

Harmonizing Art and Business in *Wakaa-the Musical's* Production Management: A Case Study

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Abstract: In the pursuit of maximizing audience engagement in theatrical productions, producers prioritize both box office revenue and the paramount aspect of artistic excellence, navigating the complex journey from creative conception to live stage performance demands meticulous managerial oversight. The success of theatrical collaborations hinges on the shrewd business acumen exhibited by managers as they navigate the intricate web of factors influencing a production, including content, cast, crew, production dates, ticketing, venue selection, and socio-economic considerations. This research delves into the exemplary case of *Wakaa-the Musical*, directed by Bolanle Austen-Peters, as a paradigmatic representation of contemporary Nigerian stagecraft. Examining the myriad stages preceding the inaugural performance, the study underscores the pivotal role played by judicious allocation of resources and adherence to a meticulously planned schedule. A discerning analysis of *Wakaa's* production management illuminates the nuanced interplay between artistic vision and pragmatic execution. Drawing on a blend of scholarly literature and insights gleaned from interviews with the production manager, this study unravels the intricate phases of *Wakaa*, shedding light on the strategies employed by the production management team to achieve success. The findings conclusively affirm that effective production management is not a serendipitous occurrence but a purposeful undertaking aimed at birthing well-conceived and impeccably executed shows. The imperative of judiciously managing time, resources, undertaking due diligence, and making informed executive decisions emerges as the linchpin of a triumphant theatrical production. This research contributes valuable insights to the discourse on the deliberate and strategic nature of production management in ensuring the success of live performances.

Keywords: Theatre production, Audience traffic, Gate takings, Production quality, Theatrical collaborations and Managerial inputs.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the unfolding tapestry of Nigerian stage productions, a dynamic evolution has transpired since the inception of professional theatre practice in the early 1940s. While the pioneering efforts of Hubert Ogunde marked a significant chapter, the trajectory of theatrical exhibitions, reminiscent of film shows at the Glover Memorial Hall from 1903, foreshadowed an era of academic prospects. The subsequent establishment of WNTV in 1959, the TV College, and the Nigerian Film Corporation and Film Institute in Jos, Plateau State, injected substantial value into theatrical productions.

This paper delves into the nuanced evolution of Nigerian stage productions, tracing the transformative impact of key institutions and influential figures such as Hubert Ogunde, Duro Ladipo, and Wole Soyinka. A meticulous examination reveals the strategic planning, effective management, and meticulous execution that characterized their theatrical endeavors. Over the years, astute observers have noted the technical and managerial prowess exhibited by Nigerian theatre practitioners

in the show business domain. The multifaceted role played by theatrical productions in Nigeria extends beyond mere entertainment; it serves as a vital avenue for income generation and the projection and preservation of diverse cultural, religious, ideological, sociological realities, and general worldviews. Despite the longstanding history of theatrical productions, academic investigations into institutional theatrical management have received limited and sporadic attention.

Drawing parallels with the historical management structures of Western Theatre in Athenian Greece, where festivals were meticulously overseen by appointed officials, this paper emphasizes the dearth of comprehensive academic exploration into the management principles of Nigerian theatrical institutions. A Choregus, in the person of a wealthy citizen in Athens was appointed to sponsor the ceremonies which were a civic duty. “These festivals were managed by an Archon during the Greek period, Magistrate/Dominus during the Roman period, the Clergy during the medieval period, and during the Elizabethan period different troupes managed the productions of the period” (Wainscott and Fletcher, 176-184).

Until the academic recognition of the importance of management principles in Nigeria, it is essential to note that successful productions have held. While it may seem like prospective theatrical institutions are ignorant of the management dynamics of show business, Awodiya asserts that management as a course was first introduced into the syllabus of the department of Theatre Arts, University of Ibadan in 1974 and later, it spread to other Universities who embraced and inculcated arts management courses in their curricula (47). Subsequently, other universities embraced and incorporated arts management courses into their curricula, underscoring the imperative for a comprehensive understanding of the management dynamics inherent in show business.

While the prospect of successful productions beckons, it is essential to acknowledge the dual nature of the challenges and opportunities that accompany singular and collective efforts in the theatrical realm. This paper endeavors to unravel the critical elements of men and resources, elucidating their pivotal roles in the intricate process of creating a compelling and audience-worthy theatrical presentation.

Management; Definitions and Experiences in Nigeria.

In different circles, even outside the theatre, managing comes as an all-encompassing attempt at putting necessary mechanism together in order to realise the optimum results during a profitable endeavour. In a family, church, class room, office or a village/town/country, there is the utmost need to make things work. It is imperative to understand that the meaning of management is not discipline specific as the term can mean different things to different people at different times. This is not to say that the definition of production management contradicts the general concept regarding man-made efforts to make things work. At other times, the need to avoid wastage and strict compliance with time schedules, set down rules, ability to work with minimal resources and produce maximum benefits conjoin to make management a hard subject which cuts across a wide array of academic and real-life subject. According to Kuye:

Management is the process of co-ordinating and utilising human and material (equipment, machines tools, financial capital, etc.) components to accomplish organisational goals effectively and efficiently. Management is a practice and a process by which managers create, direct, maintain and operate purposeful organisation through integrated and co-operative human effort (11).

In Kuye’s definition of management, focus is on the fact that management is a process which involves frugal use of resources, both human and materials such as; tools, machines and so on to achieve a set goal. Fayol identifies management activities such as; planning, organising, commanding, co-coordinating and controlling (102). Taylor looked at management from a different view by stating that it is an; “Art of knowing what you want to do and then seeing that it is done the best and cheapest way” (3). This involves applying one’s skills into the act of management. Drucker avers that; “Management is work and as such it has its own skills, its own tools and its own techniques” (23). Management is the entirety of all those activities that when all these resources are put into operations through thorough organization, determined purposes, plans, objectives, policies and programmes, direct and motivate the men at work, supervises and control their performance, secure men, material, machinery economically and provide maximum prosperity, satisfaction and happiness for both employer and employees and the public at large.

According to Diakpomere, the earliest history of management can be dated from antiquity, where it is affirmed that “Interpretations of early Egyptian papyri, extending as far back as 1300B.C. indicates the recognition of the importance of organisation and administration in the bureaucratic states of antiquity. The parable of Confucius offered practical suggestions for a proper public (47-48). Also in the Western theatre which dates back to the fifth century BC Greek when

theatrical activities and their management were set around the Greek festival, a structured format for show business were outline. The Greek Athenian commonwealth with its councils, courts, administrators, etc. indicates a high understanding and applications of managerial functions (Diakpommere 48). “Socrates gave one of the earliest definitions of management as a skill separate from technical knowledge and experience” (Dutton 124).

According to Brockett:

The Choregoi or Choregoi (singular) performed this duty in rotation as a part of their civil and religious responsibility borne a large share of the expenses of play production, underwrote the training and costuming of the chorus and probably paid the musicians, in addition, he may have supplied properties and supernumerary actors and may have met other demands (51).

Theatrical performances in Rome, like Greece were given during official religious festivals, or Ludi, to honour various Greek/Roman gods. Brockett says that “The state festival at which the entertainment were given were under the management of the magistrates, who receives a grant to cover expenses. The magistrates themselves frequently supplies additional funds, since a well- received festival reflected honour on them” (12). During this period there were managers for acting troupes and they bought plays from authors, arranged for properties, costumes and music. The magistrates also doubled as a censor’s board and thus plays were performed before them before it is taken to the public for public consumption. Publicity of plays during this period was done with the aid of poster that stated other attractions involved in the production and the magistrate saw to that.

Awodiya notes that:

Some of the legacies of the Roman period from a management point of view, includes adequate planning and organising of performances in terms of finance, personnel, production, audience, admission, auditorium, and other basic aspects of theatrical practice. The foundation of state support for theatrical practice was laid by the magistrate during this period (52).

This is to attest to the fact that this period had managers although they were not called production managers, but their duties were the same as what the production managers do presently. It also shows that every production done during this period required a level of management as this helped in the planning and organising of productions. The duty of the production manager during the medieval period was attributed to the clergy who performed exclusively the duty of a manager. Continuing, Awodiya asserts that; “The clergy played the role of the producer-actor-manager as they procured finances, acted the roles and organised the performances in the church” ... (Awodiya 53). When drama left the church, different troupes took over the managerial aspect of theatre from the clergy. Furthermore, Awodiya says that for example, “In Northern England, the town council and trade guilds shared in responsibilities. The council decided whether the performances would be given in a particular year; it assigned the plays to individual guilds, held the approved copy of the script and demands faithful adherence to it. The majority of the work and expenses fell to the guilds” (Awodiya 14). Theatre during the renaissance spread from Italy, to different countries like England, Germany, Spain, and France and so on and were perhaps managed by their production companies. When Elizabethan became queen in 1558, Brockett points out that:

Any gentleman could maintain a troupe of actors. Any actors not employed by a gentleman was classed a vagabond and was subject to severe penalties. Since the troupe patronized by gentlemen were allowed to tour when not needed at home, actors weren’t closely supervised, and many illegal companies falsely claimed patronage or performed partisan plays (114).

From this statement, maintenance and management of troupes was considered highly essential. The renaissance was notable in the Spanish theatre during the 1700s as the government was involved in the licensing of theatre troupes. There were two kinds of licensed companies: sharing companies (companies de parte) and salaried actor’s tracts (Brockett 146). These licensed companies were responsible for the managerial aspect of the troupes. Continuing, Brockett assert that “The company gave them fix sum for each performance, and if companies had to travel to perform, it might receive additional payment since travelling from one engagement to another was time consuming and costly. ... Contracts often specified allowances for travel, as well as the type of lodging and food to be provided on the road” (146).

Commedia Dell’ Arte was a major contribution of the Italian renaissance, there were troupe of dramatis not consisting more than ten to twelve members that performed at different locale. Brockett notes that; “Their productions were supervised by the leaders or most respected member of the troupe. This leader was responsible to explain the character relationship, clarify the action, enumerate the lazzi, and acquire the properties needed” (181). These responsibilities are equally the duties of production management, this indicates that theatre suffers from lack of management and benefits from it as well depending on the creativity, socio-economic dynamics and theatrical template upon which plays are created.

According to Adeoye; “No matter the nature of a performance, its cultural affinity or traditional bondage, there must be somebody or a group of people that will be saddled with the responsibility of performing a seemingly artistic, technical and or managerial function in ensuring the success of the would be performance or theatre” (230). Suffice to say that production management is an integral part of theatre practice, it was practised during the time past and at present. A prominent figure in the Nigerian theatre space was Hubert Ogunde who founded his own theatre that was mainly made up of his wives and children. Ogunde’s impart can never be over looked in the theatre of Nigeria, and also this theatre developed and was able to survive all the destructive processes of time, and likewise influenced subsequent theatrical ensemble in Nigeria at large. In the view of Adedeji; “The approach to the survival syndrome rests on the fact that each troupe-leader-husband, as it were, and the resources available to him direct relationship to the talents, skills and capabilities of members of his family” (76). The husband serves as the manager and was in charge of planning, organising and controlling the theatre although every member had to contribute to the success of the troupe, the husband was in charge, they knew that there was a need to manage this troupe and hence someone who functions as a manager indeed.

In the light of the above, Adedeji highlights the following points when he said that:

Touring schedules must be skilfully planned and prudently executed. Transportation costs, road hazard and operational logistics, are items which cannot be taken for granted but maintained not only under divine guidance but also sufficient empirical disposition.... Feeding cost is minimised through self-provision and making do with what is available at any point. The approach is haphazard but it has its sustaining power which keeps the group together as a buoyant co-operative (76-77).

From the above statement, it is clarified that there is a need to coordinate all these logistics as well as the skill and talent of the troupe. In addition it is not only important to rehearse and perform but other areas of logistics as well needs to be considered as this is also paramount to the success of the troupe. Therefore, the work of a production manager was contingent to the success of a show, especially when good planning was critical to the artistic and technical wellbeing of the productions at hand. Ogunde’s travelling theatre, unlike the Alarinjo theatre performed to masses at market squares and open air arena; were taken to school halls and town-halls notwithstanding the content. In this case, the managerial prospects of opening new vistas of audience patronage came to be reckoned as a skill for the foresighted. In this regards, Adedeji stated; “he also learnt from the traditional theatre troupe, organisation and theatre management, especially the role of women as the sustaining power of the troupe” (48). This was in consideration of the fact that he understood the essentials of organisational management as a key ingredient for long lasting troupe prosperity which he keyed into it.

Conception and Execution of *Wakaa the Musical*

Wakaa as a production consisted of sixty cast members sourced from within Nigeria and a handful of performers from abroad. The show was staged at the Shell Hall, Muson Centre-Lagos, Nigeria. The production in Nigeria ran for five days from 30th December, 2015 to 3rd of January, 2016. It was later taken to London where it was booked into the Shaw Theatre from the 21st of July through 25th July, 2016. When it opened in London to the audience, on some days it had two shows, making it a total of five days with seven shows. The choice of turning the production into a musical was premised on the supposition that the public would prefer what was trending at the time the initial idea for the show was conceived. This was partially not unconnected with the successful outing of Jay-Z’s *Fela at Broadway* which had a hall packed with live theatre patrons, a rare feat at the time of its debut in Nigeria. According to Umoibom, the production manager of *Wakaa*, they realised that it was difficult to get audience to come see a production due to some factors ranging from the medium of production till the technological advancement of Nigerian entertainment, which bordered on flexible aesthetics were becoming common place in musical theatres. Given the colourful and episodic plot templates inherent in musicals, there was a need to look critically at what Nigerians like, and a recourse to previous outings such as the success of *Saro-the musical* informed the showcase. In this case, it was deciphered that Nigerian stage productions did not pull crowds like the comedy and musical shows presented in the past. To correct the trend, therefore, there was need to infuse entertainment into the performance of live theatrics from a musical point of view. There was also the need to infuse technological innovations into the production of live Nigerian theatre so as to meet up to the standard of the audience because some of them who saw previous shows were well travelled and seen a lot of top notched productions with splendid aesthetics. *Wakaa* was meant to make up for the aesthetic dearth apparent in indigenous shows as well as to dissuade the apathy by indigenous audience who are in the habit of discriminating against patronage of Nigerian shows.

Wakaa was devised with the view to make the performance appealing to the audience by introducing some elements of music, dance, serious entertainment and special effect thereby creating a formula that has become a trend. The production manager Umoibom Joseph was fully involved from the onset of the production. The idea and conception of the production was initiated by Bolanle Austen-Peters after which she met with her team where the production manager was fully drafted into the production from onset. The production manager was brought in to manage the budget, cast, crew and the entire production of *Wakaa*. The idea of the production was discussed and thus the producer/artistic director hired Tunde Babalola to write the script. Later on, Segun Ojawuyi was also brought on board as the dramaturge and these efforts facilitated the work of production management in motion. The budget of the production was drawn based on the scripted idea and how the production was intended run. The executive producer Bolanle Austen-Peters made a budget of fifty million naira for the production available and all the prospects of a well-made play was underway. The producer, it must be noted did not single handily bring out the money but sourced for funds which the production manager in concert assisted in the fund raising bids for the budget. Umoibom was involved and suggested whom to go partner with to raise the required amount for the production.

In the course of time, when the issue of the budget was sorted out the production management team, headed by Umoibom Joseph, had to draw a work sheet that will suit the budget. The initial aspect of the production planning process started with choice of the venue. Shell Hall at Muson Centre, which cost up to N2million was negotiated because of the number of days the hall was intended to be used and agreed upon. The show ran for five days from December 30th, 2015 to 3rd of January 2016, it was scheduled as follows; December 30, 3pm and 7:30pm shows, December 31, 1pm and 5pm shows, January 1, 3pm and 7:30pm shows, January 2, 1pm, 4pm and 7:30 shows, January 3, 3pm and 7:30pm shows. The equipment for the production, payment of cast and crew, hotel, transportation and welfare arrangement and the miscellaneous were all put in the budget so as to manage the laid down budget. The production manager had to create a skeletal framework of what the money will be used for to enable them work within the budget. For *Wakaa* the executive producer was the same as the artistic director whose services were apparently not monetized. In respect of the technical team who were hired by the production manager within the laid down budget, the technical team of *Wakaa* was GAP Productions, a corporate entity. Auditions for the cast at this point began as the advert was put out for the production and people from home and overseas turned up for the audition. Dolapo Oni came from the United Kingdom, Arese from New York, Uzi Agu who schooled abroad came and auditioned and the cast was finally selected. Given the diverse audience the show intended to show before, it was indicated that they wanted people who could speak articulately, and thus went for it. It was observed that much room wasn't given to non-professionals because of the idea of how the production has been conceived and hence making their work both artistically and administratively easier, the management team discussed the payment and the scheduling of the payment to the cast members.

Immediately the cast and crew for the production were selected, schedules were made and the rehearsals ran for between six weeks to two months. However, before the rehearsals started in earnest, the welfare of the cast and crew members had been finalized by the production management team. At this time too, the technical team had been given dates to bring their equipment and the hall and date of the production was already noted down thus leading to early publicity of the production. In view of the two months production dates, because it was less than two months, media houses were contacted to partner with the production and thus were given incentives for their support such as having their logos printed with the programmes and t-shirt. They were given reserved tickets for members and also created awareness of their product or brand through the production. The rehearsal schedule was drawn to know when and what time a particular scene will be blocked and this was communicated to the director, cast and crew members. The rehearsal was at Terra Kulture but because the venue was leased to other theatre people it was paramount to start within the time scheduled. Paramount also was the need to finish within stipulated time so the venue can be used by other troupes who were having a show at Terra Kulture when *Wakaa* was at pre-production stage. All these were done by the management team within the schedule during the rehearsal.

Typical of the production manager was the need to look through his schedule and follow up on what he had started. It was normal for him to always check with the suppliers to avoid disappointment, check with the vendors, and also discuss further with the sponsors of the show who partnered with *Wakaa*. For example, when the banners and advert came out no one was left out. The major sponsors for *Wakaa* the musical was MTN, they were involved from the onset till the end and even when the show went to London, the production had other smaller sponsorships by individuals who were mostly in the form of kindness and support for the show's innovation in the Nigerian theatre circle. The production management team was not really needed at the rehearsal because the director and stage manager handled the artistic and technical responsibilities. The

Production Manager was only called when his presence was critical to the welfare of the show. Thus during this period several arrangements were made so as to avoid waiting for the rehearsal to be over before publicity was kick-started. Matter of expediency was the fact that, although publicity started even before the auditioning, but this time around the publicity was defined as radio and media houses were contacted to begin the announcement and advert for the shows. The production management team also made available interview sessions to radio stations and media houses, but it was done in such a way that did not inconvenience the rehearsal process, as the actors were scheduled to go for their interviews when they were not needed on set. For example, it was normal that the interviewers come to the rehearsal venue and those not currently rehearsing at that time did the interview. This was done in such a manner that the interview did not delay the production in anyway or interfere with the production prospects.

As the rehearsals were ongoing, the production manager made a schedule for run-through as well as dress and technical checks. The schedule was distributed to the director, members of cast and crew and a time format was stipulated in this schedule. During this routine, they realised that there was not enough time for the characters to change and come back on stage within stipulated time frame. In order to address the projected lapse therefore, other cast members were made to 'hold-up' for the period so that the characters might have enough time to change into designated costumes. Also the production management of *Wakaa* knew they were working with some professionals who had other schedules and might not come for rehearsals which may demoralise the others and invariably delay the production. In order to checkmate this, the production manager resolved to exact his authority, by invoking the 'employer' status. As a matter of contingency, he tried not to be too friendly or give away himself as someone who strikes the picture of soft landing for the cast.

The production phase of this show, it should be noted, was scheduled to culminate with the presentations as the five days booked for the performances attracted additional two days booked for set up and loading in of equipment. There were days set aside for sound check as well as dress and technical rehearsals which had a time schedule of their own. The aim of these schedules was to enable them have a quick and swift production when it kicked off. There was the temptation to start early and finish three shows so as to save the cost of an extra day's expenses on the hall. However, considering the wellbeing of the cast and crew, it was imperative that the shows were given when audience traffic was most profitable. *Wakaa's* management team made actor's health and safety a priority by making available, through a partnership with Saint Nicholas Hospital an Ambulance. The provision of this ambulance and medical services was made available both for rehearsals and during the productions so as to forestall any form of stressful breakdown. In spite of this plan, unfortunately, one of the female cast collapsed prior to the production and was instantly rushed to the ambulance and then taken to the hospital. This quick response revived her on time as she was brought back before the production began. More so, this was an intense production that involved singing, dancing and acting, and it ran for five days simultaneously involving the same actors. Therefore provisions were made available to prevent such work place hazards, aside from the medical check unit that was on standby. In addition, honey, glucose and energy drinks were made available for the actors, so they can be in the best form as possible to deliver their roles well.

An aspect of production management that was not left to chance was provision of power for the show. Considering how unstable the Nigerian electric power is without any regards for economic upliftment, the management team made sure to have a standby generating set. The aim was to switch to alternative power once the PHCN (Power Holding Company of Nigeria), with its erratic disposition towards provision of power, fails. If this was not taken into account as the Nigerian situation demands, it had the potential of delaying and inconveniencing the audience members, thus leaving them in the dark. Hence, logistics was key to ensure that generating set fees was paid even though it was not used, eventually. On the day of production the management team managed the venue and audience in terms of ushering and security. The air conditioners, the convenience, and ambience and so on, were doubly inspected so as to satisfy their audience in every way possible. The box office which served as the first point of contact between audience and the show was handled by staff whose human relations' skills were excellent. The ticket fees were ₦ 5,000 for regular, ₦10,000 for standard, ₦25,000 for VIP and ₦50,000 for VVIP. Although, for *Wakaa*, a company was hired to manage that area, the production manager was in charge to make sure everything went smoothly. For example, the special guests and sponsors' tickets were handled by the production manager. The option before special guests with tickets was either they sell it to other guests before the day and have their seats reserved for them or the sponsors sent the list of those that will be coming so the production manager makes sure that they were taken into consideration in case of another show. In order to forestall unwarranted panic as a result of artiste disappearance, all the cast and crew members were lodged in the same hotel throughout the production period. This was done to enable them stay together and being more organised, the production manager made sure their food were given to them and that they were treated well.

Umobom aver that your cast and crew are your responsibility and thus should be given good treatment to maintain a professional working spirit with them. In his view, this enables them maintain a cordial working relationship which made it profitable for them to be available for the London show as well as pledges to be available for the *Wakaa 2*, coming up in December of 2017. As earlier noted management also entails managing people which is very important because without them there is no production. For *Wakaa*, KSquare Company were hired to manage security which is extremely important because the security of the lives and properties of their audience was paramount to them. In a bid to attain a professional outlook, the management of *Wakaa* hired the expert services of 'Mahogany Event' to cater for ushering the guests to their various seats and keeping them comfortable as well as selling the tickets for the show. During the shows, some guests were turned back because the hall was already full to capacity and to avoid a stampede the ticket sales was stopped. Those who have already gotten their ticket through online sales were also turned down and their money returned. *Wakaa* the musical was shown during festive period and there were lots of shows happening concurrently at this period at the Eko Hotel, Ocean View and so on, in Lagos Island. Note also that *Kaakadu* the musical was likewise showing at the same venue concurrently with *Wakaa*. While *Wakaa* was running at the Shell Hall, *Kaakadu* was showing at the Agip Hall, both at Muson Centre. It made ample sense that in spite of the competition, *Wakaa* was oversubscribed in spite of the fact that these shows happened at the same time and venue. In spite of the competition, from records made available by the management of *Wakaa* it had a large audience turn-out and there were no empty seats. Looking at the intense marketing, publicity and reach-out to people; the initial reactions from the first audience seeing the first show went viral through word of mouth and on social media. The hall was filled each day as people, it is said even called after the shows wanting to buy tickets for the subsequent shows. The outcome of the Lagos shows, seeing how high the patronage was for *Wakaa* inspired the demand for its London shows which were booked into the Shaw Theatre. The London outing has also inspired a spin-off *Wakaa 2* coming up this year, December 2017. This goes to show that live theatre in Nigeria only needs to adapt with the intricate interplay of trends to become relevant, artistically and commercially.

2. CONCLUSION

The success of a theatrical show, it seems is not only based on the ability of its management team to give the audience a run for their money's worth, but on how much money it makes. This is true to the viability of *Wakaa* against its competitors when it ran at the Muson Centre, 2015/2016. To the extent that some sold tickets were refunded to avoid over-crowding during the show, the feat was not based on its beautiful previews and reviews, but the financial wellbeing it exuded. Suffice to say the producers invested so much, an uncommon and unlikely lot in the live theatre business in Nigeria, it is logical to say it paid off with the decision to go on tour in the UK. Had *Wakaa* failed, the prospects of dramatic performances reaching a wider audience in the age of diverse entertainment platforms would have announced the death knell of the struggling prospects of live theatre in Nigeria. Theatre management in Nigeria maybe as old as the culture and traditions of the indigenous people of the past, who lived and conducted their affairs in the way befitting of their collective and individual good, yet as modern as the mechanism governing institutional wellbeing, there are ample evidence that live theatre yet thrives. In the theatre, there is a concerted effort employed by managers whose determination to succeed defies the failure syndrome in whatever endeavour they are engaged. In the production of *Wakaa-the musical* for example, notice is served on how the artiste were well taken care of, safety and health-wise, remunerations, accommodation and general welfare. The outcome of the show's delight, as well written about and announced on several social media platforms is but a confirmation of the managerial acumen of the production team. What is therefore glaring is that live theatre in Nigeria only needs to conform to global best practices and it will have unprecedented patronage. In this regards, content and quality, both the product of good resource management as funding dynamics are inevitable, makes good the wellbeing of a show business which will leave a record worth emulating. Nigerian drama, it must be noted, has over the years made in-roads into new markets and left indelible marks, especially where box office returns are the main concern, hence *Wakaa's* exploit, both home and abroad. The production has demonstrated a transparent culture of talent and resource management, as a standard for the promotion of home-grown theatrical exploits and for export purposes.

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APPENDIX I

Interview with the production manager of *Wakaa*; Umoibom Joseph on the managerial aspect of the production by Okwulogu Maureen on Friday September 23, 2016.

Okwulogu Maureen: What kind of play is *Wakaa*

Umoibom Joseph: *Wakaa* is a Musical, it is also a political satire about different graduates who faced the obstacles and challenges of life.

Okwulogu Maureen: Why did *Wakaa* take a different medium of communication which is the musical, is it because people say dialogue drama is becoming outdated?

Umoibom Joseph: theatre was already dying in Nigeria, the number of people that come to see plays are not encouraging at all, when AY does shows the hall is packed, when musicians do shows the hall is full but when thespians do shows we barely see people, so we decided to bring in to productions what Nigerians like, to fuse in the entertainment aspect, what people want, no nobody wants to sit down and listen to long dialogue, so we decided to fuse in dance, drama and music, make it more aesthetically higher by infusing visual equipment to make it look like the Broadway. Most of our audience travel abroad to see plays but when they come back they see something totally different. That is why Bolanle Austen-Peters the artistic director of *Wakaa* decided to add the elements of music, drama and dance, serious entertainment, technical addition and a lot of people are now tilting to musicals and it conveys the messages and adds to the entertainment value the audience are looking for.

Okwulogu Maureen: Were you involved from the onset of the production as the person in charge of production management?

Umoibom Joseph: Yes I was but maybe because of the fact that I work for her as the general manager of Terra Kulture. We sat down together, brainstormed on her idea and decided the crew and cast to hire, we called some on phone, had an audition and came up with the script, it was her story line, and thus she instructed Tunde Babalola to write the script, later on Segun Ojawuyi a Professor of Theatre Arts in the United States who also worked on it. However our production did not end with the way the script was brought because in the course of rehearsals the script keeps changing when directing based on what to make the entertainment level high and the technical aspect right. So I was involved from inception, the conception stage...

Okwulogu Maureen: What was the budget for the production?

Umoibom Joseph: The *Wakaa* budget was over 50million naira.

Okwulogu Maureen: Where was the venue and how much was ticket for the production?

Umoibom Joseph: It was at Shell Hall, Muson Center, Lagos and the ticket fee was #5,000 for regular, #10,000 for standard, #25,000 for VIP and 50,000 for VVIP and all the tickets were sold out.

Okwulogu Maureen: Why was it only performed once in Nigeria before going to London

Umoibom Joseph: Venue cost is a big problem we face in Nigeria, it ends up taking a huge amount from the budget, so we decided to wait for the reconstruction of our building at the Terra Kulture to be completed so as to stage the performance there, although the venue is not so big but the shows will run for long to accommodate enough people.

Okwulogu Maureen: What constitutes the job of a production manager?

Umoibom Joseph: It means to manage the entire project from the budget to logistics, the entire cast and crew, negotiate all the contracts. They are meant to manage the event and budget already made available, not to source for fund, although they can suggest which was what I did, it does not fall under their job description.

Okwulogu Maureen: Are production managers supposed to be involved in the creative aspects of playmaking?

Umoibom Joseph: Yes because it gives an advantage and this helps the production in a way...

Okwulogu Maureen: How long was the rehearsal for *Wakaa*?

Umoibom Joseph: It was within 6 weeks to two months

Okwulogu Maureen: How many cast members were in the show?

Umoibom Joseph: It was about 60 comprising of dancers, musicians and actors...

Okwulogu Maureen: How was it like managing the production?

Umoibom Joseph: The success of a production lies in the pre-production stage, arrangement for the welfare, selected date of performance and venue booked down, technical aspect sorted out, the publicity already running, all these were built ahead. It wasn't easy because you have to manage people's ego, you must have fantastic management skills, because you are managing super stars. You need to exact your authority, don't be over friendly but also have a relationship with them that will enable you to have a good production.

Okwulogu Maureen: Would you say the production thrived because it had no competition at the time of the performance?

Umoibom Joseph: *Wakaa* was at Shell Hall and *Kaakadu* at Agip Hall, both at Muson Centre and these shows happened at the same time but from record *Wakaa* still had a large guest turnout and no empty seats and some people were turned down. Aside from the intense marketing, publicity and reaching out to people, from seeing the first show people went ahead and announced the show with words of mouth causing the hall to be filled each day, people even called after the show had ended wanting to buy ticket for the show, all these were as a result of proper management. *Kaakadu* had celebrities in their show as well as had good publicity, but the managerial skills differed and thus the result was seen during the production and the success of this production led to the UK-London show.

Okwulogu Maureen: Describe your duties during the pre-production, production and post-production stages.

Umoibom Joseph: The pre-production stage involves getting the venues for both the rehearsals and production booked down, having a schedule for the rehearsals, making sure that the crew members meet up with their works, make provisions for welfare, and logistics, etc. *Wakaa* management team made that available, they had a partnership with Saint Nicholas Hospital and an Ambulance from the Hospital was made available both for rehearsals and during the production. Arrangement were made for interviews when necessary so it does not interrupt the rehearsals and publicity plans as well. Follow up on all the vendors, suppliers and sponsors was also carried out. We had to know the timeline, find out if there is a problem and try to sort it out before time. During production, ensure the audience were well catered for, making sure the production was good to go. KSquare Company was hired to manage security which is extremely important because the security of the lives and properties of the audience was paramount to the success of the show. In addition, Mahogany Events was hired for ushering the guests to their various seats and keeping them comfortable as well as selling the tickets for the show. Post production stage is a very important stage. The *Wakaa* management team did not relinquish on the good job being done so far so that when the main work started to run, the publicity during this period was done to create awareness for people to come whenever the show comes up again. The people that came were mainly because of the publicity as special appearances on the show and several other key points about the show were mentioned on radio, through Facebook, Instagram, twitter and different Websites.