

**A DIRECTOR'S AESTHETIC TOOLBOX IN THE PRODUCTION OF VICKYBON
UZUAZOR'S DIARY OF A PASTOR'S WIFE**

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Abstract

As the world advances in technological inventions, there is continuous need for theatre practitioners, especially the theatre director, to creatively integrate the use of emerging technologies in their art-making processes and products offered to audiences. The use of multimedia as a theatre director's tool for achieving aesthetics in productions has become imperative, as theatre practice in the digital age is in dire need not just to survive, but to thrive. Noticeably, the Nigerian Theatre cosmos continues to struggle to maintain patronage as theatre halls become deserted due to dwindling audiences and a seeming abandoning of live theatre for more contemporary sources of entertainment via emerging on-the-go screen technologies. Aesthetics can be achieved through the integration of texts, graphics, audio & sound effects, still images, animations and motion videos to create appealing performances. As exemplified in VickBon Uzuazor's Diary of a Pastor's Wife directed by Aniebiet Mbede and staged on Wednesday, 17th May, 2023 at the Pinnacle Theatre, Akwa Ibom State University, Obio Akpa Campus. The director draws from the multimedia aesthetic toolbox to foist creative images and sounds on the live theatre performance, fostering a sublime synergy between arts and technology. This merger provides a stimulating performance environment observed to attract and sustain audiences' interest. From the foregoing, the application of multimedia to theatre productions offer aesthetic possibilities that are critical for audience engineering, hence this study recommends the creative and consistent application of multimedia; not just as a streak of trend, but as a directorial tool required to achieve aesthetic deliverables in the creation of appealing theatrical productions.

Keywords: Aesthetics, Directing, Multimedia, Theatre Productions

Introduction

Theatre is a collaborative art which permits the synchronisation of the human and technical properties of the theatre to achieve an appealing production. The bringing together of these elements to achieve a sense of beauty in staging the production to the appreciation of the audience, is the job of the theatre director. The director's vision therefore determines the overall meaning of the production. "Aesthetics is the study of the phenomenon of beauty and or ugliness is an important accompaniment in every artistic work, be it drama, writing, oratory, sculpture, music or dance; and therefore should be creatively crafted by the director,

to command some sort of appreciation by the audience” (Inih Ebong 43). This creative crafting can be achieved through the use of multiple channels. The evolution of multiple channels of technology in every sphere of human endeavor has birthed an artistic and technical merger of various forms, which has become the director's tool for crafting beautiful content and serving the same to audiences who look forward to artistic expressions, as a means of entertainment, information or education.

Multimedia a creative channel for the creation and dissemination of aesthetic content allows for the digital integration of texts, graphics, audio, still images, animations and motion videos in a way that provides the performer high level control and interaction, and leaves audiences desirous (of more) of such aesthetically appealing productions. The theatre director in the digital age is therefore saddled with the responsibility to identify, determine the suitability and synergise all aspects of the audio-visual presentation into a gestalt presentation. This essay explores the assemblage of VickyBon Uzuazor's *Diary of a Pastor's Wife* using the multimedia approach to draw creatively from an ingrained sense of digital-aesthetics, exploring the use of technological equipment to create an appealing production milieu in this age of machine assisted human existence as influenced by the digital revolution.

Theatre Traditions and Technology: A Historical Overview

Theatre is the creative assemblage of human experiences to articulate an idea which conveys meaning that can influence societal behaviour. With an extensive history which dates back to over 2500 years of existence, theatre has remained relevant in moulding and remoulding the behaviour and by extension, the culture(s) of the human society. Theatre is derived from the Greek word, *theatron*, which means, a seeing place (Oscar Brockett and Hildy 4). A seeing place may depict a structural setting, usually in the open air, used for the presentation of dramatic spectacles and plays from the Fifth Century in Athens, Greece. The development of Greek theatre convention is traceable to the celebration and worship of the Greek god, Dionysus. In ritualistic enactments in honour of their god in an Amphitheatre seating about 15,000 to 17,000 spectators who sat down to watch series of plays that lasted all day, as playwrights or leading actors were responsible for the functioning of the production (Oscar Brockett and Hildy 4).

In the Roman Theatre, comedy and other forms of popular entertainment (borrowed largely from Greek forms) short dramatic pieces, singing, gladiatorial contests, acrobatics and took the variety of games. “In 240 B.C.E. a festival called the *Ludi Romani* dedicated to Jupiter (the Roman counterpart of *Zeus*), became the first major Roman festival to incorporate theatre” (Wilson and Goldfarb 222). However, at the fall of the Roman Empire in 476 AD dramatic performances were adversely affected and theatre lost its official status and the financial support it once enjoyed from the state. According to Jerry Blunt, “this setback ushered in a new experience as theatrical activities were now reduced to small bands of players led by stage managers called *Conducteurs de secrets*, striving to stay afloat in touring performances all over Western Europe” (182). During the Medieval period, the performance culture suffered intensely and theatre of all kind went on hiatus – most especially the ideology that all, 'frivolous, godless display of lewd and licentious behaviour known as theatre, should be done away with'.

Ironically, the turn of the era, the rebirth of theatre practice owed much to the churches' discovery that the dramatisation of biblical episodes was an effective means of teaching. The mystery and morality plays produced by guilds and staged on mobile wagons made extensive use of masons to create locales mostly depicting heaven or hell. By the creations of these innovative locales, audiences became attracted to dramatic enactments, which later revived every area of artistic practice.

By the end of the sixteenth century Queen Elizabeth I controlled the stage just as effectively through a system of patronage, licensing, and censorship. During the period known as the Renaissance (Rebirth) period, theatrical activities blossomed with the centre of activity in Italy, with improvisational theatre forms like intermezzi, Pastoral Drama, Opera and Commedia dell' Arte. Special effects were also a spectacular addition at the Elizabethan theatres thrilling the audiences with special effects like the smoke, effects, the firing of a real canon, fireworks (for dramatic battle scenes) and spectacular 'flying' entrances from the rigging in the 'heavens'.

By the turn of the nineteenth century, the industrial revolution replaced hand driven tools with mechanised equipment, made theatre more 'fashionable'. With innovations like the fly system, elevator, revolving stage and 'continental' seating arrangements, theatre became trendier than ever. By 1881, the Savoy Theatre in London deployed Thomas Edison's invention of incandescent lighting, the safest and most controlled form of lighting. With the magnificence of controlled lighting both for the illumination and for special effects, the pivotal change in artistic ideas sponsored theatrical movements like Realism, Naturalism and introduction of stage conventions like the Box Set and furnishings which borrowed from observable everyday life. The conventions of Modernism were challenged by departures into Postmodernism. The practices of this era imbibe the use of ideologies and technologies to keep theatre practice artistically and aesthetically relevant as a slice of life and the mirror of the society.

Theoretical Framework

From primordial times to the Ancient Greek Mythological Era; from the tunnels of Theatre's Dark Ages to the light of the Renaissance Period, the display of Realism in the Modern Theatre gave way to departures from convention in the Postmodernist Era. The theories and principles which undergird theatre practice is constantly upgraded by the discoveries from experimentations with technologies of the age. Since theatre is a slice of life, contemporary theories, theorists and practitioners seek to keep momentum with the constant flow of creative energy, surfing the technological turf towards garnering better output for the artistic venture. Underpinned by the nuances of Post Modernism; this essay reveals a departure from the modesties of modernism and a tilt towards a more daring approach to theatre practice. In *Flexible Theories, Dynamic Practice: Extensions and Converges of the Performing Arts in the Third Millennium*, Esekong Andrew-Essien observes that, "there is a tendency to become arbitrary; to deconstruct traditional conventions and recreate new forms of expression, which do not adhere to rational order" (4).

The major proponent of postmodernism, who is regarded as the most influential dramatist of the twentieth century, Bertolt Brecht is characterised as a "stellar luminary" of post-modernist theatrical sensibilities, an umbrage he shares with Samuel Beckett of Theatre of the

Absurd fame both who stands notable in their contributions to the development of technical theatre technology. According to Edde Iji, "the Brechtian Drama and theatre as well as his theories and directorial style are uniquely iconic in ideas, Marxist in ideological bent, aesthetically seminal and, therefore highly emulated ideologically around the world in terms of innovations and iconoclasms; most especially in his artistic and aesthetic uniqueness, multimedia-wise, and continued to be so, irrespective of detractors" (119). Another notable theorist, Erwin Piscator was one of the principal theatre theorists to experiment and develop the use of multimedia in the theatre space.

Consequently, Erwin Piscator and Bertolt Brecht made tremendous impact on audience in their presentational and narrative styles in shifting the theatre space from a singular narrative to simultaneous multiple actions. "The response to the induction of multimedia into the theatre space was threefold: expansion, simplification, and inclusion" (Iji 37). Since the late 1990s there has been a small but growing feeling both in popular culture and in academia that postmodernism 'has gone out of fashion'.

However, there have been few formal attempts to define and name the era succeeding postmodernism (Garry Potter and Jose Lopez 4). In his 2006 paper [The Death of Postmodernism and Beyond](#), the British scholar Alan Kirby formulated a socio-cultural assessment of post-postmodernism that he calls 'pseudo-modernism'. Kirby associates pseudo-modernism with the triteness and shallowness resulting from the instantaneous, direct, and superficial participation in culture made possible by the internet, mobile phones, interactive television and similar means: In pseudo-modernism one phones, clicks, presses, surfs, chooses, moves, downloads.

In 2010 the cultural theorists [Timotheus Vermeulen](#) and [Robin van den Akker](#) introduced the term [Metamodernism](#) to describe the post-postmodernism discussion. In their article 'Notes on Metamodernism' they assert that the 2000s are characterized by the emergence of a sensibility that oscillates between, and must be situated beyond, modern positions and postmodern strategies. Jon Mckwnzie in his work *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance* (2004) draws attention to Francois Lyotard's theory of Postmodern Performativity, The merging of technology and performance (termed techno-performance) has evolved as a Post-postmodernist feature, showcasing fragmentation and pluralism in the twenty-first century theatre praxis. This study therefore unifies fragments of actors on stage, video recordings, animation, sound and other multimedia elements to the production of VickyBon Uzuazor's *Diary of Pastor's Wife* in an attempt to upgrade the aesthetic quality of the performance through Mckwnzie's ideology of techno-performance.

Aesthetics: From Theory to Practice

Aesthetics is a branch of Philosophy that deals with the notion of beauty, ugliness and sublimity. Aesthetics is the principle that defines a design's pleasing qualities, the study of aesthetics is factored as a means of establishing meaning and providing validity for the critical appraisal of artistic works as it deals with the appreciation of beauty and artistic taste. The word aesthetics is from the Greek origin *aisthethai* which means to perceive and it involves the mind and emotions relating to the sensation above pure

intellectuality.

The term 'aesthetics' first appeared in Alexander Baumgarten's work in 1735, yet philosophical discussions of beauty extend back thousands of years. Beginning in the 1960s, the field of cognitive science became increasingly influential in the philosophy of mind. While much of this influence relates to the nature of thought, reasoning, and consciousness, the impact of cognitive science has expanded to other areas of philosophy, including aesthetics. In photographic terms, aesthetics captures the ideas of style and taste which includes factors such as balance, color, movement, pattern, scale, shape and visual weight (David Saltz 151).

Theatre directors deploy aesthetic elements to make artistic statements and to complement the designs usability, and so enhance functionality with attractive layouts in audio or audiovisual presentations. The judgment and sentiment of aesthetics can be appreciated through: Sight (Vision), Hearing (Audition), Taste (Gustation), Smell (Olfaction) and Touch (Somato-Sensation) of the artistic production. Aesthetics therefore refers to the beauty or the pleasing appearance of things. The world in its current form has assumed a very sophisticated posture and artistic productions which are intentionally crafted to induce appeal. In a more technically epistemological perspective, aesthetics can be appreciated as the study of subjective and sensory -emotional values and taste.

German philosopher, Immanuel Kant posits two pillars in Western aesthetics: First, he distinguished aesthetic pleasure from other forms of pleasure. Aesthetic pleasure is situated as not some other type of pleasure in disguise: for example, art is not the sublimation of food, sex, warmth, companionship, or some combination of other existing pleasures. Second, Kant argued that aesthetic emotions are 'disinterested'; when we experience an aesthetic pleasure, there are no utilitarian or ulterior motives underlying this experience. Now the salient questions are: What is beautiful? What makes things beautiful? What is art? What is the difference between good and bad art? Is it the literal qualities, the formal or its expressive qualities? The visual imagery appreciated by the aesthetic senses redefines artistic productions by their perceptual appearance. To be sure, perceptual characteristics are supplemented by all kinds of knowledge, but since such knowledge conveys only indirect information, it has less immediate effects. Sound strokes the ear just like images strike the eyes and speak through the properties of shape, color, space and sometimes motion. These properties are the carriers of visual dynamics and act as symbolical equivalents of the undercurrents that determine one's own mental and physical expressiveness.

Effiong Johnson citing Emmanuel Akpan and Etuk Udo posits that, aesthetic experiences are usually obtained from enjoying works of art. "We very easily and naturally tie our aesthetic experiences to works of art, which are man-made objects" (20). From this account, aesthetics can be perceived as "the science of the beautiful", and such a feeling as can be gained from a work of art. In this case, the use of digital media technology deploys computer generated components to create and display art. Phillip Andrew Prager identifies this as, "the contemporary theory of creativity, and tradition, combined to develop an aesthetic of computer-based art today and in the future" (1). This presentation makes creative use of dialogue, music, sound effects, scenery, costumes, makeup, animation, pre-recorded videos and live actors on stage as an aesthetic channel to enhance the message embedded in the

production, *Diary of a Pastor's Wife*.

Application of Multimedia to *Diary of a Pastor's Wife*: A Director's Aesthetic Toolbox.

Theatre directors do more than just arrange actors on stage to show them, entrances and exits. The responsibility of the director includes the creative application of use of the artistic and technical elements relevant to the theatrical production. The contemporary theatre director may choose to use digital tools at his disposal for his presentation; which allows for the integration of texts (graphics), audio inserts, still images, animation and motion videos in a way that provides the performers high level coordination, control, and creative interactions with the audiences. In creating this appealing content, specific sets of skills are required. Louis Jovet, French actor and director, describes the art of play directing in a more encapsulating way when he submits that,

To direct a production means more than to help the actors with their memorizing and to mold the text in rehearsals so that it is freed of bookishness and takes on the feeling of the players; it means nourishing, sustaining and revitalizing the actors, encouraging and satisfying them and finding their proper theatrical and technological diet; it means bringing forth and raising that family to a different formula for each new play theatre company (28).

Inih Ebong submits that, aesthetics (in theatre) is not an easy concept to explain, "because of the numerous problems associated with identifying the aesthetics in terms of the properties of its object, arts and culture" (21). Theatre productions find this bent of expression in the creative use of more than one medium of expression in the application of text, audio, videos and animation interactively and aesthetically. It admits of digital technologies, among other requirements, which may include: computer generated videos, soundscapes, animations, still images, and kinetic interactive equipment either worn or triggered by live actors or pre-recorded and edited (audio or visual) elements framed to tell the story embedded in a dramatic piece, in the most sublime form. This convergence of mechanism stimulates the collaborative nerve of the theatre director and sparks an even fresher dimension of the aesthetic quality of performances.

***Diary of a Pastor's Wife*: Synopsis**

Diary of a Pastor's Wife written by VickyBon Uzuazor, chronicles the travails of Pastor (Mrs.) Ekom, wife Pastor David Jerome, who is the Presiding of Bishop Hills of Grace Ministries International; a global church with branches in Nigeria and the United States of America. Ekom has been married for twelve (12) years without giving birth to children, but she has two adorable adopted children and a maid – Tessy. Trouble begins when her mother-in-law, Georgina Jerome suggests to Pastor David to take his maid as his mistress, so she can have biological grandchildren from the blood line. Ekom's five months trip to the United States of America for church planting gives room for an affair between Tessy and her husband, David.

Upon return to Nigeria, Ekom bumps into the devastating news of Tessy's pregnancy with a baby boy and is rumoured to be the 'New First Lady' of Hills of Grace Ministries. Despite the confusion, heartbreak and emotional melt down, Ekom is thrown out of their matrimonial home by her husband and her mother-in-law. She moves in with her friend Dr. Lizzy and in

the drama that unfolds, the said baby boy (as eventually revealed) is not Pastor David's biological child but belongs to Ediomomo (the Church Drummer). The truth comes to light at Ediomomo's funeral, as he (Ediomomo) was unfortunately involved in a car crash. Pastor David is shattered by the news of the electrocuted boy's real father and weeps profusely. David seeks forgiveness from God, his wife and the church. He is reinstated from suspension and the reunited family is blessed with a beautiful baby girl to the glory of God. *Diary of a Pastor's Wife* is a social commentary which borders on the credibility of some religious leaders, and their treatment of family as opposed to the façade of chanting, "It is well" to cover up for lifestyles that lack integrity to hold such divine assignment and leadership role in the society. A sense of familiarity resonates within the audience members when they find observable everyday patterns reflected in the story. The themes explored are: fidelity, forgiveness and fostering formidable families.

Background of the Writer: *Diary of a Pastor's Wife*

Vicky Bon was born on 20th May, 1989 in her grandmother's hut in Abakoko Village. She is from Abakoko in Ikot Ekpene LGA. She started storytelling through tiny drawings in Nuco Nursery/Primary school, Uyo. She was seven when she could narrate fiction stories to her little friends who nodded at her with so much attention. She got even more addicted to storytelling in secondary school, Loreto Girls Juniorate, Eriam. Vicky studied script writing at Royal Arts Academy and has written over sixty scripts. She wrote the script for the popular feature movie, 'The Final List', she also writes for Africanfiction.com, a blog that tells pure African stories. Vicky Bon studied Communication Arts in the University of Uyo. She has participated in so many online storytelling Courses and has written several stories for different blogs, including Bellanaija and London African Romance Hub. Vicky Bon has published stories, including *Memorable July*, *The 6 Husbands of Iyaket*, *Diary of a Pastor's Wife* and *When God Speaks to Me*. Vicky Bon is married to Tony Uzuakor, and they have a son, Dayeabasi. She was named Best Writer in African Romance Storytelling at the Nigerian Writers Association in 2014. Mrs. Vicky divides her time into storytelling and skincare, where her passion is effervescent.

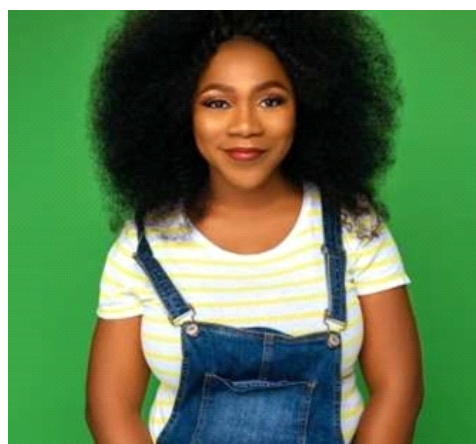


Plate 1: VickyBon Uzuakor

The Writer, *Diary of a Pastor's Wife*.

Source: www.vickybonfictions.com

Multimedia Production Processes: *Diary of a Pastor's Wife*

From the script interpretation to the character analysis, the director arranges characters in action to tell the story, creating distinct personalities and voice distinctions, the use of suitable music (in genre and content), suitable locations, costuming and makeup, appropriate use of sound effects and silence (for tension and suspense) and set design to create an overall sequence for the production that will be appreciated aurally and visually. It is noteworthy that in contemporary theatre presentations readily deploy these innovative communication systems via enhanced gadgets which integrate filmic presentations, sound

and acoustics, photography and animation, texts and changeable backgrounds to constitute what is known as multimedia. Pauline Sheldrake observes that the infusion of, “analogue devices like some sound recording equipment and slide and film projections with digital technologies, which include: computer generated video, soundscapes, animations, still images, and kinetic interactive equipment either worn or triggered by live actors in the theatre space, creates the most aesthetically appealing productions” (5). The tooling and fabrication multimedia elements in *Diary of a Pastor's Wife* by the director, stagecraft technicians, technical designers and actors in ways that aesthetic infusions to stage craft was achieved through audio and audio-visual technologies, taking into account the limitations of the venue of the performance slated for the Pinnacle Theatre, Akwa Ibom State University, Obio Akpa Campus on Wednesday 17th May, 2023 by 2:00pm.

There are three basic steps from inception to conclusion to realise the vision of the production, which are as follows: 1. Pre-Production 2. Production 3. Post-Production Activities. All three steps were followed in the making of *Diary of a Pastor's Wife*.

Pre-Production Activities: From the formulation of the idea through the director's creative conjecturing of the production informed the choice of play. The scripting of the play was done by the writer, VickyBon Uzuazor. However, the screenplay and audio inserts were handled by the director, Aniebiet Mbede. The compelling everyday life-like story in *Diary of a Pastor's Wife* endeared the script to the director. *Diary of a Pastor's Wife* takes on relatable family crises, caused by infidelity. The audience members could readily connect to the theme and story line. The production planning, budgeting, auditions, casting, rehearsals and search for locations all formed part of the pre-production phase for the multimedia production. The knitting together of the production through proper editing, obtaining all rights and permissions required, audio sweetening, synchronisation of all sound effect and music to propel the final production for the airing of the multimedia presentation. Magical moments like disappearing effects, opening montage and end credits, music and sound effects were handled during the audio and video editing process, which is part of the pre-production arrangements before the main performance. The cast of the production was drawn from the year two class (2022/2023) academic session, Department of Performing Arts, Akwa Ibom State University.

Production Activities: This has to do with the main presentation. It involves the presentation of the synchronised bits of the video, stage actions, audio, graphics, music and sound effects in a unified production, presented before an audience. The artistic and technical equipment for the production includes: the stage, hand and movable properties, costumes, makeup and proper lighting, mixer consoles, audio processors, microphones (unidirectional, bidirectional and omni-directional microphones) mic arms, headphones, cameras, tripods, track, drones, cables, active speakers/monitors, computers with installed applications for editing and accessories, broadcast desks to mention a few. The production *Diary of a Pastor's Wife* was staged on Wednesday, 17th May, 2023 at the Pinnacle Theatre, Akwa Ibom State University, Obio Akpa Campus by 2:00pm.

Post-Production Activities: Apart from the traditional striking of the set and viva (a critical appraisal of the performance), technological advantage was deployed to achieve a wider

review as the presentation was aired live on multiple internet-driven applications like YouTube, Instagram and Facebook. Streaming, storage and audience response mechanisms were activated on social media platforms. An Audience review questionnaire was administered to select members of the heterogeneous audience, for feedback.

Multimedia Sequence: *Diary of a Pastor's Wife*

The sequence of multimedia production need be presented in a seamless flow of action and interactions with other media, in a way that is void of interruptions or technical glitches. The various media need to be synchronized into a story which moves from screen to stage to audio back to screen in a pattern that weaves the story into an aesthetic experience.

In *Diary of a Pastor's Wife*, the fluid sequence of the production is as follows:

SEQUENCE	MEDIUM	TIME FRAME	DESCRIPTION
Introduction	Animation (Screen)	51 Seconds	The Introduction
Opening	Text/Graphics (Screen)	1 Minute	Montage
Movement 1	Video (Screen)	4 Minutes	The Nightmare
Movement 2	Audio Insert	3 Minutes	The Love Affair
Movement 3	Video (Screen)	5 Minutes	Landing Blows (Airport)
Movement 4	Live Actors (Stage)	3 Minutes	The Return
Movement 5	Live Actors (Stage)	3 Minutes	The Unpleasant Surprise
Movement 6	Audio Insert	3 Minutes	Hospital <i>Wahala</i>
Movement 7	Live Actors (Orchestra Pit)	5 Minutes	The Boutique Meet up
Movement 8	Live Actors (Stage)	3 Minutes	Sister's Counsel
Movement 9	Live Actors (Orchestra Pit)	2 Minutes	Ediomo's Mischief
Movement 10	Live Actors (Auditorium)	12 Minutes	Hills of Grace Church
Movement 11	Live Actors (Stage)	8 Minutes	House on Fire
Movement 12	Video (screen)	5 Minutes	Elder's Council
Movement 13	Video (screen)	10 Minutes	Ediomo's Burial
Movement 14	Audio Insert	4 Minutes	The Restoration
Movement 15	Stage/ Audio Insert	5 Minutes	Angel's Story (Hallelujah chorus)
Closing	Text/Graphics (Screen)	3 Minutes	End Credits

TABLE 1: The Multimedia Production Sequence for *Diary of a Pastor's Wife*.

Source: Aniebiet Mbede's Directorial Note, 2023.

Scripting and Mechanisation of Audio Inserts: *Diary of a Pastor's Wife*

Four (4) movements were crafted as audio inserts, to establish the practicality of technoperformance to enhance the overall interpretation of the production vision. The script writer used descriptive language and adjectives that creates images for the situations of the production. All the sound cues, labeling of music and description of sound effects are graphically presented in the audio insert script. The following is a sample page of the mechanised audio insert:

An Audio Insert in *Diary of a Pastor's Wife*

CHARACTERS

✦	David - A Pastor	(45 Years Old)
✦	Ekom - Mama, Pastor David's Wife	(42 Years Old)
✦	Lizzy - Ekom's Friend	(43 Years Old)
✦	Georgina - Ekom's Mother in law	(67 Years Old)
✦	Doctor Ekpeno	(39 Years Old)
✦	Nurse Uwem	(28 Years Old)

INT. In Pastor David's Room. FX: Phone Rings
[Filter] Georgina is speaking over the Phone with David.

GEORGINA:

Hello, Pastor David my son. How are you today?

DAVID:

Hello Mama! I am fine o. How are you doing Mama?

GEORGINA:

I am fine o o o o o my
son **DAVID:**

I hope all is well with you

FX: Knock on the door. Door opens. Foot falls. Glasses, plates and spoons clinging. Foot falls.

Door shuts.

GEORGINA:

Who was that?

DAVID:

Oh mama, it was Tessy she came in to drop my food.

GEORGINA:

Greet the children when they return. And greet Tessy specially for me o

DAVID:

I will greet her, Bye mama

FX: Cuts the phone line. Beep

DAVID:

Hahahaha...Mama and her wahala

Music: RTID by Kizz Daniel **MUSIC OVER, MUSIC UNDER TILL FADES**

Aesthetic Use of Sound in *Diary of a Pastor's Wife*

The use of sound to engage the audiences, pass information and evoke powerful emotional responses through mood creation, as an accompaniment to the videos and generally increase the aural value of the performance. The acoustic performance with no visual component makes use of dialogue; music and sound effect to help interpret the message of the production by creating an imaginary world to accommodate the characters and story. The aesthetic use of sound be it in the production of musicals, voicing the supernatural and dramatising an independent audio presentation with depth, breathing, interaction, inflection, articulation, elocution and the control of speech elements is essential in the production. The actors used the *on mic* (Closer to the microphone) and *off mic* (distant from the microphone) positioning and express the dialogue. The post production infused the



necessary sound effects, use of pre-recorded music and even the propensity of silence to create suspense in the presentation. These forces were merged together for the best possible expression and to further the story in *Diary of a Pastor's Wife*. The recorded dialogue was purposely

intended not take too long so that audiences will not fall into the boredom (See Table 1-Production Sequence).

Designing images for the mind's eye (audio medium) entailed an aesthetic detailing of aurally perceived dramatic enactments using the creative inventiveness of imagination, the story telling power or characterisation the rhythmic impulses and dramatic elements in the use of Sound, Sound Effects, Silence and Music (SSSM). Audio Inserts as a standalone pre-recorded audio clip, which is part of a multimedia presentation extended the audio-scape in *Diary of a Pastor's Wife*. The simulated Voice of God was audibly captured with sound effect accompaniments like echo and thunder. As an aesthetic element, proper consideration of music selection by the director in genre, tempo and suitability of mood was achieved in transition, from movement to movement. An example was the use of *Believe Me* by John Drille as theme tune. As often noted, the use of sound effects to deepen the understanding of the message drama is adds on some aesthetic colourations to the production, albeit aurally. The main tool for acting for the audio medium is the voice. So attention was given to the actor's tonal quality in expression and control of pitch, timbre texture and loudness. In *Diary of a Pastor's Wife*, microphones were used on stage to amplify the actor's voices (in the Church Scene were Choristers made a presentation) also live drums, keyboard, saxophones and rattles for musical accompaniments.

Plate 2: Use of Microphones and Saxophones by Eka's Family in *Diary of a Pastor's Wife* Source: Pinnacle Theatre Productions, May 2023.

Visual Aesthetics in *Diary of a Pastor's Wife*

Multimedia production is a multi-faceted creative construction of dramatic pieces with audio visual content that is disseminated to tell a story, pass a message or make a statement in the society. On the one hand, people will subscribe to any aesthetically packaged presentation, so far quality is guaranteed. The use of multimedia in productions as observed offers a creative platform so theatre can keep pace with the fast track of innovations defining and redefining contemporary society and its art forms deployed in *Diary of a Pastor's Wife*.



Costumes and Make Up: Costume design enhances visual appeal. Aesthetics were reflected in the choice of style, texture, colour, fabric and the fitting of these elements to the age and class of the character portrayed. The Choir members are seen in their robes and Pastor Mrs. Ekom is seen her expensive clothing with matching headpiece. Drapes, Pulpit, Drums and other properties and essentials were acquired (through hire or purchase) to enhance the aesthetic quality of the production.

Plate 3: Showing Pastor (Mrs.) Ekom and Choristers in their costumes Source: *Diary of a Pastor's Wife*, Pinnacle Theatre Production, 2023.

Camera Types and Camera Angles in *Diary of a Pastor's Wife*

The picture quality of any visual production depends on the camera type. The hiring (or purchase where applicable) of the camera is an important aesthetic facility that will capture the essence of the story. Professional Cameras can be purchased or hired (depending on the budget of the production) before the shot. In *Diary of a Pastor's Wife* the producer hired two Sony HDV cameras for the shot. Apart from securing the camera, the proper use of the camera revealed the beauty embedded in the story. The movement and capturing of camera shots and angles in the: Establishment shots, Extreme Close Up shots, Close Up shots, Long shots, Medium Shots, Wide Shots, Reaction Shots, Ariel shots; and the use of camera movements like: Panning, Dolly in, Dolly Out, Zoom in, Zoom out were creatively used to achieve aesthetics in the recording of the four (4) movements which served as video inserts for *Diary of a Pastor's Wife*. Art Direction of the

actors on set using the principles of directing included proper: composition, picturisation, movement, rhythm and pantomimic dramatisation. In *Diary of a Pastor's Wife*, the director created spectacle in the presentation through the use of merged screen and stage engagements in Simul-Set (the use of screen and stage medium simultaneously).

Plate 4: Simultaneous Setting (Simul-Set) Merging Video and Stage
Source: *Diary of a Pastor's Wife* Pinnacle Theatre Productions, May 2023.

Use of Animation in *Diary of a Pastor's Wife*

Creation of Talking Avatar Video with Voiceover and Subtitles:

The process of creating a talking avatar video with voiceover and subtitles, which was used for the introduction in the presentation of *Diary of a Pastor's Wife* was produced using various web applications and editing software, resulting in a high-definition (HD) file suitable for playback at uncompressed, broadcast standard resolutions.

Creating a Talking Avatar from a Photo with Background Music:

To initiate the creation of the talking avatar, the subject's photo was uploaded to the web application called Movio.ia. Using this app, a talking avatar was generated from the provided photo. During this process, we removed all preset background designs and props, leaving a plain canvas featuring only the avatar. Additionally, we loaded the previously recorded

voiceover by the presenter into the app. Once these steps were completed, the video was submitted for rendering and prepared for the next stage.



Step 2: Creating Automated Subtitles with CapCut

The avatar was rendered with the voiceover, accompanied by a plain green background, into a video format and imported it into CapCut, video editing software. Additionally, we corrected any

misspelled or mispronounced words, including non-English terms, to ensure accuracy. After making these modifications, we exported or rendered the captions on the green background for further processing.

Step 3: Consolidating All Assets using InShot

In this step, all the necessary assets were imported, including the talking avatar with the green backgrounds and subtitles with green backgrounds, into InShot. Next, we arranged all the components on the timeline, added transitions to smoothen the entry and exit of video clips, and applied animations. We used a simple white background to provide a cohesive visual presentation.

Step 4: Enhancing Video Quality and Applying Effects

After the initial assembly, we refined the entire video further. We added transitions between scenes to improve the overall flow and performed color grading and balancing. We also enhanced the audio, levelled the background music, then removing background noise to achieve optimal sound quality. Finally, we rendered the video into an HD file with a resolution

of 1920 by 1080 pixels.

Step 5: Finalizing and Sharing the Video

We shared a preview copy of the video with stakeholders for approval via WhatsApp. Once approval was obtained, we saved the final version to Google Drive. The combination of Movio.ia, CapCut, InShot, and Vivacut facilitated the seamless integration of various elements, resulting in a professional-quality video suitable for academic presentations and other applications.

Conclusion

In the light of the foregoing, it is evident that creating aesthetically appealing multimedia productions involves both artistic and technical skills and diligence in every practicable way. The director's tool box as revealed in *Diary of a Pastor's Wife* is seen to contain audiovisual mechanics, which the

director needs to use in the fabrication of appealing content for theatre audiences. Drawing from this aesthetic toolbox, the theatre director therefore needs to creatively explore digital tools to conveniently foist creative images, videos, animation and soundscapes to improve on the aesthetics of live theatre productions. This study therefore recommends the creative and consistent application of these multimedia elements; not just as a streak of trend, but as a directorial apparatus necessary for achieving aesthetic deliverables in the creation of appealing theatrical productions, especially, in a digitally saturated society.

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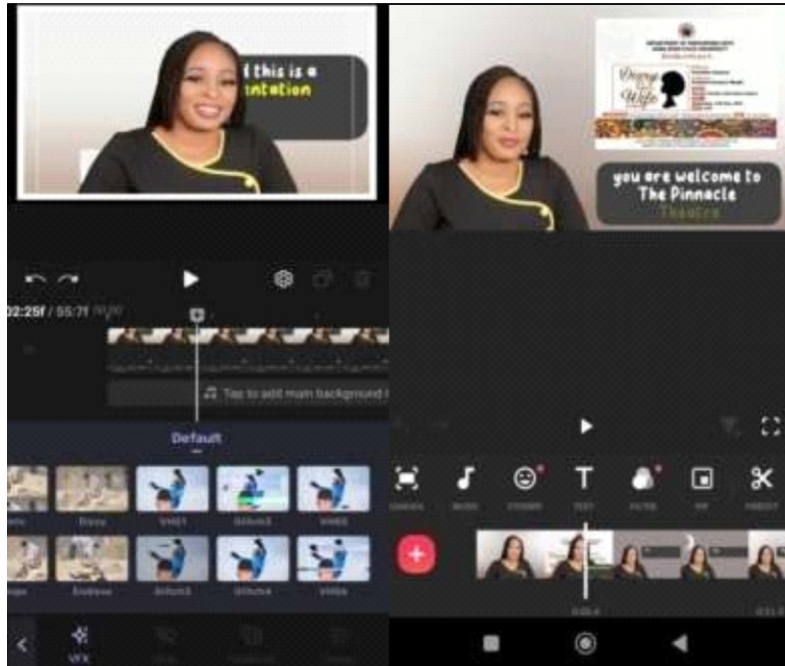


Plate 5: Use of Talking Avatar Animation as Techno-Performance
Source: *Diary of a Pastor's Wife*, Pinnacle Theatre Production, 2023.

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