

TRANSFORMING THE ACTOR THROUGH COSTUMING: THE DESIGN PROCESS IN STAGE PRODUCTION

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Abstract

Costume helps to define the style in a stage production, demonstrate relationships among actors, reveal the essence of actors, set the social and cultural environment and tell the story. Other significance of costume in a performance includes specifying the actors' social and professional roles, establishing time and place and meeting the practical needs of production. To achieve these, the costumer engages in research, brainstorming with the director and the other production crew. This is then followed with the sourcing of materials and building of the costumes. As tasking as these stages are, documenting costume design process in play productions could be more engaged. This work was then inspired to itemize and record the process of conceptualizing and realizing the costume of "Idia" as a stage production.

The researchers used majorly participant observation for the research work. The report of the production process and pictures served as data with which the work was carried out. This study recorded the process of conceptualizing and realizing the costume of 'Idia' as a stage production. It was the convocation play of the Department of Performing Arts and Film studies, Lead City University Ibadan for the year 2018.

Findings revealed that for a stage play such as 'idia, the sketching beforehand helped note the considerations for time in-between scenes. The sketching helped note costume changes that needed to be performed quickly and also aided in the process of sewing. Also, the materials used for the 'idia' production were not very appropriate to the picture of the play but close substitutes were used. The play tells

about the Benin kingdom, and each actor was costumed to portray the character given according to the play. Costumes and accessories worn by actors were not the ideal materials, based on the low fund that was allocated to costume. Therefore, some of the materials gotten were the replacement of the ideal materials.

The work then recommends that costumer should be able to work with the available fund allocated especially in an academic production. Also, he or she should have a backup plan in sourcing for production materials.

Introduction

Theatre is a collaborative art form that uses live performers, typically actors or actresses to present the experience of a real or imagined event before a live audience in a specific place, often a stage. The performers communicate this experience to the audience through combinations of gesture, speech, song, music, and dance. Elements of art, such as painted scenery and stagecraft such as lighting are used to enhance the physicality, presence and immediacy of the experience. The specific place of the performance is also named by the word theatre as derived from the Ancient Greek “*théatron*” which means a place for viewing. Modern western theatre comes in large measures; from the theatre of ancient Greece, from which it borrows technical terminology, classification into genres and many of its themes, stock characters and plot elements. Modern theatre includes performances of plays and musical theatre. There are several aspects of dramatic theatre expression such as acting, costumes and staging, design make-up, directing, choreography, light design, music and dance. Among all of these arts, costume and make-up are known in drama as the most personal aspects of the visual arts in the theatre because clothes are worn by actors on stage, likewise make-up and other accessories like bracelets, mask, hairstyle and other body properties are used by actors during performances. Costume and make-up play important roles in play production because they add value to the play in terms of colour, shape and texture. The presence of costume and the use of make-up must be felt just as costume and make-up used in the theatre are different from our everyday dresses.

Costuming could mean habit and particularly the manner of dress and clothing worn at different period by different people. Costume is the distinctive style of dress of an individual or group that reflects their class, gender, profession, ethnicity, nationality, activity or epoch. The term also

was traditionally used to describe typical appropriate clothing for certain activities, such as riding costume, swimming costume, dance costume and evening costume. Appropriate and acceptable costume is subject to changes in fashion and local cultural norms. Costume often refers to a particular style of clothing worn to portray the wearer as a character or type of character at a social event in a theatrical performance on the stage or in film or television. In combination with other aspects of stagecraft, theatrical costumes can help actors portray characters and their contexts as well as communicate information about the historical period, geographic location and time of day, season or weather of the theatrical performance. Costume is referred to as an actor's second skin. However, dressing in character is no trivial matter, for costumes differ from everyday clothes (**Tanner 193**).

In drama, costume sends signals similar to those used in everyday life to the audiences. In the theatre, costumes relay the information in performance with regards to status, sex, age, occupation, cultural or ethnic identities and many more. However, costume plays a primary role for the actor to impersonate a character. Costume cannot be seen in isolation, it has to be considered with the other technical aspects of the theatre to form a harmonious whole in any theatrical production. These four art (costume, make-up, scenery and light) must meet so as to convey the colour motif of the production at hand in order to avoid a bizarre spectacle on stage and this has to be done in relation to the concept of the director. In her words, Felner captures the costume design process thus:

Costume designers are usually engaged after a project has been selected. Like the designers, they come to an understanding of the characters and their world through a close analysis of the text, discussions with the director and the rest of the production's creative team, and through research. They ask themselves what needs to be revealed about the characters through the costumes and what demands the dramatic action makes on the clothing the actors will wear (286).

In other words, costume is very crucial in any theatrical performance be it on stage or screen because it plays an important role in character creation, visual aesthetic as well as practical elements in a production. Theatrical costume can illuminate the stage atmosphere and characters portrayed, while the basic elements of theatre are nothing more than the actors and the scripts. Most theatre productions are not complete without the addition of costume. Good costume gives the audience key information about a

character at first sight. For example, if a character is a wealthy one, the costuming of that particular character may be reflected in form of expensive, neat and ironed cloth and expensive accessories coupled with a tidy hair and beards which enhance the story telling and the realism of play. Costumes also serve as a chief indicator of the time and place of a play. In most stage play, costume is the most visible and often deployed art. For dramatists who know the value of costume, they pay close attention to it even at the level of text. Capturing the premium that the father of modern drama; Henrik Ibsen placed on costume in driving home characters' realization in his works, Ajami posits thus:

In his plays, Ibsen gives us detailed description of the appearance of characters and their costumes. He visualizes and gives life to the written persona by describing their looks and way of clothing. Moreover, Ibsen illustrates his characters by his comments about their apparel and characterizes them visually. In Ibsen's dramas, the characters interiority and beliefs are reflected by their external appearance hence costumes have a significance role in projecting a character's personality. In his dramaturgy, Ibsen also uses costume to illustrate symbols and metaphors. Therefore, costumes not only signify characters' moods, identities and social positions, but also they have wider meanings (11).

Theatre is seen as the most complex of all the arts, since in a single production many other arts are utilized. The playwright, the director, the actor, the scene designer, the costumer, the make-up artist, the choreographer and so on are all part of a production. This complexity therefore has led many to refer to theatre as a mixed art, because it is a combination of the written words of a literary artist, visual background of the scene designer and painter, the speech and movements of an actor and so on. Costume, however, ought to perform some distinct functions such as establishing the style of the production, indicating the nature of individual characters or groups in a film or stage production, as well as their occupations, personalities and status. Costume must also indicate the historical period of the production and the locale in which it occurs and so on. Costume conveys the relevance of individual characters where necessary. Furthermore, costume should be expressive of the psychological nature of its wearer (actor or actress) by trying to project the truth about him or her. The character, through his costume and make-up shows the difference between his or her usual self and the role he or she is playing. The costumier should therefore strive to establish a

comprehensible relationship between the actor and the audience through costume since the audience first feed their eyes on characters physical appearance before they are heard.

The Essence of Costume in a Production

Sanders, succinctly captures the essence of costume in a production to an actor and how it helps the audience's understanding of a performance thus:

From the time an actor first enters the stage the audience should be able to tell quite a lot about their character, even before they speak. The actor themselves, through posture, stance, gait, and general demeanor can communicate much, but their costume, much like our own clothes, establishes a lot of what the audience infers about that person at first glance... Costume design is the artful creation of wardrobe that tells the stories of the play's characters. Good costume design accomplishes the looks required by the production while preserving the comfort and flexibility of the performers and addresses wardrobe maintenance concerns for the run of the production. It is an art that relies on knowledge of period detail, fabric construction, tailoring, and costume craft (59).

Good costume will give the audience key information about a character at first sight. For example, if a character is in a depressive state, the costuming may reflect this in the form of unkempt, dirty and wrinkled clothing. This enhances the storytelling and realism of the play. Costumes are a chief indicator of the time and place of a play. Makeup and hairstyles should also be coordinated to match the setting of the play, though some concession is made in makeup styles for the sake of avoiding wash-out. The director and costume designer will often work together in creating a visual aesthetic for a show that goes beyond the practical concerns. This type of planning not only enhances the vision for the drama and storytelling; it helps create a theatrical experience that is richly enjoyable from a visual standpoint as well as a dramatic one. Costume serves an important purpose for actors, too. Though the primary work that actors do in creating their characters is done during the weeks of rehearsal and individual practice leading up to a show, seeing them transformed visually into a character is often a powerful source of inspiration. Also, beyond setting and character, costume plays an important role in visibility and aesthetic. Costumes are clothes worn by actors and actresses, which assist them to assume different forms of characters aside their true selves. Traditionally, it is very essential in theatre and possesses the ability of transforming a character. Among the theatrical elements, costumes have

always assumed a major stand in every successful production. One may view costume as clothes, which we wear, but they are very essential in the theatre based on the functions so far alluded to.

This proves the indispensability of costume in any theatre presentation. It is meant to serve as a blending factor to the actor's role in interpretation of the character he is portraying both on stage. Also the relevance of costume in productions cannot be over emphasized because costume aid understanding and interpretation of a performance. This is achieved by embarking on a thorough research of the script from costumier's perspective. Whereas the actor seeks to embody his understanding of character through movements and voice, the costumier uses the elements of costume design such as texture, colour, and line and so on to create a visual counterpart of the action. In the theatre, costumes send us signals similar to those in everyday life. However, as with other elements in theatre, there are significant differences between costumes of everyday life and those in theatre. In the words of Landis:

There is often confusion between costume design and fashion design; however, these two fields and their objectives are very different. Fashion designers have labels and sell their clothes, while costume designers have no labels and are focused on creating authentic characters in a story. Costume designers create both beautiful gowns for a glamorous entrance and everyday clothes when required by the script. They must know "who" characters "are" before they create a closet of clothes and accessories for the characters. A costume is worn by one actor, as one specific character, in a specific scene or scenes in the story. Most important, the audience must believe that every person in a story has a life before the movie begins (2)

Although stage costumes communicate the same information as ordinary clothes with regard to sex, positions and occupations, this information is magnified because every element in theatre is in the spotlight. Also, on the stage, costumes must meet other requirements not normally expected in everyday life. Stage costumes should help establish the tone and style of a production indicate the historical period of a play and locale in which it occurs and help to show the nature of individual characters or groups in a play, their stations in life, occupations and personalities. Costumes should show the relationships among characters; separating major characters from minor ones, contrasting one group with another, symbolically convey the significance of individual characters of the theme of the play. Also, the costume should meet the needs of individual performer making

it possible for an actor or actress to move freely in costume in order to change quickly from one to another. Costume must also be consistent with the production as a whole especially other visual elements. On the practical side, the costume designer clothes the actor and ensures that the actor is able to perform without constriction due to their costumes (**Crist 5**).

Furthermore, costume on stage must meet other requirements apart from those stated above because theatrical clothing sends us signals similar to those in normal life. This is why an actor or actress should always strive to feel and acts like the character he or she is portraying. Theatrical costumes can exaggerate some aspect of a character. Sometimes theatrical costumes literally mimic what the costume designer thinks the character would wear if the character actually existed. On the other hand, often-stylized theatrical costumes can exaggerate some aspect of a character. Through the use of appropriate costumes, the time and place, the occupation and lifestyle, the culture of a group of people, the economic and social status, the mood and atmosphere, as well as gender and age of actors, as well as the period of the play are established (Kwakye-Opong and Dennis 83).

The Costume Design Process of “*Idia*”

Sketching Phase for Costume Design in ‘*Idia*’ Production

- **Script reading:** the script is always the foundation of any play work. It therefore necessitates a proper reading for understanding. More especially as many will put descriptive passages into their scripts to help set the tone for their story, our job was to collaborate with the director and agree on what he wanted the costume for the play to look like. During the process of reading the script, we broke down the script into several categories to form an outline that will become the performance. We had a book, and in this book, there was all the pertinent information that we needed on a day-to-day basis to perform my duties as the costumiers. It consisted of all the characters in the play, which scenes they were in and how many costume changes they had over the course of the story. Reading of the script was very important, because it aided the understanding of the play, during the pre-production stage of ‘*Idia*’, reading the script aided our understanding about what each actor should be wearing for each scene, what colour of fabrics, texture etc. We met with the director to discuss the approach with the director, and other members of the design team.

Knowledge of period and/or style came from research while reading. The reading was done outside rehearsal and while rehearsing.

- **Script analysis:** script analysis is the breakdown of the script from start to the end of the story. It covers all aspects from the first time we see an actor on stage to the last. All the script reading was to enable us create a better script analysis as it helped establish the tone and style of a production of '*Idia*'. It helped also to indicate the historical period of a play and the locale in which it occurs. Also, we were able to indicate the nature of individual characters or groups in the play, their stations in life, their occupations and their personalities, and show the relationships among characters; separating major characters from minor ones, contrasting one group with another. Where appropriate, we could symbolically convey the significance of each character in the script '*Idia*'. It also helped to meet the needs of individual performers, making it possible for an actor or actress to move freely in a costume, to change quickly from one costume to another. We were consistent with the production as a whole, especially other visual elements because it is then we could match up the characters in the script with the scenes that they appear on stage. Then we created a costume plot for each character in the script, and we created a look and provided a costume for each member of the cast, and also selected fabric suitable for each role, accessories.

- **Character analysis:** This is a process for analyzing characters as would be played by actors and creating the perfect match in terms of costume. Analysis of character begins with the script as usual. These include finding clues into their personal history, their family history, where they live, who they have relationships with, age, social status, religion. These are all useful to discovering the characters comprehensively. In the case of '*Idia*', there was a long list of questions asked on characters' age, socio-economic status, time period, geographical location, housing, etc. That's always a great place to start, as we moved into image research. In '*Idia*', the queen mother Idia and Oba Esigie were the most interesting actors to work with. We began with clues from the text that described them. We also looked at the actors' practical circumstances. Both actors represented Benin culture, rulers of the Benin kingdom and also great warriors. These things all informed the choices for costume. Their several attires were combination of many colours and patterns to distinguish it from the other single coloured costumes on stage.

Even though there is often extensive work on actors, there is also a larger picture that one has to address with costume. How does it look with the set? Is the story made clearer with the costumes that were put on stage? Do the costumes help you know where to look on the stage? The job of creating a world and helping tell the story of the play is collaborative. Everyone on the team had something to contribute to the production as a whole.

- **Costume Plot:** The costume plot is chart for the productions listing actors' appearances in each scene, what they are wearing and their overall movement throughout the play. This helps track the specific costume needs of every actor. It can also identify any potential costume challenges, such as very quick changes between scenes. The next step along the way is to add pertinent notes to each actor and change in '*Idia*'. For instance, an actor has to appear powerful for example oba Esigie in '*Idia*', a character has to appear impeccably neat for example Imaguero in '*Idia*'. There were actors that had change in costumes for different scenes, so we had to think and then be prepared to have some numbers of such outfits. Everything we can garner from the script related to the character and the relationship to their costumes was noted in our book. If an actor was meant to change for multiple roles, then we needed to create different costumes. In the production, the two actors who had to change mostly were oba Esigie and queen mother Idia, for each scene both actors had four different attires to change to. For the first scene which is the coronation, both oba Esigie and queen mother Idia wore different attire and colour related to the scene, and also at the war scene, the both actors had to change to particular war attires different from the royal attires, and there were other scenes they had to change. While queen mother Idia and oba Esigie had about four changes early during the production, some other actors too had change of attire for different scenes. For these attires, notes were attached to different costumes to indicate. So while creating a costume plot, we used the columns to write the names of each roles the actors were playing (and the actor's name). Then we used the rows to write in the scene from the production. After meeting with the director to discuss our vision for the costumes, from colours, to periods, to specifics for the main actors, then we began to determine what each actors will wear and write it in the appropriate box for each actor and each scene. Sometimes the same outfit will be worn by one or more actors for the entire production. Other actors may make full costume changes from scene to scene.

A Sample of Costume Plot for 'Idia' Production (Queen Idia and Oba Esigie)

Act/Scene	Actor	Costume Pieces	Accessories
Scene 1	Idia	Red Wrapper, Bead Blouse, Crown	Coral Beads
Scene 2	Idia	Blue Wrapper, Crown, Bead Blouse	Coral Beads
Scene 3	Idia	Wine Wrapper, Crown	Coral Beads
Scene 4	Idia	War Costume (White, Black, Leopard Skin Gown)	Leopard Skin Scarf
Scene 5	Idia	Red Wrapper, Bead Blouse, Crown	Coral Beads

Act/Scene	Actor	Costume Pieces	Accessories
Scene 1 & 2	Esigie	White Skirt and Blouse, Bead Blouse, Crown	Coral Beads and Neck Choker
Scene 3	Esigie	Red Skirt and Red Blouse, Crown	Coral Beads
Scene 4	Esigie	War Costume (Leopard Skin Top) with Red Skirt, Crown	Coral Beads
Scene 5	Esigie	White Skirt and Blouse, Bead Blouse, Crown	Coral Beads and Neck Choker

The costume plot's enabled us to look through the various types of costumes and accessories available and find the ones that are intended for each actor. Without a costume plot, it would be very easy for us to forget how many costumes wderfe required for each actor due to various events occurring during the performance. It would also be very easy for actors' costume pieces or accessories to be forgotten. The costume plot helped to also point out areas that may have been forgotten to provide for in the definition of the actors through costumes.

- **Costume sketching:** If the production is set in a specific historical era, the fashions of this period will need to be researched. To stimulate the flow of ideas at the first meeting with the director and the design team, well after several meetings which the director, we presented a few rough costume sketches. And also, appropriate time to check with the director on the exact number of actors needing costumes, as well as any non-

speaking characters the director included on the stage that were not in the script. It was our responsibility to sketch these out. This helps track the specific costume needs of every actor. It can also identify any potential costume challenges, such as very quick changes between scenes. After the director approved our preliminary sketches, we drew up the final costume designs. The final designs are done in full-colour which shows the production the style, silhouette, textures, accessories and unique features of each costume.

Sourcing Phase for Costume Design in ‘Idia’ Production

- **Budgeting:** In sourcing, the first thing is the budget of what needs to be used. Each production has a labour budget and a materials budget. With the materials budget, a rough estimate is made of the amount of money allocated to each costume. The best term to describe this is “creative financing” as obviously some productions will cost more and some less. We began an exhaustive discussion in which each costume is broken down into its various components. This allows us to get a sense of the design direction and to establish design priorities or fabric and style options.

- **Buying:** After the budgeting and costume breakdown has been completed, we went shopping for materials needed, went to some markets in Ibadan to get all the materials needed. There may be several buying sessions, or one or more complicated sessions during which most of the buying were completed. The first trip to Gbagi market consists of switching (buying small pieces – swatches – of fabrics to assess their colour and ability to be broken down) and purchasing the major fabric pieces. The second trip to Ogunpa and Oja Oba markets consists of buying trim and other accent pieces. Footwear and accessories were purchased Aleshinloye market during the third buying trip. Not all costume were purchased however because the department had some of the costume used.

- **Cutting and Sewing:** tailors began their work-term with an extensive discussion where the practical, technical and design aspects are discussed. Due to the challenge I had with the machines in costume room, the materials were moved outside for tailors to sew, and it was not easy for us to monitor the sewing. This was because we had to keep attending rehearsal to see if the director made any character changes or costume changes. Collaboration occurs, as a tailor offers invaluable input as to how a design can be fully realized. Every costume is basted together prior to a fitting, then, after alterations have been made in the fitting, the costumes

were taken apart, basted together again and finally, after the second fitting, permanently sewn together. Costumes were cut to closely recreate the historical period in which they are set, but they must also accommodate the requirements of a modern physique and the performance demands of the actor.

- **Dress Rehearsals:** The dress and technical rehearsal is the first time the actor wears his or her costume on stage. It was this time; all the elements of the production came together: set, props, costumes, lighting and sound. Once the costume reaches backstage, it becomes the charge of the dresser who works during the performance and is responsible for getting the actor into costume to see if there is any change to be made or if the costume were okay to be used. We made sure that every changes made during the tech dress was noted.

Final Work of the Costume Design Process of ‘*Idia*’

- Production phase: This phase is all about the final result of each costume, accessories that has been put together for the production of ‘*Idia*’. Before the final piece was used or showcased we went through several challenges, starting from research on the play while reading the script, it was not easy for us to understand everything about the script, concept, so we had to meet with the director to tell us about his concept of the play. Then we did script analysis, character analysis, got some ideas on different looks for each characters. Then we met with the director, told him about our ideas, we searched for more ideas and agreed on these final costumes design. Another challenge was the cutting down of budget because not much fund was allocated to us for costumes which led to getting cheaper materials that were not suitable for some of the roles in the play, but that was the only way out of the situation, the materials gotten were only managed. Audience didn’t know if they were made from cheap materials or not, changing of designs that are not achievable was also a challenge because at a point the director rejected some costumes and had to be returned for changed and amends before the production day, sewing were also done outside the costume room because the atmosphere was not conducive, the sewing machines were faulty , but the end result or final piece of each actors’ costume used in the stage play ‘*Idia*’ was well sorted and turn out well, which is being analyzed. All these are exemplified in the following actors.

Queen Idia

This role was played by Ademola Ayomide, she played the major role in the play. Queen Idia is described as the symbol of women's liberation. History has it that she played a very significant role in the rise and reign of her son. She was a strong warrior who fought relentlessly before and during her son's reign as the Oba (king) of the Edo people. She exuded power, skill, loyalty, and feminine beauty and there are artistic works that portray her as both a warrior and a mother. Idia was the first Queen Mother of Benin Kingdom and she paved the way for Nigerian women of yesteryears and present times to have their part in decision-making as touching the political issues. Idia received much of the credit for Esigie's victories as his political counselor. Her mystical powers and medicinal knowledge were viewed as the reason for Esigie's success on the battlefield. To reward and honor her, Esigie created a new position within the court called the Iyoba or "Queen Mother," which gave her significant political privileges, including a separate residence with its own staff.

We and the makeup artist did a good job in transforming the actress into the Idia character. The first costume she wore in the play was when she appeared on stage mourning her late husband Oba Ozolua. She was dressed in a red wrapper, embroidery designs in gold, crystal and a beaded blouse, neck bead called *ive-uru* in Benin, hand bead called *ivie-obo* in Benin, crown which was designed with coral beads, the crown is called *okuku* in Benin. This is the most important part of her dressing, which signifies royalty. And for the next scene which the contest/coronation scene, she was dressed in a blue wrapper embroidered with stone all over, with the same beaded blouse and accessories and this costume worn by Idia. The choice of colour was to indicate that there was a huge ceremony and she had to appear glamorous. She was dressed in a wine plain wrapper, but without her beaded blouse, but just hand and neck bead, with her clown in the next scene where she meant *uke* in the bush path, the same outfit and accessories was worn in the next scene, but this time with her beaded blouse. For the war scene which was the following scene, Idia was dressed in a gown which was made of three different colours, black, white, and leopard skin with cowries' embroidery. She was with no accessories or crown, she tied scarf made with leopard skin material, and she was with a sword.

At the end of the play she was dressed in a red wrapper had gold crystals embroidery at tip of the wrapper, with a beaded blouse made with red coral

bead, a crown made with coral bead, neck and hand bead which were red coral beads.

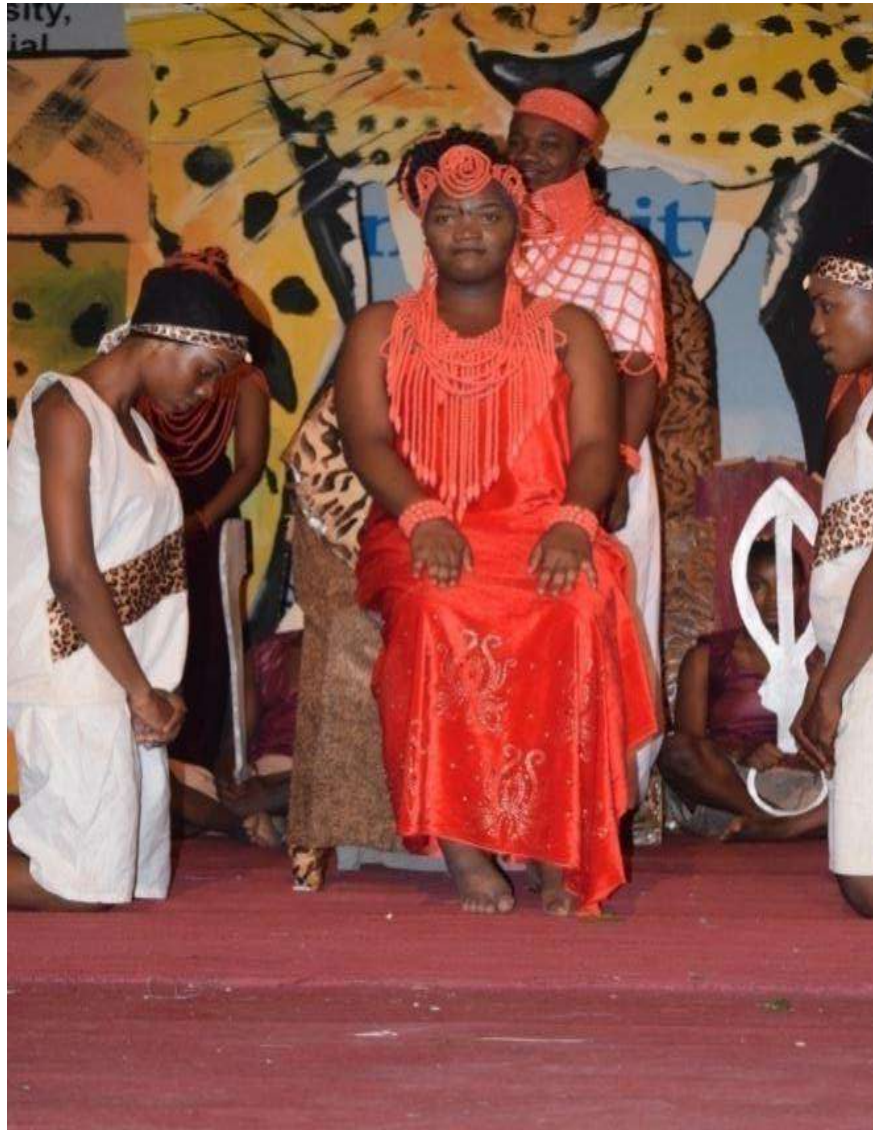


Fig. 1 Image of Idia Costume in Scene 5



Fig. 2: Idia in her War Costume



Fig. 3 Idia in her coronation costume

Oba Esigie

This role was played by John David. Oba Esigie was an Oba (king) of Benin who ruled the ancient Benin Kingdom. At the time of his father Oba Ozolua's death, Esigie controlled Benin City with major assistance and support from his mother Queen Idia. Esigie became Oba of Benin. Esigie later fended off an attack from the Igala people. Esigie started a tradition in Benin by conferring his mother with the title of Iyoba (Queen Mother) and providing the Eguae-Iyoba (Palace of the Queen Mother) in lower Uselu for her use. During his reign, the mischievous Oba Esigie who had some scores to settle with Chief Oliha devised a plan to put the disaffected Chief Oliha in his place. For the first scene he appeared, he wore a white skirt and blouse. The blouse is called Iyeruan and the skirt is the Akhuankhuan or Ikekeze in Benin, though the costume wore by the actor in the picture was just an improvisation of what the original outfit worn by the Oba of Benin kingdom. He also wore a male beaded blouse made of coral bead, a crown made with coral red bead called Ede in Benin, a neck choker made with coral bead called ikiro, and several other neck beads, hand bead, and he was holding a staff made with coral beads, which symbolizes authority, this costume was worn during his coronation. The same costume was repeated in the next scene but without his beaded

blouse and neck choker, and his crown was changed to another, for the scene of his meeting with oliha wife. He was seen wearing a red skirt and blouse, with bead accessories on his neck and hand. At the war scene he was dressed in a blouse made with leopard skin with cowries' embroidery and red skirt, with his crown and hand bead. And at last scene, he dressed in the costume he wore for the coronation, with the same beaded blouse, neck choker and accessories.



Fig. 4: Esigie in his coronation costume



Fig. 5: Idia and Esigie in their war costume

Imaguero

The wife of oliha was played by Reginald Amarachi. She was very famous for her beauty and chief Oliha felt very lucky to own such a breath-taking female. Imaguero particularly loved expensive coral beads; she couldn't get enough of them. And this weakness was used against her. This led to her betraying her husband trust by getting involved with the king and it led to her death. For her first scene appearance she was dressed in a pink wrapper with blue and gold embroidery, bead all over her hair, neck bead and hand bead, for the next scene her encounter with the king she was dressed in wine wrapper which had stone or crystal embroidery at the tip of the wrapper. And for her last scene {death scene} she was dressed in a plain brown wrapper with no accessories, just her head bead.



Fig. 6: Imaguero in her costume when she met with the king.



Fig. 7: Imaguero in her costume before her death

Uke

Uke the royal jester, the role was played by Gisman Pius. He was a humble and loyal servant to the king. He was the one who the king sent on a mission to entice Imaguero with royal coral bead, he was the most trusted servant of the king. He didn't have change of costume like the other actors he was seen wearing white skirt and neck bead.



Fig. 8: Uke in his costume

Oliha

He was one of the chiefs. Oliha won't stop bragging about his most beautiful wife in the palace, he was envied by his fellow elites. As time went by, and he was betrayed by his wife and the king, which made him join forces with the kingdom enemies to wage war. The role was played Akisanmi Oluwasijibomi. He had two costumes: a white skirt with neck bead and hand bead, and in the war scene he was seen dressed in a red skirt and a red blouse with cowries' embroidery alongside his warriors all wearing red and black blouse and shorts.



Fig. 9: Oliha when he sentenced Imaguero to death.



Fig. 10: Chiefs in their costumes



Fig. 11: Images of women in idia cult costume

The Portuguese Explorer

There were four actors who played the role {two females (Osazuwa Stellamaris; one of the reserchers and Adediran Oreoluwa) and two males (Iwague Timothy and Noah Micheal)}, who came to Benin kingdom to explore. The females were dressed in white shirt and a black long gown with white bow design and different colour of shoe, the male were dressed in white shirt, black or white trouser, black jacket, black bow tie, black hat and red scarf around their waist, and different colours of shoe.

Fig 12





Fig 13: Images of dancers

Conclusion

This study has been concerned with examining the costume design process in a stage production with all the constraints involved in the stages. The general view taken is that costume apart from being used for indicating such things as age, social status, locale, historical sign posting of productions, it can also be used for the purpose of preserving culture. In the course of this study attempt has been made to document the costume design process in stage performance of “*idia*”. It is in this wise the script reading, script and character analysis, costume research, costume plot, costume sketching, budgeting, buying, cutting and sewing, fittings, dress rehearsals were looked at in order to acquire more ideas on the processes involve in designing costume in a stage play. The challenges in the process and the techniques employed to overcome them were also examined. By and large, it is ultimately the culmination of the designer deep research into the script with consultation with the director and using the correct tools in order to work with the entire ‘*idia*’ stage production team that has enabled the costumiers to accomplish the job and to create the masterpiece. And this work will definitely serve as a purpose of research to any scholar that wants to know more about the process of designing costume for a stage production.

Recommendation

A costume designer should always work within the fund allocated to costume. He or she should always have a replacement or alternative for any material for costume that could not be gotten in case if the fund allocated to costume is not enough. Costume could either be hired or borrowed, for any production, as a replacement for the ones that could not be bought. Furthermore, the atmosphere should be conducive enough to work, the sewing machine should be replaced if spoilt and serviced when needed some days before sewing starts, and be in a good working condition.

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