
**THE PLAYWRIGHT-DIRECTOR IN NIGERIAN THEATRE PRACTICE:
HENRY LEOPOLD BELL-GAM IN FOCUS**

Edum, Sunday*

*PhD,

*Department of Theatre and Film Studies,
Faculty of Humanities,
University of Port Harcourt,
NIGERIA

DOI: 10.5958/2249-7137.2023.00024.1

ABSTRACT

Nigerian theatre directing scholars have ventured into the interpretation of not just plays written by other playwrights but plays which they authored. Ola Rotimi, Wole Soyinka, Femi Osofisan, Ahmed Yerima, Sunday Ododo, Ben Binebai etc readily come to mind in this regard. This paper evaluates the contributions of Henry Leopold Bell-Gam as a Director-Playwright in the development of theatre practice in Nigeria. The paper notes that Henry Leopold Bell-Gam contributions to the growth of theatre is borrowed from the Aquatic life of the Ijaw culture and as such recommends that budding theatre scholars promote their traditional untapped culture through documentation and graphic presentation on stage and screen. This in our view will help in generating historical materials for scholars and cultural enthusiasts as well as promote peace and development within the society .

KEYWORDS; *Playwright, Director, Playwright-Director, Theatre, Practice.*

WORKS CITED

Adedeji, Joel "Theatricalism and Traditional African Theatre" *The Arts and Civilization of Black and African Peoples*, Volume 1. Okpaku, Opubor, et-al (Eds). Lagos: Third Press International, 1986

Adeoye Abdulrasheed "On Theatre Scholarship and Controversy: "The Case of the Director in the Traditional African Theatre" *The African symposium: An Online Journal of the African Educational Research Network*. 84 Volumes 10, No. 2, December: 84-93, 2010

Ayakoroma, Barclays Foubiri. *Re-inventing Live Theatre Practice in Nigeria: Leveraging on the Power of the Television Medium*. Retrieved from the web @www.nico.gov.ng

Bell-Gam, Henry Leopold. *Igbuduogu*. Port Harcourt: Pam Unique, 1997.

----- *Ube Republic*. Port Harcourt: AGV Multi-Project 2000.

----- *No Sacrifice No Marriage*, Port Harcourt: Paragraphics, 1998.

----- *Enemies of Destiny* Port Harcourt: AGC Multi-Project, 2002.

----- *Mrs. Manfred's Dream*, Port Harcourt: AGC Multi-Project, 2002.

----- *The Hidden Treasure*, Port Harcourt: AGV Multi-project,

----- “Theatre Directing. An Introductory Statement.” *Theatre in Theory and Practice for Beginners*. Ed. Henry Bell-Gam. Port Harcourt. University of Port Harcourt Press, 2007. 71-87.

-----The Directorial Function of the Master Drummer in Nji-Owu Performance of Opobo’ *Journal of Arts and Humanities*, Lokoja: Kogi State University Press, Vol.2. 2003: 9-15.

----- *Erebie*, Port Harcourt: VchgasPercetions, 2006.

Brockett, Oscar. *The Theatre: An Introduction*. New York: Rinehart, Holt and Winston, 1969.

Brook, Peter. *The Empty Space*. New York: Atheneum, 1968

Burns, Elizabeth. *Theatricality: A Study of Conventions in the Theatre and Social Life*. London: Longmans, 1972.

Cameron, M. Kenneth and Gillespie, P. Patti. *The Enjoyment of Theatre*. USA: Macmillan, 2000.

Clurman, Harold. *On Directing*. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1972.

Cohen, Robert *Theatre*. 2nd ed. California: Mayfield, 1988

Downs, Missouri Williams et al. *Experiencing the Art of Theatre*. USA: Holly J. Allen, 2007

Effiong, Johnson. *Play Production Process*. Lagos: Concept Publication Limited, 2001. Print

Emasealu, Emmanuel. *Theatre of Ola Rotimi: Production and Performance Dynamics*. Mina: Gurara, 2010.

Esslin, Martin. *An Anatomy of Drama*. London: Temple Smith, 1976.

Fernald, John. “Acting” *Drama and the Theatre, With Radio, Film and Television: An Outline for the Student*. London: Rutledge, 1971

Gassner, John. *Producing the Play*. N.Y Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc., 1941

Gbilekaa, Saint. “The Practice of Literary Theatre in Nigeria: Prospects and Constraints.” *Nigerian Theatre Journal: A Journal of the Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA)*, 8, 2005: 7-15.

George and Kernodle, Portia. *Invitation to the Theatre*. USA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971

Johnson, Effiong. *Play Production Process*. Lagos: Concept Publication Limited, 2001.

-----*The Dreams of Obio*, Owerri: Springfield Publishers, 1997.

Whiting, Frank. *Introduction to Theatre* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World), 1968.

Whitmore, John. *Directing Postmodern Theater: Shaping Signification in Performance*. USA: University of Michigan Press, 1994.

Wikipedia (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/theatre-director) 201

Wilson, Edwin and Goldfarb, Alvin. *Theatre: Theatre Lively Art*. 3rded. USA: McGraw-Hills, 1999.

Wright, Edward. *Understanding Today’s Theatre*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Englecliff, 1972
