HYBRIDIZATON AND THE THEATRE PRACTICE: AN ANALYSIS OF *LEGENDS THE MUSICAL*

Samson Sunday **AKAPO, Ph.D**
Department of Theatre Arts,
University of Ibadan
Ibadan, Nigeria
akaposamson44@gmail.com

Abstract
Musical theatre basically refers to a kind of theatre practice which relies heavily arts of the theatre like acting, dance and music. It uses these media as a means to communicate certain messages or aesthetic satisfaction for the audience. This research provides a review of the key elements of musical theatre using John Kenrick's approach as well as the interplay of narrative and music with choreography and staging. The study addresses, through performance analysis of Legends the Musical, how its narrative, technical production and use of stage elements resonate more closely with musical theatre traditions. This research also sheds light on the views which place its classification as a musical (rather than operatic) performance. Additionally, the research highlights that modern theatrical productions draw from global and hybridization to establish a new performance mode by mixing in cultural and artistic style. The relevance of Legends the Musical in the Nigerian context is also considered, as well as how it can help to revitalize Nigeria's theatre practices by bringing in bigger audience base and greater commercial viability. Legends the Musical is both entertaining and culturally significant in the way that the interplay of the traditional African deities across the plot represents the socio political challenges facing the continent. The study recommends, therefore, that musical theatre is a viable, dynamic and hybrid art form that can uniquely appeal to and entertain different audiences along the way to reviving the Nigerian theatre culture.

Keywords: Musical Theatre, *Legends the Musical*, Hybrid Theatre and Stage performance.

Introduction

As man continues to evolve, the role of dance continues to evolve also. This evolution may be consequent upon industrialization and scientific revolutions. The twentieth century for instance brought with it an era of technological advancement, better road networks and computer operations. According to Reamer, 2014 the last quarter of the 20th century saw the emergence of the information and computer technology (ICT) revolution, the development of products and processes that rely on managing the movement of electrons for communications and analysis. If mechanization provided means to extend and magnify human brawn, information technology offers the means to extend and magnify the workings of the brain.

The theatre hence, through all this is challenged to provide a strong argument of its relevance to the daily activities of the people. Easily said, newer inventions were adopted into theatre practices that better capture the present state of our living. It is not a surprise therefore that the many revolutions of the twentieth century brought with it consequent revolution in dance practice, as 'modern dance' pioneered by Isadora Duncan represented a major shift from the confining classical ballet to a more natural set of movements inspired by “trees, the ocean and by all of nature” (Ambrosia, 1999: 61). Other figures such as Martha Graham, Ted and Denis Shawn but to mention a few followed in the footsteps of Duncan and consequently developed or improved on newer techniques that reflected both personal taste and beliefs about the dance as an expressive art form. (Ambrosio, 1999).

The idea of 'musical dance' purports a juxtaposition of two different cultural ideals: Dance, and then Music, where the power structure might be reexamined to strike a balance. Dance, in a simple way of stating, basically refers to the movement of the body within a given space, over a period of time with exerted energy of different levels. The Britannica encyclopedia defines dance as the "movement of the body in a rhythmic way, usually to music and within a given space, for the purpose of expressing an idea or emotion, releasing energy, or simply taking delight in the movement". (Mackrell, 2019: 23). The reason behind this movement begs a separate article entirely, as some may move for the purpose of entertainment, fun or expression. As Kraus and Richard (1981) put it, dance had many definitions, and these definitions were most times representative of the types of dances that were performed during the eighteenth century (Kraus, 1981: 12). Therefore, one cannot entirely rest on a single definition of dance. All of this shall be expounded upon in the body of work.

Hybridisation in respect to the theatre follows the concept of total theatre, which brings to mind the broad angles of acting, dance and music, which, though exist independently, may likewise be brought within the frame work of a single idea. It is under this umbrella that dance musical thrive as a boisterously energetic display of theatrical arts all existing and co existing within a given artistic space and aesthetic idea. Hybridization functions as an ongoing global paradigm which opens us to the possibilities of rethinking the meaning of art, design and fashion. The world continues to make advances in human interaction, technological innovations and the search for immense social and political stability. The impact of hybridization on culture and identity also holds true in other areas such as language, music, visual/ material culture, pop culture, and the arts. It is no wonder Alexander and Sharma (2013), suggest that a new or hybrid identity is formed from influences from more than one location, usually drawing upon dual influences of the colonizer and the colonized.

The contemporary artists thus attain a definition of self from a redefinition of certain cultural beliefs and standards as may affect their artistic consciousness and creativity. Sharma therefore enthuses that:

> As we work to define ourselves as professionals….it is important that we employ reflexivity about how we view and define the process of interaction with whom we work, based on the contrast between our pre determination of who they are and their own authentic self definitions of their cultural identities. (Alexander and Sharma, 2013:89).

Conceptual Clarifications of Hybridization and its Relation to Theatre Practice

The ability to define art forms and identities continually becomes more elusive with the trend of hybridism. Considering several factors of socio political and economic realities, there is a yarning need for an inquiry, through all of these influences, to understand who we actually are. Attaining this definition within the microscopic lens of history might prove problematic based on the chaotic influences of our travel and interaction with people as indications of what we were and what we have become as a result.

The ability to assimilate aspects of some cultures into another place is crucial to progressive living, as is the duo of diversity and creativity. However, this still faces some challenges, as Rodriguez (2016) opines:

> Another set of influencing factors are linked to the frames of cultural encounters. In this regard, the prevalent power relationship could be an important factor in explaining the feasibility of cultural hybridization processes. Likewise, specific contexts – such as given traditions in the expression of national culture identities, ethnic representations or discursive configurations regarding cultural value - could play a significant role in the cultural valorization of hybrid products.(Rodriguez, 2016:7).

There exists however an anti-cosmopolitan scenario that negates the advances of any such possibilities of a hybrid of cultures. The increasing rise of Xenophobia and penchant for racism makes it difficult for the establishment of contact, between the foreigner and the local citizenry, needed to put into action the enactments of an exchange of cultural ideas leading to hybrid.(Rodriguez, 2016):

> As long as a discriminatory social relationship prevails, the predisposition of minority groups will be, in the most favorable hypothesis a reluctant and partial assimilation of the majority culture (Rodriguez, 2016: 5).

The relation between diversity and creativity is one of the most important keys to addressing the key challenges of coexistence and progress in the complexly structured societies we live in. The theatre is home to anybody; a place where you can be anybody. It is in this light that we must not just recognize but also appreciate the hybridization process as it concerns theatre activity, making for more productions of holistically conceived theatre performances laden in content and form. While believers of racial purity may strongly antagonize the details of any such cultural hybridization policies and prefer to have existing cultural practices left in their pure forms, hybridization instead states that cultural practices can intermingle with other cultural practices through globalization and inter-culturalism, without inherently leading to an abuse or bastardization of the ideals that make up each practice.

Music Theatre as a Deviation to Musical Theatre

As Stephen Malloch (2018), asserts, the creation of musical stories do not necessarily need words to inspire richly veiled narratives of rich meanings and context. It is upon this essence that Musical theatre thrives, using the elements of bodies, voices and minds as captured in the above definition to proffer more robust approach to theatrical productivity.

To outline the necessity of music to the human condition, we may see its relative importance in the sustenance of mental wellbeing through the strengthening of the emotions of social resilience needed to recover from mental stress and illness. This projects a sort of therapeutic perspective on the nature of music. (Malloch, 2018: 14).

Music and theatre are two separately broad art forms that exist with its own repertoire and conventions. There have been attempts to provide encompassing definitions on the nature of these subjects, and even other attempts to draw a parallel between Music and theatre existing under the same coinage or phrase. Several works come to mind in the mentioning of the performance elements of music. The opera, operetta, musicals, music theatre and Musical Theatre; several articles have been written in retrospect to the defining natures of these coinages, with arguments raised to separate the latter entities; a differentiation in terms of definition of Music theatre and Musical Theatre, or Music theatre and Opera.

Certain authors like Ryan Green (2014), claim that the Music Theatre is a hugely experimental project, and cannot be seen in the same light as Opera performances on the basis of the innovations embedded in Music Theatre. Ryan Green consequently seeks to provide this clarity on music theatre which he considers not to be a popular performance practice based on its cost of productive and the complexities that come with the assemblage of a functional orchestra. He argues that:

> Music theatre does not necessarily have a continuous plot in order to make the scenic representation convincing since musical completeness can be conveyed with the residue of a plot…it is theatre which is muse driven and does not have to include music but "breathe a musical energy which comes from movements and the profession of musicians as performed (Green, 2014: 5).

Elsewhere, Thom Andrews makes an even more compelling argument on the nature of Music theatre and the need to delineate its differences from "popular" misconceptions such as Opera and Musicals. The conjectures in the above statement make for complex viewing, and only complicate what should be a simple background check on the nature of music to dance musicals. I do not attempt therefore to be drawn into this extemporaneous argument on what Music theatre is or is not. Both authors here are studious proponents of the fundamental aesthetics that define music Theatre, and whether it be Music Theatre, Opera, Operatta, musicals etcetera, the most germane thing to this discuss is that one very vital connection between all these categories, that "music" above all form the fulcrum of any discuss on the respective categories. It is in this light that an approach be made on the two terms "music" and "theatre" as independent of one another.

Music in the theatre is basically used in play performances to establish mood or provide background noise among an array of other functions. Music as an art of the theatre traces its roots to ritual origins and ceremonies. The use of music on ballet follows a trend where music now partners the accentuation of movements by the ballet dancer as designed by the choreographer. Felner (2013) states the six elements that make up any drama according to Aristotle to include: plot, character, thought, diction, music and spectacle. This shows that music has always enjoyed reverence in the formation of theatre and has existed since antiquity till date. Music in specific parts of a play performs a set of differently aligned functions.

Difference between Musical Theatre and the Opera

Musical theatre basically refers to a kind of theatre that strives towards a confluence between acting, dance and music. It uses these media as a means to communicate a certain message or aesthetic satisfaction for the audience. As such, practitioners are encouraged to be vast in the three fundamental areas to ensure success in this form of theatre. (Kenrick, 2008: 14).

Musical theatre, through some salient features differs from the Opera as a form of theatre. Through the presence of the text, emphasis on acting, and the amplification given to actors, it negates some stringent principles governing the performance of Opera, like the Italian opera whose primary focus"going back to its Camerata foundations in the early Seventeenth century, was that the human voice represented the noblest and most ideal musical instrument, an instrument capable of expressing the entire range of human emotions and passion, aspirations, yearnings and desires."(Fisher. 2003: 128).

Firstly, Musical theatre deviates from Operas on the basis of the text which includes the dialogue, music and certain directives upon which the performance shall be built on. The text offers a blueprint for this kind of theatre. This is unlike Operas, therefore which does not entirely need a dramatic sequence but instead relying on musical scores and compositions.

> As with any other literary form, the primary job of a musical is to tell a story- or in the case of a revue, to tell a number of brief stories via songs and skits. When all goes well, a musical's blend of song, dance and the visual arts entertains, evoking an intellectual as well as an emotional response, but in order for any of these elements to matter, a musical must tell a compelling story in a compelling way. (Kenrick, 2008: 14).

Operas primarily focus on the Music as its most significant instrument of creation and identity, and require a lavishly assembled team of composers to function. Musical theatre makes use of an "orchestra" also, but emphasis shifts from music, instead drawing a parallel between the singing and the acting.

> Perhaps the only factor that unifies all types of song in musicals is that each is a heightened expression of a character's experience- a slice of life we go through via the combination of sung words and music. Unlike popular music we listen to on the radio, musicals depend on the story and characters that surround them for specific meaning (Deer and Veera, 2008: 51)

In respect to the singing, Operas adore the use of the natural voices of the singers in its performances, to the accompaniment of musical instruments. Musical theatre on the other hand adopts enabling technologies to amplify the voices of the singers, making ardent use of the microphones and speakers. While opera might involve a bit of dancing, the ratio of singing to dance differs between Opera and Musical theatre.

> Bel canto Opera becomes the materialization of the ideal that the voice was a divine and sacred gift, as such, singing was considered both an art and a science, and Bel Canto Operas were composed first and foremost as showcases for singers to demonstrate feats of vocal virtuosity; as a result, dramatic and theatrical elements generally became secondary considerations, the underlying literary values of the librettos generally insignificant, and the dramas rarely bearing any organic relationship or integration with their underlying music. In Bel canto Operas, the art of singing was the priority, not heightened dramatic conflicts and tensions. (Fisher, 2003: 128).

Musical theatre offers more dancing to the spectators than is permissible in the Opera, thus marking a major shift in both forms. The music does play an important role, and all actors are supposed to serve this essence both in Musical and the Opera. However, as a further deviation to the provisions of the Opera, and the function of its participants to the entire performance, Green does well to state that:

> Contemporary music theatre works such as *Once*(2011) completely blur the lines between musician and actor by creating spoken and named roles in the book allowing the musician to slip in and out of accompanying the vocalists and helping developing the story (Green, 2014: 7).

While these differences may abound, it is safe to say that musical theatre may have had its influences over time. Jazz and Blues music, like Opera, have consequently influenced the developments of Musical theatre. As Taylor (2012) asserts, Jazz music and blues were initially "associated with performance in churches and at funerals" and had a "lower status" because of its "sexual and racial connotations (Taylor. 2012: 41). Yet, through radio which carried it to a wider public, it became immensely popular. It is in the nature of Musical theatre hence to adopt this rising trend as the music does not represent a time in history, and Musical theatres tell stories associated with the people. (Jones, 2003: 1).

Performance Analysis of *Legends the Musical*

The performance *Legends the Musical* exists as a theatrical show piece that captures the thriving nature of commercial musical theatre in Nigeria, with centers like Lagos and Abuja (areas toured by the performance) being one of the major regions. The *Legends the Musical* brings to light a very innovative storyline based on dexterous thinking that situates the piece within the African framework, but is bold in its approach to use this framework as a unifying essence for most of the gods present in the work. It borrows from the African pantheon, and makes bold in its approach to think of a possible existence and convergence of certain gods as may include Nerfetiti, Asantewa, etcetera who the performance conceives as being able to work together towards a common goal.

As such, all of these gods come together within the space of the performance to tackle what may be seen as a menace to the African race. Achieving this bears great cost of misrepresenting history or under representing it, and it is safe to say that *Legends the Musical*, through its simple yet enthralling storyline captures the necessary details of such historical referencing.

All gods must hence converge to combat the rising menace of the "Shadow" which exists as an entity in the spiritual realm. This entity, which we may otherwise call a spirit, has possessed a young man named "Pete" seemingly in search of love. Pete goes up the mountain in search of love. There he meets the elegant Zina known as the princess. Zina is engrossed with her service to '*Modaland*' and is only capable of this kind of love. Pete discovers that the only way to Zina's heart is to devote himself to Zina's cause, which is both the servitude and salvation of her '*Modaland*'.

In the development of the plot, Shadow enters the young Pete, and is set on causing havoc to the entire *Modaland*. In a bid to save her community therefore, Zina calls on all the gods to come to her aid. There is thus an enthralling battle between Shadow and the gods; enthralling not exactly because of the fight sequence that may eventually be used in depicting this happenstance, but the visual and historical feast it presents, having separate gods with their individual powers combining to magnificent purpose. Shadow almost succeeds in defeating these gods until Zina, through her love, sings with her melodious voice which then saves Pete from the ensuing parasitic relationship with the Shadow. While this shows a case of great warfare, it is also an apt portrayal of the power of love, romance and indeed beauty, combining to provide the emotional spectacle needed for a thriving dance theatre.

Hybridization in the performance of *Legends the Musical*

Hybridization in the theatre as has been explained follows through in the many fusions already existing and being created to make for new and diverse ways to theatre practice and appreciation. Through the multiple facets of inter-culturalism and multiculturalism, Hybridization appears to already have a strong hold on performances in the arts. There are still traditional performances that refuse to bend to the whim and caprices of the Hybridization effect, but several Directors and Choreographers have begun to set out newer ways to expression and artistry. Hybridization, seen visibly in *Legends the Musical* may thus be analyzed on its influence to the forms of the theatre present in the work which primarily included Dance, Drama and Music; the costuming as well as the performance codes. All of these provided important outlets needed to build a comprehensive discuss.

As a reference to an interview held with Mr. Floyd Igbo, the hybridism in *Legends the Musical* may be found in the mixture of theatrical elements and cultures. The merger of the cultures of the people from across Africa highlighted by the four legends: Nerfititi of Egypt, Shaka of Zulu land, Yaa Asantewa and Queen Amina show that the performance has been used as an enabling platform to put into motion the hallmarks of hybridity. Consequently through all of these we see, according to him, the power of "pan Africanism". Here, every African can connect to its history as well as other materials of our culture to foster a truly vibrant, progressive African continent. Hybridization in the performance of *Legends the Musical* will be discussed under the following sub topics: Forms of the theatre, Costuming and Musical theatre

Forms of Theatre

The forms of theatre under review included Dance, Music and Acting. The performance borrows steps from Egypt, down to Nigeria. It also makes use of the contemporary dance technique, with dancers visibly seen pointing their feet. The contemporary dance style, distinct in its feature, and having been pioneered by Isadora Duncan, has gone on to be subjected to several interpretations with the individual

Choreographer's or Dancer's expression. These qualities hold true in the dance and is seen with the ambience of lights and sounds. The dancers engage in what is a properly balanced performance on the basis of the stage usage and the pictures evident in the piece.

Here, we see a female dancer ushered in on stage by another male dancer. Before this, other dancers have been arranged in an ascending structure, to create platforms with their bodies upon which to stand and move. It is through this that the lady climbs from one level to the next, until she meets the end of this structure. She stands with both feet on the shoulders, and with two timely gestures to the sky, falls, to be received from the shoulders by another male dancer. She continues to beckon to the sky, while the earlier structure upon which she came dissipates from dancer to dancer. The apt use of the human body in capturing this rise to prominence of the African essence is commendable, and goes on to show how dance can be used as an instrument for expression and negotiation of time line, both past and present. The climb made by the female dancer may be seen as an attempt to connect the past to the future as a means to living out the present.

Elsewhere, we see the dancers arranged in a circle, with their hands locked into one another to make for a chain like structure. At the middle of this circle stands a female dancer on the shoulders of a male dancer. These create three basic levels in the dance: the dancers in the round are bent in a trance like state to make for a different level with the male dancer who sands whilst carrying the female dancer make up the third level. This dancing reminds us primarily of the African history of ritual making in obeisance to a god or deity. That this is done within the structure of a European model makes for a confluence of two different traditions, further captured in the costume design that is not significant of the quintessential African prints or animal skin.

As has been said, globalization makes it easier for people and cultures to meet, thus making the world smaller and accessible to one another. As Mr. Floyd rightly stated, globalization ensures that "countries can rise above self-interest and act together" while also fostering "integration, openness and collaborative networks". He envisions globalization in how all of the legends, despite being of separate cultures, evidently come together to fight to protect the *Modaland* and achieve a "collective goal". He enthuses as well, that the priestess' belief in globalization is seen in how she summons all the legends form different parts of Africa.

Also, we see some Afro dancing embedded in the work, with the guards taking care to show fanciful footwork consequent of the dance style. Dancers first move together on two lines of no less than three per line, as if to do a parade. This dance serves to make for a comic relief to the entire performance. The Music, which is a live playing of a previously sung song, begins to play. In a spontaneous vibe, the dancers begin a masterful execution of moves laden with synchronicity and precision. The dance majorly involves rapid leg movements within a given space, coupled with sleek waist movements and a bourgeoning smile on the faces of the dancers. It is performed at such pace as may attract admiration from the audience. Its expressive qualities make for a sort of craze, with the upper body taking contortedly funny positions to show the excitement of the dance to the dancer and indeed the audience.

Elsewhere, we see the Egyptian dancing, with features such as the hand pointed in opposing directions outside of the shoulder line and the head motioning left to right while looking straight to the audience. The dance has been used to depict the Egyptian god Nerfititi adapted into the story, and functions as an important instrument of this representation.

Through Music, we see that there is a blend between orchestral music originally composed by the team, and previously composed popular songs among the audience. This exists severally in the piece. The song danced to by the guards for instance "she don text" is a popular song among lovers of Nigerian Pop Music. The Music therefore sets the tone for the dance that ensues. Consequently, there exists the use of

sound effects to depict certain scenes in the performance, like the descent of Sango for instance. It is important also to consider the use of drums in the emergence of this Yoruba deity. Placing this therefore within the context of the many other gods from several other cultures adapted into the work, a visible essence of music is seen in helping to represent the culture being portrayed and the god being depicted. This makes for a diverse approach to music, as the audience receives tunes from several places across Africa.

Having mentioned Dance and Music, the Drama therefore becomes an inevitable discuss. To better discuss this then, considerations must be placed to character and characterization in the scripting of the *Legends the Musical* performance. A referral point is the character of "Shadow" who cannot exactly be placed within the European context, nor can it easily be placed within the African frame. Shadow is however a boisterous character, evil as some may call, with a single purpose: destruction. While English may have been the general language employed in the entire performance, the language of Shadow and its diction differs from that of the other characters. While the language of the other characters may further be earmarked by the clothing to suggest a pinpoint historical location, that of Shadow places it in a different cultural angle. Shadow is dressed in animal fur as a robe, with tight denim jeans and a round necked shirt to suggest a location within the European setting. As such, characterization for the actor appears to be in sharp contrast with that of the other actors, but a confluence of all these forms of acting adopted to fit different traditions lays bare the impact of Hybridization in the work.

Costuming

Costumes played a remarkable role in the performance of *Legends the Musical*, and credit must indeed go to the designer. The costumes made for a possible and effective design to the rather experimental approach of the Director and sponsors of this Musical theatre piece. Among the costumes on display include the Zulu, Egyptian and Ghanaian designs all represented within their cultural frames.

The Ashanti for instance was represented within their usual Ashanti prints, which shone brightly under the lights used in the performance. The Zulu costume was made out of animal furs and of animal prints, with further indications of props present in the shields and spears used by the Zulu warriors. The Shadow character was seen in black animal fur worn as a robe, and the color of the fur aptly captures the "Shadow" qualities of the character, as a means provoking fear and terror. As he moves around, this robe becomes a cape, thus capturing shadow as a character with supernatural powers and also gives him that aura and charisma with which to dwell the character as he perpetrates his evil.

***Legends the Musical* as more of a Musical than an Opera**

As mentioned earlier, several writers have devoted articles to a comprehensive discuss on the points of divergence and indeed convergence of Music theatre to other forms such as the opera and Operetta. As such, a section of this research has provided reviews on these points raised by these writers. It is on the basis of these points therefore that this research hence motions to point the performance of *Legends the Musical* as more of a Musical theatre than an Operatic performance.

Several things point out what a musical theatre is or can be defined by. Some of these include the story, the relationship of the story to the music, amongst other factors such as dancing and singing. It is on these bases therefore that *Legends the Musical* in terms of its structure may be placed within the frame of a Musical theatre piece.

First and Foremost, as common in most operatic performance, the music is the most important element of the performance, and all other sub elements only serve to aid the overall effectiveness of the music. Thus, the music stands at a more relevant percentage to the overall production, taking the bulk of this scale. On this basis, *Legends the Musical* while thriving in its ardent musical compositions does not have such a huge percentage of its performance conceptualization given to music.

Secondly, the Opera deals more with accomplished singers whose natural voices leave the audience in awe and admiration. The voice in Operas may be regarded to be of a heavenly status thus making for its prominent use. Singing therefore becomes the major artistic specialization of the performers form which many other requirement may then ensue. Some of these singers therefore may have pursued a career in professional singing at some points. In *Legends the Musical*, ambience is given to this voice to cover the limitations that may be present in it. The use of microphones is evident to help the actor project. This becomes important in ensuring that the performer concentrate on other aspects of his stage presence other than his voice, thus making a major shift from the norm that is of operatic performances. While there are persons with careers on music present in the play, the purpose for their inclusion differs to that of the Opera. The Opera uses them as a means to attain more quality in Musical rendition, but the inclusion of these persons in *Legends the Musical* was majorly from a commercial point, helping to sell the performance to potential sponsors and audiences. These points have shown why *Legends the Musical* may not be tagged an Operatic performance.

In Nigeria, there is a growing realization that good theatre shows would most likely attract more audience attendance. As a result, more theatre producers are not only investing more time in producing theatre shows of remarkable quality, but also investing more resources into these shows. The result of this follows an increased patronage of what the said theatre company has to offer, with the audience and indeed sponsors confident of getting the value for the money paid. This bolsters the commercial value and increases the avenues for revenue growth and increment on the part of the theatre companies.

As Mr. Floyd Igbo said, the "concomitant effect for paying good money to see a show is that, people sit in those seats and demand excellence and that is why many Broadway shows are excellent. They give you the value for your money".

Summary and Conclusion

Hybridization continues to influence, not just the world of arts, but as well science and technology. The theatre has always had remedies to new introductions of the society, imbibing new technologies as they appear to improve the art form thus enabling its survival. People will always continue to travel and this trend would only ensure that the impact of hybridization as may entail exchange and interaction of ideas and people of different races and socio cultural background become more forceful in the contemporary world.

This makes for an intertwined relationship with hybridization in the arts, and the factors that make globalization possible directly and indirectly influence the byproducts of the Hybridization process which may include creation of independently new art forms, experimentation, or the juxtaposition of ideas that seem contradictory as a sort of Anachronism, which may hence be done through alternate historical timelines or disparately existing arts such as painting and dance for instance. The question of authenticity continues to be a topic of hot debate, but one only need to look at the Modernist period and see that some conventions are born out of previously existing ones. The contemporary dance form for instance is said to have been birthed as a reaction to the classical ballet. Yet it borrowed some of the conventions of the Ballet into its own performance lexicon.

The art and the artist as two entities must be influenced from both the internal and external. Internal and external influences may abound in the artist's travel or various reading or exposure to several other works within and out of his field. If the new creation then, born out of this influence does not bastardize or ridicule that which it may have borrowed from, does it matter if the artist skillfully and intelligently discovers and utilizes an information to improve his art? The art is incomplete without the audience, as such is designed primarily for their consumption. Art is to be consumed and experienced, like the theatre; so why not we appreciate new and innovative ways to make this process enriching to old and new audiences?

Musical Theatre in my view should hence not be flagged for inappropriate usage of Theatre conventions or anachronistic implementation of artistic ideas as may lay hold in the performance of *Legends the Musical*. It is a boisterous art that has travelled from Europe down to Africa, with many benefits abounding in practitioners who have found ways to ensure that a Musical Theatre oriented performance is commercially successful and beneficial.

Its engaging story line, emphasis on aesthetics, and the blend of Dance, Music and Drama may further become a useful tool to reviving the sleeping nature that has become the theatre culture in Nigeria. Audience members can hence go to the theatre to be informed, educated, and entertained at the same time, with Musical theatre serving to drive this essence. Whether or not the debate on Musical theatre as not Opera or Operetta linger among theatre scholars today, the simple structure of a Musical evident in its use of Music, Choreography, Dialogue, Sets etcetera is enough to help the lay man identify *Legends the Musical* as a Musical theatre piece.

Lagos continues to set the pace for what theatre should be and can be within a Nigerian space, and other states can only look to the examples being set and learn from them. Inter-culturalism and Multiculturalism ensure that a partnership can exist between states, where the practitioners and stakeholders in the top echelons of each state can find better ways of improving a dormant theatre culture. Musical theatre provides this escape route from such dormancy.

The story of *Legends the Musical* follows a simple plot: Young Pete is in love with a beautiful girl, has his body overtaken by a spirit called Shadow. The girl beckons on several gods to come to the aid of both Pete and the land, but it is Love which defeats Shadow and saves Pete and subsequently, *Modaland*.

To have brought several gods from differently existing cultures makes for a bold approach to theatre. Each of these gods has lived out their lives in different historical times, but has been conceived to possibly converge to save a dying race. As such, gods such as Sango conversant among the people of Western Nigeria was conjured, alongside the Egyptian goddess, Ashantewa of Ghana and Shaka of South Africa all combining to fight the strength of Shadow. As a means to further analyzing this context, one may look to the dark cloud that covers the African people. Politics, economy, society amongst others have an air of uncertainty over them as a result of bad governance and a despairing state of neo colonial rule. It thus threatens the very fabric of what it is to be African as the people seem incapable of proffering a possible solution. This then means that the most powerful gods be consulted to do justice to such menace, thus leading to the personification of this darkness in the character of "Shadow".

Other explanations abound in what is a truly hybrid theatre. The tension and suspense of the dramatic genre mixed with the boisterousness of the Dance form in consonance with the elegance of the Musical art. The totality of such an experience forms the core of Musical theatre, and every of its detail tailored to achieving such successful hybrid.

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