

Editorial

African dramatists and critics use various methods to investigate and question the link between indigenous and non-indigenous performance cultures in the continent. Whilst some follow the traditional methods of narration and textual production, others bridge the gulf that exists between performers and the audience, using approaches and devices that include redesigning structures to suit the performance and expanding filmic contexts to engage with different kinds of audiences at the same time. The link to all the papers and interview in this issue is performance, the connection between the indigenous performance, practice and scenography and the influence of performance in the nascent/re-emerging dramaturgy in Africa. As expressed by Ssaalongo Tamusuza in the interview conducted by Sam Kasule, performance reflects different ways of thinking about and relating to knowledge and life. Performance therefore contextualises the culture of the people, occurring in the intersection between music, text, dance and movement and drama. Tamusuza is a noted Ugandan ethnomusicology professor and composer of Baganda music who employs a blend of traditional folk styles with Western classical forms to create a contemporary music style that is unique in the orchestrating and balancing of instruments such as flute, viola, prepared harp, marimba and maracas, oboe, clarinet, saxophone, guitar, horn and bassoon. He does this to produce a new form of Ugandan music where performers are not only free to vocalise song lyrics but are also able to perform a narrative that expresses the indigenous concepts of storytelling and dramatic narrations popular with the people. The musical performances thus string together themes that juxtapose modern compositional methods with traditional Buganda performance tradition.

There are three papers in this issue. The theme of performance and its function to surreptitiously serve as a tool for resistance is explored by Sola Adeyemi in the textual analysis of Femi Osofisan's *Tegonni* (*An African Antigone*), a play that has been critically described as one of the more significant works of the playwright in his thesis of extracting and defining the main causes of the social and political lethargy in the postcolonial African state. The dialectics of resistance is structured into the essence of

British colonial adventure in Nigeria and though the African nationalist leaders tried to extract and conceptualise these contentions, modern African leaders have failed to translate those ideas into visible popular actions, according to Osofisan.

In “Seeking an Alternative Approach to Teaching Scenographic Theory and Practice: The University of Zimbabwe Theatre Legacy”, Nkululeko Sibanda reflects on the teaching of scenographic practice and theory in Zimbabwe, introduced in 1984 by Robert McLaren (Robert Mshengu Kavanagh) at the University of Zimbabwe. The curriculum had an ideological basis – “Zimbabweanization, Africanization and socialist transformation” – designed to challenge the legacy of colonial theatre programmes in the country. While the idea was laudable when it was introduced, Sibanda argues for an alternative approach that, whilst building on the old practice, would adopt a more eclectic view regarding world performance cultures, requirements of indigenous performances, needs of the people as well as respond to the needs of applicable performance contexts. In the same vein, Tume Fondzeyuf advocates for a more pedagogical approach to transforming community theatre practice in Cameroon, in particular the more global and widely appealing filmic context. In “From People Theatre to Film: Articulating Minority Voices in Cameroon – An Anglophone Grass field Minority Case Study” Fondzeyuf considers the link between the practice of community theatre in the early 2000s and the subsequent use of the video performance of one of the products, *Gomen Na We*, to further the agenda of community theatre practitioners in raising awareness for societal change in a country where there is a general disconnect/detachment between the ruled and the rulers.

This edition concludes with a review of *African Theatre* in an issue devoted/dedicated to the celebration of two of the foremost African dramatists, Ngugi wa Thiong’o and Wole Soyinka. Finally, there is a tribute to one of the founding editorial advisers of APR, Professor Dapo Adelugba of Nigeria, who died in November 2014.

In ways, the papers and interview in this issue, in exploring and investigating African performance, emphasise the contemporary view of the relationship between the performer and the audience, and the significance of enabling performance structures to redress the past.

Sola Adeyemi