

**THE ROLE OF MUSIC IN THEATRE PRODUCTIONS IN  
UGANDA:**

**A CASE STUDY OF THE PRODUCTIONS AT UGANDA  
NATIONAL THEATRE, KAMPALA**

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Requirements for the Award of a Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Drama  
and Film of Makerere University**

**January, 2024**

## DECLARATION

We, the undersigned, declare that this research report is our own original work and has never been presented to any institution for any academic award.

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**APPROVAL**

This research report has been written and submitted with my approval as a University Supervisor. to us during the course of our study.

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## **DEDICATION**

We dedicate this dissertation to our beloved families and the lecturers for the knowledge they passed on to us during the course of our study.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The role of music in theatre is fundamental to the success of any standard play production. Unfortunately, some play productions, as the study has revealed, do not showcase the fundamental roles of music in play productions. Music is merely employed as an appendage to the production. What is worse, the music when it is there at all, is poorly composed and orchestrated. This trend, if not curtailed, is detrimental to the act of playmaking and play production as it is capable of further endangering the already fragile state of live theatre in Uganda.

This study intended to investigate the role of music in theatre productions in Kampala, central division, Uganda. The rate of misconception on music used in the theatre productions leaves a big threat to the situation being that music is used in theatre to enhance the mood, create the atmosphere, engage the audience yet the theatre practitioners are unaware of the type to use. Given the attitude of theatre practitioners towards music, it can be noted that this idea is still being developed and mostly will be embraced in the years to come as still little knowledge is known about it.

This paper therefore defines music, attempt to categorize its genre and surveys how music was used in the theatre of the old. It also attempts a historical overview of the roles of music played in play production with a view to documenting the essential functions of music in play production.

## CHAPTER ONE:

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Introduction of the study

Music is defined by Babafemi Babatope as “*the rhythmic, melodious and harmonic organization of sounds*” (Pg. 168). He goes on to add that “Though what constitute music is culturally determined, generally, music is an organized composition, harmonious and pleasant to listen to. The basic elements of music include melody, rhythm, harmony, texture, form, tempo, and dynamics. Its instruments are voice, string instrument, wood and wind instruments, brass and percussion instruments”. (Pg. 170)

Babafemi goes on to notify us that “*Music performs many functions in the society. Music and society are closely related. Music reflects and creates social conditions, facilitates communication more powerful than the spoken words and it enables meaning to be shared. It also promotes the growth and sustenance of individuals, groups, cultural and national identities, has the ability to induce physiological mood, emotional, cognitive and behavioral responses in individuals. Music has therapeutic power. It promotes relaxation, it reduces anxiety and pains. Today as it was in the past, people variously employ music to alter their own moods, reduce stress, and diminish boredom during and after serious and intellectual tasking activities. In a nutshell, the role of music in society cannot be over emphasized. Since theatre is a reflection of life, it follows therefore that music in the theatre ought to play these functions depending on what aspect of life a particular play production is reflecting*”. (Pg. 170)

Stated by Babafemi, “*The knowledge of the past demystifies the past, clarifies the presence and illuminates the future. It can therefore be safely assumed that in as much as music was in the theatre of old, and it played specific significant roles, the*

*use of music in the play production today is justified*”, (Pg. 171) he goes ahead to discuss the specific roles that music must perform in the theatre.

He also adds that “Music in the theatre is not and should not be just for cheer aesthetics, rather it is and should be for socio-aesthetics harmony. In order for music to play its primordial role in the theatre, it should consciously be used in the following ways:

- i) **As Incidental music;** An incidental music is used in a play as a background, to create or enhance a particular atmosphere. This could be to underscore the thematic or composed to accompany the action of a drama or to fill intervals between scenes. The idea is that an incidental music usually is composed for the particular play or some songs that have precise relevance to the play; incidental music could be used to set an appropriate mood. It is advisable to play music that relates to the mood of the play to be watched the moment the house is opened for audience to come in. Unfortunately, the common practice in Uganda today is to usher in the audience with all kinds of popular music or sometimes no music at all. The practice of playing just any music related or not to the mood of the play to usher in the audience to the theatre is not in tune with the fundamentals of music in play production. The music the audience hears as they file in to the theatre should prepare them for the play they have come to see. During scene changes, the songs/music should either be reinforcing previous scene or setting the mood for the next.
- ii) **As integrated music;** An integrated music is used as part of the play/production. It is usually incorporated as part of the dialogue or any part within the play that has actors singing. This is best seen in the play; *Oluyimba wa Wankoko* by Byron Kawadwa. It engages the actors as part

of the play.

- iii) **For character development;** Music is used for character development; it is used to introduce and describe a character. The entrance of a notorious character can be announced with a song itemizing his personality and character traits.
- iv) **Entertainment music;** can also be used just for entertainment purpose, to create a joke or heighten the humorous depth of a play.

**V) To serve the function of the plot;** Music can be used to advance the play; that is to move the action forward. A character could commit murder as a result of being provoked by a song another character has rendered. The murder may then be the point of a turn-around for the plot. In a nutshell, the role of music in the theatre is a major one; so significant that a play may not be "complete" if devoid of music. Therefore, the instrumentality of music should be made standard. The song must be sung to tune, the instrument must be apt and adequate for the specific demands of given production.

As a result, specialists are needed to put a play together, for instance, the director, actors, theatre technicians, critics and the choreographer, are expected to work together, so also a musicologist is needed to perfect the musical needs of the play. The coaching of performers for music essentially should be handled by professionals. It is an error for theatre specialists to assume that the service of a musicologist or music specialist can be done without in a play production. Particularly when the play is one that needs music and most plays need music. The melodrama is different ball game all together, as the live band must essentially be

composed of musicians.” (pg. 171-172)

## **1.2. Background of the study**

This study investigated the role of music in theatre productions, Kampala central division, Uganda. Ethnomusicologist John Blacking says “we can go further to say that music is sound that is humanly patterned or organized” (1973) which expands the study to include music as sound.

Through early studies, it can be noted that music in theatre was being used when playing the local musical instruments because theatre was by then, engaging and non-existent of the ‘fourth wall’. This encouraged a lot of dance and singing from the members. It also promoted culture and tradition as mainly local songs as well as instruments were used such as the “adungu”, “endongo”, “engalabi”, “ennanga”, “embaire” for the different cultures.

Today, regarding the research conducted, music in theatre has developed several other aspects among both the theatre practitioners and the audience. There are few productions incorporating music and these, sometimes, use it for the wrong aspects which later on disengages the audience from the production, hence straying away from intended purpose. Theatre director, Emma Reynolds goes on to support that *“In the realm of theatre, music is the emotional architecture that supports the structure of storytelling, creating spaces for audiences to feel and reflect”*. In this regard, music has become an essential in theatre productions especially with the need to engage audiences.

## **1.3. Problem statement**

Music in theatre productions aids in expressing mood, evoking emotions, and driving the stories plot, which makes it a necessity in theatre productions. Although such importance is realized in theatre, there are still few theatre

productions using music. Through the study conducted, this has been realized that people still have different perspectives on how they view theatre productions especially associated with music, hence a threat to the development of music in theatre.

#### **1.4. Objectives of the study**

Here we are going to explain the purpose of music in theatre productions, how the role of music in these productions have been achieved and analyze the perspective of the audience and theatre practitioners on music in theatre productions.

##### **1.4.1. General objective**

To determine the role of music in theatre and in theatre productions.

##### **1.4.2 Specific objectives**

The objectives of the study were;

1. To assess the type of music in the theatre productions.
1. To determine the level of music in conveying the message intended.
2. To verify the reason for few music in productions.
3. To suggest better uses of music.
4. To assess the understanding of music to theatre practitioners.
5. To determine the number of people using music in theatre productions

#### **1.5. Research questions**

The research questions of this study were;

1. To what extent is music being used in theatre productions?
1. What type of music is used in theatre productions?

2. How many producers/directors use music in their productions?
3. Does the audience appreciate the use of music in theatre productions?
4. How effective is the music used in theatre productions?
5. What is your suggestion on the use of music in productions?

### **1.6. Significance of the study**

It was hoped that the study will offer information to the theatre practitioners to recognize and implement music to enhance theatre productions. The study would raise the standards of productions in the theatre thus boosting the market as well as engaging the audience.

It was hoped that the study could offer awareness and motivation to theatre practitioners to invest more on music aspects especially rehearsals, music composition. This knowledge could help them engage more audiences in theatre.

In the context that Uganda has diverse cultures with different music genres, this study can evoke producers to use the local music incorporated into their plays hence promoting culture and safeguarding heritage among different communities.

It would offer knowledge and skills of research to future researchers of how to carry out research. With this, they'll be able to contribute literature to academic debate and towards socio-cultural development.

### **1.7. Scope of the study**

Kumar (2011: 230) characterizes scope as a description of salient characteristics of a people as a “*community in which you will conduct your study*”. He adds that scope briefly describes the main characteristics such as size of a community, social profile of the community and issues of relevance to central theme of the study. This section, therefore describes the Geographical scope, Time scope, and Content

scope of this study.

### **1.7.1. Geographical scope**

This scope was conducted in Kampala City Central Division, focusing on the National theatre and Bat Valley theatre.

### **1.7.2. Time scope**

The historical time scope of the study conducted has been since Uganda's independence tracing back to 1962 till 2023. This has been through collecting and reading of already existing literature, watching recorded plays and analyzing them. Conducting the study lasted for eight months exclusive of the time period needed for the introduction and guidance on how to tackle the research.

### **1.7.3. Content scope**

This study intends to find out the role of music in theatre productions.

## **1.8. Limitations**

We found it hard to meet the scheduled interviewees because of their busy schedule. Some interviewees were not willing to be recorded. However, we solved this by exercising patience and being flexible. We also travelled and met our respondents in their places of convenience.

We were also challenged by the weather since most of this research was carried out during the rainy weather. Therefore, we had to be very determined which helped us to complete this exercise regardless weather challenges. We also bought umbrellas to enable us continue with our work

## CHAPTER TWO:

### 2.0. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1. Introduction

Uganda is one of the African countries with a diverse culture and it is believed to consist of about 26 ethnic groups, each with their own languages and music. However, it cannot be directly justified that this music has been used in the theatre practices.

Histories of music and histories of theatre readily attest to the fact that Uganda has had a brilliant experience in both arts, but the relationship between the two, the significant bearing that one hand on the other has largely been left unnoticed. *“Since independence, it is possible to notice the influence of colonialism into the Ugandan theatre”* says Sam Kasule and Peter Cooke as it largely influenced the theatre today, some of which can still be noticed. However, these impacts may not be entirely positive as Ugandan tradition and culture has been eroded.

Traditionally, music was used for storytelling, speech making and other recitations. *“Music making and music works are some of the most fundamental ways in which people can express their cultural values and beliefs”*. Elliot (1995; 197). Music as a multi-cultural phenomenon encompasses various cultures and practices where each specific practice reflects a social, cultural and ideological way of life. This was normally performed in groups which promoted unity and identification among the folks. Though it cannot be said that theatre by then was as what is defined as theatre today, with the proscenium stage and scripts, it can still be argued that the practice of music in theatre was common. This was through the traditional activities like child naming, circumcision, harvesting, birth and burial ceremonies and much more. This proves the existence and use of music in theatre.

Most people in the Western continents view music in Africa as interesting because

of its rhythmic complexity and the variety of percussion instruments. An example is shown in Buganda that uses the drums, flutes, xylophones and many others. These, if incorporated in the theatre space would set out an unforgettable experience.

On the other hand, it can strongly be debated that the use of music in theatre in traditional times brought more meaning to the event depending on the occasion and the same cannot be said with today's theatre as it is commonly noticed that the theatre practitioners usually choose random music to be used in the productions. Probably this should be attributed to the political climate that existed in the early years.

Between independence and the shattering of civil society amidst the violent anarchy of Amin's rule, Uganda enjoyed a decade of the most productive and committed indigenous theatre in East and Central Africa. Interest in drama began as early as the 1920s which however did not last during Obote's rule. *Andrew Horn* (Pg. 12)

While many in Uganda's theatre community died at the hands of Amin's various security agencies, none was more widely celebrated and respected than the 37-year-old playwright and director Byron Kawadwa. Active in theatre since secondary school, Kawadwa-with his former teacher Wycliffe Kiyingi and the gifted musician Wassanyi Serukenya - created a popular audience for drama by developing an accessible form of musical play; performing in Luganda (the main language in the region of the capital), against local settings, and establishing a professional standard for his large and meticulously rehearsed casts. In 1964, he founded the Kampala City Players, whose members, employed during the day in commerce and the Civil Service, gave long evenings to the theatre.

Two years later, during the Emergency declared after Obote's republican confrontation with the hereditary Kabaka of Buganda, Kawadwa, then on the staff of Radio Uganda, was arrested and detained without trial at Luzira prison. Upon his release, he found he could not reclaim his broadcasting post and turned to the theatre and to commercial advertising to sustain a living. In carefully crafted plays, like *Makula ga Kulabako* (Beautiful One') and *Oluyimba Iwa Wankoko* ('Wankoko's Song'), Kawadwa combined acute social observation, a deep affection for the culture of his native Buganda, a keen sense of stage spectacle, and Serukenya's rich musical scores for traditional Kiganda instruments, to produce neatly patterned romantic comedies. *Kulabako* drew the largest audiences ever recorded at Uganda's National Theatre.

In 1976, Wankoko was selected to represent Uganda at the Festival of Black and African Arts and Culture (FESTAC), in Nigeria. The production was revised and remounted under the direction of playwright Elvania Zirimu, and performed to appreciative international audiences in Lagos. But on 5 February 1977, while Kawadwa and his company were still in Nigeria, Anglican Archbishop Janani Luwum was arrested and murdered in Kampala, precipitating world-wide protests against religious persecution in Uganda. Some eight months earlier, Kawadwa had sought-and reportedly received - official approval from the President's Office to revive his *Saint Lwanga*, first produced for the 1969 visit of Pope Paul VI. The play commemorates the martyrdom of 22 young Baganda Roman Catholics, burnt to death in 1885 by Kabaka Mwanga at the urging of his Arab adviser, Salim bin Juma. When Kawadwa returned and resumed rehearsals of *Saint Lwanga*, it must have seemed to some in the Muslim military hierarchy that, by offering a stage piece on the slaughter of Christians, he was engaging in subversion. In early March 1977, Kawadwa was dragged by armed officers of the SRB from the greenroom of

the National Theatre, of which he had been the Artistic Director. Some days later his body, with those of five members of the Saint Lwanga cast, was found mutilated and charred in a forest outside Kampala.

It will probably never be known why Kawadwa's death was ordered; whether because of his theatre work or because, having travelled abroad, he was therefore suspected of having made contact with anti-Amin organisations.

Even more obscure are the reasons for the disappearances in the following July: of Dan Kintu, who had succeeded Kawadwa as Artistic Director of the National Theatre; of John Sebuliba, an Under-secretary in the Ministry of Culture; and of playwright John Male. All that is known is that Male's *The Empty Room* had that evening been given its premiere performance before a large audience in Kampala and may have been interpreted as in some way offensive to the person of the President. Several months later, Lieutenant Stephen Mutengo, who claimed to have had a part in the disposal of the bodies, reported from refuge in Kenya that the three men had been taken from the National Theatre to an Army barracks in Bombo, tried in camera, and executed on 23 July 1977. It should be noted that musicians, as well as actors, writers, and directors, have been murdered by the security agencies. Even Amin's own favored Scottish Pipers, all from the Acholi region in northern Uganda, and the Director of the Police Band, Ahmed Oduka, may be found in the catalogue of the dead.

Uganda has had an active theatre culture and has developed particular initiative in the use of theatre for development and educational purposes and in the exploration of the theatrical potential of traditional performance form. A significant play in that context was Rose Mbowa's *'Mother Courage and Her Children'* (first performed in 1987) with its plea for unity and progress. Mbowa with her company, drew on the rich performance resources of the various ethnic groups of Uganda. The play

also toured Europe and became symbolic of the vigor and relevance of contemporary Ugandan theatre.

Despite all the negative results brought about from practicing music and theatre, performing arts in general, the industry has not failed to rise and continue struggling through the difficult times. Today, the Ministry of Education and Sports through the new curriculum that supports the performing arts from a young stage. This has changed the negative attitude and perspective of the public towards this. Music at primary level of education in Uganda is categorized under the syllabus of Performing Arts and Physical Education. A study by Benon Kigozi reveals that mission of the Ministry of Education and Sports is to support, guide, co-ordinate, regulate and promote quality education and sports for national integration. (pg. 4), which has improved the perspective of music and theatre in general.

Theatre on the other hand, has had its devastating moments through the years which has left a void in the industry. The fact relating to the change of era and technological aspects that reveal that theatre is no longer appreciated as it was before. With this in mind, it can be strongly validated that the traditional practices and customs highly encouraged theatre development which is not the same as of today. The society now views family in nuclear setting which has led to neglect of these practices.

The government support of the industry is now minimal and extinguished even with the increased knowledge and advocacy for this industry growth. This has in turn discouraged the practitioners into taking action into their own hands which has brought about disunity and hence limiting development of the sector as a whole.

A review of other scholarly works reveals high level of inadequate research carried out in this field of the role of music in theatre. In fact, from the review, we realized

that most of the literature rotated about sound in theatre, music in theatre and to a small extent the role of music in theatre. all these, look at music from a different perspective than from the right one. This proves that the aspect of music in theatre is taken with little consideration especially with the expenses that surround it, therefore it still remains a theory that is to be discovered by many.

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3.0. RESEARCH METHODS

#### 3.1. Introduction

This chapter provides the methodological statements to this study. It includes the Research design, sampling,

#### 3.2. Research Design

According to Blaikie (2000:37), research design “*is the plan, structure and strategy of investigation conceived so as to obtain answers to the research questions and to control variance...[It] is the overall program of the research*”. It involves sampling strategies and tools used, what techniques will be used. The study intended to access the role of music in theatre productions in Kampala Uganda.

The study utilizes qualitative data through interviews of selected individuals to help understand that these members have different experiences and perspectives of music in theatre.

#### 3.3. Study population

Study population includes theatre practitioners around Kampala. According to the Uganda population survey, there about five [5] formal theatres around Kampala. Since it was not possible to travel to all the theatres for the study, we used a representative sample of the theatres. From these we selected actors, writers, designers, directors and audiences. We selected a total of ten [10] respondents for the interviews and 20 questionnaires for the audience.

#### 3.4. Sampling

Collins, Onwuegbuzie, and Jiao (2007), explains that “*sampling denotes the explicit strategy used to select units*” for example people, groups and settings that

are to be studied. The study employed snowball and purposive sampling techniques.

#### **3.4.1. Snowball Sampling**

Kumar (2011: 208), explains that snowball sampling, “*is a process of selecting a sample using networks...[where] a few individuals of a group or organization are selected and the required information is collected from them. They are then asked to identify other people in the group and the people selected by them become part of the sample*”.

We used snowball sampling to get additional data from the informants that were recommended by the already identified respondents. In doing so, we minimized the limitations associated with snowball sampling such as bias of the informants who may tend to recommend friends only.

#### **3.4.2. Purposive sampling**

This type of sampling is used when the researcher selects individuals and sites for the study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem, thus only participants who had necessary information were selected. Respondents were also selected basing on their involvement on music in theatre productions.

#### **3.5. Data Collection**

According to O'Reilly (2012), data collection involves systematically documenting details from daily life, documenting speech, habits, customs, as well as magic formulae and myths; making lists, drawing maps, constructing genealogies and taking photographs and field notes, recording not only those occurrences and details that are prescribed by tradition, but also the actual actions that are observed as they occur. We collected data by making transcriptions of audio recordings,

analyzing written literature on music in theatre, interviewing individuals. This enabled us to acquire and analyze data, to give a more concrete discussion.

### **3.5.1. Data encoding**

Here, we used different statistical representations to explain our data. These included tables, sets and others to help our reviewers understand our data better.

### **3.5.2. Data transcription**

At this stage, we used the different interviews that we had attained while in field. These, we listened to over and over with pause and resume steps and wrote down everything as said by our respondents. We later used the information to support our research questions as these provided answers and also gave deeper explanation that help in understanding more of our research topic.

### **3.5.3. Interviews**

Interviews are direct conversations between two or more people about specific topic. We used both structured and unstructured questions in the study on people with knowledge about theatre practice. The main aspects being;

- a. To assess the understanding of music to theatre practitioners
- b. To determine the number of people using music in theatre productions
- c. To determine the level of music in conveying the message intended
- d. To assess the type of music in the theatre productions
- e. To suggest better uses of uses in theatre productions

### **3.5.4. Questionnaire**

We also used questionnaires to gather information mostly from the audience that attended different shows at different theatre spaces, most of which were students. This was time saving and highly relevant as respondents were able to reply to

questions without any fear or favor and it can be noted that the main aspects really included the age brackets for theatre goers as well as their perception on music in theatre productions.

### **3.6. Data Analysis**

Analysis involved “*looking for categories, themes, or dimensions of information*” Creswell, 2007. (p. 153). Through reading, we were able to critically analyze and organize this information into tabular form dissecting them basing on the aspects presented on the questionnaires as well as the interviews, some of which include; age, gender, theatre attendance, level of knowledge.

### **3.7. Ethical considerations**

In the course of carrying out this study, we ensured respondents' prior consent as Silverman (2010) suggests that respondents must be informed fully about the purpose, methods and intended possible uses of the research. We therefore respected our respondents' privacy by asking for their permission to record our interviews. We also inquired on the best language to use where by all of them agreed to use our official language which is English. We also made sure we were dressed decently as the interviewers.

## CHAPTER FOUR:

### 4.0 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

#### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on data presentation, data analysis and discussion. The data was obtained from the study titled “Music in theatre”, Kampala, central division and were based on seven specific objectives all about examining the role of music in theatre productions.

#### 4.2. Data Presentation

##### 4.2.1 The extent to which music is used in theatre productions

According to one informant, a poet who also sometimes does soetry, music has been used to a greater extent. Similarly, another, who is a singer and song writer confirms to it together with most of our interviewees. One theatre director, goes on to support this saying that actually our culture is musical. He adds that the stories that they do are mostly cultural therefore, they are embedded with music. *“You cannot do a kiganda story without Maganda dance like bakisimba, muwogola and others”* he says. He however adds that you can do a German piece without music because you do not identify with them. Therefore, he says, it’s because the stories they usually tell have a background and a cultural background which has a musical story to tell. Furthermore, a sound engineer has this to say *“you can’t have a plain production unless it’s the directors vision.”* He adds that a production without music is unpleasant to him. It feels empty.

However, a few respondents said that music is being used to a smaller extent. In an interview with one, he supports this saying that Ugandan productions are limited by funds. Therefore, when it becomes costly to hire a composer and the director cannot write his own music and above all they cannot afford copyright, they tend to neglect the music aspect and only rely on the ability of the sound designer who

adds in a few sounds to bring out the mood and atmosphere.

A playwright, actor and director adds that many productions have interludes, fillers, sweepers which are very different from song. One student of drama and film at Makerere University, says that most directors use music in limited cases like when changing scenes but rarely make musical productions.

#### **4.2.2 What type of music is usually used in theatre productions?**

One actor says that the kind of music used in any production depends on the director's vision, the kind of piece you are putting on stage, what kind of mood you would like to portray but he emphasizes that we should be able to differentiate music from sound effects and not mistake one for the other.

He adds on to say, "*music is not music without sound.*" And sound can include all sound effects such as fillers, folly, ambience and others which makes them valid in this study.

Another further says that the environment of the story dictates what kind of music to use. He gives examples of a market scene and a bus park which will all call for a different type of music. Another interviewee in his explanation refers to this as "organic" music. However, some respondents went on to breakdown the different types of music they have witnessed or even used in their shows. These include; rap music, opera music, R&B, instrumental music where they use guitars, drums, violins among others. However, as one playwright suggests, directors are free to use any genre of music in their productions as long as it's in line with the story.

#### **4.2.3 How effective is the use of music in theatre productions?**

All our respondents agreed that music is very effective just like sound effects and greatly emphasized its use for those who have not been using it. The sound designer says that music is great at enhancing the performance and the

environment in which it is performed, evokes emotion in both the actors and audience, it can also be used as a bridge especially during transitions. Another student adds on this by saying that actually music can be used to tell a story, set the mood and atmosphere; backing it up is another who goes on to say that the effectiveness of music depends on its message and that music compliments dialogue, it helps to bring the audience deeper into the world of action.

#### **4.2.4 Do the audience appreciate the use of music in theatre productions**

Yes, the audience appreciate the use of music in theatre productions. A student has this to say, “for all the productions I have attended and they use music, they have been very entertaining and engaging.” One interviewee is critical to notice when he says that the audience appreciate the use of music as long as it reflects the theme of the production.

Another adds on this saying that as long as the audience relate with the music, they will surely appreciate it. He goes ahead to give an example of a musical show he watched. He says, the show started and ended with song. “It had a total of forty-six songs. Out of the forty-six, I have thirty-five of them in my play list and out of the thirty-five, I know thirty of them in my head and that is the best show I have ever watched,” says Ssekatawa.

A playwright broadens this by saying “there is music to listen to and music to dance to. People in theatre do not come to dance therefore they appreciate the music to listen to.” Defending it is another who says yes, the audience appreciate the use of music because if they didn’t receive it, theatre would have been faded especially the musical productions.

#### **4.2.5 What can be done to make sure that we have more productions that use music that is very relevant in theatre productions in Uganda?**

Sound engineer advises all sound engineers to understand the script first because when designing they follow the beginning, middle and end so they should bring out that flow and then compose or download that relates to the actions on stage. He is supported by another who says, “you should first understand the message. You won’t bring music from anywhere and put it in your production if the two are not compatible.” Sound engineer further goes on to suggest that the sound designers should always be called in time so that they can be part of the rehearsals which gives them time to explore their creativity and understand the script. He also hints on the importance of specialization since it gives you a chance to perfect your field of interest.

Another informant says that music is therapy therefore, people especially technicians should prepare themselves so well if need be, they should take classes for their roles. Another actor says that Ugandans should respect pre-production processes thus they will be full organized and ready for the shows. He also advises the sound technicians to make thorough research and inquire from people who are best at what they are doing hence emphasizing collaborations. He also advises theatre makers to go for workshops as it will help you improve your skills. The playwright supplements on this by saying that we should make use of composers like Paul Ssaka, church priests and artists not for the purpose of acting but for the purpose of music.

Another student also urges theatre people to learn how to make their own music. He adds that when you are a creator and performer, it helps you in the finance, you do not spend a lot of money on hiring composers. He also advises performers to

learn to play traditional musical instruments such as adungu, long drum because some people are getting a lot of money from them and besides they are a representation of your culture and your culture is your identity. A music composer also advises theatre makers to be ready to put in much efforts because the songs can help you tell a story and you have to make it to the taste of your audience. He also advises them to look for funding so that they are able to facilitate all activities of the production.

The poet also adds that understanding the kind of audience for your production is key.

We also included the use of questionnaire with a total of 20 respondents. These questions were categorized into age, gender, attendance of theatre i.e. national theatre, bat valley theatre and la Bonita, use of music in theatre productions and how appealing it was, existing knowledge about music in theatre, type of music used and how it was used including its effectiveness in the production. All these have been presented in tabular form as shown below;

***Figure 1:Table showing age groups***

Age groups	Frequency	Percentage
10-25	15	75
26-35	4	20
36-45	1	5
46-Above	0	0
Total	20	100

**Figure 2** Table representing gender

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Males	11	55
Females	9	45
Total	20	100

**Figure 3:** Table showing attendance of any theatre spaces

Attendance	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	19	99
No	1	1
Total	20	100

**Figure 4:** Table expressing what they enjoyed most

Responses from the respondents	Percentage (%)
Find the actors appealing	15
Like the characters	20
Enjoy the music	25
The plot	40

**Figure 5:** Table showing the respondents' knowledge of music in theatre productions

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Very little knowledge	3	15
Little knowledge	8	40
Moderate knowledge	5	25
Much knowledge	3	15

Very much knowledge	1	5
Total	20	100

***Figure 6:Table determining whether music was used in these plays***

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	9	45
No	11	55
Total	20	100

***Figure 7:Table determining the type of music used***

Type of music	Frequency	Percentage
Pantomime	0	0
Contemporary	9	45
Folk music	9	45
Others	2	10
Total	20	100

***Figure 8:Table showing how music was incorporated in the productions***

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Playing music in the background	10	50
Playing it between breaks	8	40
Actors singing it	2	10
Total	20	100

***Figure 9:Table determining effectiveness of music in these performances***

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Not effective	0	0
Neutral	7	35
Effective	9	45
Very effective	4	20
Total	20	100

***Figure 10:Table showing respondents' experience on music in theatre productions***

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Very involved	8	40
Involved	7	35
Detached	4	20
Very detached	1	5
Total	20	100

***Figure 11:Table showing appreciation of the use of music in theatre production***

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	16	80
No	4	20
Total	20	100

### **4.3. Data Analysis**

During the study, we interviewed ten respondents. These included actors, directors, sound designers, song writers, poets, sorts and a few drama students from Makerere University. All of these had experience of the theatre and watched and participated in different productions. Among these interviewees, only one was a Lady and the rest were males. This shows us the gender distribution in the Uganda theatre in that it is comprised of more males than females and even the females taking part in it rarely embrace the technical areas. Most of these respondents said that music is used on a larger extent but this is only valid if even other sound effects are included. Without sound effects, we noticed that music issued to a smaller extent and most of the productions that use it are cultural in nature. It is on this note that some interviewees argued that actually music is rarely used in our productions.

However, all our interviewees as noticed are facing the same challenges in the industry and gave almost similar solutions that can be used to turn around the situation but one major recommendation from all of them was that we should make use of professional composers so as to have nice music in our shows which is also very relevant to the story.

We also distributed out twenty questionnaires to the audience of different shows and the following were noticed;

We noticed that of the twenty respondents, in reference to the table in figure 1, seventy-five (75%) percent was of young people between the age group of 10-25 years, 20% was between 26-35 years, 5% was between 36-45 years and none of the respondents was 46 years and above. This means theatre is frequented mostly by

young people who do not even have enough money to sponsor these shows and also can't afford expensive shows which forces the directors to make low budget productions. This also implies that the theatre is mainly enjoyed by the youth, especially those who have taken interest in the space. The absence of adults 46 years and above clearly indicates that theatre has lost meaning to such people especially with the growing economy as they tend to prioritize other events.

In reference to table in figure 2, we also noticed that more males attend the theater than females which is attributed to the traditional setting of women becoming sluts in this field leaving the platform to the men. This also means that the main purpose of theatre which is to educate may not be realized hence morality may not be instilled in children as emphasized in theatre since we believe that its women who spend more time with the children. This also explains why there are few musical plays in our production. This is because a child learns about music from its mother as a baby but if this woman does not get the opportunity to appreciate this music in theatre, chances are high that even the child may not appreciate music use in theatrical productions. However, with the few women who are found in theatre, society does them no justice as they are oppressed and undermined. The males were taking 55% and the females were only 45%.

Under the attendance part, among our respondents, most of them had attended productions or had taken part in different productions. Therefore, 99% of our respondents had attended or participated in theatre productions. This means that they were the right sources and that chances are high that the information we received is relevant to the study. However, the 1% who have not attended or participated in theatre represents those that take theatre for granted because of the perspective they have on theatre spaces. This, however can also be attributed to their ignorance of the existence of theatre spaces around them. Therefore,

advertisements should be maximized to increase awareness to the public as well as theatre advocacy.

In another analysis is the attendance within the given theatre spaces as represented by table in figure 3. Our respondents had all attended theatre in most of the known theatres in the Central division of Kampala. Among them, 50% had attended some shows at the National theatre, 40% had gone to Bat valley theatre shows and 10% of them had visited La Bonita shows. However, some of them had attended shows in more than one theatre space. This means that they have knowledge about formal theatre. This can also be attributed to the strategic location of these spaces that make them easily accessible. Also the study recognizes that National theatre uses English as the National language for its shows catering for the large population, which has attributed to it having the highest level of attendance. Another factor realized is the level of advertisement as well as the shows having no age description (for all ages). All these have attributed to its popularity. The low percentage under La Bonita theatre is majorly due to the high prices charged for the shows and the accessibility according to age. This theatre is mainly attended by the adults and the working class.

In these shows, our respondents went ahead to break down what they enjoyed most during these shows. From their responses, 15% find the actors appealing, 20% like the characters, 25% enjoy the music while 40% it's the plot for them and their responses are represented in the table on figure 4. Due to the nature of Uganda's theatre, little effort is put during the casting of actors for the different shows according to their characters. This is because the ones with knowledge are denied chance to prove themselves which leaves the career to the untrained resulting to the low percentage. The characters for these plays are however, well portrayed if analyzed carefully. The plot having the highest percentage of attendees who

enjoyed it highly attributes to the good plays chosen, and another to the playwright and director's execution of the play. However, for this study, the music cannot be forgotten and given the percentage, it indicates that there is a growth in the industry and recognition of this in the theatre spaces.

In addition to that, we inquired about their knowledge of music in the theatre productions and we found out that most of them had little knowledge about music, how to compose it and integrate it in their shows which is the reason why perhaps we have few musical productions in Uganda. We found out that 15% had very little knowledge of music use in theatre productions, 40% had little knowledge, 25% had moderate knowledge, 15% had much knowledge and 5% had very much knowledge and this is represented on the table on figure 5. These percentages indicate that there is little consideration of the application of music in theatrical productions. This can be coupled with the fact that it is expensive to apply this in theatre. The gap between the music and theatre in Uganda largely contributes to the disunity among performing artists as one of the interviewees mentioned because each identify themselves in the different fields and cannot join hands to become one. Also given that this industry is not highly supported with the political climate. There are other factors that deny the development of the industry but most of it all is the willingness of artists to collaborate.

A further discussion went on as to whether music was used in the different plays that were watched by the respondents and we found out that 45% of the shows they watched used music whereas 55% of them did not as represented in the table on figure 6. The low percentage of shows using music in their productions can be a result that the producers do not know how to compose music as discussed in the analysis above. One may even notice that the few productions did not incorporate music in accordance to the message and theme of the play regarding it as another

mis-communication to the audience. The percentage that did not have music in their productions is probably because of the high expenses attributed to this exercise. Still, little knowledge is about the music in theatre productions. However, with the current curriculum that aims to promote the performing arts, there is a greater chance that the audience will get to know the aspects and how to incorporate them in productions.

We also went deeper into finding out the type of music that was used in these plays that our respondents had watched. 45% of them used contemporary music and the same went for folk music and other types of music only occupied 10%. The battle between contemporary music and folk music highly indicates that these are cheaper to incorporate in theatre productions than other kinds of music. More so, with the traditional belief that theatre producers tend to use what is already known by the public (trends) in order to highly market their shows also brings about that result. The 10% on the others such as opera clearly indicates the lack of experienced personnel to manage such and the ones available could be highly expensive to charge for their services and the same goes for the pantomime. Also given the fact that Uganda and the theatre practices in the different spaces aim to conserve tradition gives little room for other types of music to be used especially one not of the culture. This is represented in the table on figure 7.

More still, we went on to look at the way how music is brought out in these performances and we realized that actually actors rarely sing this music out. This could be because they are sometimes not talented singers hence perhaps this could also be a reason as to why directors find it hard to include music in their performances. However, other means of including music in these performances have been found out to be as follows; Firstly, 50% of the music used is played as background music, 40% is used in change of scenes as transitions and only 10% is

included in the story and sung by actors. Table on figure 8 indicates this. Most times for music to be played in the productions, it means the play being performed has music or that it's the director's vision to draw the audience into the production. Either way, it is noticed that in this study, most of the time, it was used in the background. This is because it is easy to use it as that. The same goes for it to be used during a change of scenes and the percentage that was sung by actors were probably because the play required it that way. Some of such plays include Song of Wankoko by Byron Kawadwa and to write such plays, it requires creativity and knowledge of songwriting, which is a rare talent among the theatre practitioners.

Above that, we went on and assessed the respondents on how they found this music effective in these performances. Though they had watched few musical productions that involved music, those few that used it well remains memorable to them and we discovered that 35% of them found the music neutral, meaning the show would lack nothing even without the music, 45% of them found it effective and 20% of them found it very effective due to the demand of the play. However, this can also be attributed to the actors' effort to sing or the directors' creativity and leadership skills to bring out the meaning of the play. This is represented in figure 9. As identified in the table, we realize that there was not a moment when the music was non-effective to the play. This brings a conclusion that even with the little knowledge about music, theatre practitioners do their best to make a meaning of the play to gain audience.

Our respondents also went ahead and precisely shared their experiences during all the productions that used music that they watched. In the table of figure 10, 40% of our respondents said that they felt very involved, 35% of them felt involved, 20% of them felt detached and only 5% said that they felt very detached. This aimed at helping us as researchers to find out the relevance of our research topic. The fact

that the highest percentage was attributed to the respondents being highly involved in the production indicates the understanding of music by theatre practitioners. However, this is opposite with the interviewees as they think most theatre practitioners need more training. So, could this be a mistake of luck that the highest percentage find of the audience find the show very involving or it could be attributed to the little knowledge of the respondents themselves. These statistics show an improvement in the use of music in theatre and understanding of its application.

We concluded the questionnaire with a question that intended on helping us know whether the audience appreciate the use of music in theatre productions and 80% of the respondents said that they appreciate its use and only 20% did not appreciate it. The positive feedback having the highest percentage has its roots on the understanding of theatre and music, both for the audience and theatre practitioners. Shown in the table of figure 11.

#### **4.4. Limitations of the Data**

It should be taken into consideration that the sample size was small due to the purposive sampling method chosen for the research. However, the information received from our respondents was carefully and accurately transcribed and represented after a series of listening to the interviews over and over. However, we cannot depend on that to assume that our respondents are "fountains" of knowledge. More so, since theatre and music is always evolving, the information given above may or may not be relevant in a few years to come. Therefore, one should be cautious when applying this knowledge for general purpose.

The allocated time for this study was inadequate to carry out intensive research, therefore the presented data might not create impact in terms of knowledge

generation. This also reduces the quality of the work presented, however true it may appear.

#### **4.5. Conclusion**

In conclusion therefore, during our research, we found out that music plays a very great role if incorporated in productions. It can provide an amazing experience for both the audience and creatives but it has not been extensively used in Uganda productions.

## **CHAPTER FIVE:**

### **5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

This chapter finalizes the study by discussing through the conclusions and recommendations discovered throughout the study. A summary of the objectives that drove the study are as discussed; To assess the type of music in the theatre productions, To determine the level of music in conveying the message intended, To verify the reason for few music in productions, To suggest better uses of music, To assess the understanding of music to theatre practitioners, To determine the number of people using music in theatre productions

#### **5.2. Conclusion**

Accordingly, it can be concluded that the prevalence of music in Ugandan theatre, is no doubt, a vital force, that has been realized in this era. Even with the little knowledge discovered among the theatre practitioners, music has still found its way into the theatre even when used incorrectly, therefore, we notify that in this conducted study, the objectives have been fully engaged throughout the findings and this has been through the application of both the questionnaire and the interviews.

However, it can be noted that the success and popularity of these productions must have been, to some measure, due to the fact that they contained a quantity of music the audience had learned to enjoy.

#### **5.3. Recommendation**

Basing on the conclusions of this study, we hereby recommend that the theatre practitioners should look up more opportunities to increase the practice of music. Some of these may include collaborations with music composers, engaging

musicologists during productions, engaging in serious rehearsals, training new learners. These will create more knowledge concerning music in the theatre.

Also, schools should be engaged in the practical sessions of the study of music in theatre productions in order to create awareness about this aspect in theatre. This broadness in knowledge helps to improve the quality of the music in theatre productions.

Music should also be made a part and parcel of the theatre productions in order to increase audience engagement and participation in the theatre.

As Africans, music should be used highly practiced due to its roots with the traditional practices hence bringing more light and understanding as well as appreciation within our different cultures.

### **Recommendations for further research**

We also recommend that additional research that would establish the existing state of music in theatre productions. This would greatly increase the sustainability of the music in theatre practice as well as audience engagement to theatres.

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