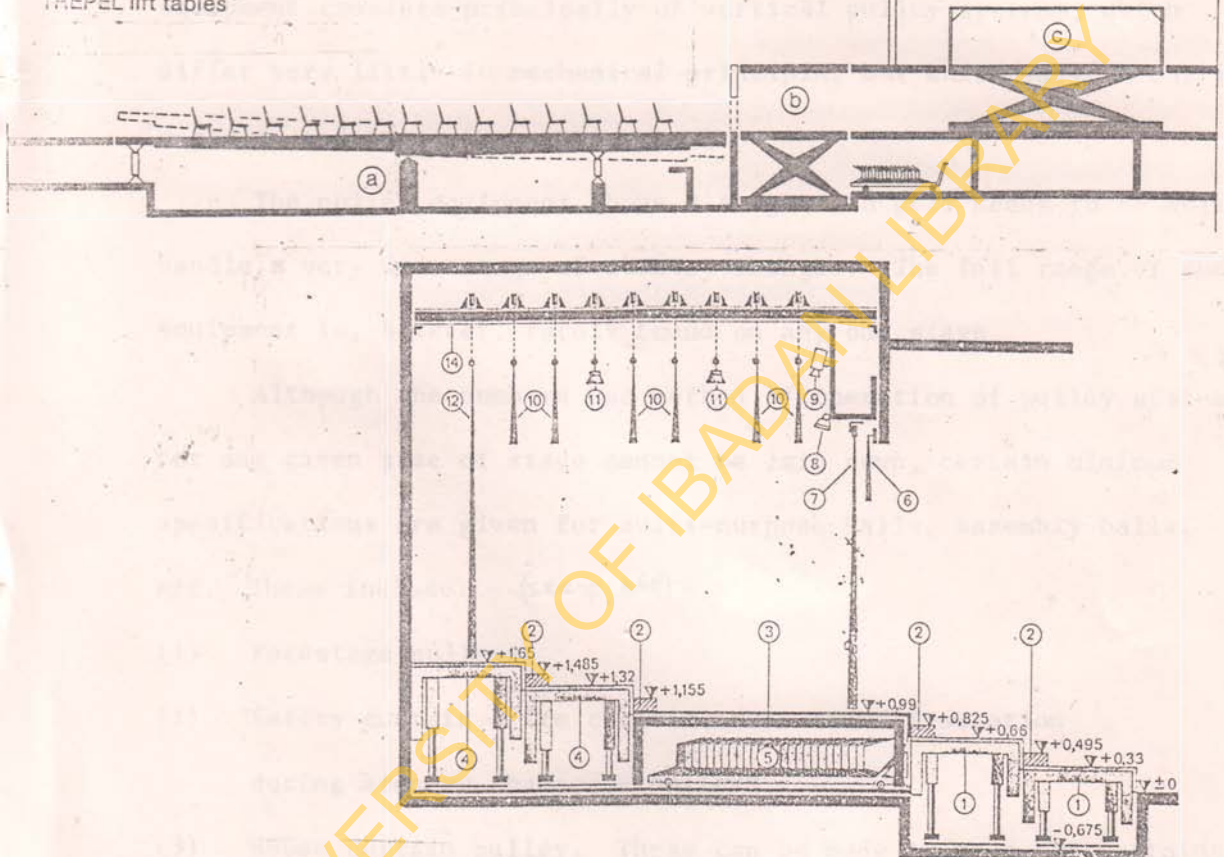


Fig. (83 (a+b))

PROSCENIUM STAGE AND ITS MACHINERY

Fig 84: An Example of a Multi-Purpose Stage

- a) Auditorium with sluable floor for buildings with varying requirements.  
 b) Orchestra platform travelling on TREPTEL lift table, type HTD.  
 c) Main stage with two story lift operated by mechanically coupled TREPTEL lift tables.



Key to Illustration

- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| 1)  | 2 section elevator forestage               |
| 2)  | 4 removable steps                          |
| 3)  | 1 fixed centre section                     |
| 4)  | 2 section elevator rear stage              |
| 5)  | 3 chair storage carriers                   |
| 6)  | 1 textile material pelmet                  |
| 7)  | 1 two-piece house curtain                  |
| 8)  | 1 top front lighting batten                |
| 9)  | 4 above-stage spotlights                   |
| 10) | 6 scenery pulleys                          |
| 11) | 5 Halogen acting-area floodlights          |
| 12) | 1 background curtain                       |
| 13) | 2 cyclorama pulleys (not shown in drawing) |
| 14) | 1 above-stage grid                         |

and the mechanical engineers work together to minimise these noises.

### Stage Equipment

With the exception of the pulleys for horizontal curtain, stage equipment consists principally of vertical pulley systems, which differ very little in mechanical principle, but which vary in carrying capacity and type of operation.

The pulley equipment above a stage with grid needs to be able to handle a very wide range of scenery changes. The full range of such equipment is, however, rarely found on any one stage.

Although the numbers and method of operation of pulley systems for any given size of stage cannot be laid down, certain minimum specifications are given for multi-purpose halls, assembly halls, etc. These include: (see p. 648)

- (1) Forestage pulleys;
- (2) Safety curtain - fire curtain, also sound insulation during scenery changes - pulleys
- (3) House curtain pulley. These can be made to move the curtains sideways (Greek system), straight up and down (German system) sideways towards the top corner (Italian system, Wagner curtain) or in a combination of side-ways towards top corners and then straight up and down (French system);
- (4) Screen for projection and film shows also in combination of pulleys for horizontal and vertical masking;
- (5) Gauze pulleys for special effects;

- (6) Cloud effect pulleys, operating curtains of a material which become denser towards the top;
- (7) Lighting pulleys, which must not be combined with scenery;
- (8) Drop pulleys for scenery or masking;
- (9) Auxiliary pulleys, hand-operated, without counterweight;
- (10) Spot-line pulleys, also operable in gangs, mostly static;
- (11) Free pulleys with adjustable blocks, operated without counterweight;
- (12) Panorama pulleys, for side masking, with adjustable cross batten;
- (13) Curved batten pulleys, to form rounded cyclorama;
- (14) Sound insulating curtain, to isolate side stages during performances.

In small installations, all pulleys can be operated by hand, Increase in size of the stage and consequently in weight of scenery make mechanical operation essential.

Further examples of stage equipment are retractable footlights and prompter's boxes which can also be built into elevator platforms and -- line grids with pulley blocks; fixed and movable proscenium side-screens and tormentors; lighting barrels and frames, battens, fly galleries, proscenium towers, etc., together with all the machinery needed for their operations -- Proscenium arch.

Layout and ground plan of pulley system to DIN 56920.

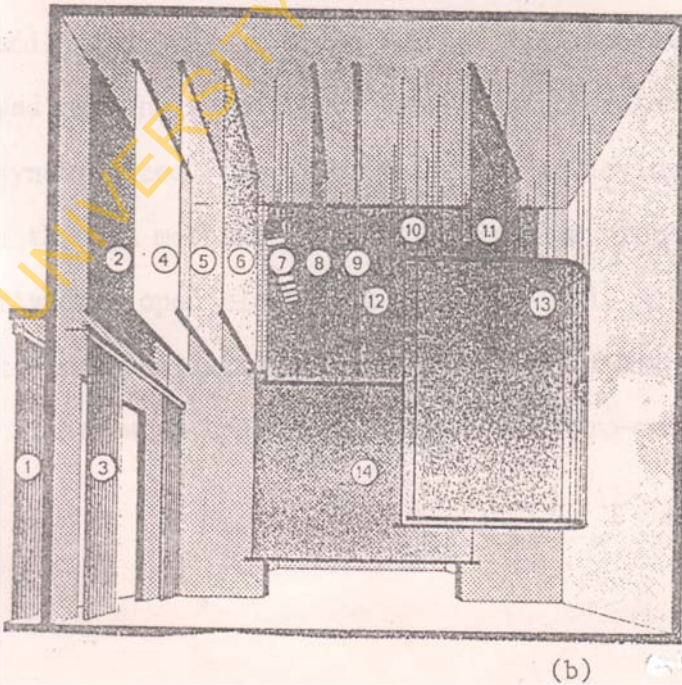
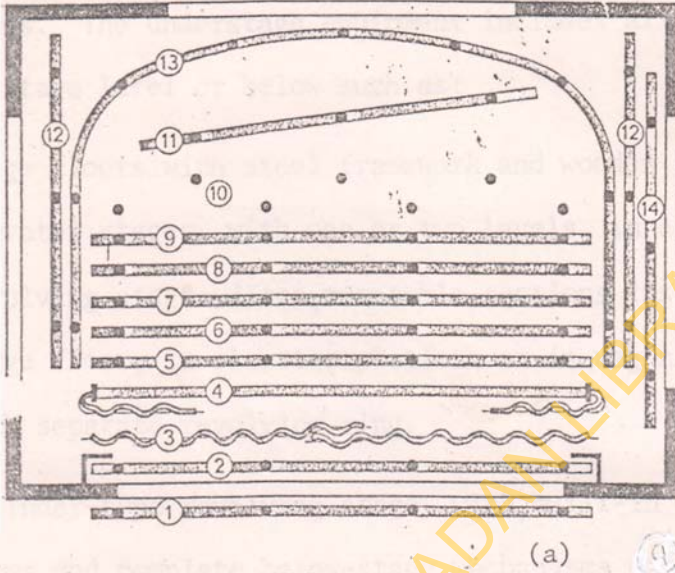


Fig 85, (a+b) Plan and Section Layout of Pulley System

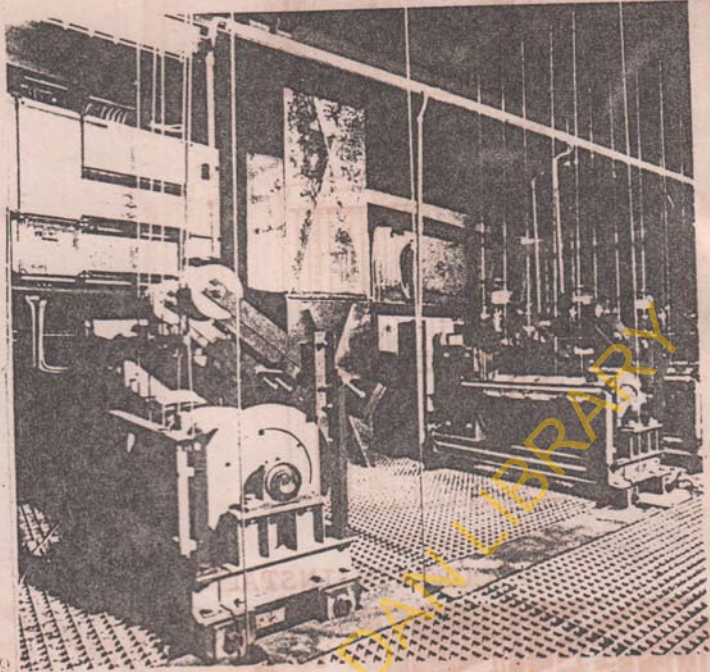
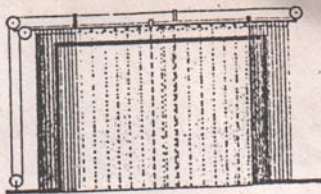


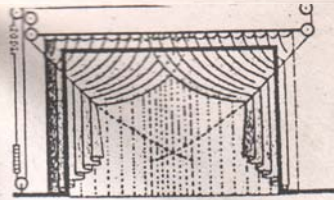
Fig. 86) UPPER STAGE MACHINERY



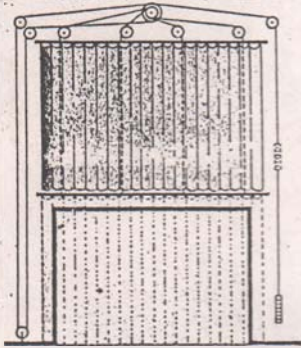
Fig. 86.d) LOWER STAGE MACHINERY



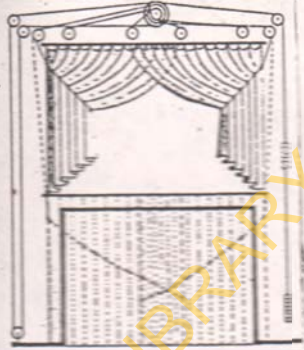
Greek system



Italian system



German system



French system

CURTAIN INSTALLATIONS

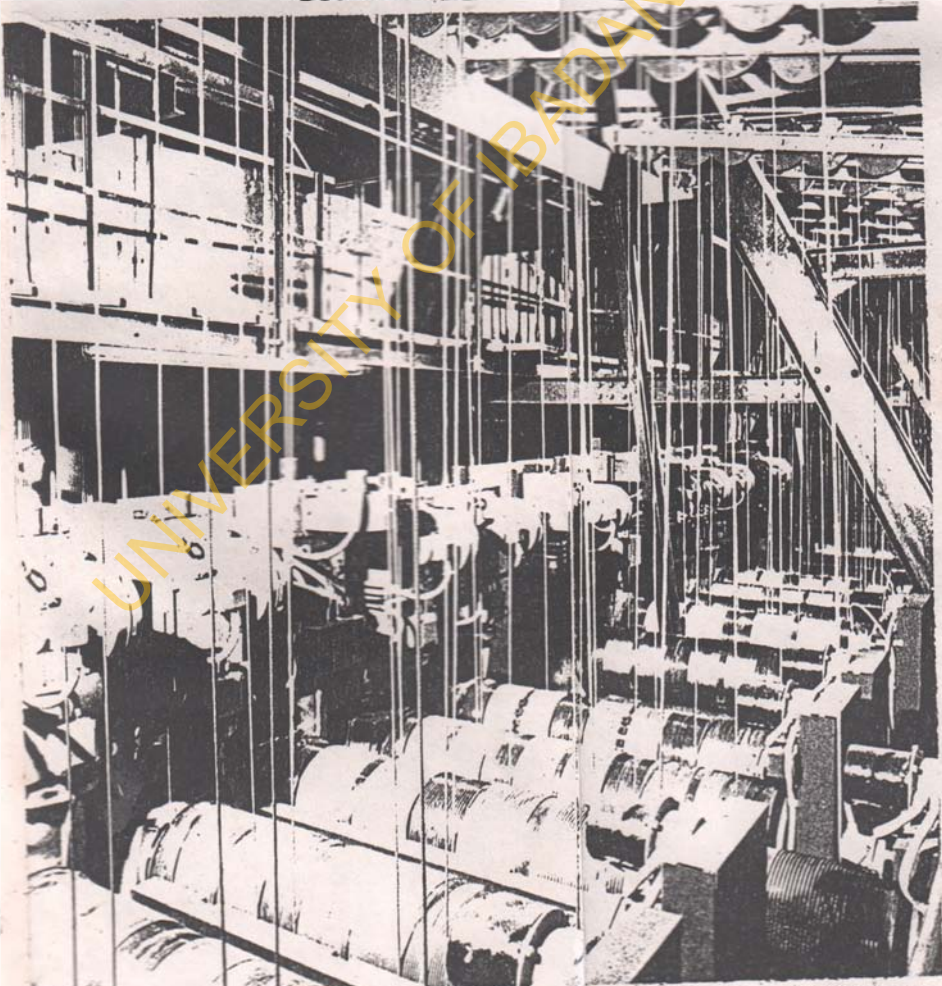


FIG. 1. CURTAIN INSTALLATION AND UPPER-STAGE MACHINERY

## Stage Lighting

Both large and small stages should suffer no restriction in the amount of light that can be used to flood or spot both the scenery and the actors.

The innumerable effects created by the use of movable lights, which can change both colour and intensity, are in every bit as important as those created by the rest of the stage machinery together in use.

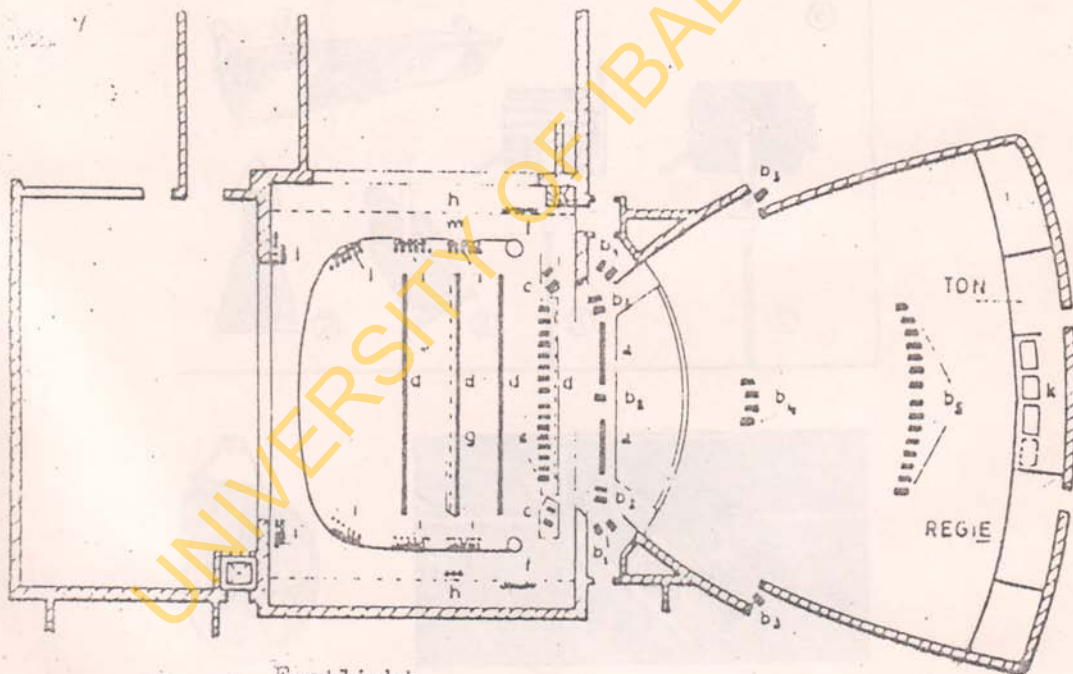
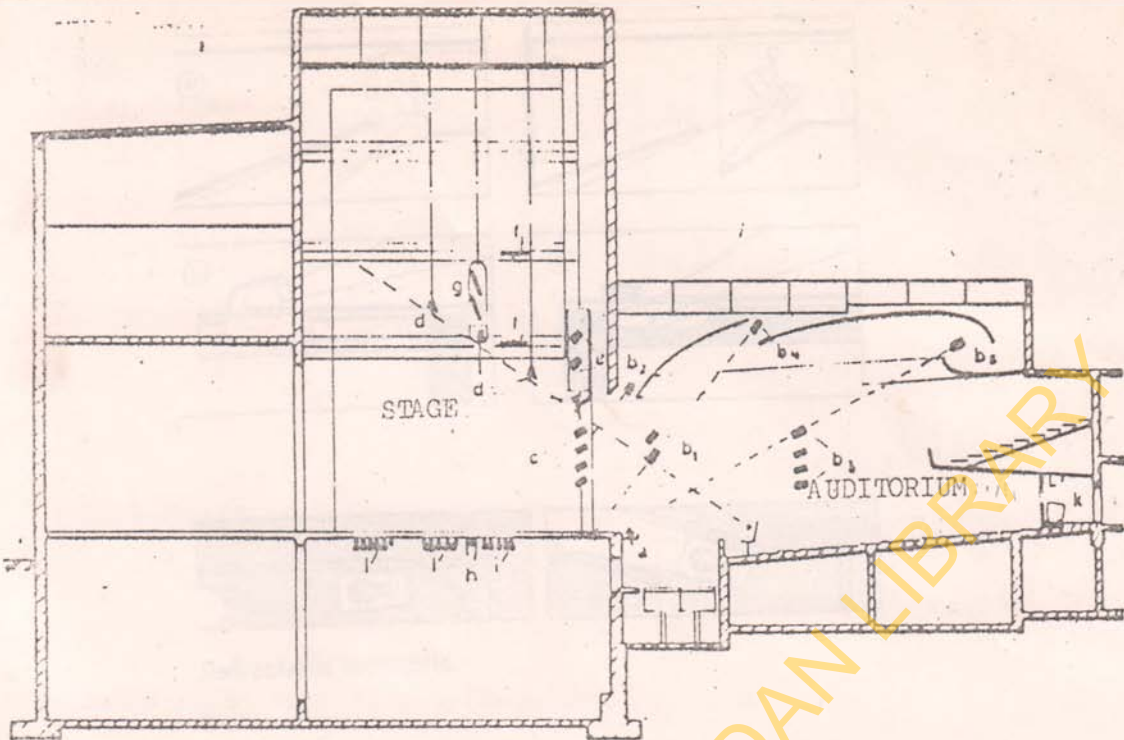
A stage lighting system can consist of batten lights with 6 x 6 x 100 watts bulb each, of which 2 are white, 2 orange, 1 blue and 1 red, with separate switches, supplied for every metre width of stage. Colour changes are possible, with filter attachment, 1 Halogen lamp of 100 watts to light up the central stage area (at least 2 per stage) is supplied for every 8 square metres of stage surface. Lighting arrangements can be supplied as movable basic equipment, or as fixed equipment for installation in the ceiling. High quality lighting techniques can also be used with a modular stage system.

Non-directional (diffused) flood and colour lighting consists mainly of even, colour-mixed light from footlights and overhead battens, the white element is reinforced by floodlights. Overhead lighting demands are expressed in metres.



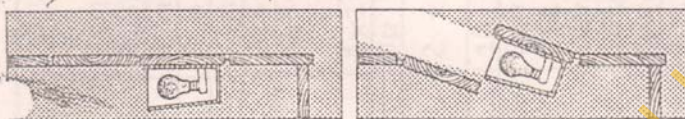
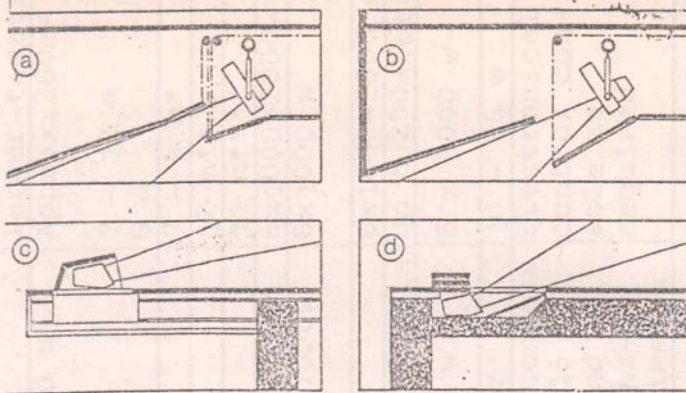
Directional light is provided by spotlights, which can be equipped with a cut-off frame or a colour frame. Of the large number of different spotlight systems available, and if no particular system is specified, we recommend lensed spotlights with adjustable beam size and low-voltage spotlights with lens and mirror which give high performance despite their small size. Also follow — spots with ball joints, projection spots and other special effect lighting apparatus are commonly used. The type, number, strength and method of installation of front-of-house spotlights, which provide the necessary frontal lighting for the stage, all depend on the space available. If the spotlights are not accessible during the performance, they should be equipped with remote-control colour change apparatus. Further spot-lights are installed above and at each side of the proscenium and also further downstage on spot barrels when the stage is deeper than normal. All spotlights must be connected through plugs. As a rule, we recommend halogen lights as floodlights. For small stages, one light per  $8m^2$  at a height of 2m, at least 2 lights per stage. They are especially useful when the stage is being used for non-theatrical events.

Footlights most serve to eliminate shadows when they occur. They are often dispensed with on small stage.

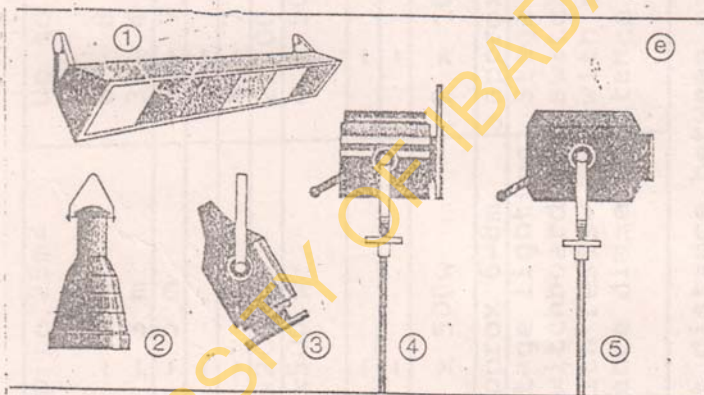
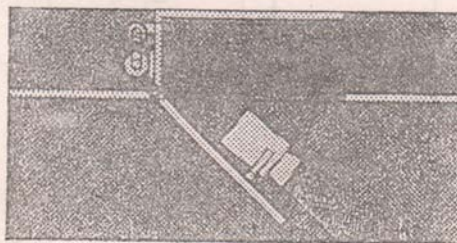


- a = Footlight
- b1 to b5 = Fore stage Lights
- c = Tower spot lights
- d = Upper lights
- e = Bridge lights
- f = Gallery sockets
- g = Cyclorama lights
- h = Cyclorama sockets
- i = Stage sockets
- k = Electricians stand

Fig 87. LIGHTING PLAN



Retractable footlights.

Above-stage spotlight  
with colour wheel

Front-of-house spotlight

Fig. 88

Spotlights in the ceiling of the auditorium (a + b); footlights on the edge of the apron floor (c + d); batten lighting (e1); acting area light (e2); spotlight (e3); pinspots (e4 + 5).

Examples of Stage lighting requirements Minimum requirements for stage sizes A and B (from a treatise by the Theater- technische Gesellschaft e.V., Berlin)		Small stages in Schools, halls, etc.	Size A for provincial theatre comp.	Size B for original productions in larger theatre Approx. 200m <sup>2</sup>
Size of stage	Up to 25m <sup>2</sup>	Up to 50m <sup>2</sup>	Up to 100 m <sup>2</sup>	
Proscenium opening:				
Width	4 - 6 m	6 - 8 m	7 m	7 - 12 m
Height	2 - 3 m	3 - 4 m	4.5 m	6 m
Top front batten	3 - 5 m	5 - 7 m	6 m	7 - 9 m <sup>v</sup>
Battens	-	-	8 m	12 m <sup>**</sup>
Footlights	-	5 - 7 m	7 m	11 m <sup>***</sup>
Floodlights	2x200 w	2x500 w	2x500 - 1000w	6x1000-2000w
Spotlights at side of proscenium	2x500 w	4 x 500 w	4x500 - 1000w	6x1000 w
Proscenium spot barrel	-	-	4x1000 w	6x1000-2000 w
Free-standing spotlight	-	-	Up to 2000wtotal	Up to 2000wtotal
Front-of-house spotlights	2 x 500w	2 x 1000 w	2 x 2000 w	6 x 2000 w
Distance from stage	approx 6-8m	approx 8-10m	10 - 15 m	10 - 15 m
Control equipment	Stage lighting switchboard with resis- tance dimmers	Stage lighting switchboard with resis- tance dimmers	Control console with 12-16 levers and auto-trans- former dimmers	Electronical control con- sole as required

\* Same length as shortest distance between proscenium sides

\*\* Same length as widest proscenium opening

\*\*\* Same length as widest opening, less width of prompter's box.



Fig: 89.

A MODERN STAGE LIGHTING CONTROL BOOTH

## Production Facilities

Even though the theatre may not aim at immediate housing of a resident company, but rather at taking in already produced works of visiting groups, provision of facilities such as workshops, stores for fabrications, repairs and touch-ups works; sound-lighting instruments and property, stage management, electricians and sound technicians, crew members, common and dressing-rooms, wardrobes, actors' and actresses' lounges, or Green room(s) while the technical staff are to be provided with offices and the administrative staff, too, require a number of separate rooms to be included in the Programme of Accommodation.

The entrance into the auditorium by the audience happens through two large entrance doors on either side of the front part of the structure at the floor level where the box offices are. The ancillary public spaces are to be furnished with toilets, cloak rooms, bars and a first-aid room. The house manager, box office manager, ushers' changing rooms and programme stores are located in such reasonable close proximity and trafficking relationship to the foyers.

## Efficiency

Theatre design has to be guided, just like in industrial design, by the principle of efficiency if the theatre is to be economically and artistically successful.

Theatre efficiency is measured by the shortest time (man hours) needed to accomplish all theatrical tasks, subject to the artistic demands of the play, under ideal conditions of comfort and safety for audience and staff.

In the backstage area, efficiency is a function of plenty of floor space area and adequate equipment for the movement of sets in the vertical, horizontal and diagonal planes. Modern theatre space uses much machinery to achieve the desired maximum effectiveness and efficiency. (4) The working and the supporting spaces, the devices within them must be interrelated in such a manner that signify the idea that the theatre is a production machine that would make major expressive elements possible in theatrical art, for example, the way things are related in time. "Thunder follows lightning and reaction follows stimulus." (5)

According to Willard Bellmann, "the machine-like efficiency of a well run theatre is a wonderful thing to experience, delightful to behold and thrilling to be a part of, but it is really a metaphor." (6)

The theatre is ultimately the people in it, not the cold walls, nor the machinery. People, not machines nor architecture, make art work. (7) That assertion is useful, for it reminds us of the level of inter-relationships that our planning and organization can make theatre come close to art and the degree to which art can be achieved. The prerequisite for stage efficiency has been the concern of the International Organisation of Theatre Architects and Technicians (OISTAT) Special-Commission for Theatre Design, Planning and Engineering for some time. It has therefore published a draft of International Guidelines on safety codes, regulations and specifications on the operations of Public Assembly places, i.e., Theatres.

and Studios, etc., extracted from the codes operative in some European countries and in the United States. For example, the city of New York had engaged the services of qualified experts for four years to intensively study, for revision, the building codes of the City of New York, which after examination in public hearings was enacted into law by New York City Council on October 22, 1988. In Germany, laws and codes guiding planning, building and operation of theatres have been in existence since the nineteenth century and have been constantly reviewed up to date, consisting of hundreds of theatre specification-sheets published periodically by the German Standardization Board, the DIN - Deutsche Industrie Norm-Ausschuss.

Finally, the conception and design of a new theatre is one of the most complex projects. The expert advice of experienced theatre and acoustic consultants, in order to achieve the ultimate successful theatre building, is simply inevitable for the architect and the client alike, moreso when tax-payers' and public donors' monies are involved.

The design and planning aspect of a new theatre for Ibadan should be guided by the watchword and motto of "high quality but not lavish". The structure must reflect a warm, attractive and appealing space. Towards the aim of self-reliance of the theatre, it would be necessary that it is run by an independent profit-oriented management board. And, for the determination of the anticipated self-reliance, therefore, the following parameters are operative.



1. The utilization of existing theatre venues for theatrical productions to test the growth in attendance to support the building.
2. Interview of impresarios, major theatre people, groups, theatre organizations and producers to know whether or not they all are aware of the need for a new theatre and its capacity.
3. The location of a well designed theatre building within the metropolis to attract people of all walks of life to itself.
4. Establishment of a programme of use, costs and revenue generation.
5. The end-form of the theatre within the available space, generation, nature and extent of capital costs, development of potential for shared space, gross and 'net' size of these spaces.
6. Estimation of the capital and operating costs as compared with projected revenue.
7. Establishment of the Form and Nature of the Operating Agency  
The concern here is to establish an organigram for the profit orientation and management of the complex under a management board. check
8. Recommendations and conclusions geared towards the strategic arrest of the declining fervour for live performance in Ibadan, taking cognisance of the existing relationship between other

media and the developments in social and economic situations in the country at large.

1. The Utilization of the existing theatre venues

The existing venues in Ibadan with their varying capacities ranging from about 250 seats at the Arts Theatre, University of Ibadan to the about 1, 000 at the main auditorium of the Cultural Centre at Mokola, are being under-used year in and year out due to the reasons given earlier.

Consultants, in order to assess the viability of a new project, normally consult already conducted feasibility studies by other research companies or they institute their own fresh ones. Such was the audience survey conducted by Dr. T.O. Malomo during the performances of "The Good Ideologist for Naira-Republic" by the present writer. With such surveys, a prediction of audience potential for a new arts facility could be attempted. However, such studies are but of little benefit because they only serve as a scientific basis for an attempted prediction of the future. The present Bill notwithstanding, the present writer is convinced that, with the proper channelling of the scenographic and technological potentialities of a new multi-purpose, adaptable, flexible theatre, the performing arts and entertainment industry will become a rediscovered 'greener-pasture' for the persevering and enduring pioneers. If the Trans-Amusement Park at ~~Badia-Ibadan~~ ~~Badia-Ibadan~~ can make it, the Live-Performance should be able to make it, with careful planning.

1970  
R. ADEYI  
NEW VENUE  
AT THE  
TRANS-AMUSEMENT  
PARK

2. Interview of Impresarios and major theatre people

The exploration of the potential users of a new medium or large theatre for Ibadan has shown that the significant/potential users of the building would still be the Travelling Theatre Troupes, the Amateur Theatre Groups, the Schools and other culturally minded promoters of the arts who are yet to emerge. The uses to which the new theatre would be put would determine the brief that shall be developed, the seating capacity and projection of the likely levels of activities.

The spectrum of activities and events at the disposal of the promoters would range from solo, classical, musicals through dance drama. The promoters would bring name artists to tours of musicals, concerts and presentation of dance companies ranging from the smaller, more avant-garde companies to the largest national and international groups, examples of which were the recent promotion of 'Children of Africa' in Lagos and of "Ipi-Tombi" with its overwhelming success of the pre-FESTAC era. An abandoned aspect of the Nigerian Culture is the Dance Arts, the ballet (or perhaps, more culturally relevant, modern dance) which is yet to be developed and the promoters would do well in this regard. In the drama sector, straight plays could best be accommodated in the envisaged new medium-sized multiple-use theatre. The promoters' efforts to popularize in Nigeria other major music events such as classical symphony Recitals, chamber music and the smaller works in the orchestral repertoires would soon yield profits and dividends as soon as the classical Operas and Operettas of the Maestro Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Wagner, Haydn and

others as well as those of their Nigerian counterparts, the so-called 'Folk Opera' of the late Duro Ladipo, the late Kola Ogunmola and the late Hubert Ogunde would receive better acoustic reverberation and reproduction times in the new theatre in Ibadan.

The cost of production of Opera is much higher than for drama; hence, the seating capacity of a theatre has a bearing on the amount of money the box-office can generate and consequently on the scale of production which, therefore, calls for long runs through which the growth of audience is boosted, via word of mouth and reviews. At the Arts Theatre, University of Ibadan, the usual three nights run had not been adequate for allowing an audience to grow. This shows that the three nights running is grossly uneconomical.

### 3. The Location of a New Theatre in Ibadan

The site for a kind of 'People's - Theatre' must be strategically located. A theatre situated at Ojã-Oje or Ojã-Oba or Adámásingbà area, in the writer's view, would be at a point in the city to where many roads lead. Since the markets have been moved to their new sites at Oba-Alésinlòyé - Bodija and New-Gbági markets, respectively, their left behind available spaces could be used for a new theatre in town.

Due to the site's size problem, the structure could be multi-storeyed in order to be able to accommodate the variety of space, room and accomodation programme.

### 4. A Programme for a New Theatre at Ibadan

We shall attempt an outline of the programme as identifying the

types of events which may conveniently be presented in the new theatre. The estimates of the use of the new theatre are based on optimism, though we would rather proceed from the conservative point of view to permute the likely achievable level of use in the first years of operations of such a theatre in Ibadan as follows:

- Touring Drama
- Chamber Opera
- Musical Theatre
- Small Scale Ballet
- Folk Dance
- Folk Music
- Contemporary Dance
- Choral Concerts
- Chamber Music concerts
- Classical Music Recitals
- Film Presentations
- Conferences and conventions
- Lectures
- Exhibitions and shows

5. The built Theatre Form within the available space

The development of the uses into the brief for a building is our task here. The brief includes a detailed programme of accommodation which lists all the space requirements, their dimensions, and, among others, the ability to accommodate the following types of events:

EventsLocally Produced Musical Theatre/Major Play No. of use

- 1 Production of 15 performances 15
- 1 Production of 10 performances 10

Chamber Opera

- 1 Production of 5 performances 5

Chamber Music/Chamber Orchestra

- 2 series of 5 concerts 10
- 1 Lunchtime series 10 concerts (for schools) 10

Educational Concerts

- 1 Series of 10 concerts 10

Touring Straight Plays Nos of Use

- 3 productions of 5 performances 15

Touring - Dance

- 5 productions of 5 performances 25

Locally Produced Dance

- 2 productions of 3 performances 6

Film

- 60 presentations per annum 60

Conventions/Conferences

- 6 per annum 6

Total number of performance in first year of operation is 174

Thenceforth, we reckon with a steady growth of the use of the theatre from 174 upwards. Based on the anticipated revival of the

people's interest, we estimate in:

Year 1 - 174 performances

Year 2 - 186 performances

Year 3 - 198 performances

Year 4 - 210 performances

Year 5 - 225 performances

The figures above do not take into account several societal functions, festivals and celebrations that the theatre could be used to host. This theatre would lead to an increase in the visitors to Ibadan and thus encourage tourism.

1)

#### Details of Programme of Accommodation

1. Although an undefined theatre space, the kind of a 'black box' or a television studio, is aimed at, for the purpose of easy identification of imaginary locations in the space, we still have to adopt the traditional convention of breaking the theatre space into auditorium, orchestra pit and stage areas.
2. Given are net areas of the listed spaces exclusive of the structural vertical-horizontal-connecting-circulation-air-conditioning plant-and mechanical-equipment-ducts.
3. Modification of this programme should be anticipated during the design phase in consultation between the architect, client, theatre and acoustic consultants.

4. A number of rooms are listed with an area of zero-(nil) -square metres. These rooms are not essential to the operation of the building but, if they can be accommodated in the building design, they should be added.

Room Ref.	Space	Square meters
100	Auditorium with 1,300 to 1,500 seats - Proscenium width 14m (44ft) to 11m (35ft) - Proscenium height 9m (30ft) to 7m (22ft) - This area is an allowance The actual area and seating capacity will be a function of the auditorium design	1,200
101	Orchestra Pit. - The pit would be dual size for large or small ensembles. - The pit could also be used for additional audiences seating or as a forestage extension	60
102	Stage (Including Wing Space) - Stage Width 32m (100ft) Stage Depth 14m (44ft) - Grid Height 22m (70ft) plus a further (10ft) to the roof.	448
103	Understage	50
104	Chair and Rosta Store	60



105	Quick change Rooms	10
	- Two at 5 square m. each	
	- These could be deleted if the dressing rooms are close to the stage	
106	Actors Assembly Areas	20
	- Assembly areas close to the stage	
107	Dimmer Room	15
	- Houses the lighting dimmers	
	- Located adjacent to the stage to minimise cable runs	
108	Projection Room	20
109	Lighting Control Room	10
110	Sound Control Room	10
	- A position to accommodate the theatre or a touring sound desk will be needed in the stalls of the theatre	
111	Director's Booth	0
112	Latecomers' Booth	0
113	Follow Spot Positions	10
	- Two at 5 sq. m. each	
114	Prop Kitchen/Store	
115	Musical Instrument Store	20
116	Keyboard Instrument	0
	- Note - Rooms 115 and 116 need temperature humidity control	

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117	Stage Manager's Office	10
118	Crew Room	15
119	Chief Electrician's Office	10
120	Electricians Workshop & Store	15
121	Sound Technician's Office	10
122	Sound Store and Workshop	10
123	Principal Dressing Rooms	32
	- Two at 15 sq. m. each	
124	Two-Person Dressing Rooms	60
	- Four at 15 sq. m. each	
125	Four-Person Dressing Rooms	80
	- Four at 20 sq. m. each	
126	Eight-Person Dressing Rooms	60
	- Two at 30 sq. m. each	
127	Chorus/Orchestra Changing Rooms	60
	- Two at 30 sq. m. each. The rooms could each accommodate up to 15 persons	
128	Green Room/Performers Lounge	40
129	Costume Maintenance/Laundry	20
130	General Manager's Office	15
131	Marketing Manager's Office	12
132	Technical Manager	12
133	Administrator/Accountant	12
134	General Open Plan Office	60

135	House Manager's Office	10
	- Located adjacent to the Foyers	
136	Box Office Manager's Office	10
137	Stage Door Keeper's Office	10
138	Waiting/Reception Area	15
139	Fire Control/Security	10
140	Ushers Assembly & Changing	15
141	Cleaners Store	15
142	Programme Store	10
143	First Aid Room	10
144	Foyers	1,200

- The exact area required will be a function of the building design.

Foyers range in area located from around 0.5 sq. m. up to 1.5 sq. m. The figure shown is an allowance only at this time.

145	Cloakroom	50
146	Box Office	10
147	Toilets	150

- This is an allowance only. The toilet provision must comply with local regulations. It must be noted that the use of the toilets is concentrated in a short period before the performance and during the interval.

148	Bars & Storage Areas	200
	NET USABLE FLOOR AREA (sq. m.)	4,191
	(sq. ft.)	45,095

For the purpose of this study, the programme used is based on information gathered from Theatre Projects Consultants of London, from the Consulting Bureau of Professor Adolf Zotzmann in Germany, and Planungs-gruppe of Switzerland, where the writer had the privilege of training and internship. The hypothetical articulated accommodation are for a 1,300 - 1,500-seat community theatre, covering a total of 4,191 sq. meters of land, at Oja-Oba (King's Market) area of Ibadan, as a modification of the information mentioned above.

#### 6. Estimates Capital Cost and Guidance

The objective of a preliminary estimates is to attempt a realistic and reasonable cost limit within which a programme may be designed and executed in a specified time-span-frame.

#### Inclusions

To be included in the preliminary estimate are:

- (a) Building construction
- (b) Special theatre and performance equipment
- (c) Non-performance furniture and equipment
- (d) Contingency for design
- (e) Contingency for escalation - inflationary trends within a specified time of usually longest time of a year.
- (f) Premiums for public and material access.

Exclusions

To be excluded from the preliminary estimates but to be allowed for by the client separately are:

- (a) Site development and landscaping
- (b) Professional fees (architects, engineers, theatre and acoustic consultants, quantity surveyors, scheduling)
- (c) Owner related costs of any description
- (d) Legal, fund raising, public relations, expenses
- (e) Financing expenses
- (f) Commissioning and start up costs

Time-Span-Frame

This seeks to pinpoint or establish the duration of construction work, beginning with overall project development that would start on site at a specific time. The phases of construction in sequences, such as car park, offices and then the theatre, are spelt out here.

(a) Building Construction

The "net" floor area, 4,191 sq. m., was reviewed and converted to a simulated "gross" floor area which takes into account space that will be required to accommodate structure, horizontal and vertical circulation, mechanical and electrical rooms, duct risers and miscellaneous service space. The final space review becomes nearly 5,600 sq. m. This is to be verified with tentative preliminary sketches

to be made by the theatre consultant. A Unit cost per square meter, derived from records of similar facilities constructed elsewhere in the world, suitably adjusted to a Nigerian, particularly Ibadan location, applies.

(b) Special Theatre and Performance Equipment

For these equipment, we make a preliminary allowance provision for: Stage rigging systems, orchestra pit elevator; house curtain and draperies; rolling cyclorama; safety curtain and smoke pockets; sound and light bridges; theatre seats; performance lighting control systems; performance lighting instruments; sound system; production communication systems; loudspeaker cluster; adjustable acoustic elements and miscellaneous backstage equipment.

(c) Non-Performance Furniture and Equipment

We make a preliminary allowance for: ~~reviving~~ and storage of equipment; front of house and public entry furniture, office furniture; first aid equipment, dressing room chairs, tables and clothes racks; green room furniture; costume maintenance items.

For eventual extra elevating, escalator and stair access that may be needed as a result of the location, we allow for some premium over the above estimates.

(d) Design Contingency

As the concept develops and unfolds certain unknowns are likely to surface in the design, especially when facilities are to be located within the overall development. For this purpose it is appropriate to include provisions for design contingency.

(e) Escalation - Inflation Fluctuation - Contingency

Crucial here is the Nigerian Foreign Exchange Market, since there will be many foreign services and materials in the project to be procured with Foreign Exchange, we allow from January 1991 to January 1992, an 80%, though unsavoury but possible, increase rate, subject to proper monitoring, scrutiny and reporting upon as the project progresses.

Quality

The estimate is a function of high standard technical performance criteria founded on sound engineering technology and functional architectural projects.

For such a new theatre, an hypothetical operational budget has to be attempted, bearing the probability of its operation at a small deficit, at the beginning, in mind but with the view to curb such deficit soonest by improving on all fronts of theatrical entertainment offerings and services in order to attract more people to the venue.

Estimate Summary

	Nigerian ₦100	US Dollars \$ 100
1. Building Construction;	92,610.000	8,820:000
2. Theatre and Performance Equipment Provisional allowances	30,030.000	2,860:000
3. Non-Performance Furniture and Equipment provisional allowance	2,940.000	280:000
4. Access Premiums	5,880.000	560:000
Provisional, allowance, Sub Total	131,460.000	12,526:000
5. Design Contingency		1,050:000
6. Escalation Inflation-Contingency 30 % on 1 - 5 above		4,071:000
Total with January 1992 Exchange Rate of N10.5 to 1 US \$	₦185,230.500	=\$17,641:000

NB: Excluded in the above estimate are all soft ware and site costs.

The foregoing order of magnitude estimate would be followed by a more detailed estimate to be prepared by the Architect and Consultants when a preliminary scheme has been prepared. This would facilitate the validation of the budget.

7. Form and Nature of the Operating Agency

This new theatre should belong to the Ibadan Municipal Government, but with subvention from the Oyo State Government. The operations entrusted to an Operating Agency or theatre company to be governed by



a Board of Management Directors and to be incorporated as a limited liability company. By the time of handover and opening of the theatre, it should be debt free; meaning that the building cost should have been fully paid for. The Management Board would enter into a long term lease agreement with the IMG and OYSG as the owners of the building under terms inclusive of:

- A nominal or peppercorn rent to be charged by the owners of the building to the Management Board as the operating agency.
- The operating agency - Board of Management - has full and free use of the Theatre.
- The Operating Agency - the Management Board - meets all of the operating and occupancy costs of the Theatre such as cost of lighting, air-conditioning, maintenance, cleaning, security, etc.
- The minimum length of lease should be 33 years.

#### The Operating Agency - The Theatre Management Board

The operating of the theatre could be made to function in any of these patterns:

1. IMG - appoint management board of directors to run the theatre.
2. OYSG plus IMG float an autonomous, profit-oriented company such as Trans City Theatre Company Limited (TCTC - Ltd.)
3. Non-profit Distributing Independent Trust.

For the success of the new Theatre, the Management Board has to play the major roles in programme planning, marketing promotions and projecting the theatre with a business zeal. The management board would have to see the cost of the building as a debt to be liquidated with interests. With that "debt-consciousness", the viability of the edifice, on a long term, would be feasible since the majority of the costs involved in running a theatre are fixed. Such costs would dwindle as the level of operations improves.

These very decisive functions cannot be left to one man a Business Manager or Theatre Manager appointed as in the case of a Civic or Educational-Theatre of the University of Ibadan, both at the Departmental and at the failed experimental Resident Theatre Company levels.

Whereas the third model, the Non-profit Distributing Independent Trust, with the advantages of being autonomous, could raise its operating funds from several different sources, such as the Local Governments, private donors, and corporate sponsors and possibly from shareholders et cetera, the management of a trust would be through a Board of Directors, whose membership would be representatives of many sectors of the community: business, education and the arts. This amalgamation of views would facilitate a democratic and eventually a progressive running of the Theatre, provided the typical Nigerian mentality of rhetorical talk-show, without action, could be eschewed. The implication of the model of non-profit distributing model is that of the recycling of any made gains. The profits are ploughed back into the purse of the theatre from

where it could be used to service whatever deficit development or subsidy it may require.

The consensus of the people the writer interviewed on the ownership of a theatre reveals that it would be better if the management and operation of the building could be independent of all the bureaucratic spells that have always spelt the doom of such government-owned installations including the National Theatre, State and the University theatres. No matter which of the models is adopted, it is important to instill the spirit of competition between the New Theatre and the State-run cultural centre to enhance excellence.

#### Operating Revenue and Cost Projections

There is the widespread notion that the arts cannot survive without grants or subventions and subsidies. Prominent among such views is John Maynard Keynes, the economist and the first Chairman of the Arts Council of Great Britain, who, in 1936, claims that:

Our experience demonstrated plainly that ~~the arts~~ cannot be successfully carried out if they depend on the motive of profit and financial success. The exploitation and incidental destruction of the divine gift of the public entertainer by prostituting it to the purpose of financial gain is one of the worsser crimes of present day capitalism. (8)

If Keynes' views were to be universally accepted, then how and the Alarinjo theatre of the Yorubaland survive? Or how did the pioneer efforts of the late Chief Hubert Ogunde reign for generations without subsidy? Or did the late Kola Ogunmola and the late Duro Ladipo not

make their art survive and to pay for itself for decades? Or 1 those Nigerian masters would have packed it up no sooner than they started. And how could the commercial theatres on Broadway be swinging in dollars ever since without (all of) them prostituting the divine gifts?

The present writer feels strongly that, given the right business mind, the arts can pay for themselves without becoming "prostitutes". All that is needed is the diversion, perhaps, of a little portion of whatever amount of money (capital) the theatre group initially has to take off from into another viable profit-making business to yield dividends. That immediate profit-yielding venture would be earning some money to be used to augment the theatre-making venture. Members of the theatre group might have to work, part-time, to earn part of their living in such a subsidiary business belonging to the theatre groups.

Even if, at the beginning, such a new theatre in Ibadan might require an operating subsidy the ultimate goal of the management would be the soonest possible self-reliance in meeting the costs of operation.

#### The Cost of Operation

These costs could be broadly classified into staff salaries, programme, marketing and operation, otherwise regarded as overhead costs, which can be grouped thus:

UTILITIES	- Electricity, Water, Gas Sewage.
CLEANING	- Janitorial Staff, Supplies; Supervisor.
BUILDING MAINTENANCE	- Staff, Building Service, Contracts, Supplies.
SECURITY	- Staff, Systems, Maintenance.
MISCELLANEOUS	- Licences, Insurance, Supervisory Staff (related to the above)
	- Telephone related to above activities.
	- Stationery, Printing, Post (related to above activities).

#### Occupancy Costs for Theatres

Usually, the occupancy costs for theatres are calculated in two ways. One way is to calculate the cost per seat per annum while the other way is to calculate the cost per square metre per annum in order to appreciate the magnitude of the financial need of a theatre set-up and, by implication, the need of a non-subsidized set-up; a glance at the theatres in Germany and Canada would be informative. In our comparison exercise, we, of course, are aware of the great difference in the education, social, economic and national gross productivity of the three different countries and this explains the gulf between the standards of living, cultural consciousness and attendance at theatrical performances in these nations. For instance, in Facts about Germany, it is claimed:

In the 1985/86 season the expenditure of all theatres in the Federal Republic amounted to more than DM2,000 million. Less than a sixth of this was recouped through admission charges, while about five-sixths came out of the public coffers - about DM110 for every theatre ticket issued. The subsidies went mainly to the publicly owned theatres but private ones also received some. (9)

Only about 90 theatres are privately owned. Traditionally, theatre in Germany is regarded as a community service. Sixteen million attended in the 1985/86 season.

Using the current foreign-exchange rate of 1 DM to N15.00, it would mean that Germany spent, as subsidy, for theatre in 1985/86 session alone ca N30,000 million. If we attempt a conservative proportional comparison of the two nations on the basis of their standard of living, at a ratio 1 to 20, implying that Nigeria, in all, is 20 times poorer than Germany, then we may assume as well that Nigeria should have spent 20 times less that figure during the period on her theatres, namely, N1,500 million. Could such a dream ever come to pass? If so, that would have meant that each of the 30 States of Nigeria would have had about N50 million annual subsidy. In essence, Nigeria would have been proud of at least 30 well designed, equipped, manned and functional theatres. The average annual occupancy cost per seat in each one of such theatres would have been N50,000,000. 00 divided by 1500 seats x 300 days a year = N111,10 per seat per day as against DM 110.00 of Germany.

In the 1981 season, the occupancy cost per seat in Civic Theatres

in Vancouver, Canada was given as \$121 per day/seat. These figures by 1991 would, with an average of 10% per annum inflation rate in the developed nations, have been \$242 per day per seat. At the December 1991 exchange rate of \$1 to N18, that would amount to  $N18 \times \$242.00 = N4,356.00$ , almost double the German rate. And, by assuming a minimum site requirement of 45,000 square feet at N35 to N38 per square feet we would have an occupancy cost of between N157,500 and N170,000.00 for 1991.

#### Salaries and Emoluments

The cost of staffing such new theatre could be estimated based on the Government's Salary Grade Level (GL) or the University Salary Structure (USS) scheme. The salaries are estimated as follow using the USS grades.

#### The Attendants

The attendants meant here are the front of house ones whose costs are primarily variables. We have based all cost on 170 events to be presented in the first year.

Our expenditure projection later concerns the running cost of the operation of the theatre as a building only. It does not include budget for marketing promotion of the theatre's events and activities.

Salaries	USS	Basic in N	Allowance in N	Gross Total in N
General Manager	14	12732.00	6000.00	18732.00
Business Manager	12	10092.00	4774.56	14866.56
Technical Manager	12	10092.00	4774.56	14866.56
Chief Stage Technician	10	8148.00	4230.24	12378.24
Senior Stage Technician	9	7550.00	4062.72	11612.72
Senior Stage Electrician	9	7550.00	4062.72	11612.72
Book Keeper/Accountant	10	8148.00	4230.24	12378.24
Secretaries:				
1. for General Manager	9	7550.00	4062.72	11612.72
2. for Technical Manager	8	6336.00	3353.28	9689.28
Clerks:				
1. for the General Manager	6	4008.00	2894.40	6902.40
2. for Technical Director	6	4008.00	2894.40	6902.40
3. for Accountant	6	4008.00	2894.40	6902.40
Workers:				
2 for technical works	7	5136.00	3114.20	8251.20
2 for creative works	7	5136.00	3115.20	8251.20
2 for artistic works	7	5136.00	3115.20	8251.20
Driver	6	4008.00	2894.40	6902.40
Messenger	5	3120.00	2376.00	5496.00
2 Cleaners	4	2436.00	2169.06	4605.06
8 Attendants to be engaged for 170 events of 5 hours each at N2.50 per hour - (8 x 170 x 5 hours x N2.50/hour	..	..	..	N17,000.00
Allocation for Miscellaneous Jobs	..	..	..	N10,000.00
Benefits at 12%	..	..	..	130,827.62
				<u>15,699.31</u>
		TOTAL	..	<u>N146,526.93</u>



### Revenue Generation

The major anticipated revenue-generating source is the theatre's rental income. In Ibadan in 1991, the average entrance-ticket-charges is N5.00 performance of which 20% could be taken as rental fees, then we have N1.00 for rent per ticket. If we calculate for 170 performances per annum, with full house of 1,500 people, then we may expect an income of  $N5 \times 170 \times 1500 = N1,275,000.00$ . Based on increased social activities, especially during week-ends and public holidays, we reckon with more than 170 events per annum. Apart from the rental charges for performances and film charges for set-ups, rehearsals, strike-down times, etc., a nominal rate of N100.00 per hour could be raised. We estimated an average of fifty times per annum, hence we reckon with a revenue of  $50 \times 5 \times 100 = N25,000.00$ .

Other sources of income would include the bar sales, refreshments, and programme. From these, we estimate an average sale of 200 bottles of soft drinks per event at N2.50 per bottle, thus yielding  $N2.50 \times 200 \times 170 = N85,000.00$ . We estimate a profit of 40% on the sales when the drinks are supplied by bottling companies, thus making a profit of N34,000.00.

After we have put the above figures together, we get the expected net income and by placing against it our estimated expenditure, we shall have the following statement:

<u>Revenue</u>	<u>1991 in</u> <u>Nigerian Naira</u>
Rental Income: 170 events at N1,500	N255,000.00
Rehearsals/Set-ups; 50x5-hours at N100 p.h.	25,000.00
Bar Revenue (Net)	34,000.00
Refreshment Revenue (Net) - Non drinks, i.e, snacks, biscuits, etc.	15,000.00
Programme Sales	3,000.00
Total Revenue	<u>N322,000.00</u>

Expenditure

Occupancy Cost	N170,000.00		
Salaries and Emoluments	146,527.00		
Office Costs/Telephone etc.	15,000.00		
Total Expenditure	<u>331,527.00</u>		
Surplus/(Deficit)	331,527.00	-	N322,000 = <u>N9,527.00</u> (Deficit)
(Deficit)	<u><u>N9,527.00</u></u>		

The above statement which reflects a deficit of about ₦9,527.00 could be offset by the amount of ₦10,000.00 budgetted for miscellaneous jobs. Therefore, efforts must be made not to spend the budgetted ₦10,000.00 on such labours.

The basic factors for the achievements of the desired objectives, especially the economic viability of a theatre space, are optimum sight seating and audibility conditions to enhance the accommodation of the various "processes" in the same space with minimal manpower labour, time and monetary expenses.

A new theatre hall for Ibadan has to meet the multi-functionality, variability, adaptability and flexibility requirements of theatrical staging, presentation of various entertainment forms, involving the kinetic, dynamic, translatory, rotational and harmonic movements and energy forms, in the vertical, horizontal and diagonal planes. And for these purposes the overhead and understage machinery, electronic and electrical equipments must be developed. Generally, the demands placed on it, and because of its design and control requirements, stage equipment is an expensive technology which is still undergoing improvements for the future through the refinement of control and regulation techniques relating to the drive units.

In conclusion, the present writer believes strongly in well equipped theatres for Nigeria, as did Erwin Piscator for Germany. Piscator, in his note on "The Theatre Can Belong to our Century" demonstrates his belief in technologically expensively equipped theatre for his productions to present "epic" dramatizations of the present world, the activity and thought of people in it, when he asks:

To what century does the "modern" theatre belong? It is housed in last century's opera house. In the busiest theatrical centre of the Western World, "modern" theatre, in rented buildings, is crowned into the byways while the film palaces flourish prominently. A film palace is the symbol of people's theatre today, wonderland ... Modern science and technology are freeing the visual imagination ...

Using all the technical devices supplied by research, the film can cover earth and sky, and dwell under the sea. It can project its message "hitting home" with close-ups or with the increased power of voice, music, and sound effects.

But when present-day audiences attend a stage play, they find the stage set with scenes and actors on the same unimaginative scale used since the proscenium box-stage emerged from the sixteenth century renaissance theatre. Everything has been changed by new techniques; the waging of wars, our behaviour, even our thinking. Everything but the stage...

How then can the substance and poetry of our drama help but lag behind our changing ways of life? We must become the free artists who can use the physical properties of the stage even as a painter freely mixes colours on his palette. In such a way we would use treadmill, turntable, sunken stage, raised and lowered for changing levels, moving escalator, motorized bridges, elevators. Film and television would be used in combination with the stage, for stage close-ups. We imagine the other fields, both psychological and epic, such combinations would open contrasts between the conscious, spoken thought and subconscious thought could be revealed. Monologues could

be visualized; the inner colloquy could be externalised, the actor talking to his own screen image. Asides made visible motives traced to their sources - all this could be done by contrasting new over-dimensional material (by means of projections referring to the outside world) with human material (the actors on the stage, the actual scene). Film could be used as atmosphere for fantasy, or as moving background, or as chorus: interpreting, prophesying, philosophizing.

And, in Nigeria, eminent theatre scholars, such as Kalu Uka, besides those already mentioned, in his article "Technology and the Performing Arts", also vindicates the present writer's agitations and views when he affirms that:

If the performing arts are to go anywhere in the path of advancement, progress and meaningful evolution in Nigeria, the choices, technology-determined choices must begin to be made now. For example, in building, whatever the SAP cost, an appropriately suitable performance centre, not like the "National" Theatre at Iganmu, Lagos, but one, in each State Capital, characterized by a Nigerian design, Nigerianized facilities, Nigerian personnel, Nigerian mural and current history, Nigerian equipment of power, sewage, water-supply must be established (14).

The present writer does not say that only modern architecture, scenography and technology will be the saviour of the Nigerian theatre, but that with them the Artists, their fantasy and their intelligence, given fresh inspiration, can express new dramatic contents by liberating the creative forces of playwrights, directors, and actors and thus a great modern Nigerian theatre would then develop with their rightful audiences restored to them. Does this seem a dream? Vision has often created reality. If so, then this study has been given a testimony and vindication.

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DIN 14 494 - Ortsfeste, selbständige Sprühwasserlöschanlagen mit offenen Düsen, Technische Prüfstelle des Verbandes der Sachversicherer, Köln.

(Permanently installed automatic spray water fire fighting equipments)

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