

**African Performance Review**

**Vol. 14, No. 1&2, 2024**

**pp. 79-80**

**Performance Review: Charles Mulekwa's *Man to Man*<sup>1</sup>**

**Ruth Epoch-Olise**

*Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike (AE-FUNAI), Nigeria*

*This play was first performed at the 2022 AfTA conference on 21 July 2022.*

Charles Mulekwa's *Man to Man* was performed at the opening of the 2022 edition of African Theatre Association annual conference at the Kyambogo University, Kampala, Uganda. It was performed on a raised dais, on a stage that had moments earlier been used for panel discussions. Therefore, apart from a table, a chair and a couch, there was minimal setting and no scenic background.

The performance is a one act, two-hander excerpt from *Man to Man* a melodramatic play written and directed by Charles Mulekwa. The drama tries to resolve family squabbles arising as a result of the husband's drunkenness. The recurrence of drunkenness in both the immediate and extended family of Rukiyat (Patience Nakamanya) leaves her emotionally drained. She tries to avoid the path her mother went through with her father as a result of alcohol consumption and this leads to constant and continuous argument with her husband, Job (Allen Mwanja), who insists on drinking every evening with friends. She fears a repeat of what happened to her father, who went out drinking one night and never came back home. His body was found by the roadside.

To Job, drinking with friends is the solace he finds for lack of satisfaction in his job, even when it hurts the wife. He says apart from Rukiyat's cooking for him, taking care of his laundry, and sleeping with him, there is nothing more that gives him excitement in life than drinking. It is his passion, a drug that cures his frustration; so, for Job, drinking is a religion, a ritual.

---

<sup>1</sup> DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30817/01412.apr0200>

*Ruth Epoch-Olise*

As for Rukiyat, she has become a frustrated African teacher who grew up despising teachers, and does not end up becoming one, but also has one as a husband. She tries to re-adjust to life, but ends up finding solace in her pillow, since her husband is always out with friends drinking.

The ending was inconclusive as both husband and wife maintain the veracity of the reason for their behaviour. The playwright seems to be throwing the dilemma of the resolution to the audience.

*Man to Man* is a simple, psychological play that utilized a concept of minimalism to put across its views to the audience.