

The Necessity Of Art: A Discuss On The Art Of Theatre Management

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Abstract

This paper examines the necessity of art on a general level, but its nucleus is the necessity of the Art of Theatre Management. Many studies abound on the subject of arts and on the art of theatre management too, but despite this, many till date do not consider theatre management as a necessary art in the discus of arts and the theatre. This has given rise to why most young theatre undergraduates, post graduates and even scholars pursue and specialize in other aspects and areas of the art of the theatre, and not on the art of theatre management. This lopsidedness in view and pursuit, has created a lacuna which the study seeks to cover by bringing to light the necessity of art (the art of theatre management). The study further highlights the purpose and aim of the art of theatre management and also brings to mind, the very consciousness of the inseparability of the art of theatre management and other aspects and arts of the theatre. The study recommends that undergraduate, post graduates, art/theatre art scholars and practitioners see this art, as a necessary art that cannot be discarded in the practice and discus of the art of the theatre.

Introduction

Scholars of different disciplines have given their views on what art is, its composition and its relevance to the society. Some of these scholars see art as a pivotal tool while to others it is nothing. To most, it is nice but fades besides the everyday problems of physical survival, housing, food, money, children, etc. Seeing all of these assertions, the question of the necessity of art on a general level, has really become essential. We must note that, art is something to work with at all levels of human endeavour either to ease or tease human's development, or for other purposes. Frankly, man's yearning for enlargement shows that he is more than an individual. He feels that he can attain completeness only if he takes ownership of the experiences of others that might potentially be his own. Yet, what a man considers as his potentials includes everything that humanity owns. Art therefore becomes indispensable for this merging of the individual with the whole. In all forms of its development, in dignity and fun, persuasion and exaggeration, sense and nonsense, fantasy and reality, art has a lot to do with improving the society.

The general necessity of arts is also not far in the discus of the necessity of the art of theatre management. On a general level, management is a very vital aspect and

part of human existence. This is because success in any sphere and field of life, is a product of well managed, and executed activities. Theatre which is a collaborative work and form of arts, needs more than just artistic knowledge and skills, but also the presence of good managerial skills, this is why this art of theatre management is a very necessary art. Individually, management is a vital part of human existence, because in every sphere of life, materials and resources have to be managed; be it in the family, business, organisations, companies and even in the government. Without management (effective management), things would be left undone or partially done, and this will lead to the collapse of any institution and even the theatre as an art and institution. By this alone, it is clear that theatre management is a necessary art to be desired and held with both hands. As Monyeh M. Peter (2010) would put it:

Management has always been applied in all ramifications of life (house management, school management, office

management, farm management, educational management, and in traditional settings - traditional management and Theatre Management, etc.) Though approaches may vary, from organization to organization, but any organization that wishes to attain success must take into account effective and efficient management procedure (p. 1)

This indicates that management on its own, is a necessary part of human existence, and by extension, theatre management is a very necessary part and aspect of the art of the theatre.

Conceptual View of Art

The beginning point to note is that art has diversified definitions and thus cannot be limited to a single rigid and straight jacket definition. This is because the definition of art, has no limit. Art is the product or process of deliberately arranging symbolic elements in a way that influences and affects the senses, emotions, and/or intellect. It encompasses a diverse range of human activities, creations, and modes of expression, including music, literature, film, photography, sculpture, and paintings (Marilina Maraviglia 2010, par. 1). Art is a human activity in which one consciously hands unto others feelings he has lived through so that other people are infected by these feelings and also experience them. Art, the product of creative human activity in which materials are shaped or selected to convey an idea, emotion, or visually interesting form. The word art can refer to the visual arts, including painting, sculpture, architecture, photography, decorative arts, crafts, and other visual works that combine materials or forms. We also use the word art in a more general sense to encompass other forms of creative activity, such as dance, drama, and music, or even to describe skill in almost any activity (Dream Fine Art, par. 1). In this article art refers to the managerial art, (the art of management).

Wenikado S. Ganagana (2014) puts it that art is the creation of or reproduction of ideas, thoughts and imagination into visual and practical reality from shambles and chaos. Art is also seen as the outward expression of our inner impressions (p. 1-2). Art involves the application of imagination as well as the technical utilization of the resources of the human mind in fashioning the art object which is the medium through which the artist objectifies his feelings and emotions. Susanne Langer, the great philosopher of the art, observes that the art is the "creation of forms symbolic of human feelings" (AZ QUOTES, n.d). So far as she is concerned, artistic works symbolize human feelings. Every work of art is borne out of the desire of

an artist to communicate a feeling that he has lived through. Everybody is affected by different factors which make different kinds of emotions to well up in them no matter what they may be. Susanne Langer (1993) opines that feelings, serve as the trigger that set off artistic creations. Because not only do people feel, but they are eager to express their feelings so that others could derive some benefits from the feelings. So, they create forms or works of art.

From all of these, it is clear that a single concept on what art is does not exist because many still see art as an attempt to create pleasing forms, the process of consciously using skill and creative imagination in transforming raw experience into aesthetic objects for arousing delight and intellectual stimulation of the perceiver. Art could also mean to play with form, the purpose of which is to produce an aesthetically successful object or performance. It connotes a sense of trained ability or mastery of a medium, and can also refer to the developed and efficient use of a language to convey meaning with immediacy or depth. Art on its own is an act of expressing feelings, thoughts, and observations. A common view is that "Art", particularly in its elevated sense, requires a certain level of creative expertise by the artist, whether this is a demonstration of technical ability or originality in stylistic approach such as in the plays Shakespeare, or a combination of these two, and the most important and interesting part of it is that art, can be learned.

Characteristics of Art

Just like every other forms of human endeavours, art has some basic characteristic that makes it unique and different from other forms of human activity. Art tends to facilitate intuitive rather than rational understanding, and is usually consciously created with this intention. As a result of this impetus, works of art are hard to pin down, refractive to attempts at clarification, because they can be appreciated in more than one way, and are often susceptible to many different interpretations. Traditionally, the highest achievements of art demonstrate a high level of ability or fluency within a medium. This characteristic might be considered a point of contention, since many modern artists (most notably, conceptual artists) do not themselves create the works they conceive, or do not even create the work in a conventional, demonstrative sense. Art has a transformative capacity: confers particularly appealing or aesthetically satisfying structures or forms upon an original set of unrelated, passive constituent. As part of the unique characteristic, art always has its

principles of:

Unity

Unity is an important principle common to all arts. Unity in art means total adherence to the subject. It suggests the treatment of a single subject.

Coherence

This is closely related to unity in that each part of the whole should not only bear a relation to, but develop or evolve from the previous parts. It demands logical and probable relationship of the parts.

Emphasis and Selectivity

Emphasis is essential in all arts. The kernel, core, heart and soul of every concept are expressed through the proper control of emphasis. Through emphasis the artist is able to make the important aspects of his creation stand out vividly from their background of lesser parts so the spectators may recognize their importance more easily and clearly. Emphasis involves selectivity; in fact, one of the simplest ways to emphasize is to omit entirely certain elements of its nature.

Rearrangement

The emphasis of the important part is conveyed not only by actual size in space of time but by rearrangement so that through its position the important part is readily recognized by the spectator.

Intensification

Rearrangement further produces an intensifying effect. Dramatic or theatrical effect is result of intensification; in fact, the two terms are often used as synonyms.

Mood

A concept or idea when reproduced, takes on the power to convey a certain amount of feeling to an observer. This same object rearranged with the principles of art is able to convey or suggest something more than the denoted object; it can convey the essence of itself

Conceptualization of Theatre Management

The first point to note in the conceptualization of the art of theatre management is that, theatre management is an art in its own right. To begin with, management as an independent word is explained by Barclays F. Ayakoroma (2013) to be derived from the verb, manage, which means to:

Control, to deal
with or guide, to

run or man something. Thus, management means an act of managing, the process of planning, organising, directing, coordinating and controlling men, materials and money so as to ensure the optimum achievement of goals. Management involves the effective carrying out of operations, designed to accomplish the aims and objectives of a business set – up (p.17).

Management involves following a laid down order, pattern, process or format to achieve a desired goal or objective. In agreement with the above, Monyeh (2010) asserts that, management could be defined as the process of planning, organizing, directing and controlling the activities of an enterprise to achieve its objective. Management involves the coordination and the use of man and other resources to arrive at a final point, or to achieve a goal. This view is in line with the definition of arts which states that “art is the creation of or reproduction of idea, thoughts and imagination into visual and practical reality from shambles and chaos” (Talabi qtd. Wenikado, S. Ganagana 2010; 1).

The term theatre management, involves running the financial, marketing, human resources and sales activities of a performance venue or theatre. It also entails the orderly procurement, harmonization, and utilization of human and material resources of the theatre. Giving a detailed definition of what theatre management entails, Innocent. C. Ohiri (2016) states that:

T h e a t r e management is the art and science of planning, staffing, organizing, motivating, directing and controlling human and material resources in the arts of the theatre in order to attain the predetermined objectives of guaranteeing satisfaction, having full house and maximizing profit (p.56).

This assertion provides a good view of what the goals and objectives of theatre management are “having full house and maximizing profit”. Further Ohiri (2016) is noted to say that theater management is so important that without it, there cannot be theatre. This is because theatre can only take place after the procurement, harmonization and utilization of the human and material resources of the theatre. Being “the mother of theatre”, theatre management is therefore the root of the success of the theatre business. This is why Ayakoroma (2013) boldly says that theatre management is the “process or art of planning, organizing, controlling and directing all commercial and non-artistic aspects of a theatre, or any production programme, in order to generate audience patronage, audience satisfaction, and maximize profit” (p. 23). The theatre management team has no business with the artistic aspect and matters of the theatre, except the managerial aspect of the theatre, the artists (technical and artistic) and its productions. This is why the theatre production is collaborative in nature; involving the collaborative work of different teams. Without the presence of the management team, especially the presence of the theatre manager who with his teams ensure that the theatre is in order for use, the theatre production (any form of production/performance that is done in the theatre, this could be a play production, a dance production, an opera performance, a comedy shows etcetera,) cannot be said to be complete.

The aims and objectives of theatre management as highlighted by Ayakoroma (2013) are:

- 1) To facilitate the operations of all commercial aspects of a production, and handle those operations in an efficient and responsible manner.
- 2) To coordinate and control all the theatre business, including sales, purchasing and publicity activities.
- 3) To facilitate the job of the director, designers and technicians in the performance of their artistic duties, when such duties have commercial dimension.
- 4) To carry out all theatre policies as they relate to the public performance programme.
- 5) To act as a liaison between the artists and the business officers of the organization.
- 6) To contribute to the overall aesthetic impression of each production (p.27-28).

The purpose of having theatre management in place and seeing that the people manning this aspect of the theatre are always up and doing, is seen in the above six aims and purposes of theatre management.

Like in other areas and cases of the theatre, someone is responsible for this aspect of the theatre and this personnel is known as the theatre manager. A theatre manager oversees the administrative and production-related aspects of a theatre. They can address the financial, marketing and organisational concerns when necessary to ensure the theatre operates successfully. The theatre managers are responsible for the business operations of theatres or theatre companies. This person or group of persons, are responsible for managing the marketing, sales and media relations of the venue. He/she may also be responsible for overseeing the hiring of performers (in commercial theatre especially), and the production and development of performances. In the words of Peter F. Drucker (1990), the theatre managers face the difficult job of making human resources productive, making people work together, bringing to a common task their individual skills and knowledge. It is a job of making strengths productive and weaknesses irrelevant. The Theatre Manager is one who sees to the fulfillment of the aims and objective theatre management. He/she brings together the four basic elements of the theatre - the script, the artists, the performance venue and audience - for the shared dramatic experience (p.12). The theatre manager is solely responsible for the bringing together and functioning of different artistic elements and personnel to achieve a theatre business,

still with the sole aim of making profit.

The role of the theatre manager in the theatre and in the course of a production, are enormous. He arranges every aspect of the show and never rests until the show is over. He contracts the artistes, hires the venue, designs and executes the publicity plan, arranges transport and accommodation for the star artistes (in commercial theatre performances), arranges and supervises the gate-takings to ensure that he is not short-changed, ensures that the audiences are catered for, carries out post-production functions, and so on (Ayakoroma 2013, p. 32). This explanation clearly indicates that the duties of the theatre manager begins from the first day the idea of staging a production is conceived, and ends at the post production level. Highlighting the functions of the theatre manager, Ayakoroma (2013) explains that the functions of the theatre manager are broad based. He is an Artist, a servant of the artist, a director (not in the sense of an artistic director in the play production process), a servant of the audience and controller of building, a licensee, and an accounting officer. Giving explanation to these different functions of the theatre manager, he states that:

(i) As an Artist: the theatre manager, in order to appreciate the quality of what he is to sell and promote, has to be an artist. He needs adequate training in the arts to effectively manage the various elements of a production. Even in his managerial capacity he should consider himself as a partner to the performing artist to function well. This point to the fact that even though the theatre manager is not an artistic personnel, he should have knowledge of the artistic happenings in the theatre and around his artists.

(ii) As a Servant of the Artist: the responsibility of promoting and protecting the performing artist is on the theatre manager. Thus, he publicises the production; maintains a good public image for the theatre; protects the artist from public criticism and anger; protects the theatre from copyright and insurance laws; and provides comfortable rehearsal space and green rooms for artists.

(iii) As a Director: a theatre manager may be the one who takes the responsibility of choosing a play. Where this is not the case, he provides the guideline for choosing the play, where there is a play selection board. The purpose of this, is to see the possibility of the play selling itself considering the findings of market research.

(iv) As a Servant of the Audience: the success and the happiness of the Theatre manager, lies in the immediate comfort, wellbeing and safety of the theatre clients-the audience. This is seen in his responsibilities of:

- (a) Selling tickets to the audience
- (b) Receiving them at the theatre entrances
- (c) Offering them comfortable seats
- (d) Seeing to their needs during the show
- (e) Guaranteeing the safety of their cars
- (f) Protecting them from bodily and mental injuries until they leave the theatre premises and
- (g) Maintaining good theatre-audience relationship.

(v) As a Controller of Building: the theatre manager can be likened to a caretaker of a residential building in the Nigerian parlance. Under an ideal setting, it is the responsibility of the caretaker of any residential quarter to ensure that tenants pay their rents regularly. So in the theatre, the theatre manager carries out these roles of controlling the theatre building.

(vi) As a Licensee: the theatre manager is a licensee in the sense that he obtains various licenses for the smooth operation of the theatre organisation. These include business incorporation or registration of business name, registration of business premises, signboard fee, operational permit, liquor license, and fire permit. Other forms of authorisation he has to take care of include, company tax, copyrights, entertainment, tax, and insurance covers. These are all necessary because any legal action against the theatre for contravening any of the above could be detrimental to the image of the theatre.

(vii) As an Accounting Officer: the theatre manager is responsible for the day-to-day running of the organisation, which means he is answerable to the board. He takes the blame for poor outings and gets the credit for the good (Ayakoroma 2013, p.32-36) Despite this listing, the functions of the theatre in most cases are different depending solely on the type of theatre in place and operation. In the academic theatre for example, most of these functions are not always put into consideration, as they are mostly performed by the course lecturer and his/team.

Necessity of the Art of Theatre Management

The art theatre management is a central part of the theatre experience. It necessity cannot be over emphasized. As we know, theatre throughout history is known to have recorded countless struggles ranging from the acquisition of the theatre building, down to

managing of the acquired theatre structure, to the successful organization of theatre productions and shows, and also the maximization of profit. All of these challenges are surmountable not with the having good artists or even directors alone, but with the presence of good theatre management in place. This is because good actors and directors alone do not and cannot keep any theatre running; as good actors and directors will always be available, but if the theatre management team and the theatre manager is not present to see that the theatre is open, running, and always in shape, no performance will be successful. The reason for the above is that the coordination of the theatre is in the hands of the theatre management and not in the hands of any other. By this, the first necessity of the art of theatre management is in its coordination of all activities that relates to and concerns all theatre performances.

Theatre management is responsible for the coming together of any form of theatre performance, this is to say that, all theatre performances, begin and ends with the art of theatre management. As indicated in the functions of theatre manager (management team), the manager and his team's function exists long before the cast and crew of any production is contacted, and it continues even after the production has come and gone. This is because the theater management is responsible for seeing that productions continues to occur in a continuum, and not a once in a life time experience. So the art of theatre management is responsible and necessary for the coming together and continuity of theatre performances.

No matter the type of production that one would like to put on stage, finance remains a major factor, and theatre management is the art and arm responsible for the financial aspect of theatre. This is seen in the fact that theatre management is responsible for all financial dealings in any theatre, this ranges from the seeking of sponsors, to the hiring of cast and crew. It is worthy to note at this juncture that, only an effective theatre management team can be able to seek and reach out to sponsors that would be ever, and always to sponsor the programmes of the theatre. So, effective art of theatre management is necessary for the continual financial running of the theatre. The theatre manager (management) and his team, are the ones responsible for all financial dealings in the theatre, so just imagine if this art is kicked aside in the discuss and operation of the theatre as an art, it means the theatre would be running in the wind and would not stand the test of time. The necessity of the art of theatre management is

also seen in the opening, running, maintenance, and closing of the theatre after every session and production. The theatre has to be open and be running at all times, and the best way to achieve this, is by ensuring the art of theatre management is put in place, and also ensure that all aspect of the management of the theatre are running effectively.

Throughout the ages and in the discuss of theatre, the art of theatre management has always being there and has played a crucial role. Theater management is universal and we experience the performance of this art every day and time we visit or even hear of the theatre as the art of theatre management is responsible for publicity of the theatre and the ensuring that the theater maintains a good face before all. Theatre management as an art is necessary because it encompasses all the developmental domains in the theatre, it lends itself to the development and the enhancement of artistic skills in performance.

Conclusion

The discuss of the paper has being focused on the necessity of the art, with focus on the art of theatre management. It is necessary to point out that the art of theatre management exist in all theatres, but the duties and functionality of this art vary from theatre to theatre, depending solely on the theatre structure. This difference is because the administrative structure of theatres differs. The commercial theatre will do nothing (no production will hold) without the full engagement of the theatre management arm, but in the academic theatre, most productions do not consult or engage the services or office of the theatre manager in the pre, rehearsal (and in some case even in the performance and post performance stage.) Be it as it may, even though the duties of the theatre manager might not have being performed by the assigned personnel known as the theatre manager, the place, functions and necessity of this art of theatre management still stands and is always carried out by someone. Because be it in the academic or commercial theatre, no production can consider being successful or even possible without someone performing the duties of the theatre manager.

As far as one can see, the necessity of the art of theatre management boils down to what people think and even see in their visit to the theatre. No matter what, the fact is, the presence of an effective theatre management team, make theatre goers feel people happier as this art of would be make the performance centre more coordinated. Based on the above views of the art of theatre management, it is pretty clear that

this art is a necessity and a vital ingredient in the existence and continuity of the theatre, and thus recommend that it should be seen as such and young scholar, should strive to specialize in this necessary art of the theatre as they strive to specialize in other areas of the theatre.

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