

**STAGE MANAGER AND MANAGEMENT IN ACADEMIC THEATRE:
AYO AKINWALE'S *THIS KING MUST DIE* AS A PARADIGM**

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Attestation

I, OKUNLOLA, Timileyin Folasade attest to the fact that this project is original to me and I did not copy or plagiarise the work of anyone, either living or dead.

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Certification

This project work has been read, approved, and certified, as meeting the partial requirements for the award of Bachelor of Arts Degree (B.A Hons) in the Department of the Performing Arts, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to God Almighty who through His love has nurtured me so far. I appreciate His kindness to me throughout my academic journey to this point. You are worthy of all honor, and gratitude, Lord.

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ABSTRACT

Stage Management in academic theatre is a different ball game from stage management in other types of theatres. For instance, an academic theatre is a theatre that does not have a permanent production team because students are admitted, trained, and sent off upon graduation and the cycle continues the next academic session. Also, those who train them are employed for a specific duration while most stay on as full-time staff; some are either on a sabbatical or part-time basis. The training in academic theatre is all-encompassing in that it exposes students to dramatic arts, stage management, technical theatre, acting skills, dance, and directing. However, the management of the stage and cast often constitutes a major challenge in the theatre. This is the focus of this study. The research methods employed for this study are the participant-observation and content analysis methods. The participant observation tool allows the researcher to be actively involved in the production process of Ayo Akinwale's *This King Must Die* while the content analysis method enables us to subject the script to scrutiny to extract relevant information. Information obtained by using these methods serves as our primary data while secondary data are obtained from textbooks, journals, articles, and internet sources. During the research, it was discovered that the motivations of actors in this type of theatre differ a great deal from those of the professional sectors. Therefore, it recommends that further attention be paid to the study of the cast's behavioural patterns in order to get the most from them during performances, as discovered in the production of Ayo Akinwale's *This King Must Die*.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Over the years, management has always been the backbone of organizations. Companies thrive, successes are recorded, and histories are made all because of how well managerial duties are carried out. Management can either make or mar an organization. It is the driving force behind all that we see. It is imperative to note that management cuts across different human fields because of the social nature of human beings and other natural phenomena that rely on interaction and organization for effective performance.

The theatre is not left out in the managerial sphere; it is, rather, more pronounced because of the social nature of the art form. Theatre relies heavily on effective management to flourish. This management is the responsibility of the theatre manager. Aside from the general theatre manager, who oversees the theatre building and general activities, there is also the stage manager, who is in charge of the managerial aspects of the production. In the production process, effective stage management is germane to a successful production, hence making it an important aspect of the theatre. According to Hartshorn, in an interview held in 2017, “It's like shuffling a deck of cards: the stage manager must add the acting, directing, technical, and human elements together to create a new deck.” A stage manager can be likened to a bond that connects all aspects of the theatre to form a whole. The success or otherwise of the performance lies heavily on his or her shoulders. The intricacies, functions, significance, and demands of the stage manager toward the success of a production will be duly discussed in this research.

The stage manager is an important crew member of a production. He or she serves as the fulcrum through which the production template is built and raised because of the versatility of engagement with other crew members. Corroboratively, Lonazzi (1992, p. 9) submits that:

“Most people have a sense of what a stage manager is but are usually surprised to learn their perception is rather narrow. The stage manager should certainly know the varied components that go into the creation of a piece of theatre. The physical scenery, props, costumes, lights, and sound are obvious elements requiring the attention of the stage manager, but a stage manager must be part director, playwright, designer, and producer. A stage manager will also find himself in the position of confidant, counselor, and confessor.”

This submission aptly covers the details of the stage manager's responsibilities and characteristics.

1.2 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The Personnel of a stage manager as well as the stage management process in an Academic theatre is a theme that has not been widely discussed hence the need for a study like this to shed more light on the subject matter and also provide workable templates for future research to work on.

1.3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study is Ayo Akinwale's *This King Must Die* which is to be staged in the Performing Arts Theatre University of Ilorin as one of the PFA 499 final year special project productions. The production will be used to examine stage managing in an Academic theatre. It will also evaluate who a stage manager is expected to be in an academic theatre.

1.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology refers to the procedures employed in the course of a study. The research methods employed for this study are the participant observation tool and content analysis methods. The participant observation tool allows the researcher to be actively involved in the production process of Ayo Akinwale's *This King must Die* while the content analysis method enables us to subject the script to scrutiny to extract information. Information obtained by using these methods provides our primary data while secondary data are obtained from textbooks, journals, articles, and internet sources.

1.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The major aim of this study among several others is to widen the knowledge of theatre personnel as well as non-theatre practitioners on the personality of a stage manager and the stage management process in an academic theatre using the production process of Ayo Akinwale's *This King Must Die*.

This study considers the following objectives:

- To examine the historical background of stage management in Nigerian theatre
- To expatiate the importance, functions, and characteristics of stage management in an Academic theatre
- To examine the personnel of a stage manager in an Academic Theatre.
- To analyze the stage management process in an Academic theatre.
- To evaluate stage management in the theatrical production of Ayo Akinwale's *This King Must Die*.
- To formulate a procedure for proper understanding and assimilation of key points by personnel of the theatre.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research elucidates the management styles and approaches that go into making a production in an academic theatre. To a large extent, it also reveals the impact of stage management from the pre-production to the post-production process. This study is vital as it can be used to resolve theoretical questions that relate to stage management in an academic theatre. It combines an understanding of who a stage manager is and what stage management entails within an academic environment. In other words, this study is crucial because it will serve as a scholarly document for consultation by researchers and scholars in the field, as well as individuals who are inquisitive about the world of stage management in an academic theatre.

1.7 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to develop the understanding of individuals in the theatre world regarding stage management in an academic theatre. The study also reveals the importance of a stage manager and takes an in-depth look at his or her impact in an academic theatre.

1.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Limitation simply means hindrances that restrict the smooth flow of an activity. It is inevitable for any research work to have limitations, and for the researcher to encounter certain challenges, however few they may be. One of the major challenges encountered during this research was cast management. Having to deal with people of different calibers, backgrounds, and behavioral patterns is no small feat. Another notable challenge was the time frame for the rehearsal process. We had a very limited time for rehearsals, and keeping up with the schedule was quite an

arduous task. However, it is worthy of note that these limitations have not, in any way, affected the credibility of this work.

1.9 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF TERMS AND CONCEPTS

In this study, it is important to define some terms to facilitate the reader's assimilation, and because some words might be ambiguous for the non-practitioner of the theatre. The operational definition will be done to the following key operating words:

- Stage Manager
- Management
- Stage Management
- Academic Theatre

Stage Manager:

A person who supervises the physical aspects of a stage production, assists the director during rehearsals, and is in charge of the stage during a performance.

Management:

This is the act or activity of looking after and making decisions about something.

Stage Management:

This has to do with organizing the details of a performance in a theater, it involves careful planning and arranging of resources to achieve a desired theatrical result.

Academic Theatre:

This is a theatre where people are trained formally in the art of the theatre.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 CONCEPT OF STAGE MANAGEMENT

Stage management dates back to the 17th century, during the Shakespearean and Molière era. During this period, some individuals handled both the stage and the actors. Initially, it was just one person handling both directing and stage management, but as time went on, stage management emerged as an art of its own.

Although artistic expectations and opportunities are created by the director, it is the stage manager who creates the practical circumstances for the realization and achievement of the director's goals. According to Bowskill (1995, p. 295), "the director may devise artistic possibilities and opportunities, but he will get nowhere without a stage manager who can efficiently create the practical conditions for their realization." Above all, a stage manager must be physically fit and alert to be able to perform his or her duties effectively. Efficiency and effectiveness must be his or her watchword at all times.

A stage manager's work begins immediately after receiving a script. Once the script is in his or her custody, the time for serious study and perusal begins. The stage manager reads through the script and understands it thoroughly. He or she takes note of every feature and how it will factor into the vision of the production team.

Vital submissions from scholars such as Stern (1995) are inevitable when discussing the art of stage management in the theatre. Stern (1995, p. 1) argues that "the person who has

responsibility for making the entire production run smoothly on stage and backstage, in the pre-rehearsal, rehearsal, performance, and post-performance phases, is the stage manager.”

In any theatrical production, the position of the stage manager demands versatility in dealing with cast and crew members. A stage manager maintains a different approach for each group of people he or she must work with. This will be further explained using the Stage Manager’s DCMAP. **The Stage Manager’s DCMAP** refers to the stage manager’s relationship with the following:

Director

Crew members

Actors

Public

STAGE MANAGER'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DIRECTOR

The working relationship between the stage manager and the artistic director often determines the success of the production. If this relationship is a viable one, the production is well on its way to success; but if it is besieged with poor communication and misunderstanding, the production is headed for the rocks. The stage manager must consult with the artistic director at all times and at every stage of production. He or she is accountable to the artistic director throughout the pre-production phase, the production phase, and the post-production phase.

The job description of the stage manager includes making prior and proper arrangements for rehearsal venues, ensuring that the stage is set for rehearsal even before the arrival of the director. This ensures that the director comes to a settled house and makes the rehearsal process seamless. The stage manager ensures proper decorum during rehearsals so the director does not have to work with a noisy house. It is also his or her responsibility to make available all the actors the director needs to work with at any given time. This implies that the stage manager is accountable to the director for the whereabouts of any actor at any point during rehearsals.

As the director plots his blockings, it is the stage manager's task to document all the blockings in his or her notes. He or she is to effect any change the director might make as the rehearsal progresses. To make the stage managing process more fluid and effective, a stage manager must develop shorthand abilities. He or she must take down notes and comments as dictated by the director in shorthand to save time, while documenting full notes at the edge of the page or on an overleaf. He or she should also be very vast in stagecraft and all aspects of the theatre. A stage manager cannot afford to be a novice in the art of theatre. In the event of a director's absence, the

stage manager handles the rehearsal, though he or she must not at any point assume the role of the director nor usurp the director's authority.

STAGE MANAGER'S RELATIONSHIP WITH CREW MEMBERS

A theatrical production involves various aspects of the theatre coming together to form a whole. The stage manager must ensure that all these elements evolve with the production right from the first production meeting. The stage manager must know the script thoroughly to be helpful to the crew members. The sketches and models needed for the production must be available to all from the onset of the production, and it is the stage manager's prerogative to coordinate the crew members and make them accountable.

He or she must encourage all members of the crew to imbibe the culture of teamwork. It is neither enough nor advisable to bark orders at crew members; rather, the stage manager must sit them down and explain what is required of each member and what is at stake for the entire production team. Proper communication and understanding of the activities of any team, and this is what the stage manager must strive for within his or her team.

STAGE MANAGER'S RELATIONSHIP WITH ACTORS

The stage manager is in charge of the theatre and is responsible to the director; therefore, he or she must present the actors for rehearsals and productions. He or she owes it as a duty to know the whereabouts of each actor at all times. The well-being of all members of the production is a priority of the stage manager. He or she is positioned to deal with all problems that might affect any of the actors during the period they are working on the play.

The nature of the stage manager's job makes it mandatory for him or her to be humane in approaching the actors' numerous problems. In other words, the stage manager must possess psycho-social skills to be able to perform his or her duties and functions efficiently. He or she must always keep in mind the nature and fluidity of the theatre environment, as well as the ever-changing nature of human beings. He or she must also understand that the success of the production depends greatly on the connection with the individuals under his or her care. Knowledge of the intricate nature of human behavior is crucial to effectively playing the role of a stage manager; hence, he or she must be quick and shrewd in handling issues.

No cast member leaves the rehearsal space without permission from the stage manager. The attendance register must be intact at all times. He or she keeps a register containing the names, phone numbers, and addresses of the actors. Once rehearsals commence, the stage manager takes roll call at the beginning and at the end of each rehearsal. This helps to curtail absenteeism and indiscipline among cast members.

STAGE MANAGER'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PUBLIC

The production team owes the public a satisfying and aesthetically pleasing performance, and the stage manager must ensure that this responsibility to the audience is upheld. Most of the stage manager's responsibility to the public is carried out through the publicity team, though after the performance he or she may have the opportunity to relate with the press during interviews. During and after the performance, he or she also ensures the security of the audience's property and the maintenance of order in the theatre house.

2.2 DEVELOPMENTAL PHASES OF STAGE MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIA

According to Ogunbiyi (1981, p. 295), stage management in Nigeria began with the late Hubert Ogunde in 1944. Sir Ogunde's theatrical career started in the church, where he staged a play to canvass support for the congregation. After the success of that performance, he decided to take his plays outside the church premises. Ogunde performed with his actors, directed them, and also managed them. He assumed the role of both director and stage manager, organizing, coordinating, assembling, and supervising his cast and crew members.

His performance mode is connected to that of the Alarinjo theatre of the Yoruba ethnic group, where performances are held en route and one individual remains at the helm of affairs.

Apart from the Ogunde dynasty, there were other theatre troupes in Nigeria led by individuals such as Oyin Adejobi, Moses Olaiya, Duro Ladipo, and Kola Ogunmola. These individuals also spearheaded theatrical performances in their localities and served as stage managers for their productions. When Nigeria gained independence in 1960, Wole Soyinka created the 1960 Masks theatre troupe and later the Orisun Theatre Group in 1964. The Mbari troupe was formed in 1962 by Ulli Beier, alongside Nigerians such as Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, Duro Ladipo, Mabel Segun, J. P. Clark, Arthur Nortje, among others.

These new troupes paved the way for the introduction of the professional theatre house into the Nigerian theatre system, marking the birth of professional theatre practices and creating space for stage managers as independent personnel in theatrical productions. This development clarified the distinction between the roles of the stage manager, director, and other members of the production team, thereby giving more artistic impetus to stage management.

Over the years, the craft of stage management has evolved and gained recognition as the need for a definite professional approach became apparent. While the director works primarily with actors and crew to shape the performance, the stage manager ensures that everyone's production needs are met through effective supervision, coordination, and management. In Nigeria today, theatre houses now designate individuals specifically to handle stage management, as opposed to the earlier one-man approach.

2.3 OVERVIEW OF STAGE MANAGEMENT IN THE ACADEMIC THEATRE

Stage management in an academic theatre differs from stage management in other types of theatres. An academic theatre does not have a stable production team, as students are admitted, trained, and graduated on a recurring cycle. Tutors are also employed for specific durations. While some complete their contracts, others may leave at any time. Stage management in this environment provides an avenue for training budding stage managers and helps students imbibe the necessary qualities needed to pursue careers in the professional world. Due to the temporary nature of production schedules in academic theatres, the project organizational structure is often employed.

The project organizational structure is typically applied to performances with specific demands. Each participant, resource, and component is carefully selected for its ability to meet the needs of a particular production. Without a play and the desire to present it to an audience, a production cannot exist. Each actor, dancer, artist, singer, technician, manager, and crew member is carefully chosen based on the needs of the play. These individuals are then organized into a unique entity, custom-built to produce a specific performance.

Stage management in this setting is particularly challenging, as many individuals who may be unfamiliar with one another must be coordinated to ensure effective collaboration. The stage manager works with students of varying attitudes and abilities and must also manage the gap between senior and junior students. The production timetable is often short, leaving little time to resolve individual differences and adjust interpersonal relationships.

The organizational structure also places the stage manager and crew under the authority of tutors and instructors who oversee activities and exert significant influence. Consequently, the stage manager strives to satisfy the director, crew members, actors, audience, and tutors.

As a stage manager in an academic theatre, there are two key aspects of human behavior to be aware of: motivation and job satisfaction. In this context, employees refer to members of the production team. What motivates actors in an academic theatre differs from motivation in professional theatre. For example, while professional actors may be motivated by wages, academic actors may be motivated by grades or academic recognition. Motivation and job satisfaction have been studied extensively, and while related, they are not identical. Both have a significant impact on the success or failure of a production.

Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs presents motivation as a set of shared human needs arranged in a hierarchy, suggesting that basic needs must be satisfied before higher-order needs. Subsequent studies have challenged this theory, proposing that individuals may pursue multiple needs simultaneously and possess unique hierarchies shaped by values, career stage, maturity, or psychological state.

It is important to recognize the dynamic nature of these needs among members of the production team. One actor's needs may differ greatly from another's. While one may require shelter, another may need a scholarship. Although a stage manager has limited control over personal circumstances, showing deliberate care and consideration through consistent engagement can significantly motivate cast and crew members and enhance performance outcomes.

Ultimately, it is the duty of the stage manager to ensure smooth production despite diverse and evolving needs. By understanding individual motivations and offering support within professional limits, the stage manager helps team members achieve their goals and contribute meaningfully to the success of the production.

2.4 CHARACTERISTICS AND FUNCTIONS OF A STAGE MANAGER IN AN ACADEMIC THEATRE

A stage manager possesses distinguishable qualities that enable cast and crew members to achieve a successful theatrical production. Barranger (1995, p. 79) describes the stage manager as an "assistant director," responsible for supporting the director throughout the production process. The characteristics of a stage manager include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Maintaining composure in the face of adverse situations
2. Accepting responsibility
3. Retaining a sense of humor
4. Keeping their mouth shut and their eyes and ears wide open
5. Taking initiative
6. Being considerate

7. Being organized and efficient
8. Being punctual and dependable
9. Being a friend to everyone

These characteristics are collectively referred to as MARKTB⁴ for ease of assimilation.

1. MAINTAINING COMPOSURE IN THE FACE OF ADVERSE SITUATIONS

The rehearsal process can often become tense, presenting situations beyond the stage manager's control. However, the stage manager must remain calm, striving to restore order and maintain a productive environment.

2. ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility forms the foundation of stage management. A stage manager must embrace responsibility and respond to it promptly and efficiently.

3. RETAINING A SENSE OF HUMOR

A stage manager's sense of humor helps lighten tense situations and fosters a positive rehearsal atmosphere.

4. KEEPING THEIR MOUTH SHUT AND THEIR EYES AND EARS WIDE OPEN

Confidentiality is a hallmark of effective stage management. A stage manager observes keenly but exercises discretion in sharing information.

5. TAKING INITIATIVE

A stage manager plans ahead, anticipates problems, and provides solutions without waiting for directives.

6. BEING CONSIDERATE

A stage manager demonstrates empathy and considers all individuals and circumstances before making decisions.

7. BEING ORGANIZED AND EFFICIENT

Organization is central to stage management. Prompt books, cue sheets, and attendance records must be maintained accurately to ease the workload.

8. BEING PUNCTUAL AND DEPENDABLE

A stage manager must model punctuality and reliability, serving as a dependable source of information for the production team.

9. BEING A FRIEND TO EVERYONE

A stage manager fosters inclusivity, avoiding favoritism and ensuring all team members feel supported.

Rita Carver (2013, p. 411) describes stage management as “a unique job within the industry. No other job encompasses so many varying responsibilities.” Supporting this view, Apperson (1998, p. 83) states:

“Don’t do theatre unless you are willing to give it your all. And don’t stage manage unless you are willing to be present from beginning to end every time there is an audition, rehearsal, production meeting, photo call, or performance.”

These submissions emphasize the expansive nature of stage management responsibilities. These functions are discussed under three phases: the pre-rehearsal phase, the rehearsal phase, and the post-rehearsal phase.

PRE-REHEARSAL PHASE

During the pre-rehearsal phase, the stage manager has the following responsibilities:

- Creating a contact sheet for all members of the production
- Preparing and distributing rehearsal schedules
- Selecting and communicating rehearsal venues
- Ensuring production meetings are attended and scripts thoroughly analyzed
- Studying the script to identify its specific needs

REHEARSAL PHASE

During rehearsals, the stage manager is responsible for:

- Collecting contact forms from actors
- Assigning scripts to cast and crew
- Explaining the script and production concepts
- Coordinating the first script reading

- Assembling the cast and preparing the rehearsal space
- Taking roll calls
- Disseminating necessary information
- Providing rehearsal props in consultation with the director and designers
- Ensuring actors' availability and welfare
- Documenting and implementing directorial changes
- Assisting actors with line delivery and movements
- Monitoring rehearsal time
- Writing daily rehearsal reports
- Contacting absent members
- Maintaining order and enforcing regulations
- Recording blockings, script changes, and running time
- Scheduling breaks
- Keeping the director informed

POST-REHEARSAL PHASE

At the end of rehearsals, the stage manager must:

- Assist the director with notes
- Announce relevant information
- Remind cast members of subsequent rehearsal details
- Ensure rehearsal spaces are clean and organized
- Secure all props
- Coordinate post-production activities

Conclusively, a stage manager must perform duties judiciously while prioritizing the welfare of cast and crew members. Leadership, teamwork, confidentiality, and a nurturing disposition are essential qualities that enable the stage manager to function effectively within the production team.

CHAPTER THREE: ANALYSIS OF AYO AKINWALE'S *THIS KING MUST DIE*

3.1 BIOGRAPHY OF AYO AKINWALE

Ayo Akinwale was born in Ibadan, Nigeria. He attended Methodist High School and the University of Ibadan before commencing his academic career as a lecturer at The Polytechnic, Ibadan. He was once the Dean of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Ilorin and also served as the Chairman of the Oyo State Council for Arts and Culture. He has been a judge at several cultural festivals across Nigeria.

He began his acting career in the 1970s, featuring in television and drama productions. He won the Best Indigenous Actor award at the 4th Africa Movie Academy Awards. His works include *Mountain of Wealth*, *Hello Prisoner*, and *This King Must Die*.

3.2 SYNOPSIS OF *THIS KING MUST DIE*

This King Must Die is a tale about the generational persistence of corruption, bad leadership, and societal decadence. From time immemorial, society has been plagued with issues that threaten peaceful coexistence. During the reign of Alaaḥin Aole, the misuse of power was at its peak, and nothing else seemed to matter to him other than the liberties the throne offered.

He went a step further when he became bent on reprimanding Alapomu for a wrong done to him years earlier. The last straw that broke the camel's back was the doomed expedition he sent Afonja to execute, the invasion of Iwere. According to ancient history, Iwere was never to be invaded. Afonja, knowing this was a death trap, revolted and demanded that Alaaḥin Aole pay the death price.

Aole had no choice but to die honorably in the way of the elders. However, before his death, he laid curses on the lineage. These curses ravaged the populace for a long time, extending to all facets of life. Major emphasis was placed on the political sphere, where the rot became evident. Politicians such as Alhaji and De Alhaja believed in crooked means and explored these possibilities to the fullest. Individuals like Comrade T.T still arise from time to time to curb these excesses.

3.3 THEMATIC PRE-OCCUPATION IN *THIS KING MUST DIE*

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, a theme is a subject or topic of discourse in an artistic representation. It is the basis upon which a play revolves. The central theme in the play is the **misuse of power**, an underlying factor throughout the work.

From Aole to the Oyomesi and onward to the era of politicians, power is constantly sought and used to further human greed. Aole used his authority as Alaafin to avenge a perceived wrong done to him years before ascending the throne. He also sought to eliminate Afonja, believing fully in the sovereignty of his office, as evident in the dialogue below:

AOLE: Who are you to tell me where I am supposed to divert my expedition? I will have none of that... (p. 39).

Let me warn you that a king reigns and rules. Wait till I join my ancestors if you are interested in ascending the throne (p. 40).

He was power-drunk and unwilling to listen to reason. This same trend is evident in the 21st-century political era. Politicians go to extreme lengths to obtain power and become

comfortable misapplying it. The misuse of power has become normalized and remains a struggle the masses continue to resist.

Other sub-themes include:

ROYAL EGO

Alaafin Aole was an ardent believer in the supremacy of royalty. He believed he deserved preferential treatment because of royal blood. He would not back down for any reason and held the view that a royal could never be wrong. Even as a young prince, before ascending the throne, he displayed a condescending attitude toward those he considered beneath him.

DIGNITY

Alapomu exhibited true leadership qualities. When called upon to relinquish his life, he did so without hesitation to save his town from destruction. He was willing to bear the consequences of his actions, no matter how painful. He was also unbiased, as seen when he refused to spare the young Aole when he fell victim to the law against the slave trade.

TREACHERY

This is revealed through the character of Alapinni. He encouraged Aole's misconduct through his words and actions. His true nature was exposed when the sacred empty calabash was presented to Aole. By then, it was too late for Aole to amend his ways. Chief Awoniyi's supporters were also guilty of treachery. Although they publicly aligned with Awoniyi, they secretly liaised with Alhaji.

3.4 SETTING OF *THIS KING MUST DIE*

Setting is an essential component of literature and one of the first elements a writer considers. It influences characters and events and enhances the reader's imagination. Setting allows the reader to understand the literary world they are entering and experience it more fully.

This King Must Die is unique in that it blends two centuries, featuring both the 20th and 21st centuries. It is set within the Yoruba cultural setting of Nigeria. The locales in the play include:

- Aole's palace
- Alapomu's palace
- Campaign grounds
- Election venues

3.5 GENRE OF THE PLAY

This King Must Die is a satire. It exposes the roots of societal decay. Aole, a powerful king of the Oyo Kingdom, laid terrible curses that became the source of societal downfall.

Carolyn Miller describes genre as a "social construct and social action, providing the writer with a socially recognizable way to make intentions known" (pp. 157–158). Social and political contexts shape knowledge, and the credibility of statements depends on the speaker's position within society. The context in which a playwright operates gives rise to genre.

Thus, *This King Must Die* functions as satire by exposing political deceit, lies, and lawlessness that characterize society.

3.6 CHARACTER ANALYSIS IN *THIS KING MUST DIE*

The word “character” is derived from the Greek verb *charassein*. Characters are tools used by playwrights to develop plot and express ideology. The prominent characters include:

AOLE

The ruling king of the Oyo Kingdom. He is power-drunk, quick-tempered, and dismissive of advice. His refusal to heed the Oyomesi ultimately led to his downfall.

ALAPOMU

The Baale of Apomu. A true leader who places the welfare of his people above personal interest.

ALAPINNI

A chief in the Oyo Mesi known for instigation and self-interest. He favors aggressive solutions and personal gain.

ONA ISOKUN

A voice of reason within the Oyo Mesi. He consistently advocates proper procedure and moral order.

AFONJA

The Aare Ona Kakanfo of Yorubaland. He refused to invade Iwere and demanded Aole’s head instead.

AWONIYI

Founder of the People's Party, symbolized by a lantern representing education and enlightenment.

ALHAJI

Leader of the Naira Party, driven by wealth and bribery.

COMRADE T.T

The modern counterpart of Ona Isokun. Leader of the Youth Party, symbolizing strength and reform.

DE ALHAJA

A loyal ally of the Naira Party, motivated purely by financial gain.

OLD MAN

A symbol of enduring African tradition. He prevents electoral malpractice through ancestral wisdom.

ORUNMILA

Represents spiritual intervention and guidance.

COMRADE NEWBREED

A symbol of hope and future transformation.

FADELE

The narrator who links past, present, and future.

3.7 SOCIOLOGY OF THE PLAY

Sociology is the study of social life, social change, and human interaction within structures such as groups and institutions. Human behavior is shaped by social contexts and patterns.

This King Must Die examines Nigerian society, with particular emphasis on politics. It traces corrupt leadership from ancient times, represented by characters like Alapinni, to modern figures such as Alhaji and De Alhaja, revealing the continuity of societal decay.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE PROCESS OF STAGE MANAGING *THIS KING MUST DIE* IN AN ACADEMIC THEATRE

4.1 PLAY SELECTION

Play selection is a very important step in the play production process because it provides insight into the intended objectives of the director and other crew members. It also affords the crew members, who in this case were members of Group 9 (PFA 499), the opportunity to respond to the demands of the audience and society at large. This should naturally be the foremost consideration in selecting any play intended for production.

Peter (1972, p. 30) comments that “play selection can be said to be choosing a particular play text out of several play texts because of its outstanding qualities for theatrical performance.” Taking all these factors into consideration, especially the academic purpose of this production, the choice of play had to be carefully considered.

For academic purposes and assessment criteria, our primary concern was that the production should be a total theatre presentation. This would allow us to test our creativity in dance, music, and drama. By the grouping arrangement, Group 9 belonged to the Drama segment, which required us to present a dramatic performance.

In the course of our search, the following plays were considered:

- *Hangmen Also Die* by Esiaba Irobi
- *Wonyegi* by Obotunde Ijimere
- *The Trials of Brother Jero* by Wole Soyinka

- *Grip Am* by Ola Rotimi
- *Koseegbe* by Akinwunmi Ishola
- *The Imprisonment of Obatala* by Obotunde Ijimere
- *Àrè Àgò Aríkúyerí* by Lawuyi Ogunniran

After much deliberation among the crew members and the project supervisor, the team resolved to produce *This King Must Die* by Ayo Akinwale.

4.2 AUDITIONING AND CASTING

Auditioning is a sample performance by an actor, singer, musician, dancer, or other performer. It typically involves displaying talent through a previously memorized and rehearsed piece or by performing a piece given at the audition or shortly before.

In the same vein, Hartnoll and Found (1992, p. 26) describe an audition as “a trial run by an actor seeking employment, either to display his talents in general or to demonstrate his fitness for a particular role by reading some part of the play to the directors.” It is a system designed to assign actors to specific characters in a play.

For *This King Must Die*, the criteria for casting were flexibility, facial expression, body carriage, agility, voice clarity, stage presence, vibrancy, diction, ability to carry the audience along, expressive range, and movement. The zeal and work ethic of the cast members were also considered.

The audition was scheduled for the 16th of September, 2021, and was open to 100–300 level students of the department. It took place in the theatre according to the timetable assigned to

each section. After assessing the actors based on the stated criteria, the most suitable performers were selected.

The following actors were chosen as the major cast for the production:

AOLE — ABDUL-MALIK Ayomide

BASORUN — AYANDELE Nurudeen

BALOGUN — OLADOKUN Samuel

ASIPA — ADESHINA Adedamola

ALAPINNI — JIMOH Abdulrahmon

BABA IYAJI — OLU DARE John

ALAPOMU — ADELEKE Benjamin

BABA ALASIRI — ADETUNJI Abdulrasaq

YOUNG AOLE — YUSUF Adewunmi

AFONJA — APELUJO Ayodeji

CHIEF AWONIYI — ABDUL David

ALHAJI — EMMANUEL Victor

COMRADE T.T — OTI Courage

DE ALHAJA — AMAO Damilola

COMRADE NEWBREED — OLADELE Jemimah

ORUNMILA — MUHAMMED Basit

FADELE — ADEBAKIN Emmanuel

4.3 REHEARSAL PROCESS

The rehearsal process is a vital aspect of theatre practice and cannot be taken lightly. Rehearsal is an activity in the performing arts that prepares performers for public presentation. It involves the repetition of actions over time in order to improve skills applicable to drama and other performance arts.

Rehearsing can therefore be described as the practice of a play or musical composition in preparation for performance. According to Barranger (1991, p. 182), it is the “task of creating emotional impact through the careful reconstruction of one’s life experiences and relating those emotions to the character and situation, which is carried out in rehearsal.”

Rehearsals may last between three and ten weeks. Since the success of any theatrical production largely depends on the effectiveness of rehearsals, they must be well organized and diligently conducted.

Due to the academic nature of our theatre, a timetable was designed to allow three groups rehearse simultaneously in different venues. This initially led to disputes, particularly regarding the use of drums and other musical instruments. The timetable was later reviewed and adjusted to accommodate all groups fairly. Each group rehearsed for two hours, three times a week, and this schedule was strictly adhered to until the end of rehearsals.

The rehearsal process for *This King Must Die* began with an in-depth analysis of the play text, which I conducted in my capacity as the Stage Manager. This was done to familiarize the actors with the script and their respective roles. The analysis was integrated into the reading rehearsal, a

preliminary stage where actors read through the play to gain a deeper understanding of their characters.

According to Emmanuel (2010, p. 112), “The importance of rehearsal cannot be overemphasized, in spite of the different attitudes to it.”

While rehearsals are crucial, actors should not be overworked. Adequate rest and breathing space are necessary for optimal performance. During rehearsals for *This King Must Die*, I ensured that production meetings were held after each session to evaluate the day’s work and identify areas for improvement. These meetings contributed significantly to the overall success of the performance.

PFA 499 REHEARSAL SCHEDULE 2020/2021 SESSION

DAYS/TIME	VENUE	2-4:00 PM	4:00-6PM	6-8:00PM
MONDAYS	FOYER	Arabian Nights	Pegunrun	Wonder Child
	STAGE	Obatala	The Legendary Thief	Twingle Twangle
	DANCE STUDIO	Agbogunboro: The Legend of Ogedengbe	Joseph and The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat	The Lion King

TUESDAYS	FOYER	Triumph of Destiny	The Sultan's Dilemma	Obatala
	STAGE	Kinjeketile	Drums of War	Agbogunboro: The Legend of Ogedengbe
	DANCE STUDIO	This King Must Die	***	Arabian Nights
WEDNESDAYS	FOYER	The Legendary Thief	Twingle Twangle	Kinjeketile
	STAGE	Joseph and The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat	The Lion King	This King Must Die
	DANCE STUDIO	Pegunrun	Wonder Child	Triumph of Destiny
THURSDAYS	FOYER	Drums of War	Agbogunboro: The Legend of Ogedengbe	Joseph and The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat
	STAGE	***	Arabian Nights	Pegunrun

	DANCE STUDIO	The Sultan's Dilemma	Obatala	The Legendary Thief
FRIDAY	FOYER	The Lion King	This King Must Die	***
	STAGE	Wonder Child	Triumph of Destiny	The Sultan's Dilemma
	DANCE STUDIO	Twingle Twangle	Kinjeketile	Drums of War

Due to the limited timeframe the Department gave for the rehearsal process, the rehearsal time was increased to 2hrs 30mins when the production dates drew nearer. As a means of last resort, the whole group also resorted to night rehearsals. The timetable for that is shown below:

499 NIGHT REHEARSAL TIMETABLE FROM 3RD DECEMBER, 2021 TO 18TH DECEMBER, 2021

3rd December, 2021	Wonder Child
4th December 2021	Obatala
6th December 2021	Agbogunboro: The Legend of Ogedengbe
7th December 2021	Pegunrun

8th December 2021	The Legendary Thief
9th December, 2021	Joseph and The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat
10th December, 2021	Triumph of Destiny
11th December, 2021	Twingle Twangle
13th December, 2021	Lion King
14th December, 2021	Arabian Nights
15th December 2021	Kinjeketile
16th December, 2021	This King Must Die
17th December, 2021	The Sultan's Dilemma
18th December, 2021	Drums of War

4.4 CAST ATTENDANCE

It is imperative to document each actor's involvement and attendance during the production. It is to ensure that all students are well-behaved and to curb truancy. The attendance also accounts for a certain percentage of the overall grades. The rehearsal started with over 100 cast members but in the long run, the names below totalling 67 were retained. There was also an addition of 13 cast

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UWA Emmanuel	•	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	•						√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	P	P	P	√	√	√	√	•	•	•	√	√
KELANI Olamide	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	•	√	√	•	•	√	√	√	S	S	S	S	S	√	√	√	√	√	•	•	•	√	•	•	•	√	√		
ADEYEMI Damila	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	•	√	√	•	•	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	•	•	•	•	√	√	
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performance report. Additionally, any major problems encountered during the performance, such as a missed sound cue, should be clearly noted.

The performance took place on the 19th of January, 2022, at the Performing Arts Theatre, University of Ilorin, by 4:00 pm. On the day of the performance, I arrived at the theatre four hours before the commencement time in my capacity as the Stage Manager. This was to ensure that all necessary preparations were in place, including costumes, props, technical equipment, special effects makeup, and that the cue sheets were ready before the performance.

Thirty minutes before the performance, I ensured that all cast members had their costumes and that their makeup was properly done. I also ensured that the business manager carefully guarded the entrance to the theatre to prevent individuals without tickets from gaining access. I addressed the cast, reminding them of the progression of the play, the locations of the cue sheets, and encouraged them to give their best performance. After this, we prayed together and the cast proceeded to the orchestra pit.

After the cast had settled in the orchestra pit, I ensured that decorum was maintained. Five minutes before the start of the production, I instructed the actors involved in the opening scene to take their positions to avoid distractions or delays. By 4:05 pm, the performance commenced with the rolling of drums at the instruction of the project coordinator.

As the production progressed, I monitored the theatre environment to ensure that everything was running smoothly. I confirmed that the backstage area was free from accidental mishaps and that there was no loitering by actors awaiting their cues. The production lasted for one hour and forty minutes.

In conclusion, the theatrical production *This King Must Die* by Ayo Akinwale was a successful and commendable presentation.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

5.1 SUMMARY

This research examines the role of the stage manager and the practice of stage management in an academic theatre, using the production of Ayo Akinwale's *This King Must Die* as a case study. Chapter One provides an introduction to the study, while Chapter Two, the literature review, discusses the historical background of stage management and its procedures in an academic theatre. Chapter Three presents the framework of the play, and Chapter Four gives a detailed analysis of data gathered during the course of the production. This includes cast details, rehearsal attendance records, and the overall production process.

The duties of the stage manager cannot be overemphasized. Through this research, the indispensable role of the Stage Manager in ensuring the success of a theatrical production has been clearly examined and established.

5.2 FINDINGS

The findings reveal that the role of the stage manager in shaping a performance is vital. This is because the stage manager serves as the backbone of a production and is responsible for coordinating managerial efforts among the crew members, cast members, and the production process as a whole. The study establishes stage management as an essential tool in theatrical practice.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

This project recommends that after students are taught the art of stage management, they should further prepare their minds and bodies to be work-ready, physically fit, and knowledgeable about their responsibilities as Stage Managers. It is also recommended that students engage in extensive reading of stage management texts and view the discipline as a valuable and essential aspect of theatre practice. Neglecting stage management can adversely affect the success of any production.

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