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**Editorial: *In Memoriam***  
**Esiaba Irobi (October 1, 1960 - May 4 2010)**

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It has taken a very long time for us to bring out Volume 4 Number 1, but as we intimated to our subscribers and the membership of the African Theatre Association at the end of 2009, *African Performance Review* has been undergoing significant reorganisation in the past twelve months. This has included major editorial changes, as well as a change in publishing arrangements between us and Adonis and Abbey Publishers Limited. The editorial board and the AfTA Executive felt these changes were necessary to ensure the journal's survival and to also establish major synergies and efficiency gains to both the journal and the African Theatre Association. Hopefully, these are going to be the only changes to our organisational structure and mode of operation for a long time to come and thus the board is assuring our subscribers of an uninterrupted publication timetable from this volume onwards. May I use this opportunity to thank both our individual and institutional subscribers for their patience and continued support for the *African Performance Review*. Work is already advanced on Vol. 4 No 2 which we hope to be ready in June 2011. We will also endeavour to publish Volume 5 Number 1 by Autumn of 2011.

Volume Four, Number One begins with Professor Martin Banham's wonderful and well-deserved tribute to Dr Esiaba Irobi, our esteemed colleague and friend who tragically passed away on May 4, 2010 while on a year fellowship at the Institute for Theatre Studies at Freie Universitat Berlin, Germany. Professor Banham's tribute is his introduction to Irobi's proposed book, *African Festival and Ritual Theatre: Resisting Globalization on the Continent and Diaspora Since 1942*, which I hope will soon be in the public domain. AfTA and the Editorial Board befittingly have decided to dedicate this number of *APR* to his memory and in recognition of his immense contribution to the association, the journal and to the field of African theatre

and performance scholarship. We all miss Esiaba greatly and will continue to do so for a long time to come, but thankfully he has left behind a lasting legacy in his poetry, dramaturgical and critical works that like all writers and artists of note he will live forever. Those of us who knew him well are grateful to God that he made him live, work, talk, laugh and play among and with us. We will never forget his always candid, entertaining, energetic, mesmerising performances whether during stage productions (we shared the stage few times in plays such as *Macbeth* (Arts Theatre University if Nigeria, Nsukka and on tour 1979 through 1980), *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (Arts Theatre, University of Nigeria, Nsukka 1985), *Romeo and Juliet* (Arts Theatre, University of Nigeria, 1986) and *Death and the King's Horseman* (University of Plymouth, UK 1992); or in the classrooms or some his 'intellectual bomb-throwing' at conferences, seminars or general discussions about African theatre and performance for which he is now lovingly referred to by some as the 'intellectual terrorist', an appellation which he, in his characteristic ebullience, gleefully embraced. Who can forget Esiaba's robust and characteristically very colourful email entitled "Ignorance Wearing the Mask of Arrogance: The Exceptional Case of Jane Plastow!" in response to Professor Plastow's ill-advised remark about AfTA and the *African Performance Review* in early Autumn of 2009!

We are also delighted to present to our readers four very engaging articles which came to us from three continents – two from our homeland Africa, one from our base here in the United Kingdom and one from North America. This indicates the wide coverage which the journals strives to cover, especially ensuring that we recognise/acknowledge the energetic and inspiring research going on in the various African diasporas around the world. The first essay is Sunnie Ododo's, "The Playing Aesthetics of Ebiran Ekuechi *Facekuerade* Festival" in which the author examines the playing aesthetics in Ekuechi *facekuerade* festival of the Ebira of Kogi State of Nigeria. The paper looks at the festival from the participant-audience's point of view and uses this to define 'what constitutes 'playing' within African performance sensibilities'. Kevin Wetmore's "A Rotimi in the Sun: Lorraine Hansberry, Ola Rotimi and the Connections of the African Diaspora Theatre" which conducts an inter-textual reading of Rotimi's *Our Husband has Gone Mad Again* in relation to Hansberry's classical African-American play, *A Raisin in the Sun* and he uses this reading to suggest that the two plays share similar concerns, themes and issues regarding especially post-independence corruption in a lot of emerging African nations and governments in the sixties and seventies. Ngozi Udengwu's "Cultural Literacy and Educational Empowerment in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century..." takes a critical look the idea of cultural knowledge and it's impact on educational achievements and empowerment of three categories of women in Nigeria since the 1970s in three plays,

*Nneora: An African Doll's House* by Tracie Utoh-Ezeajuh, *Into the World* by Onyeka Onyekuba and *Our Wife is not a Woman* by Stella Oyedepo. The final essay is "Counter-discourse in Wole Soyinka's 'Revision' of Euripides' *The Bacchae*" by Samuel Kasule which offers a useful postcolonial reading of Soyinka's *The Bacchae of Euripides*. The essay offers in the main a 'postcolonial actor's reflection on his experience of performing a postcolonial adaptation of a classic on a European stage' using a comparison of Soyinka's 'delineation of spaces in African performance and Homi Bhabha's discourse of the 'in between' space 'as reference points for this interrogation. The four essays have been carefully chosen as they reflect the diversified thinking and concerns of scholars and practitioners current within African theatre and performance scholarship and practice; and we hope our readers will find in the essays the enthusiasm and depth of analysis on the basis of which they have been selected.