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# The Technical Concepts and Design Approach: A Study of Molinta Enendu's Production of 'Noah Built the Ark'

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#### **Abstract**

The theatre, like every human endeavour, is in a constant state of flux. It is in this regard that technical theatre practice, which encompasses lighting design, scenic design, costume and make-up, properties, sound and sound effects, is constantly evolving as theatre practitioners carry out experiments on innovative ways of communicating more effectively with the audience. Unfortunately, the efforts of many of such theatre practitioners receive scant scholarly attention in Nigeria. It is against this backdrop that this scholarly work, which adopts the qualitative research methodology, is an examination of the technical concept and approach of Molinta Enendu in the performance of 'Noah Built the Ark'. The study adopts Edward Gordon Craig's and "Plasticity Theory" (PL) and Adolphe Adolphe Appia's "Exploration of Aesthetic Scenery in Performances" as a theoretical anchor. The study reveals that the success of a good production is most times dependent on the creative ingenuity of a designer and the technique and style used to achieve its technical design concept. This study recommends that theatre practitioners should adopt the techniques of Molinta Enendu in scenic design in order to achieve more effective ways of communicating with the audience.

#### Introduction

Theatre design is concerned with the total visual and aural effect of a dramatic production. This overall effect is the sum of all the elements that provide an audience with clues about the play's meaning and purpose and the world in which its action takes place. The *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* defines design as "drawing or outline from which something may be made" (Hornby 1974, p. 234). And according to Ming Cho Lee, as cited in Downs, Wright and Ramsey;

Design is an act of transformation. In working with a director, a designer transforms words into a world within which actors are engaged in human action. It might be a metaphoric world or emotional world or an architectural world, but it is a process or bringing design ideas into a place where they can be executed (2013, p. 196).

Design most times is defined to suit and to conform to the perspective of the user, which may be defined in many ways by different scholars. Paul Procter (1978, p. 297) defines design to be "a plan in the mind; a drawing or pattern showing how something is to be made; the art of making few drawings or patterns, and the arrangement of parts that go into human productions". This shows that design is a purposeful visualization and planning, something creatively done and executed with unique techniques. Molinta Enendu (1994, p. 27) asserts that "theatrical design has its starting point in thinking and imagination backed by a sense of practical artistry usually expressed in the language of forms", while from Wolf and Block (2014, p. 41) "Designing is directing". The idea must first be conceived by the mind and then the mind transfers its concepts into a fundamental design or language of forms that could be recorded on paper for sketches to detailed drawing or and models. According to Wolf and Block (2014, p. 38) "a design is concerned first with the function it will perform". Design here can also be

identified by the role and function it plays for the designers and the users. It is a creative process that is productive in concrete terms and therefore functional. It involves the designers understanding of some basic elements of design like; colour, shape/form, line, composition, texture, structure (grid), volume, mass, measure, scale and light. Adrianne Lobel as cited in Downs, Wright and Ramsey, (2013, p. 205) contends that:

A good design... is one that takes on significance and that resonates at the end of the show. It needs to unfold and take on meaning, and become imbued with emotion and importance; it needs to connect with the piece in a way that keeps surprising and that keeps allowing the audience to have and revelations as the evening goes.

Theatre as an organization requires the close cooperation and collaboration of many professionals including the technical designers. These group of theatre makers like the playwrights, actors, directors, designers, and audience members as well come together in order to attain some theatrical elements and also ensure the success of a play. The technical design team or designers works collectively on the set, light, scene/props, sound, costumes and makeup. They create the physical space in which the actors perform on, organise the stage props (properties), illuminate the stage with light, and decide what kind of music to be used as sound effects, the costume and makeup to be won by actors for a given performance. Just as important as the designers are, they must be able to work with all the other areas of the theatre organization, including theatre management and even with the public relations staff.

Be it professional theatres, college or university theatres, commercial and community theatres, these theatre personnel work closely together, for the planning and execution of a good theatre performance. According to Taylor and Strickland (2009, p. 202):

Everyone who participates in theatre expresses or illuminates the action onstage in some way. Designers and tech crews create the appropriate environment for the action, which may involve weeks of preparation to design and produce.

From Wolf and Block (2014, p. 201); "designers in the theatre communicate the production concept and make plays idea more clear and complete that they would be in real life". And Ohiri as cited by Jacob, (2011, p. 3) therefore asserts that, "theatrical design is defined as the creation of some visual elements, by intention, in order to enhance the proper depiction and appreciation of the lessons of the production". Theatrical design process involves a collaborative work, thorough planning by some group of designers for the actualization of the design concept in any given play/production. There are dozens of questions a designer will have to answer while preparing his or her designs, which include:

- 1. How does the play environment affect and reflect the story and characters?
- 2. How do the characters feel about their environment?
- 3. What significant details of the environment will define and individualize the characters?
- 4. How do the story and characters affect and reflect the environment?
- 5. How does the created environment reflect and relate to the plays theme?
- 6. What is the period of the play?
- 7. What was the religious, social and political climate of that period?
- 8. What was the religious, social and political climate of that period when the play was written?
- 9. What are the mechanical requirements, such as doors needed as entrances and exits or even windows as required by the play?
- 10. What are the budgetary limitations and even the deadlines?

Designers and technical crews create the appropriate environment for theatrical performances, which may involve weeks of preparation to design and produce. But not much has been done in terms of scholarly research on these theatre designers in Nigeria whereas; they play a major role in any theatrical production. It is in this regard that there is dire need to study and document on a Nigerian theatre designer, his technical concepts and designs as applied in the performance of 'Noah Built the Ark'. With the growth of theatre practice in Nigeria and beyond, it is pertinent to identify the technical concepts and design techniques as used by Molinta Enendu in the performance of 'Noah Built the Ark' at the University of Calabar Arts Theatre in Nigeria. This study will arouse the interest among technical designers and also create an avenue for more production documentation in terms of technical theatre design in Nigeria. The study will inform upcoming designers on the need to use their creative skill to design productions even with the challenges of equipment, inadequate facilities and architectural deficiencies.

This is a qualitative research which combines research principles using a formal form of data collection. It involved oral interview and analysis of the performance, 'Noah Built the Ark', studying the technical concepts and design techniques as applied by Molinta Enendu at the University of Calabar Arts Theatre. The primary source of data collected for this study involved an interview carried out on the respondent, Molinta Enendu and the secondary source were obtained greatly from print materials ranging from books, journal, articles/publications, research projects and lots more. The study employed the narrative and analytical approaches in the interpretation and analysis of data gathered from written and oral sources using participant observation

In the late 19th century, Adolphe Appia (1862-1928), a Swiss lighting design innovator, was the first to develop and practice multi-directional colour lighting that painted the stage and moved in harmony with the production (Brockett 2003, p. 78). He theorised that by having more mobile and easily handled lighting instruments, it will be able to produce active lighting, but then, it will require further research to perfect their operations. The research will draw from Adolph Appia's theory on design, space, and performance relationships for providing the basic insights for the exploration of aesthetic scenery in performance. Although, Appia's theory remains true and irreversible (Bentley 1988, p. 27), the fluidity of projected images occasioned by technology through lighting and the mobility of scenic units (or revolving stage floor for that matter) has greatly diversified scenery beyond conventional static structures. Thus, Appia believed that light, just like the actor, must become active...light has an almost miraculous flexibility...it can create shadows, make them living, and spread the harmony of their vibrations in space just as music does. In light, we possess the most powerful means of expression.

Edward Gordon Craig (1872-1966), was an English modern stage design innovator who designed stage lighting for the modern theatre and also believed that the theatre should be free from depending on realism and the performer, but rather, light as a key element should be controlled by one person, the master artist. Craig's emphasis on scenic design began to take a more prominent role than that of light. He used the border lights, wing strip lights and footlights in most of his productions. Craig focuses more on the overall visual impact of ordination and balance between light movement, objects and special relationship. Through light, complete plasticity was created. An idea mooted, developed and mustered into a theory as propounded by Craig and Appia, a theory known as Plasticity theory. Both Edward Gordon Craig and Adolphe Appia were seen as the prophets of modern stage lighting. Their ability to think beyond the technology obtainable at their own time, paved the way to theatre lighting design. Robert Taylor and Robert Strickland (2009: p. 203) affirm that "the designers Adolphe Appia and Gordon Craig believed that a play's environment should convey a dramatic feeling, not merely presenting a historically or geographically accurate setting".

#### Technical Theatre: An Overview

Technical designers work closely while attending rehearsals to achieve a successful production. According to Wolf and Block R (2014, p. 2):

> Most productions involve a lighting designer, a scene designer, a costume designer, and a sound designer (while) some require a projection designer. Working in collaboration with the director, they form an artistic team to create the world of the play. In fact, none of the designers can, with integrity, design without concern for the work of their colleagues.

A lighting designer is one who designs and also decides the kinds of light needed, where to mount and focus them and when to switch it on and off for a particular production in the theatre. William Downs, Wright and Ramsey (2013, p. 211), assert that "the most central role of the lighting is to evoke mood... they must also understand art human emotions... as a result, lighting designers often study painting, optics, and art. They plan stage lighting process which may begin with the lighting plots to show detailed location of each lighting instrument, focus, and type of lighting instrument, circuitry, and wattage, indicate the kind of illumination and its distribution, general atmosphere and even colour. According to Oscar Brockett and Robert Ball (2004, p. 407):

The lighting designers use the controllable factors of light to fulfill the various functions of stage lighting. First and most basically, light creates visibility, second - aids composition, third -affects perception of dimensionality, fourth - enhances mood and atmosphere, fifth - reinforce style, sixth - underscore the development of the dramatic actions by reflecting the dominant feeling of each scene and seventh - supports the production concept".

The lighting designer must understand science of lighting design very well to be able to operate electricity. He/she must also be computer literate in order to use the new technology and some newly sophisticated automated lighting instruments in the theatre.

A set/scenic designer is one who creates the set/scenery, the onstage physical space for the actors to perform in it. They tend to work as an acting architect, painter, and interior designers, even when they don't design a full house as a trained and professional architect. They communicate ideas to other theatre personnel through the use of sketches and/or models, and drawings to indicate how scenery is constructed and designed from the beginning to its visualized completion. In all, a scene designer must understand stage construction techniques. As the lighting designer, he/she must also be computer literate since now-a-days there are computer assisted

designs and drafting programs for easy creation and communication of designs, with great accuracy. To Wolf and Block R (2014, p. 20) "the exciting interplay of line, color, and form in a vibrant stage setting or the subtle refinements of an inconspicuous scenic background do not happen by chance. To create a setting, the scene designer uses, either consciously or intuitively, well-established rules and the fundamentals of design common to all the visual arts". They further described the responsibility of scene designers and technicians as those who are interested in the construction of scenery not only to become familiar with building techniques but also to become aware of the uses and limitations of various materials. The more they know about present-day theatrical materials and techniques, the better they can introduce new materials and original methods into designs (2014, p. 153). The scenic designer is responsible for the building/construction of the scenery. As is being said, compared with standard building construction, scenery construction may, seem at first glance, to be unduly flimsy and unnecessarily complicated. This is due to the unique demands the theatre places on scenery for a particular show or performance on stage. For its proper usage, it must first of all be portable and lightweight, so as to be moved easily from the shops after construction to the stage, and sometimes from theatre to theatre. Scenery also has to be able to assume large-scale proportions for conceptual, storytelling, decorative, or masking purposes.

Most fundamentally, a scenic artist is a highly specialized painter who works on very large-scale and often realistic paintings. Scenic artists are expected to be skilled and creative in painting large-scale backdrops. They are also expected to adeptly paint two- and three-dimensional scenery by employing a wide array of painting techniques. Faux finish techniques on three-dimensional surfaces are as common now as the traditional trompe l'oeil painting that is the foundation of scenic art. Scenic artists also paint on canvas, linen, wood, plastic, foam, and metal as a matter of course. They paint with tools like brooms, sprayers, rollers, pumps, sponges, rags, and, brushes. Many scenic artists are skilled sculpture creators, and carvers as expected from many of them in most theatres. Thus, knowledge of assembling and carving wood, foam, fabric, metal, and other materials are also essential for the scenic artist. Scenic artists must be able to not just

reproduce what is given them, but to transform it creatively. Usually, scenic artists are interpreting the work of a scenic designer from a very small scale into a large size appropriate for the theatre. As it is mostly said, the key to the craft in the theatre is the ability to interpret.

From Downs, Wright and Ramsey (2013, p. 204), the set designer John Lee Beatty says, "one of the fun things about being a designer is that you don't know where the designs come from – they just come out"... set designers have a strong background in interior design, architecture, and art history, as well as theatrical conventions of various periods. But above all, designers must be artists. They draw and draft their art by hand, although now the use of computer aided design (CAD) programs is more common. From Wolf and Block R (2014, p. 234):

In addition to being responsible for large scenic background elements, the scene designer designs and selects stage properties. This activity may vary from finding a marble-topped Louis XV console table to making an exotic sofa for a Turkish cozy-corner, or from borrowing a Victorian tea set to fashioning leaves. Whether borrowed or constructed, each property must be carefully coordinated into the design, compositionally and conceptually, and must also be checked for size and ease of use by the actors.

A Props Designer or property designer is in charge of gathering and organizing props handled by actors on stage during a performance as well as furniture and other items used to enhance the set. According to Downs, Wright and Ramsey (2013, p. 216), "one of the rarest designers in the theatre is the prop designer". Prop designers also double up as set/scenic designers. They make hand sketches or sometimes used computer aid designs (CAD) for presentation of their designs. The designer selects set props and also hand props. They may buy, rent or construct the stage props.

Sound Designer is one who decides what kind of music and sound effects is needed for a performance. From Brockett and Ball (2004, p. 422), "the sound

designers usually begins by closely examining the script for opportunities to use sound effectively... most sound designers use their study of the script and imaginations to develop a sound score". Sound designers today mix, record, filter modulate, reverberate, amplify and even cue up sound effects as at when needed. To Taylor and Strickland (2009, p. 75), "the sound crew is responsible for collecting, preparing and running the sound for performance. The sound or audio component of a production that include amplification of actors voices in addition to music and sound effects". For Wolf and Block R (2014, p. 579), several references have been made to qualities that a designer of sound for the theatre should possess: a working knowledge of theatre production in general and sound production specifically; a passion for music, with interest in all types and periods; a technical knowledge that provides understanding of the equipment involved in sound production; and a keen environmental awareness that facilitates design creativity. The sound designer is involved with the production and the production team from their inception. Downs, Wright and Ramsey (2013, p. 213) attest that "sound designers must have a detailed knowledge of acoustics, electronics, digital music editing programs, audio mixing boards and signal processing equipment, microphones, effects processors and amplifiers... in addition, some sound designers are also composers or musicians: they write and play transition music or underscore scenes with mood music".

Costume Designer is one who designs or chooses costumes for an actor for a particular performance. The costumes may be rented, bought, sewn or borrowed. Downs, from Wright and Ramsey (2013, p. 214), "the costume designers use all the standard design elements – line, mass, balance, harmony, composition, movement, texture and colour... costume designers must also take into account how the costume will fit the body type and shape of the actor cast for the role". Like every other designer in the theatre, the costume designer attends production meetings, use sketches and drawings to communicate the designs before construction. From Brockett and Ball (2004, p. 386), "costume designers need a variety of skills, many of which are pertinent to other professionals (for example: fashion design, visual art, and tailoring, sewing, social and cultural history). Like the fashion

designer, the costume designer creates garments for particular types of persons to wear for particular occasions of purposes". They further mentioned that fashion designers establish fashions; costume designs use fashion. Costume designers must be able to project themselves into any period and create garments not only for present-day fashions but also for those of other eras. They use a costume chart to communicate their design ideas. Tal Sanders (2018, p. 59), asserts that "theatrical costume designers are often responsible for the entire look of the character, including wardrobe, accessories, hairstyles (or wigs), and makeup. In some productions, a wig designer or makeup designer is involved".

Makeup Designer or makeup artists are beauty practitioners whose responsibilities include enhancement of facial and body aesthetics through makeup. They are professionals with skills in the use of makeup to enhance the beauty and physical attributes of characters to change their appearance to fit into the role they are playing at a particular time, depending on the demands of a particular play. Taylor and Strickland (2009, p. 238) assert that "more than any other technical element, makeup determines the way in which the audience perceives characters. It can turn teenagers into old people, pleasant-looking people into grotesques, and humans into animals, goblins and other fantasy creatures. The makeup designer after reading the script must be able to identify the period, location, mood of any given play, which must be reflected on the actor's body through makeup. Wounds, scars and other character or special makeup play significant physical features of a character. The makeup designer renders his/her ideas through sketch on paper, water-colour paintings or digital make-ups.

Projection Designer: Wolf and Block R (2014, p. 234), assert that "projected images have been with us for a long time. Theatrical use of projection goes back as far as the "Magic Lantern," which entered the theatre in the 1860's, predating the incandescent lamp. However, recent advances in technology have greatly altered the way we think about and use projection, so much so that a new design team member—the projection designer—has become an integral member of the collaborative team". Even when someone was not personally named the projection designer, Wolf and Dick believed that there

exists the projection designer in another's responsibility. In most theatre performances, images are being projected from the control room to the stage depending on the needs of that performance, mostly by the technical director. With the huge advances and advancement in technology, the projection designer has been introduced in some theatres and technology has made this area of design more feasible for many theatres. From Wolf and Dick (2014, p. 256);

Projection design can include still images, video, interactive visuals, and cameras on stage for live feeds. Projected imagery certainly does not need to be shown only on a dedicated "screen" that lives within a set. Images can be projected on nearly any surface with varying degrees of acuity and success. They can be static or constantly changing, they can be a major element of the design or a small part of the overall look, or they can be a backdrop to the action or directly interact with it; but, regardless of the image specifics and how they are used, they must always support the action of the play.

Wolf and Dick further said that there are three broad categories of theatrical projection which are:

- 1. Projected Scenery
- 2. Integrated Projection
- 3. Documentary Projection

The Projected Scenery make use of backdrop for the action of a play or musical, that which is a common theatrical technique. The images here may be realistic or abstract in nature and are used to establish mood and/or set locale. It is intended in a performance to support the action of the play but not interact with the action. To Wolf and Dick, designers must always keep in mind that a projection is light, not paint and colour in light is more brilliant than in paint and has a limited value scale by comparison. Therefore, the use of colour in projection is more dramatic and eye-catching. The Integrated Projection interacts with the action as an integral part of the

production scheme. Although this form of projection might use static images, it most likely will require movement, either as a series of still images or as video. This also demands a great deal of planning and rehearsal time. Good collaboration among the director, the scene designer, the lighting designer, and the projection designer is essential. Projection of any sort for Wolf and Dick 'requires additional rehearsal and technical time, but integrated projection may double or even triple the time needed for technical rehearsals". They further mentioned that the Documentary Projection supports and comments on the action. And names of a city or a date might be projected on a screen above the stage to immediately inform an audience of a scene's locale or time. Documentary projections may be used to reinforce the action. Images of historical figures being portrayed by the stage characters can be projected to help the audience associate with the action. This form of projection is the least complex of the three and may not seem to require a specific projection designer; however, it is wise to have one as part of the collaborative team. In all, Okon Jacob (2011, p. 3) "confirms that the different areas of technical theatre are imbedded in various design practices".

#### A Bio-Data of Molinta Enendu

Professor Luke Ojukwu Molinta Enendu was born in Umueze Ikanga, Adazi Ani, Anaocha Local Government Area of Anambra State on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March, 1950. Molinta Enendu began his formal education when he enrolled in the Kindergarten class in January 1952. He performed credibly well at the end of the school year and received prizes and praises from the school and his family. He began his secondary education in Besden Memorial School, Isulo and later changed to Agulu Grammar School, where he had the foundations of leadership, sport, social life and persistence in academic works. While at the Grammar School, he led the Literary and Debating Society and later became the Deputy Senior Prefect. However, his secondary school education was interrupted with the Civil War in 1967 as all schools in Biafra were closed when the war broke out.

Molinta Enendu went back to Agulu Grammar School to complete his secondary school education, taking the West African School Certificate O/L

Examination in 1970. He proceeded to St. Paul's College, Awka for the Teachers Grade Two Certificate Course and graduated as the best student in 1972. He taught briefly at Primary School, Awka before he was admitted into the Diploma in Theatre Arts Programme at the University of Ibadan in 1974. On completion of the Diploma Programme in 1976, he was offered a direct entry into the Degree Programme based on his excellent performance. At the University of Ibadan, he was taught by some of the best scholars and renowned professionals in Theatre Studies in Nigeria at the time – Zulu Sofola (African Theatre and Playwriting), Joel Adedeji (Theatre History and Speech Arts), Dapo Adelugba, Biodun Sowande, Sola Arisade (a German Trained Scenographer) and Dexter Lyndersay (The Grand Master of Theatre Design and Technology in Nigeria).

Molinta Enendu graduated from the Theatre School at the University of Ibadan with a Bachelor of Arts Certificate in Theatre Arts, finishing with a 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Upper Division as the best all-round graduating student in 1979. While in Ibadan, he cultivated a tradition of hard work and the spirit of innovation in technical theatre practice, working in partnership with his trusted friends, Samuel Taiwo Ayodeji Adeyemi. Together they designed productions for the Unibadan Masques; staged productions at the University of Ilorin and shows at the University of Lagos Theatre. He was posted to Sokoto State for the mandatory NYSC assignment and the exsoldier must have been an inspiration to others in Camp, leading the drills and providing leadership. He served at the Sokoto State Council for Arts and Culture where they found in him a power pack of creativity, innovation and excellence as he mounted quality theatre productions, including Command Performances for the State.

On completion of his youth service, Molinta Enendu had two job offers, one as Senior Technical Officer at the Centre for Cultural Studies, University of Lagos and the other as a Senior Technical Officer (Theatre Design and Technology) at the University of Calabar. Dexter Lyndersay, his former lecturer in Ibadan who had relocated to Calabar to establish the new Department of Theatre Arts and who had earlier seen in Molinta Enendu the potential of Technical Apostleship invited him and made everything

possible to engage him in Calabar. The Job offer at the University of Calabar was embellished with the incentive of starting a Master's Degree Programme under the Staff Development Initiative. Molinta Enendu could not resist that offer; he stepped into Calabar for the first time on the 30<sup>th</sup> day of July, 1980 and by early August, he had signed in as a staff of the University of Calabar. In the same year, he started the Master of Fine Arts (MFA) Programme at the University and on completion in 1983, he was converted to Academic Staff as an Assistant Lecturer.

Molinta Enendu enrolled for a Ph.D. in Theatre Design and Technology at the University of Calabar. He rose through the academic rank to become a professor of Theatre Design and Technology in 2010. He has been Head of Technical Unit in the University of Calabar Arts Theatre since 1983. His fame reverberates across continents, challenging Gordon Craig, Adolphe Appia, Pamela Howard and other Western practitioners of scenography who built the practice mainly around Europe. Molinta Enendu is a man of many parts, a technical powerhouse, a thoroughbred academic, a business man par excellence, a community leader, a broker of peace, never at the centre of controversies. He is a global citizen, detribalized, principled gentleman and maturity personified. He is a child of God, a practical Christian and happily married to Mrs. Eno Enendu and together, they have 5 children.

By 2019, Molinta Enendu had designed lighting, scenery, sound, kinetic stage systems and pyrotechnics, including national command performances, departmental productions, private troupe stage productions and film sets. His designs always align to scripted needs and he is sufficiently flexible to interpret and express all his needs in the stylistic continuum – from naturalism to various forms of abstraction, including experimentations with a touch of post-modernism.

## Synopsis of 'Noah Built the Ark'

Noah Built the Ark' is a stage adaptation and interpretation of James Weldon Johnson's poem, *God's Trombone: Seven Negro Sermons in Verse* (1978). The poem is said to be inspired by the memories of sermons preached by Negro preachers in the poet's childhood days. The poem in

verse is about 180 lines, focusing on the Bible story of creation of the world and its destruction with flood. Specifically, the poem retells the biblical story of Adam and Eve. The story recounts how man sinned against God through the disobedience of the first formed humans by God. Noah was directed by God to build an ark in accordance with God's specifications as well as the preparations for the great and unexpected flood that was sent by God to cleanse the earth because of unrighteousness and sinful nature of the first creatures.

Adam and Eve were formed into the beautiful Garden of Eden as their home. In the middle of this Garden was the Tree of Knowledge, which God warned them not to eat of its fruits. However, Eve was tempted by Satan who came in form of a snake (Serpent). The snake deceived Eve to eat of the tree of knowledge; that God was merely fooling her as the fruit is the sweetest in the garden. The serpent was able to convince her by telling her that when she eats the fruit, she will not die as God said. Eve ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge and offered same to Adam who could not refuse it from her. At that moment, God appeared in human form, walking round the Garden. God walked pass Adam and Eve who hid themselves because they had eaten of the fruit which God forbade them not to eat. God who saw Adam and Eve beckoned on them to come out of their hiding. Adam shamefully came out from where he was hiding and God asked him what he has done that prompted him to run and hide from His presence, but he immediately blamed it on the woman, Eve.

The director/designer adapted the play into Nigerian situation, with multitude of people and the earth filled with wickedness and sin, cases of rape, robbery with arms, drunkenness, false prophesy and corruption. Due to this, God vowed to destroy and bring down judgment on man with a flood, hence destroying everything on the surface of the earth. God met Noah who was found as the only righteous man, he gave him the instructions to build an Ark. Noah built the ark of God using Gopher wood. Occasionally Noah stops his work, takes his staff and preaches the gospel to the sinners. He tells them to repent of their sins for God's judgment is at hand. He revealed to the sinners that God will send down the rain and

loosen up the bottom of the deep to drown the wicked world. But the crowd all laughed, and said that Noah has water on the brain and paid no attention to him but kept on sinning even more.

God commanded Noah to get into the Ark with seven members of his family and all the animals in two, male and female. As God commanded Noah to bar the door of the ark and he obeyed, the land and the earth were filled with flood. When the rain stopped, the waters began to settle down and the ark touched the bottom on the tallest peak of old Mount Ararat, Noah came out of the ark and saw that the grass was green, he opened up the ark, and all the animals with his family climbed down, the folks. He hugged and kissed the dry ground (p. 37).

## Analysis of 'Noah Built the Ark'

'Noah Built the Ark' was staged at the University of Calabar Arts Theatre from July 12th to 15th 1995. As adapted by the designer, the play begins with the Bible story of creation and ends with the destruction of the world with flood. The beginning of the play is the creation in the Garden of Eden, where God made the first man, Adam and Eve, the first woman. God placed the man and the woman together in the beautiful garden and warned them not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge which will lead to their death but should eat every other fruit in the garden. There was also a snake in the garden who asked Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit, telling her that God was fooling her, that the fruit was the sweetest amongst the fruits in the garden. Eve ate of the fruit and then gave some to Adam. At that moment, God called on Adam who went hiding after eating the forbidden fruit. Immediately, God realized that Adam and Eve had eaten of the forbidden fruit in the garden, for which Adam blamed the woman for his sins.

The play environment instantly metamorphosed to Nigeria with men on earth and the increased rate of wickedness, sin, murder, lust, violence, fornication and corruption. It presented chaotic, disordered, confused, lawless, rebellious and reckless Nigerian society filled with cases of rape, robbery with arms, drunkenness, false prophesy, corruption in churches and by government officials, murder, prostitution, cheating, rigging of elections

etc. God then appeared to Noah and asked him to build an ark and immediately, Noah responded to God's instruction. Noah, who was a preacher, carried out the task of building the ark and also preaching the gospel to the crowd who came round him to make mockery since there was no river to sail the boat he was making. God again appeared to Noah and ordered him to get into the ark with his family and animals in two's, and God also ordered him to bar the door. As the doors were barred, there came thunder, lightning, the rain, flood and the dry land.

According to Enendu (2019), the play was adapted, interpreted, enlarged in dramaturgy and directed for Calabar University Theatre by him. 'Noah Built the Ark' was initiated as a project to put to stage test and reality of the designers new ideas on stage scenography. According to Enendu (2019), the production is seen, perhaps as a production that used the highest deployment of most complex theatre technology, stage craft and effects in the history and stage experiences of Calabar University Theatre and indeed Nigeria. One of the ideas experimented upon in the production was on modern stage technology dynamics and moving needs of stage scenery in theatre production for the advancement of dramatic action and moments. James Johnson's 'Noah Built the Ark' was chosen for the experimentation for several reasons. From Enendu, "the poem holds great promise for intense theatrical actions, and requires scenic units that need to move in view of the audience for the development of the story line."

From Enendu (1993, p. 149), "the scene designer is interested primarily in learning the story of a play and getting a general impression of the effect of the play as a whole... identifies the general mood of the play, its locale and situation, the style of the play and the time and place of action". He further said that "designing for a stage production calls for a thorough consideration of several influencing factors; the script, the authors scenic descriptions, the creative genius of the designer are vital as they ensure the discrimination and selection of ideas, shapes, forms and colours as they relate and respond to a given work of art".

## Scenic and Lighting Analysis of the production: 'Noah Built the Ark' as performed at the University of Calabar Arts Theatre

The first scene provided for an open space edged by traditional black wings on both sides of the stage and the cyclorama provided at the upstage position. Provided on stage was an enclosed void, punctuated by a unit of platform, which is four feet wide, eight feet long and one foot high. The geometrical lines and form were broken and dulled to give it the irregular appearance of a heap of mud. It was on the platform that God was seen sculpturing the first man and the first woman using mud collected from the heap created. God's action was highlighted using a background of deep golden amber light alternated with blue-green colours of light. See Plates 1 and 2 below.

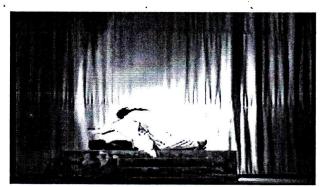


Plate 1: The use of Cyclorama light to mystify the creation process. God sculpturing Adam. (Shot from video recording)



Plate 2: God completes the creation of Adam and Eve and then placed them together in the Garden of Eden. (Shot from video recording)

The bare stage was later filled with scenic units to represent the Garden of Eden. The stage housed some two dimensional trees, cut out on profile and located at the stage sides, with one central three-dimensional tree, the Tree of Knowledge. The tree was a central image in the Garden, where the live and moving snake that tricked Eve was placed. The snake as designed by Enendu (2019) was fifteen feet long coiled on the stem and branches of the tree with its region around the head free and mobile in view of the audience as it discusses with Eve. The three dimensional tree incorporated a space on its trunk, on the upstage side from where a puppeteer anchored and freely manipulated the head of the snake for desired speeches and movement. The operator's whole arm was inside the head and neck of the snake which made the easy movement of the snake possible; talk, move and pluck fruits with the mouth and give to Eve. The puppeteer was positioned behind the proscenium wall to reach and operate the mobile speaking head of the snake as seen in Plate 3.

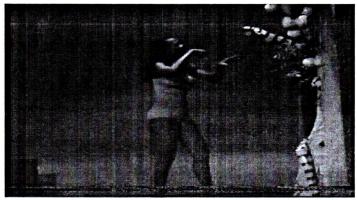


Plate 3: The live snake that tricked Eve as placed on the three-dimensional tree. (Shot from video recording)

When God visited the garden, there were beasts in the field, birds flying through the trees, elephants, cows, lions and many other animals being represented by the designer. For a designer to achieve the garden filled with different animals, their profiles were cutout of light plywood, farmed and accurately painted to natural details. With the aid of wooden braces, the

animal's profiles were stood within the dimly lit main stage, in worked-out details, oriented to the audience side. God now walks pass the animals.

The scenery was both static and movable. The ark of God moved while the tree in the Garden was static. Designing the stage for the Nigerian setting, the designer made use of the main stage and the fore-stage area, which was left in bare form, with minimal hand and stage props being brought in and taken out by actors. At this moment, God watched all the things that trespassed in the land and decided to destroy the earth with flood. God instructed Noah to build an ark. The ark was framed of horizontal 2 x 2 x 12 timber, joining the major vertical support frames made of 2 x 4 x 12. The entire scenic unit was mounted on six heavy-duty, multi-directional casters, which the ark could be moved to any direction of the designer's choice. The outer surface of the ark was covered with hardboard sheets, painted to stimulate dark-brown strips of gopher timber layered together by framed construction.

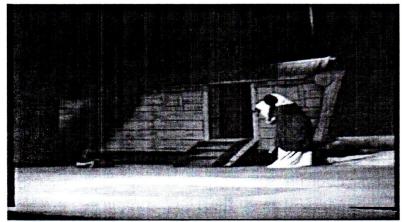


Plate 4: Noah working on the ark (Shot from video recording)

The ark was about 9 feet high at the centre and rising to 11 feet towards the stage left end and folding neatly into a semi-circular, curved, dorian design (see Plate 4). The cyclorama was used as well to represent the ark, making it look large in size. According to Enendu (2019), the ark was placed close to cyclorama, with its stage right end disappearing into the wings to

suggest and create the illusion of size and extensity of the ark. At the centre of the constructed ark is a door that leads into it. The door of the ark is two and half feet wide and four feet high. The door was built to have a rugged, sturdy, stout and rigid structure that looked impenetrable. John Iwu (2012, p. 158) asserts that:

The door is major to the arks purpose; its function is vital for economy and space, fluidity and unity of movement; the door played a dual function both as entrance space and elevator. Central to the visible body of the ark is the door leading into it: measuring  $2^{1/2}$  feet wide by 4 feet height, stands 3 feet from the base of the ark.

From the designer, the door was fabricated to have a closing device that incorporates a manual but mechanical gear of a single drum hoist system with worm and helicoidally wheeled gearing system, built of hardened steel to haul and convey the door-leaf, with the aid of six millimeter steel cable, to a closed state. This was achieved with the synchronised movement, supported with recorded and replayed exaggerated, crackling sound and a thunderous door-jam. This suggested the finality and the closing of the ark. The ark door-leaf rests its upper width edge on the floor when open, as it is hinged on the opposite lower width, thus providing three units of treads that form the step-units leading into the deck of the ark. The ark structure was firmly fabricated with five lines of steel cable, leading from the major timber supports of the ark and cleated to one of the pipes of the counterweight flying system of the Arts Theatre. It was mechanized to move and agree with the development of the story, producing practical tangible results. This was an excellent example of the use of kinetic scenery manifested in the movement of scenic units in view of the audience under the influence of in-built momentum.

The ark was stored in the loft, in flown position from the beginning of the show to as at when needed and was lowered and placed on stage. Noah who was instructed by God to build the ark did the finishing from what the designer constructed on the stage. The designer used a stage trick in the

construction and placement of the ark on stage. Noah with the aid of the helicoidal mechanical wheel system as designed by Enendu, hauls the door and step unit to closed position. The movement as mentioned earlier was supported by recorded, crackling and rattling sound the build up to a final loud door jam. At this point the intensity of the light was reduced to signify the dark cloudy sky.

## Molinta Enendu (2006, p. 171) asserts that:

The beauty of space and facility is functionally brought to bear in accommodating and concealing the massive structure of the ark when suspended. The flying system, including its curtain and borders played major roles in creating the suspense and the surprise. The entire structure is firmly anchored with five lines of steel cable leading from the major timber supports of the ark and cleated to one of the pipes of the counterweight flying system of the arts theatre...the ark remains in the loft in flown position from the beginning of the show to when it is needed and lowered and thus revealed.

The animals and men in twos were seen moving on a single file into the ark in the view of the audience as guided by Noah. See Plates below.... This suggests that they were accommodated in the deck of the ark, although creatively, they made their exits through the wings immediately they step into the ark. The animals here metamorphosed into kinetic scenic units and moved into the ark. Using strong observational and imitational sense, the different types of animals were captured using the form of their natural postures. Human characters (Noah, Adam, Eve and the Crowd) and supernatural characters (God and Devil) were all played by human actors while animal characters were all wooden, cut-out, painted profiles and carried by humans costumed in all black. See Plates 5 and 6 below.

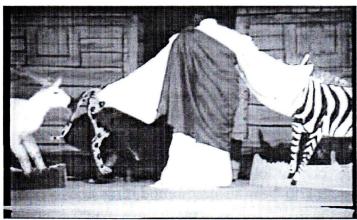


Plate 5: Noah gathering the animals in the field into the ark (Shot from video recording)

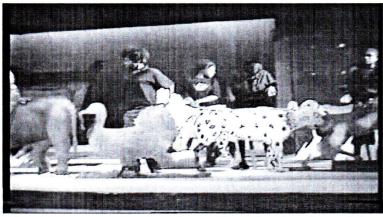


Plate 6: Wooden, cut-out, painted profiles of animals and the humans costumed in all black. (Shot from video recording)

The movement of the animals into the ark, created the illusion of reality in the performance. From the designer, each animal was guided into the ark through the large door by Noah. The spectacle of the movement was a creation of lighting effect; weaving through warm and cool colours of various shades. There was a use of white lights at low intensity separating day and night as time went by in order to register the length of time taken for all species of animal to embark on the ark. The major aesthetic and spectacle of the performance was the movement of the ark in the full view of

the audience and the rising and falling of the sea level as the rain increased and subsided as well. From the designer, the ark had to rock and rise under the effects of flood and running water. This was achieved with the use of the flying system/mechanism as installed in the Theatre. From the stage floor, the upper part disappeared into the loft of the stage tower, leaving the bottom part of the ark visible to the audience, to create the rising of the sea level.

As said by the designer, the riding and rocking was achieved by stage grips moving the ark on the six multi-dimensional casters on which it rests. A man he named the Super Fly-man was on the set unit, gently tugging on the pulley system to move the ark slightly up. The reality of the heavy rain was actualised through a projection of running water onto the stage floor by the designer, with effects of lightning and a recording of rainfall with thunder sound. The moving projections supported the flood on which the ark moved, rocked and finally floated its whole massive weight to the height of about three meters from the stage floor. At this point, the sinners who went laughing at Noah were seen swimming, leading and wailing to be allowed into the ark by Noah. This was another show of creativity in the performance. The swimming of the sinners on stage was achieved with the aid of special effect light, making their movement seem as if they were in the deep sea, swimming from one point to another without any thing to hold unto.

The ark was flown up into the loft to show the high level of the rain water. As the ark rises as the rain got very heavy, this unrolls and opens up beneath it a wide sheet of cream coloured fabric, painted with irregular curves, in blue to simulate water waves and suggest the flood level, with projected light on the fabric. It also served as a reception surface (screen) for the projection of the running water effect that crossed the entire breath of the stage. As the rain subsided, the reverse movement was done to return the ark on stage to its former position and the ark was opened. Noah and his family members, along with the animals stepped out of the ark, making it believable by the designer that the ark floated with them inside it.

According to Evan Shimizu et al (2019: 3), "in theatrical lighting, designs must be physically realisable on a stage while designers need to establish creative illumination environments and theatrical lighting evokes a sense of place and mood with exaggerated colours and varied lighting angles". Creative illumination provides cues about time of day, environment and mood of the play. From Molinta Enendu (2019), over twelve special light projections were made to create the various atmospheric and climatic conditions, which was a spectacle to behold. Most of which were registered on the cyclorama and on the stage floor. The designer used the AMC (Advanced Manual Control) operation system to achieve the desired lighting effect. He further mentioned that the creation and the realization of the atmospheric and climatic conditions on stage were the major challenges of the production. Although, they were meaningfully created using the lighting system, the flying system and the sound system as provided within the architectural dispositions of the arts theatre. Lighting execution was alleviated by adequate hanging positions in the lighting bridges, the catwalk and the cat-ladder which served as hangers for all the floor projections in the performance.

In the performance of 'Noah Built the Ark', the designer used 'front light', 'top light', 'side light' and 'back light'. Front light is a directional light coming directly towards the actors' front as they face the audience. It is specifically in the rig to provide visibility for the actors. They are hung in the front of house positions over the heads of the audience and pointed at the stage so actors can be clearly visible. The top lights in the production were hung above the actors on the stage to create the environment around the actor and also a good way to shape the actors and give them depth. It is most times used as a wash light to colour the stage, minimise the shadows and also reduce the spill of light from the light source and is measured at 90°. Backlight is a directional light from behind an actor that creates a rim of light allowing them to be visually separated from backgrounds and giving them dimensionality. It also helps to create a halo effect around the actor. Sidelight is a directional light hitting an actor from the side. At the University of Calabar Arts Theatre, the side lights used for the production were hung on overhead battens and also called High Sides. See Plates 8 to 15 for the lighting positions and effects as realised by the designer.



Plate 8: Showing the use of front light', 'top light', 'side light' and 'back light' by the designer. (Shot from video recording)



Plate 9: The effect and use of side light. (Shot from video recording)



Plate 10: Top lights used to create depth at the center. (Shot from video recording)

Molinta Enendu as the lighting designer made use of bright lights throughout the play to depict the time of the day in which the course of the play is but only changed during the gathering of the witches and God's destruction of the world to a dark, cloudy atmospheric condition and then the rain.



Plate 11: Special effect light of a striking lightening in the dark cloud. (Shot from video recording).

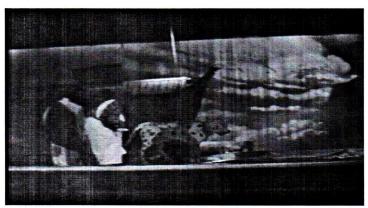


Plate 12: The effect of light on the cyclorama with the projection of the white cloud after the rain. (Shot from video recording)

Lighting is a critical element of theatre and also a fundamental part of modern stage productions. A theatre designer not only wishes to explore different distributions of light colours and intensity but also different placement of these visual attributes on stage. The lighting designer pointed out the area of focus by exploiting the technique of selective visibility. This effect was achieved by dimming some parts of the stage and adding colour to the other part where focus is on thereby making it more vibrant than the other part of the stage. See Plates below.



Plate 13: The effect of selective visibility. Adam and Eve playing after creation in the garden(Shot from video recording)

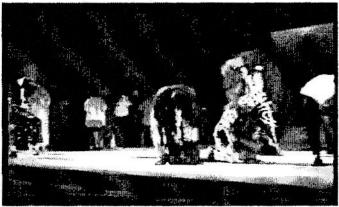


Plate 14: The effect of selective visibility. The Nigerian setting and the simultaneous action placement by the designer (Shot from video recording)



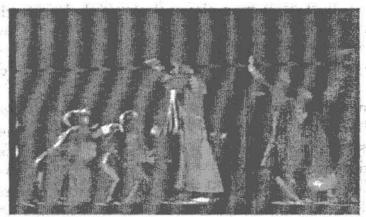
Plate 15: The effect of selective visibility. Noah addressing the sinners and his family before God's destruction of the world with flood (Shot from video recording)

The use of lighting in the production of 'Noah Built the Ark' goes beyond illumination, the other variable functions of light were fully explored to make the performance more dramatic with creative aesthetical achievement. To create a rainbow on stage, the designer, Molinta Enendu dismantled an ellipsoidal zoom profile, constructed and inserted six rings of cylindrical tubes held together by three millimetre rods between each ring, a gel corresponding to each colour of the rainbow was inserted in each slot. The

lantern was then positioned close to the cyclorama to retain the full quality of their hue and projected at an angle. However, with a scotch tape, he blinded the lens by half, and lit all colours from a single lantern; a rainbow was effectively registered. The mystery of the presence of God was also coated in pool of margenta while His actions were highlighted in silhouette against a background of golden amber light alternated with blue-green colours. Enendu believes that God's presence will be better left a mystery which it is. He also used lights to create the different worlds, which was achieved with the use of colours. See plates 16 and 17 below.



Plate 16: The creative aesthetical achievement of light showing the place of God (Shot from video recording)



Tate 17: Using light to create the world of the devils by darkening the stage. (Shot from video recording)

From the interview with the lighting designer, it was discovered that what determined the lighting of 'Noah Built the Ark' was the script and the designer's own creativity. The colours were selected by the designer to add to the aesthetics of the costume and also create the right atmosphere and heightened mood of the play. The performance had a very captivating opening glee where lights were used, during the creation of the two men in the garden, Representing the different world (the known and that of the unknown) was one of the creative presentations by the designer that kept the audience glued to their seats from the starting of the performance. The most spectacular was the creation of atmospheric and climatic conditions on stage using the cyclorama light, the rain effect, the rocking and rising of the ark, the movement of the ark in the full view of the audience and the rising and falling of the sea level as the rain increased and subsided as well. This got the production to a very spectacular ending, putting smiles in the faces of the actors, the crew members and most specially the designer himself.

#### Conclusion

A designer is one who is distinctively talented and knowledgably skillful in his technique of design either by training, practice, exposure or by qualification. Theatre design, performance style, approach and technique, places more value on the designer's emotions and creation and the technical concept and design approach of each designer differs. No two designers produce the same work the same way at any given time. All designs are original and distinct as it may also reflect the designer's character and attitude. Molinta Enendu believes so much in fantastical, illusionistic and imaginary world, the world of the known and the unknown. This helped him as a designer to creatively design the light to fit his ideology of reality.

This study, having presented the Kinetic Scenery Technique of Molinta Enendu as a practical means of moving or developing scenery to attain theatrical design success, recommends that theatre practitioners should adopt the technique in order to achieve more effective ways of communication with the audience. Universities as the live wires of theatre practice in Nigeria either from the point of providing skilled work force or from the performances produced should therefore, consciously document

the technical concepts and design approach, the techniques and styles as applied in stage performances by the technical designers. Also photographs of productions and production programmes are quite important for theatre producers therefore, theatre firms should take advantage of the computer revolution to digitalize these vital materials for future researches. The CD plate given to the researcher by the designer had poor picture quality since it was transferred from a video player into a CD (Compatible Disc). It is quite important for proper documentation of productions either with CD's, memory cards, creation of photo albums and other good durable storage devices.

The researcher also discovered that there are very few or limited works on theatre designers in Nigeria, the techniques and styles of performance presentation. Therefore, conscious efforts should be made by designers and theatre scholars to document on the scenic design and stage lighting, the techniques and styles as applied in stage performances.

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