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An Analysis  
of the Development of Theatre in Zambia  
(1950-1975)

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts,  
in Theatre Arts


By

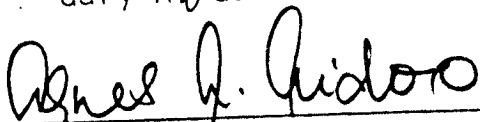
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1977



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1977

Dedicated

To my father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. Joel  
David Chifunyise.

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

An Analysis  
of the Development of Theatre in Zambia  
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by

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Master of Arts in Theatre Arts

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Professor Carl R. Mueller, Chairman.

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the development of theatre in Zambia with special emphasis to the period between 1950 and 1975.

The methodology is mainly descriptive with material based on the author's personal experience, interviews, observations, correspondence, and on printed material such as journals, newspapers, official reports and books.

The first chapter examines the nature of Zambia's traditional performing arts, the changes these arts have undergone because of urbanization, and the role of individual performing artists who have created new traditional dances

and dance-dramas.

The second chapter deals with the establishment of the European theatre movement, little theatres and playhouses in the urban area and the formation of the Northern Rhodesia Drama Association. It also deals with the activities of the first African drama clubs and the multi-racial Waddington Players who challenged the all-white Northern Rhodesia Drama Association and the Government's racial segregation laws.

The third chapter analyzes Zambia's cultural revolution and the role of the Department of Cultural Services and the National Dance Troupe in the development of Zambian theatre.

The fourth chapter examines the development of the University of Zambia's Chikwaka Theatre and the debate between its advocates and the expatriate-dominated Theatre Association of Zambia concerning the state of theatre in Zambia. This chapter also deals with various projects by Chikwaka Theatre, such as the travelling theatre movement, children's theatre and drama workshops.

The fifth and concluding chapter surveys the efforts of the expatriate Theatre Association of Zambia to integrate Chikwaka Theatre into the expatriate theatre move-

ment and the role of television drama in the development  
of theatre in Zambia.

## Introduction

The story of theatre in Zambia is very much like the political story of Zambia. Whereas the political story is now well documented, the story of the development of theatre in Zambia is still in bits and pieces scattered in magazines, club reports, diaries of directors, actors, welfare and community development officers. This study is but one of the many attempts to put these bits and pieces together into a coherent analysis of traditional Zambian performing arts, contemporary Zambian theatre, other types of theatre, theatre groups, movements and artists who make up the whole story of the development of theatre in Zambia. However, to analyze the development of theatre in Zambia is as complicated as trying to analyze the development of Zambian culture. Where does one begin? Does one begin from the period where things are documented in magazines, newspapers, government reports and diaries of individuals who were involved or does one go to the works of anthropologists, historians and sociologists and try to deduce from these records when and how traditional Zambian performing arts developed? The problem here is not because such a study is very difficult and very complicated but

that whereas historical events can easily be traced back to precise times of changes and occurrences, traditional Zambian performing arts cannot easily be traced back to the precise times of occurrences and developments. This leads us, unfortunately, to speculation.

Discussions on Zambian culture have been characterized by lack of detailed and sincere study and controversy that has risen either because of overemphasis on political implications or on excessive demands on the people by cultural revolutionaries and politicians who want the people to denounce "tribalism and regionalism" and identify with "One Zambia, One Nation" which in turn implies Zambian Culture. Traditional Zambian performing arts have also been treated with this unfortunate irrationality and misconception. Unfortunately while we are debating on whether a detailed study of individual ethnic cultures and languages is tantamount to recognizing the diversity of Zambian culture and the problems of creating a unified nation or that such a study is essential in demonstrating that within that ethnic and cultural diversity lies our nationhood, unity and strength, most reliable primary sources such as our oral literature and old informants are quickly disappearing. Those who enquire into the origins

of their own ethnic cultures are met not only with these irrationalities and misconceptions but by the fact that for such a study to achieve academic recognition it has to be in the former master's language - English - and this in turn has left those Zambians who actually do the research, collection and translation of the material under the supervision of western scholars, as simply informants. These western scholars have had a period of honeymoon in Zambia. They have collected tons of materials and have disappeared from Zambia without leaving a single copy of their findings with either the government or the University of Zambia. They have published their findings and have obtained Ph.Ds. or become authorities on our own cultures. One most frustrating problem one encounters when trying to document the development of traditional Zambian culture and the performing arts is that one finds that it is a tendency among modern scholars to be impressed with works which are supported by quotations from recognized authorities in the fields. And in the Zambian case it means individuals whose findings have deliberately avoided giving due recognition to the scholarly work done by the so-called informants. A study wholly devoted to examining thoroughly the origins of specific traditional Zambian culture and performing arts

should not be treated as an unnecessary digging of the past and exposing those elements which make our ethnic groups different or as an attempt to show how certain ethnic groups were more superior, economically, culturally, politically, or otherwise, but as an essential reflection of the rich past that makes our cultural and national heritage. Such a study is challenging and must be undertaken now while most of the reliable informants are still alive.

The study that I have undertaken, however minimal, is a major contribution to such a worthy cause. In this study I have tried to trace the development of traditional Zambian performing arts back into history as much as possible, analyze the various theatre organizations and movements who are responsible for major changes in the concept of theatre in Zambia at the moment, an examination of what led to the rivalry between the expatriate theatre and the nationalist theatre movement, with special emphasis to the period between 1950 and 1975. However, it is necessary to begin by clarifying why we are referring to all aspects of theatrical activities in Zambia as "theatre in Zambia" rather than "Zambian Theatre". By "theatre in Zambia" one refers to all the three types of theatre in Zambia. The first type is the traditional Zambian performing arts or

traditional Zambian theatre as many Chikwakwa Theatre enthusiasts have begun to call it. This type is predominant in many rural areas of Zambia and among cultural groups in urban areas. The second type is what Chikwakwa Theatre critics have called "expatriate theatre" or simply "European theatre". This is the theatre by expatriate European and other nationals from western countries who identify strongly with their own cultures and produce classic and modern plays in English, plays which often need to have succeeded on Broadway or in London, or plays by established East European playwrights in exclusive little theatres and playhouses in big towns. This type of theatre is essentially part of a significant continuation of a sub-culture from a segregated all white culture to a neo-colonial and semi-segregative expatriate culture that has only managed to draw few Zambians of the top income bracket. Their theatre is semi-segregated in the sense that although there are no club rules and government laws against indigenous Zambians joining these theatre and recreational clubs, as was the case during the colonial days, the way in which these clubs and organizations are operated is enough to prevent indigenous people from becoming members. The Zambian Government has always recognized

this theatre and has in the past joined multi-national corporations, city councils and mining companies in providing these theatre clubs and their association with funds. Although the Government of the Republic of Zambia has spoken out against segregated theatre and sports clubs, it has not been as critical of theatre clubs as it has been of sport clubs. As in some recreational and sports clubs, some educated Zambians have joined these theatre clubs and have been used as token members to legalize the existence of such theatre organizations and cultural activities. The third type of theatre is what is commonly referred to as the Zambian theatre, or, more appropriately, as contemporary Zambian theatre. This is the type of theatre that the Zambian National Theatre Arts Association describes as:

...the theatre which shall portray and reflect the life and experience of the Zambian people .... a theatre that will promote and support the utilization of Zambian folklore, myths, ritual, song and dances. <sup>1</sup>

Youngson Simukoko, one of the founder members of the

<sup>1</sup> "The Preamble," The Constitution of Zambia National Theatre Arts Assn.

Chikwakwa theatre movement that has been the major force behind the establishment of this type of theatre, refers to it as:

...the theatre that aims at integrating the concept of theatre with the ancient and traditional element of Zambian performing arts. <sup>2</sup>

If we take Michael Etherton's definition of African theatre as "theatre for African peoples by the African people" and substitute that for Zambian theatre we get one of the shortest definitions of Zambian theatre. However, Michael Etherton argues that that theatre is not designed to please or copy the former colonial master's culture but that which is genuinely and strongly motivated by the dynamics of Zambian peoples themselves who have been made to feel, through history, literature, politics and other forms of art, the inevitable urgency to examine, expose and understand the enormous complexities of Zambian experience. Michael Etherton makes another important comment about this type of theatre when he says:

It isn't sufficient really to take a play by a black writer and say you are doing African theatre.

<sup>2</sup> Youngson Simukoko, "Chikwakwa Theatre," Chikwakwa Review (1971) p. 10.

A number of African writers who we won't name now are, in fact, not writing African Theatre in any sort of cultural sense of the word. They are merely writing rather western-type well made plays. And these will inevitably only have a currency among the elite. A genuine popular theater, I think, must draw on existing cultural roots. <sup>3</sup>

Other people have advocated that apart from its educational and entertainment element, contemporary Zambian theatre must become a powerful cultural weapon which Zambian revolutionaries can adequately use to suppress the unfortunate "cultural anarchy" which has been forced on Zambian people and imparted into the current generation's minds by all the evils of colonialism, colonial education in particular, and by the so-called modernization and civilization. Many of the advocates of Chikwakwa Theatre have characterized contemporary Zambian theatre in terms of the current literary drama movement. For example, Chikwakwa Theatre, which has become a forum for Zambian

<sup>3</sup> Michael Etherton, Interview on Zambia's experimental theatre, by John Barnor, Cultural Events in Africa, No. 64 (1970), p. 8.

dramatists who reject the colonial and neo-colonial mentality of the so-called educated Zambians, and whose plays critically examine what is happening in today's Zambia and the Zambian past in search of a truly Zambian identity. Whatever definition one picks up as a working definition for Zambian theatre, one thing stands out in any of the above definitions, namely that Zambian theatre is the utilization of conventional theatre forms and traditional Zambian performing arts and culture.

## Chapter One

### The Story of the Traditional Zambian Performing Arts

Before we try to tackle the story of the development of traditional Zambian performing arts, it is necessary to refer to Chiman Vyas' cultural guideline for the Department of Cultural Services of the Republic of Zambia.

If culture is defined as a totality of human society's way of life, Zambia's culture embraces all the fields of life. Owing to the enormous import and immense impact of foreign cultures in Zambia, it is impossible to idealize it as a distinct development.... Culture originates within the origins of a society. It develops with its development. It is influenced by people of other countries with whom the individual members of the society establishes contacts.<sup>4</sup>

What can be said about Zambian culture can equally be

<sup>4</sup> Chiman Vyas, "Cultural Concept and Renaissance in Zambia," Department of Cultural Services Publications, 1972, p. 1.

said about traditional performing arts. However, a lot of misunderstanding has arisen with regard to the term "traditional Zambian performing arts". Many people have mistakenly regarded every traditional dance, song and ritual as traditional performing arts. The word "performing", like the word "theatre", which has been used for every form of traditional dance, song and ritual, implies an element of theatrical performance created for the purpose of entertaining the onlookers or the performers themselves. To regard a funeral chant, a malende ceremony (rain prayer ceremony) among the Tonga and a kuteta a zimu (special spiritual prayer) among the Nsenga as theatrical is like calling the Catholic mass a theatrical performance. There are a good number of such religious or spiritual rituals in various ethnic groups in Zambia which have been mistakenly considered as traditional performing arts. Most of these dances had very few such entertainment elements. However, this misconception has arisen because many people, especially western scholars, have regarded anything in the form of dancing, songs and drums as traditional performing art, and those Zambians who have not lived in traditional societies, so as really to understand the significance of such activities, have followed the same situation.

Nonetheless, a lot of changes have taken place in religious rituals and other secret functional dances. The coming of the white man and the element of urbanization are major factors in the development of private, therapeutic and religious dances and rituals to public entertainment performing arts. Chisungu (initiation rites) dances offer a very good example of very private dances which have, in the urban areas, become public performances. Among the Nsenga in Eastern Province a namwali (initiatee) while in her isolation hut during the initiation period is taught various aspects of womanhood and marriage life. During that period a special dance is used as a form of sexual education. The girl is taught the waist dance whose exaggerated waist movements are considered essential movements for the girl in her sexual life. However, she danced to a chosen group of skillful elderly women who made sure that her waist movements were perfect. No man was allowed to watch such dances. Even uninitiated young women were not allowed to see these dances. In such ethnic groups as Lenje, Soli and Lala, if the girl did not master the dance, she was ridiculed, insulted, beaten up and pinched until she demonstrated that she had learned the secret of the dance. In most rural areas this has not

changed. For instance, in 1972, a team of drama students led by Fay Chung studied the initiation of young women among the people of Lundazi. Japhet Msimuko who was one of the team observed:

Another important area the project touched on is the initiation ceremony of a girl who has reached her "age". We were fortunate (i.e. the women members of the research who were the only ones allowed to watch the ceremony) to have had the occasion to witness an initiation ceremony in its village traditional context. A young girl of about fourteen or fifteen was getting initiated in the chief's village. The ceremony proceedings turned out to confirm the commonly held view that it is primarily an occasion for instructing the girl in marriage principles, its values and beliefs and the roles of the woman in the family, the village and finally the society as a whole. The ceremony proceedings were not allowed to be taped so the male members of the research group had to satisfy themselves

with broad description of the ceremony. <sup>5</sup>

This does not mean that there were no public performances by initiatees (namwali). There were, but in most cases they were very much modified for public performances. Among the Tonga, the Bemba, and many other ethnic groups the namwali did not take part in the dancing at all. Other members of the community danced for her, and their dances were quite different from what took place while she was in the isolation hut. Unfortunately, many people, especially in the urban areas, have taken these private initiation dances and the exaggerated waist movements for public entertainment. Some of them have even gone to the extent of recreating some of the private and sacred rituals which take place while the girl is in isolation and even perform bare-breasted in public. Many traditionalists and chiefs have protested against this idea of recreating private and sacred rituals and traditional institutions for public entertainment for the pleasure of foreigners.

Among the Tumbuka people of Eastern Province is a dance called vimbuza. This dance was originally a form of

<sup>5</sup> Japhet P. Msimuko, "Research Project in Traditional Dances and Folk Tales Among the Chewa of Lundazi," Chikwakwa Review, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Nov. 1972), pp 2-3.

dance therapy. It is still a dance therapy in some rural communities of Tumbuka people. Originally the dance therapist (witch doctor) did not dance merely to entertain people. His real job was to exorcise the evil spirits out of the patients. The evil spirits were considered responsible for the illness, and the dance was only considered successful if the patients were exorcised. As early as 1950, a number of Tumbuka people who had moved to the urban areas and who had observed and learned these vimbuza dances, began to perform them. They had no power to exorcise and did not try; they merely entertained public audiences. Crowds began to throw money to dancers who performed at welfare centers and in beer halls for people from different ethnic groups on Saturday and Sunday afternoons. By the early sixties, the political parties (Nationalists) were using traditional dances as a major form of entertainment at rallies. Vimbuza dance was one of those dances which feature prominently at such political rallies. At independence a very colorful and competent vimbuza dancer, Ludaka Mkandawire popularized the dance by performing at various state functions, airport receptions for visiting dignitaries and at the United National Independence Party (UNIP) rallies. Today Ludaka Mkandawire is the most popu-

lar professional vimbuza dancer and recording artist.

David Kerr makes an important point about this dancer and the significance of the dance today:

Thus when the veteran dancer Mkandawire of the Livingstone Cultural Dance Troup dances vimbuza dance, it is inevitably artificial because it is no longer associated with its original function of exorcising health-damaging forces from the body.<sup>6</sup>

However, this development from a purely functional dance to a mere entertainment performing art form, completely devoid of its traditional function and context, has enabled dancers like Ludaka Mkandawire to become so individualistic in their dancing styles that they have created unique types of the same dance. This has created not only varities of the same dance but specific dance steps which are identified with specific dancers.

The nyau dance among the Chewa people of the Eastern Province of Zambia is a good example of a tradition dance that has undergone three major stages of development since

<sup>6</sup> David Kerr, "Towards an Aesthetic of Zambian Literary Drama " (private circulation paper, September, 1976), p. 26.

its origin. According to Frank Chingwalu in his article about nyau dances in Z Magazine, nyau dance originated when:

... a certain Chewa man who was somewhat mentally deranged to the extent that he could not gather food for himself and as a result he used to perform some strange dance and people used to give him food in return. The same people liked the man's style of dancing so much so that they began to perform the dance under cover of a mask lest the dancer be embarrassed to be found doing the dance of a mentally unbalanced man.<sup>7</sup>

From Frank Chingwalu's theory, we can deduce therefore that the main purpose of this dance was purely entertainment. The dancer exchanged this entertainment for food and other items he needed for his livelihood. It was created solely for that purpose. However, as Frank Chingwalu points out, as soon as other people began to learn the dance and to use the masks, it began to transform into a different dance for a different function. The dancers formed a secret society.

<sup>7</sup> Frank Chingwalu, "Nyau Dance," Z Magazine, No. 41 (Oct. 1972), p. 18.

The masks added the mystery of the Nyau dance and eventually began to be associated with the spirit world....

Initially a secret society of Nyau were the exclusive performers of the dance and it was performed only at funerals of chiefs to placate and soothe the ancestral spirits. The secret societies of Nyau were feared because people stumbling upon their secret practising places were killed or badly beaten. To warn people never to come near this place, they put flags marking the danger zone. <sup>8</sup>

It is during this stage of development that many nyau characters were created for specific functions in the nyau society and for specific dances. Those who were to become members of this secret society had to undergo a period of initiation at the society's private initiation camp (Dambwa) where they learned various aspects of the dances, the rules of the society, and how to make various masks and costumes. After the initiation ceremony, individuals

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

chose the type of characters they were going to portray and the society would then choose the best dancer for each character needed in the society. For instance, there were nyau characters known as the Nyau za Chaka ("Nyau of the year"). These nyau characters performed very important and specific functions at particular times of the year. Kasiya Maliro was a nyau character who performed only at the installation or death of a ruler or any other important members of the community. It is said that six months after the death of a Chewa ruler, Kasiya Maliro was asked to perform a ritual dance in which he assumed the role of a spiritual link between the newly elected ruler and the blessings of the ancestral spirits. If it was at the funeral of a very important member of the community, such as the ruler, Kasiya Maliro acted as a reconciliator between the ancestral spirits and the departing soul, as well as to plead to the ancestral spirits to accept the new soul. He was not a masked dancer like most of the nyau characters. He was presented as an animated structure in form of an antelope. At such religious ceremonies, no uninitiated members of the community were allowed to attend. Mzimu pa chulu ("spirits on the anthill") is another example of this type of nyau whose function was very rare. This

character performed at such occasions when, for instance, a child was disturbed by the spirits of a dead grandparent who wanted the child named after him or her or a dead grandparent who wanted to hand over secret knowledge about medicine and other powers to the child. The spirits made the child very ill. Mzimu pa chulu therefore acted as a spiritual link between the spirit of the departed grandparent and the child. After this character had performed the naming or the inheritance ritual the child recovered and took the name or inherited whatever it was expected to inherit. At no other times could this nyau character be constituted or perform. While at the initiation camp, (Dambwa), Kanq'wing'wi, a masked male nyau character, was sent to the village to beg for food to feed those in the camp. If the people in the village did not give him the food, he used violence to obtain it. He grabbed chickens, goats and other domestic animals he met on the way if the village did not give freely. Therefore, he was also a very special character whose function was very well defined.

However, this does not mean that there were no entertainment nyau characters at this stage. There were many public entertainment nyau characters who performed to all members of the community. Most of these characters per-

formed specific roles in the comic dramatization of social and political views of the community. A number of such characters are those which seem to have been created during the early contact with the white men, especially the white missionaries who fought hard to destroy nyau societies and many other traditional organizations they considered evil. One such very popular social commentary nyau character was Maliya (Mary) who, according to Barbara Blackmun and Matthew Schoffeleers,<sup>9</sup> has evolved since her origin into an anti-christian parody of the Virgin Mary. Maliya bore many characteristics of a white woman; long and flowing hair, cupped ears, a long and wedge-shaped nose. Her exaggerated tip-toe walking, her painted lips, and her tiny voice were all characteristics of the strange and delicate looking white woman. She danced and satirized the white woman. Although this character evolved into a very important character whose main task was to teach the accepted mores of the society, she still remained a purely public entertainment character. In the dancing arena, Maliya was always accompanied by Simoni (Simon). Simon was also a

<sup>9</sup> Barbara Blackmun and Matthew Schoffeleers, "Masks of Malawi," African Arts (Summer, 1972), p. 68.

caricature of the white man, and the biblical Simon. He was Maliya's husband and dancing partner. Although he represented the role of a responsible husband, his main task in the dancing arena was to entertain by comic characterization of a jealous husband. When the two characters entered the arena, Simoni danced very close to Maliya and if any other character came near her, he charged violently against him, creating confusion and laughter in the arena. Another comic performance character was Sajeni (Sergent). He imitated the colonial forced-labor recruitment officer or a military sergent, and was a tall, rough, masked male dancer. Simon carried two long whips which he used to beat up those people who did not sing, clap hands, and some of the nyau characters who misbehaved in the dancing arena. This was all done in a very comic manner.

Another category of public and all season performance characters is the group of nyau characters that portrayed undesirable characters and attitudes in the society. A good example is that of Thamu-thamu who portrayed the character of a detested drunkard. According to Barbara Blackmun and Matthew Schoffellers Thamu-thamu's dance:

...is accompanied by a slow, heavy beat of the drums as he takes long lurching strides, lean-

ing and occasionally bumping into others on the way. The heavy quality is reflected by the artist in his treatment of the features of the mask, particularly that of the mouth which is carved with full, loose, overted lips. Because of its naturalism this feature commands the most attention and gives the face an expression of open-mouthed drunken stupor. <sup>10</sup>

In most Chewa communities, drinking is a special privilege for all the adults, but drunkards are regarded as anti-social people. Thamu-thamu portrayed these detested people in a dramatic dance that often interrupted the dancing in the arena. Another social commentary nyau character was Mbiya zo dooka (pots with holes). This was a masked dancer that danced with a huge pot with holes on his head. The pot with holes represented broken marriages. This tragic character not only commented on the evils of broken marriages but also on how the people who were responsible for breaking marriages ought to be treated by every responsible member of the community. This character

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, p. 69

was often accompanied by another social commentary character called Kacipapa who was a masked female nyau dancer. Her main characteristic was a bundle of clothes tied delicately on her back representing a baby. Occasionally she put the baby on the ground and inspected the baby's clothes. Kacipapa represented a loving and responsible mother. She dramatized the role of a mother in a serious manner although now and then she would add some comic gestures. Lastly, within this category of social commentary characters was Lute (Ruth). This character was a masked female dancer who portrayed a helpless and lame girl. She could not walk on her own; other nyau characters carried her to the dancing arena. Her main function in the dancing arena was to dramatize the plight of disabled, helpless children. All the nyau characters in the dancing arena accepted her as an equal. She was also projected that way in the dancing acts she took part in.

The urbanization of Zambia is responsible for the third stage of the development of the nyau dance. As many Chewa people moved to the newly established copper mines and towns along the railway line, many nyau groups were formed in these areas. However, many of these nyau did not follow the original nyau society regulations, the strict

membership and initiation procedures. This was a major change. It had a significant effect on the nature of nyau dances and the performers themselves. Firstly, the fact that the dancers did not need to be initiated into the nyau society meant a great change in the attitudes of the dancers. Secondly, most of the dancers did not follow the original rules about what type of dances and nyau characters were not allowed to perform in public. This resulted in many nyau characters who had been for specific and private functions in the nyau society becoming mere public entertainment characters. The emphasis among many of these dancers was now on attractive costumes, masks, dances and songs. Thirdly, most nyau dancers began to perform to people of various ethnic groups who did not understand or appreciate the nyau society and rules. They did not understand why people who stumbled into nyau dressing areas were beaten up. They also did not understand or appreciate the religious, social and political implications of the characters and the nyau dances. As a result, most nyau dancers began to perform what most of these people expected and that was a theatrical presentation of the dances and characters completely devoid of the original social and religious contexts.

By 1950, individual nyau dancers began to form into very small nyau dancing groups. However, these groups were detached from the ideals and regulations of secret nyau societies. During this time radio played a very important role in popularizing individual nyau dancers, such as Gomani Nkwendo of Katete in the Eastern Province of Zambia, who was the first nyau dancer to create a professional nyau group. By the early sixties many nyau groups were performing in most of the townships in Lusaka. They performed at one area although they did not form into a secret nyau society. The people who came to watch these dancers gave them some money. This in turn created hostilities between individual dancers. There were incidents when certain nyau dancers fought because of the confusion in time allocated to each dancer and the control of the musicians. Singers and drummers too began to request for money from the dancers. The whole thing turned into a competitive weekend money earning profession. More dancers began to dance what the audiences appreciated most because of the money aspect. This was responsible for a lot of changes in the styles of dancing, drumming and singing and even costumes and masks. More people with little or no knowledge of the previous nature of the nyau characters and dances

began to be considered as authorities of the nyau dance. In 1966 some of these people were selected to form the National Dance Troupe.

However, the rural nyau societies did not change very much. They held on to their original structure, functions, initiation rites and strict rules. In 1972, Fay Chung led a group of drama students to study the nyau societies among the Chewa people of Lundazi. Japhet Phaskani Msimuko, one of the participants, had this to say about the nyau society.

We found that dances, other than those for mere entertainment had a lot of meaning to them. Of particular importance is nyau dance which seemed to have governed and laid foundation to most of the traditional social systems as a whole. It is divided into several categories of nyau characters some of which are for exclusive purposes like for burial ceremonies, initiation ceremonies and the installations of chiefs among others. These categories in turn may be subdivided into groups like, for example, the nyau for burial ceremonies of a dead commoner are different from those carried out for de-

ceased chief's councillor. From another angle one may broadly divide the nyau dance between those that may be watched by everybody and some which are strictly for people who had been formally initiated into the dance. The latter division is very secretive and a lot of rules are enforced as to the occasion of the performances and the dancers who participate in it. It was disappointing that we could not be allowed to research into this part (although we had arrived at a time there were so many dances being performed for the funeral ceremony of one of the chief's councillors who had died).<sup>11</sup>

To these Chewa people in the rural areas, there will always be differences between the exclusive, religious and ceremonial dances and those for mere public entertainment.

Among the Lozi people of western province is a popular dance-drama called kayowe which is said to have originated

<sup>11</sup> Japhet P. Msimulo, "Research Project in Traditional Dances and Folk Tales Among the Chewa of Lundazi," Chikwakwa Review, Vol. 1, No. 1, p.2.

sometime in the early twenties in Kalabo area in Western Province. Kayowe is a name of a pretty young woman who lived in this area. One day a young man called Mung'ombe was killing locusts in the fields when he saw this pretty young woman. Mung'ombe was so much moved by Kayowe's beauty that when he went home, he began to compose songs about her beauty. These praise songs were soon heard by Kayowe's parents and other members of the community. But when Mung'ombe asked Kayowe for her hand in marriage, she refused. Her parents were worried that Mung'ombe might ask a medicineman to bewitch their daughter and so they forced her to be married to him. At the marriage ceremony, Mung'ombe decided to dance the songs he had composed for Kayowe. So he dressed like a cock, with a bunch of feathers on his back forming the cock's tail and long feathers on his head. He tied many feathers on his shoulders to make wings. Then he sang and danced. Kayowe loved the dances so much that she joined in the dance and Mung'ombe started dancing like a cock courting a hen. She in turn shook her body and mimed the hen's responses. Many people who attended the marriage ceremony learned the dance and called it kayowe. They danced it at marriage ceremonies and other happy occasions. This dance developed into a very popular

dance-drama with a well known love story. The movements of the cock, his gestures and facial expressions created a unique love dance-drama. In some cases the cock does not succeed in winning the hen and so such dancers have to dramatize this conflict. As a result the dance has acquired a lot of varieties of style and presentation. Today kayowe is the most exciting dance-drama in the National Dance Troup repertory.

In Luapula province, another dance-drama developed during the time when the colonial government sent white administrators, missionaries and doctors to the province. The local people were impressed by many aspects of the white culture such as clothes, their manners and their looks and so they dramatized them in a dance-drama which became known as kalela (clean dance). The aspect of "neatness" was the major element of the dance although initially the dance movements were taken from various dances in the province. The dancers dressed in white shorts and shirts, white shoes and white handkerchiefs. There were two major characters within the dancing group which was comprised of as many as twenty people dancing in one line around the drummers. One character portrayed a white doctor dressed in a white coat. The other portrayed

a white nurse. As the fellow dancers danced around the drummers the white doctor character went around comically inspecting the dancers and the nurse character danced around with a white handkerchief and a mirror. She brought the mirror to the dancers' faces and then wiped their faces with the handkerchief. All this was done in a simple comic presentation. The dialogues and the songs said a lot of things about the white people and their culture. When these groups were created in the Copperbelt towns the white clothes and the comic characterization of white people were given more emphasis than the dancing. Kalela soon became the most popular dance-drama for young people and was performed at weddings and other happy gatherings. In villages kalela was performed by teams which competed and the element of neatness assumed a different role. Colorful uniforms became a major part of the competition. It was no longer the white color element that mattered, as was still the case in the Copperbelt towns, although the white handkerchief element remained. The most significant development of the dance was in the fifties when the political youth groups used the dance to gather groups together and publicize the party. The songs were no longer comic songs about the white culture. They

were now strong political songs against the colonialists and the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in particular. Even the gestures and movements which had been simple comic and attractive movements began to be incorporated into the Party slogans and gestures. The heavy sounds of the main drum that dictated the movements were now being used to call the youths together. The dramatic gestures and movements with their political implications, however, did not change the dance-drama from its attractive dancing format. Kalela is now the most popular dance among the Bemba speaking people in the Copperbelt towns, Luapula and Northern Provinces of Zambia. The National Dance Troup has put together various steps of the same dance from various regions to create a very exciting dance.

After the second world war, many Zambians who had fought in the war in North Africa and Burma went back to their villages. In Eastern Province among the Tumbuka, the villagers and the returning soldiers organized celebrations to mark the end of the war and the safe return of their own people. Out of this celebration developed a unique acrobatic dance with many aspects of the military life - marching, tough military physical exercise routines, salutes, etc. This dance was called fwemba. It became the

dance of physically fit young men. Because of the acrobatic nature, women never joined the dancing teams, although they sang for the dancers and sometimes joined the drummers. Fwemba spread to many urban areas by the early sixties and became popular with people from different ethnic groups because of its attractive acrobatic movements and the physical challenge it offered to young people. Although the dance has undergone a lot of changes since its origin, the dancing team is always not more than six men whose movements are precisely co-ordinated in such a way that all the gestures and movements look like movements and gestures of one dancer. In fact the most attractive element of the dance is this unity of movement. Varieties now exist in the style of presentation, the songs and the tempo of the drumming. Like kalela and kayowe, fwemba dance varieties are due to the individual choreographers' creativity. Unlike other traditional dances with static formats and whose dancers have always fought against deliberate changes in style and movements fwemba has no original static format and individuals are considered better fwemba dancers by the element of creativity and surprise. Today fwemba is no doubt the most popular dance in the Zambia National Dance Troup dance repertory.

### Modern Individually Created Dances

At independence the Government of the Republic of Zambia and the ruling National Independence Party (UNIP) gave moral support to existing traditional performing art groups and individual dancers. One of the major projects initiated by the Government was the National Dance Festival that was held in Lusaka to commemorate the nation's birthday. The Festival featured groups and individual dancers from all the regions. Although these groups and individuals competed for awards, this competition in turn gave encouragement to individuals to create their own dances and dance-dramas. One such individual is a dancer from Kabwe region called Kachala who created kachala dance.

Kachala comes from the Lenje people of Kabwe. Among the Lenje people there is a special dance which is performed mostly by women and sometimes accompanied by a few men. The dance is performed at the cisunqu (or puberty) ceremony of Lenje girls. This dance is called mantyantya. Kachala took the music and the dancing rhythm of mantyantya to constitute the backbone of his kachala dance. However, one other dance where he got much of his dancing and music elements in the spiritual possession dance called mashawe

which is found among the Nsenga, the Soli, the Lenje and many other ethnic groups.

Mashawe (spiritual possession) dances are performed by women to enable spiritual mediums to come out of them; the dance is necessary if the possessed women do not recognize the presence of these spiritual mediums in them. Mashawe is a grueling dance and most dancers faint from exhaustion. When the dancer is exhausted the spirit medium is expected to come out and say what it wants to say to the individual because at that time the human body can no longer suppress the spirit. Most spiritual mediums are expected to be those which will reveal special medicines and herbs to those possessed and thereby making them doctors. Originally mashawe dances were restricted to members of the spiritual mediums only. However, when those dances were held in urban areas there were no big houses to accommodate all the people who took part in the dances and so eventually they were held outside to large crowds. Most people obviously regarded the dances as mere entertainment programs. This resulted in more people taking part in the singing, clapping hands and drumming. The dancer's body movements, songs and drumming impressed many people who decided to try the dance. Kachala took out of this dance,

the movements, the songs and drumming to add to those elements from mantyantya to create kachala. In this dance he mimes various aspects of modern urban society and those situations he considers foreign and comic in nature, such as mini-skirts, prostitution, and many immoral behaviors. He also portrays popular people such as football players, and musicians. All this is done in comic monologues in various local languages and "broken" English. Kachala dance is a very individual dance. Very few people have succeeded in learning it. Kachala became a member of the National Dance Troup in 1973 where he has further popularized the dance.

Kalela, kayowe, fwemba and kachala are an example of entertainment traditional dances and dance-dramas which have remained entertainment dances since their origins. They also demonstrate a very important point about traditional dances and dance theatre. Many people have come to regard traditional dance and dance theatre as if they were created by the gods who gave them to our forefathers and who in turn handed them to us generation after generation in their original forms. These are the people who see any innovations to change these dances as a dangerous move. These dances show that each and every day changes are

taking place in our traditional performing arts and that those gifted artists who have the ability to create new dances should not be considered destroyers of the authentic cultural forms but as part of the cultural change that is necessary in any advancing civilization. 1970 saw an unusually gifted young man from Luapula Province create a unique and exciting new dance called tongosa. Mpundu developed this dance out of many traditional rhythms into a very personal acrobatic dance. It was not hard for Mpundu to authenticate the dance because his selection of songs and the dance steps were easily identified with a variety of well-known Zambian traditional dances. He has been adding more and more exciting movements, making himself one of the most well-known traditional choreographers in the Zambian National Dance Troupe. It seems that as more and more traditional dances and dance-dramas die out new artists like Mpundu and Kachala surface to add on to our rich cultural heritage, creative and performing art forms that demonstrate our human progress.

## Chapter Two

### The Colonial Era and the Establishment of the White Theatre

After the Second World War the Northern Rhodesia Government and the Copper Mining Companies began a vigorous campaign of recruiting white technicians, teachers and administrators from Britain, America and South Africa. During this time the political awareness of the indigenous people of Northern Rhodesia made the white settlers and administrator panic to enforce various pieces of legislature like those of Southern Rhodesia and South Africa which legalized racial segregation. Although all along the colonial Government and the Mining Companies had created separate residential areas for Whites, Asians, Coloreds and Blacks, there were now laws aimed at controlling the movements of black people and their residential compounds in order to maintain the security of the white people.

While the colonial Government and Mining Companies were not enthusiastic in providing the Africans with cultural and recreation facilities it was their main responsibility to make sure that their white recruits lived in the most comfortable and superior conditions to their home

conditions. From 1950 the Northern Rhodesia Government and Mining Companies spent a lot of money providing sport and other cultural facilities to the white settler and white expatriates. Many drama clubs were formed in these white areas during this period. These drama clubs grew to become the strongest colonial establishments to propagate white culture and enforce racial segregational laws in the colony.

## The Northern Rhodesia Drama Association (Whites only)

In 1950 a number of drama groups and opera companies visited Northern Rhodesia from England and South Africa performing at schools, Church fetes, agricultural shows and open-air well-known operas and plays by Shakespeare. Most of the amateur drama clubs which were formed in the late forties in most of the Copper Mining towns, Chipata, Kasama, Lusaka and Livingstone were able to raise money from their own shows and from Government grants and donations from Mining Companies and other businesses to hire these groups. Others were able to hire British actors, directors, theatre managers, technicians to work full time in their drama clubs or to produce plays. These people chose the plays, decided on the nature of the theatre building and therefore created a form of drama activities that was an obvious transplant of the British theatre. In 1951 all the European drama clubs came together to form the Northern Rhodesia Drama Association (NRDA).

The first festival of the Northern Rhodesia Drama Association was held in Lusaka in May 1953 and was organized by the Lusaka Theatre Club. Six theatre clubs (Kitwe,

Lusaka, Chingola, Luanshya, Broken Hill and Livingstone) took part in the festival which was adjudicated by a dramatist hired from South Africa. Lusaka Theatre Club won the award for the best production of the festival with Christopher Fry's The Lady's Not For Burning. Lusaka Theatre club was established in the early forties although it did not have a theatre house of its own until 1958. And according to Rev. John Houghten, before then the all-white Lusaka Theatre Club operated from a corrugated iron hall in the army barracks called Garrison Theatre.

In the Garrison Theatre days and afterwards at the Playhouse, there was no African membership but as concession, and at the request of Jim Harris, then Welfare Officer and myself, Munali and Hodgson school boys were allowed to see the final dress rehearsals. A minor break through. When the first play to be put into Lusaka Playhouse was staged, two Munali School boys were used in non-speaking roles. The play was And So To Bed based on Pepy's Diary. When the Lusaka Theatre Club was staging Lonely Heart, which had a part for one black man, they invited Elton Muwowo to

take the role and made him an honorary member of the club.<sup>12</sup>

In 1954 Lusaka and Kitwe Theatre Clubs registered as co-operative societies. This enabled these clubs to hold property and to raise funds for their own theatre buildings. In July that year the first theatre to be built in Northern Rhodesia was opened in Luanshya. This theatre was built with funds from the Mining Companies. It is in this theatre that the second NRDA festival was held. Ten theatre clubs (Chingola, Kitwe, Luanshya, Mufulira, Kalulushi, Ndola, Broken Hill, Lusaka, Livingstone and Fort Jameson) took part in this festival. This time the Association hired a British adjudicator who awarded Lusaka Theatre Club production of T. S. Eliot's The Cocktail Party for the best production of the festival.

In 1958 the Northern Rhodesia Drama Association hired Andrian Stanley, a professional producer, to a six month tour of NRDA theatre clubs directing plays and holding theatre workshops. The whole project was aimed at raising both the production and acting standards of the members of NRDA theatre clubs. His workshops, productions and the

<sup>12</sup> John C. Houghton, (private letter), Sept. 15, 1976.

tour were financed by a grant from the Northern Rhodesia Government. That year's NRDA festival was held in Mufulira in a newly built theatre and was adjudicated by Clifford Williams from Britain. Broken Hill got its own theatre (Venus Theatre) that was converted from a wartime shed. It became the fifth theatre in the territory.

One major development that year was the formation of the Federal Theatre League when the Southern Rhodesia Drama Association joined the Northern Rhodesia Drama Association, forming one theatre association for the two territories. The Federal Theatre League soon became the member of the International Amateur Theatre Association (IATA). It also decided to co-opt an African so that he could help "investigate how European theatrical organizations can help the African theatre grow." It is interesting to note that whereas the Northern Rhodesia Colonial Reports claimed every year that Africans were not interested in theatre the Federal Theatre League claimed that the African theatre was not growing and that it needed investigating. To the Government there was no theatre among the Africans and to the League, African theatre was there but not growing. The Federal Theatre League also planned to employ permanent directors, technicians and technical advisers and to build

a well-stocked library for the members of the League.

1960 was a year of challenge for the NRDA. John Houghton's multi-racial Waddington Theatre Club applied for membership to the all-white theatre Association. The Executive Committee of NRDA met and after a long time of debating the Committee accepted Waddington Theatre Club's membership. That year, Waddington Players entered their production of Noah at NRDA festival that was held in Ndola and attended by eleven theatre clubs. Waddington Players won the best production of the festival award and two other major awards. This surprised many white theatre clubs, especially those who had fought very hard against Waddington Theatre Club becoming a member of NRDA. Although this performance had demonstrated that Africans were not only interested in theatre but were actively involved, that year the Colonial Office Report stated:

Very little interest is shown by Africans in theatre although a few Africans are beginning to patronize the theatres in town. <sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Colonial Office: Annual Report of Northern Rhodesia (Northern Rhodesia Information Department), 1960, p. 76.

This statement is an example of the misconception of the Colonial Government and members of the white theatre establishments about theatre at that time. More than thirty African drama clubs were taking part in the Northern Rhodesia Youth Drama and Choir Festival at Mulungushi from 1958 to 1960. This was not recognized by the Northern Rhodesia Government as theatre. From 1956 Munali, Chipembi and St. Canisius and many other Secondary Schools were producing Shakespeare's plays annually. The most contradictory aspect of the Colonial Government's policy was that it did not approve of Africans patronizing white theatre clubs and yet its annual report indicated that Africans were not patronizing theatres in towns. There were no theatre houses for Africans so which theatres were they expected to patronize? Although the NRDA Executive Committee allowed the Waddington Players into the Association individual clubs did not allow Africans into their clubs even years after independence.

## The Multi-Racial Effort of John Houghton

The color-bar laws in Northern Rhodesia were aimed at keeping various races in specific socio-economic stratum as well as to perpetuate the dominance of the African masses by the implication that they were inferior to the white and Asian races. Some of the white people who began to challenge the racial segregation laws in Northern Rhodesia were those Missionaries and Churchmen who were prepared to undertake projects to demonstrate that black and white people could live, work and play together in harmony as well as learn from each other. One such white man is Rev. John Houghton of the Anglican Church who founded the Waddington Theatre Club in Lusaka in 1958.

### The Waddington Players

The idea behind the creation of Waddington Theatre Club (The Waddington Players) is expressed adequately by its founder and director Rev. John Houghton.

Zambia was terribly short of secondary schools before independence. But what few schools there were all did something about theatre - Munali, Chalimbana, St. Marks, etc. The

productions were good and full of promise but it was very noticeable to me in every case, when students left school or college they "switched off" - there was absolutely no carry over into the wider community. It seemed to me that one reason for this was that there was nothing for them to catch on to, no Africa theatre, no groups, nothing. Ironically the country was full of very active theatre clubs - every town had one. But they were all exclusively white and determined to remain so. So there was no possibility there for any African individual whose theatre appetite had been whetted in school, to pursue his interest in the white existing theatre groups. When we founded Waddington Centre, theatre seemed a good and right feature to include in it. Hence the Waddington Players.<sup>14</sup>

At the beginning of 1958 the newly created Waddington Players produced a very successful play, Lady Precious

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

Stream, as a fund-raising project for the building of their theatre. However most of the money for the building of the Waddington Theatre came from the Beit Trust, The Dulverton Trust and other organizations in Britain. Waddington Theatre, named after the former Governor of Northern Rhodesia, John Waddington, was officially opened on May 1 in 1959 with the world premiere production of Alan Paton's play about David Livingstone called The Last Journey. Alan Paton, who came from South Africa for the play, also performed the official opening ceremony of the theatre. The Last Journey was performed to a packed house at the Waddington Theatre for eight weeks and featured a cast that included Stanley Nyahwa, Cosmos Mlongoti, Elton Muwowo, Arthur Lewanika, George Zaza, Fancis Jere, Arthur Barlow, Martin Kaunda, Peter Rigby and Eric Weghtman.

In 1960 the Waddington Players challenged the all-white Northern Rhodesia Drama Association by applying for membership to the Association and to take part in the Association annual festival. The political situation in the country was already a challenge to the Colonial Government and all the racial segregation laws were being challenged left and right. The honeymoon days for the white people were also drawing to an end. So this challenge by

the Waddington Players had obvious political overtones. The Northern Rhodesia Drama Association (NRDA) Executive Committee, after debating the whole issue for quite some time eventually allowed the Waddington Players to become members of the NRDA. That year Waddington Players took part in the festival. Ironically Waddington Players' production of Andre Obey's Noah won the best play award and two other major awards in the same festival. This performance shattered the myths which were held by white people concerning the acting ability and understanding of theatricality by Africans. Noah was directed by Pearl Celine and featured a cast of distinguished Zambians, Martin Kaunda, Winner Simposya, Lazarus Mwiinga, Chad Chense, Peter N'gambi, Alick Chanda, Ednah Chella, Elton Muwowo, Mary Johnston and Arthur Barlow. So the first major challenge to NRDA had not only shattered the pride and imagination of the white people but was a beginning of cultural revolution in the territory.

From 1960 to 1965 The Waddington Players produced about three major productions each year. Among some of the major productions were Shakespeare's The Tempest, Molier's Prodigious Snob, and A Man Dies. In 1963 Waddington Players entered John Houghton's production of Lorraine Hans-

berry's play Raisin in the Sun to the NRDA festival. Although this production did not win as many awards as Noah, it was very well received by the public and the newspapers who were excited by the performances of Gwen Konie. Gwen Konie won the best actress award. Waddington Theatre Club's activities cut deeply into the core of the Colonial Government's color-bar policies. John Houghton comments on this task:

One can only say that however puny Waddington efforts were, they were made against the background of still very colonial Northern Rhodesia and they did represent well the only efforts being made at that time to demonstrate that theatre was not the exclusive right of the whites only. <sup>15</sup>

Like every pioneer project in this field, such as the efforts of many indigenous Zambians who produced plays for the Northern Rhodesia Youth Drama and Choir Festival (Africans only), the main problem was the lack of relevant scripts by Africans or about Africans. Whereas those Africans who took part in the Northern Rhodesia Youth Drama

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

and Choir Festival could enter improvised plays and sketches in English or their own languages, the Waddington Players had to come up with a well made three-act play if they were effectively to compete with many of the white drama clubs. John Houghton explains this dilemma this way:

We were up against several difficulties. One was the indifference if not hostility of most whites in those colonial days. The second was language - English was the only lingua-franca. The third was material. So many existing plays which had parts for blacks, only included them as butlers or some denigrating roles. It really was hard to find plays for non-racial groups such as the Waddington Players.... Waddington Players never did any locally written plays. This was the severest handicap of all. <sup>16</sup>

Waddington Players faded out of the drama scene as of 1966. One major reason for this is that most of the actors and actresses who formed the backbone of the Waddington Players, such as Martin Kaunda, Cosmos Mlongoti, Stanley

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

Nyahwa, Gwen Konie, Rachel Kalulu, Edward Shamwana, Lazarus Mwanza, Elton Muwowo, George Zaza, Edgah Chella, and many others soon found themselves in top positions in Government and other institutions soon after independence. They were now too busy to be involved with the Waddington Players and other theatre activities.

## Northern Rhodesia Youth Choir and Drama Festival

Although by 1958 many African secondary and primary schools were seriously involved in drama, there was no association or organization that catered to them or organized festivals and drama workshops. This is why the Northern Rhodesia Youth Choir and Drama Festival was formed. The Northern Rhodesia Youth Choir and Drama Festival was formed and sponsored by the Department of Welfare and Social Services and the Northern Rhodesia Youth Council to bring together African youth clubs organized by Mine and Municipality social workers and recreation officers, African primary and secondary schools, African technical and teacher training colleges' choir and drama clubs to compete with each other. The first Northern Rhodesia Youth Choir and Drama Festival was held in June 1958 at King George VI Memorial Camp, Mulungushi in the amphitheater that was built by voluntary youth groups in that same year. This amphitheater was:

...a semi-circular stage constructed out of a converted anthill. The base is built out with stones and concrete and the rest of the anthill with steps up one side, makes an

effective background. <sup>17</sup>

The finalists in the drama category were four plays, two in English and two in local languages and were adjudicated by the Executive Committee of the Northern Rhodesia Drama Association. The winning play was The Blinded Lion (African Youth Clubs, Kitwe Municipality). The other three finalists were The Voice From The Springs (Roan Antelope African Youth Clubs, Luanshya), The Mirror (Chilenge African Boys' Club, Lusaka) and The Bishop's Candlesticks (Munali Secondary School Dramatic Society, Lusaka). In all, twenty-one drama groups and nineteen choir groups took part in the festival. Officiating at the prize giving ceremony at the end of the festival was the Northern Rhodesia Director of Welfare and Social Services, Mr. W.G. M. Lungton, who referred to drama and music as playing a very important part in youth organizations.

The Second Northern Rhodesia Youth Choir and Drama Festival was held in June, 1959, at the same camp and attended by two hundred participants. It was the first time a group, the Bulawayo African Youth Club, from Southern Rhodesia took part in the festival. The African

<sup>17</sup> "Drama, Songs and a Festival," Nshila (June 24, 1958), p. 29.

Youth Club of Roan Antelope won the first prize in the drama category and the Ndola African Secondary School took the second prize.

The third and last Northern Rhodesia Youth Choir and Drama Festival was held in July 1960 at Mulungushi camp. Seventeen youth groups took part. The best play during this festival was The Magic Flute, a Bemba dramatization of the "Pied Piper of Hamelin" (Luanshimba School, Kitwe). David Foko's production of The Birth of Christ (African Youth Clubs, Kitwe Municipality) won the best religious play and the best play in English category. Other finalists were The Unfaithful Blind Man (Broken Hill Mine African Youth Club), The Debtors (Nchanga Mine African Youth Club), The Magic Flute (Luanshimba School, Kitwe) and Taster Time (African Youth Club, Kitwe Municipality).

Among other projects by the Northern Rhodesia Youth Council were the drama workshops. The first drama workshop was held by the Council at Mulungushi in 1958. The second was held in Lusaka at the Waddington Center in March 1960, as a way of preparing the choir and drama groups for that year's Festival at Mulungushi. The main emphasis in this drama workshop was to coach club leaders and their members various aspects of acting, directing and overall club

management. The lecturer, Mr. A.G.M. Anderton, stated the main emphasis of the workshop:

We put particular emphasis on correct pronunciation, the effect of properly arranged stage lights, why it is important for the choir conductor to swing his hand in the correct way. <sup>18</sup>

However, examining what the instructors emphasized, one sees some problems with what they were trying to do. Firstly, it is clear that many groups were producing plays in their own languages and yet the emphasis by the instructors was on "correct pronunciation" of English. Secondly, most of the groups performed their plays in open air theaters such as the amphitheater at Mulungushi Camp which the groups used during the festival. One sees no reason why the main emphasis of this drama workshop was placed on the "effect of properly arranged stage lights". It is also clear that most of the instructors were talking of drama in terms of playhouses, little theatres and published English plays. Most of the groups were involved in

<sup>18</sup> "School for Drama," Nshila (March 15, 1960), p. 27.

improvisations, literal translations of traditional stories and legends. This the workshops did not consider.

Unfortunately, the Northern Rhodesia Youth Choir and Drama Festival was being patterned to the whites-only Northern Rhodesia Drama Association (NRDA). The rules and regulations governing the preliminaries in the branches and the finals during the festival were very much those of NRDA. The idea of turning a festival into a competition with the emphasis on individual prizes, a hired adjudicator or adjudicators was the same overriding idea that was the core of NRDA's philosophy. The organizers of the festival claimed that the festival was national and yet no rural cultural dancing and drama clubs took part. The location of the festival was a major disadvantage. The groups prepared plays and songs for each other and for a few hundred who camped overnight at Mulungushi instead of preparing plays and performing at a real festival attended by many members of their own communities. The Mulungushi festival was attended mainly by welfare officers, government officers, community development officers, teachers and many whites.

When the Northern Rhodesia Youth Choir and Drama Festival ended and the Northern Rhodesia Youth Council

became disorganized, the drama clubs at welfare centers *died too*. Most of the members of these clubs thought that the main objective of their drama and choir groups was to prepare for the competition at the Festival at Mulungushi. They saw no reason for their existence if they could not go to Mulungushi. The groups had never thought of preparing plays, dances and songs to entertain their parents and members of their communities. The idea of competing among themselves and being adjudicated by a white man was what made many of them take part in these types of drama activities.

The clubs were organized and founded by Social Welfare officers, and recreation officers employed by the Mining Companies and Municipalities. Very few voluntary leaders had been given a chance to form such clubs. After about 1962, the welfare youth clubs and Mine youth clubs suddenly turned into political youth clubs of either United National Independence Party or African National Congress. The drama clubs disappeared. If these clubs had been organized in the first place by individual leaders rather than employees of the Mine and Municipal Recreation Departments, they would have continued on even during the time when the political party youth organizations were attracting most of

the youths.

However, the Northern Rhodesia Youth Choir and Drama Festival was a major influence in the development of theatre among the local people in the country. In the three-year period of the festival, more than fifty plays were created, written or adapted from popular folk tales, legends and popular town situations. These three years of the Festival were responsible for enormous writing and other dramatic activities in the country much more than ever before. Secondly, the Festival was responsible for the creation of many drama clubs at many African primary and secondary schools, teacher training colleges and churches. Most of these club members and leaders became the major force behind the Zambian Theater and Cultural Revolution from about 1964. A good number of people who became members of Zambia Arts Trust had been members of the Northern Rhodesia Youth Council and the Northern Rhodesia Youth Choir and Drama Festival. They brought their experiences into various cultural organizations which were formed after 1964 with Government assistance. Thirdly, the drama workshop projects, although only two were held by the Northern Rhodesia Youth Council, helped many club leaders in their organization of drama clubs and the production

of good plays and club programs. Probably the most important development out of the Northern Rhodesia Youth Choir and Drama Festival is that African actors, directors and writers came to realize how segregated drama was in the whole country. They realized that the white people received Municipal and Government funds for their festival and productions in well-built playhouses and little theatres. These were the people who became major critics of the expatriate-dominated Theatre Association of Zambia as from 1968.

## Chapter Three

### The Independence Era and the Cultural Revolution

The coming of independence (1964) gave a great impetus to the development of the creative and performing arts in Zambia. That impetus was created by the cultural revolution within the political ideology advanced by the ruling United National Independence Party (UNIP) and propounded by President Kaunda. At the same time the Party and Government were heavily involved in a formidable task of restructuring the national economy which the colonialists had plundered during their last days of rule. This task was not only preoccupying but was the major priority of the Party. Therefore, the cultural revolution, no matter how urgent it was, was considered by many people within the Government, as less of a priority than the economic and political revolutions. President Kaunda realized the danger of this attitude as early as 1966, when he said:

It is primarily through the evolution of a genuine culture that a people discover their national identity. But cultural growth may be inhibited by the reluctance of a govern-

ment in straightened financial circumstances to devote some of its resources to the encouragement of activities - sculpture, visual arts, writing, music and dance - which many of the people would regard as irrelevant to national development. Universities, too, tend to be strictly utilitarian in scope, turning out a stream of technical, professional and scientific people required in the central areas of national building and having neither the resources nor the personnel to devote to such rarefied subjects as fine arts and theology. Yet the nation which lacks a firm cultural sub-culture is jerry-built and though the people have title deeds to their property and the key to the front door in their pockets, they are still homeless. <sup>19</sup>

What President Kaunda pointed out became the biggest enemy

<sup>19</sup> Kenneth D. Kaunda, A Humanist in Africa (London: Longmans, 1966), p. 59.

of the cultural revolution and development of creative and performing arts in Zambia. It is still the stumbling block today. For instance, with the exception of drama that has a one year course in the Literature and Languages Department, fine arts, music, dance, oral literature and Zambian Languages are still to be introduced as academic subjects at the University of Zambia - eleven years after that institution was established. The main argument is still the same - these subjects are not at all essential to national development.

However, the Party and Government began as early as 1964, though with very limited enthusiasm and financial commitment, to initiate some practical projects and policies which demonstrated to the people to what extent they were prepared to go in assisting in the development of indigenous performing arts. They advanced a grant, manpower resources and advice to the newly created, independent, creative and performing arts organization - the Zambia Arts Trust. In 1965, the Trust organized its first major project, the Zambia Arts Festival, in Luanshya. At the official opening ceremony of the Festival, the then Vice-President, Reuben C. Kamanga, made known the Government's policy on performing arts in Zambia when he said:

I might add that this Government holds a watching brief on sporting and cultural activities and of course would assist in any way it could with cultural problems. I realize the expenses that would be involved in sending groups around the country but I feel that the educational benefits from such a move would be worth the expense. <sup>20</sup>

#### Department of Cultural Services

This grant to Zambia Arts Trust, though very small, demonstrated a significant gesture of what the Government, thought about the development of indigenous creative and performing arts, although no major cultural revolutionary statement or action had been made. This was an encouraging start. It gave a significant impetus to individual efforts in the cultural revolution in Zambia. Towards the end of 1965, the Government appointed Mutumweno Yeta to head the Department of Cultural Services that was established in January 1966. The Department's establishment was made

<sup>20</sup> "Zambia Arts Festival," Nshila, (May 7, 1965), p. 2.

through a Government communique which stated its aims as:

...basically to foster the interests of all institutions and organizations whose aims are directed towards the promotion and preservation of culture in Zambia and to provide and recommend where appropriate financial and other assistance which the Government may approve. <sup>21</sup>

This announcement can be regarded as the real beginning of the cultural revolution in Zambia and as a practical implementation of the views of President Kaunda and all the Party officials who had spoken on cultural matters. This was also seen by many people as the only practical and effective way the Government was to use to sweep away the unwanted foreign cultural influence which had become the main target of all the statements of Government officials concerning the need for a cultural revolution. Right from the beginning there were overwhelming problems. Firstly, like all other initial national development projects, the question of skilled and committed manpower and facilities

<sup>21</sup> "Director of Cultural Services," Nshila (October 1965), p. 10.

was a major one. Secondly, the demands on those who were to lead this Department and initiate all the projects were as overpowering as the demands on those who were involved in the country's economic revolution. They were so overpowering that one did not know just where to begin. Thirdly, and like other national issues where projects and programs would constitute political policies, the question of how much power the Director of Cultural Services was allowed to exercise, had far reaching political implications in the era when political issues were still very controversial. So the initial stages of the Department of Cultural Services was characterized by indecisions and dilemmas. However, the appointment of Mutumweno Yeta, a concerned Zambian artist, to head the Department, was considered as a careful Government decision to marry Party (UNIP) political ideology with the artistic expression and cultural heritage of the people to create a powerful political organ. The political aspect of the marriage necessitated a vigorous campaign of re-educating the people about the richness of Zambian culture, and the need to retain their traditional way of life and guide them in the process of discovering national culture and national identity. This campaign was to be guided by Party ideology and poli-

cies. President Kaunda underlined this political aspect of the cultural revolution and role of the Department this way:

This search for national identity underlines all the detailed problems which the independent state faces. The people will perch indecisively between alternative patterns of behaviour until there is a genuine consensus on what is the Zambian way of doing things....

The young people of our nation must be the special target for the encouragement of patriotic sentiment. <sup>22</sup>

The search for national identity and national unity was the most difficult of all the political tasks of the Department of Cultural Services. Reaching a consensus on cultural behavior, attitudes and recognition was impossible as long as the former master's ways were still being envied and emulated by political leaders who were supposed to be examples to the masses. To reach such a consensus would necessitate a vigorous campaign to these people first and yet the economic, educational and social environment in the nation, at that time, favored those who copied the former

<sup>22</sup> Kenneth D. Kaunda, op. cit. p. 60.

master's ways. The problem here was how much the Department was expected to do when all these other aspects of life dictated "the Zambian way of doing things". As a result, there developed such concepts as "the traditional way of doing things" and "the modern way of doing things". Individuals defended their actions according to these concepts. Some were even prepared to fight the Party, Government and the Department with arguments such as "freedom of choice" and "modernization". The artistic and purely cultural task of the Department of Cultural Services was stated very well by Mrs. Betty Kaunda, President Kaunda's wife, when she officially opened a traditional arts festival at Chief Mweemba's court in Gwembe Valley in Southern Province in 1966.

It is incumbent upon all of us not only to preserve our national traditional art but also to enable our art forms to be presented so that our young people may get to know and love them. <sup>23</sup>

This artistic and cultural aspect was equally difficult a

<sup>23</sup> "Culture Depends on the People," Nshila (October 7, 1966), p. 10.

task for an organization or department whose manpower and financial allocation was not a major priority. No one knew the scope of this task of preserving traditional art forms and what their presentation to the people would entail and yet this aspect was as important as those political elements. Many people at that time, especially artists and the intelligentsia, wanted a clear line to be drawn between the political elements on one hand and the purely artistic and cultural elements on the other hand. Such a boundary was impossible and no balance between the two could be maintained. In all President Kaunda's statements about Zambian culture, such boundaries were not only unnecessary, but impractical. He saw the role of the Department and all cultural revolutionaries as merely educational. He stated it in this way:

A generation is now arising which has only the dimmest memory of colonialism and soon the freedom struggle will be a matter for history books. Hence we must instill into them a degree of national sentiment which will make them proud to be citizens of Zambia. Without becoming parochial and isolationist in our approach to education, we must put such em-

phasis upon our history, geography, customs and art, will make them conscious of the land to which they belong.<sup>24</sup>

So an effective approach would entail a carefully planned cultural education that would incorporate all other disciplines concerned with the growth of nationhood, patriotism and cultural awareness. Such a plan would have to be implemented nationally and yet at that time many people, especially those who belonged to the opposition party, argued that such a cultural revolution should not involve party politics. Many national development projects, such as agricultural and educational projects, had been affected adversely by individuals who felt that endorsing any program initiated by the United National Independence Party was to accept it. Some politicians in the opposition parties used this dilemma to obtain voters' allegiance and to maintain a constant opposition to the ruling United National Independence Party. In the performing arts, many performers had, during the pre-independence party campaigns, identified with specific political campaigns using their creative and performing talents. So to accommodate all

<sup>24</sup> Kenneth D. Kaunda, op. cit. p. 91.

these groups into a department was not an easy task. This is the reason why people wanted a boundary between those elements which had political implications and the purely artistic and cultural ones. The Department experienced difficulties when it began to recruit individuals who would take various artistic and cultural responsibilities. It had to define its objectives and programs in such a way that all people, even those in the opposition parties, would treat the Department's work as a national task. Such a definition was also given to persuade people who felt that it was not necessary to spend a lot of money for the Department. It is to such people that the late Chiman, C. Vyas, the research officer in the Department of Cultural Services, addressed his comments in his paper - Cultural Concept and Renaissance in Zambia.

Some of us argue that we cannot go back to the time and live the life of our ancestors. This is a loose talk, I would say, because they are indoctrinated in the western way of life as a legacy of our past and present.

The possibility of building one national culture out of all group cultures in the country is like discovering all essential

and fundamentally common features upon which the diverse cultures stand. This is a mammoth task indeed. To lay hands on an unseen yet definite solid bond of unity running through various ethnic groups following a variety of religions, creeds, customs and traditions is certainly trying.

Zambia is committed to building a harmonious pattern in which healthy elements from other cultures could be wisely incorporated, provided they did not clash basically with her own healthy values and ideals. Conflicts and disturbances are likely to raise their ugly heads during this process but tolerance and co-existence will prevail. <sup>25</sup>

These explanations and definitions were not only controversial but also became some of the main reasons why indecisions and dilemmas dominated the activities of the Department. Just as there were major differences among

<sup>25</sup> Chiman C. Vyas, "Cultural Concept and Renaissance in Zambia" (Lusaka: Department of Cultural Services, 1972), p. 2.

the public and the Party on the best way to implement the national political ideology and cultural revolution, there were differences within the Department on the real task of the Department. Decisions on mini-skirts, bell-bottom trousers, wigs, skin lighteners, bleaching creams, western music, beauty contests, contraceptives, etc., became controversial and in most cases the Department had to recourse to the Party for decisions. So, although the Department was, in its very nature, supposed to be the main weapon against all these un-Zambian western practices, it was handicapped by indecisions and power dilemmas. The other reason why the department was incapable of reaching final decisions on how to deal with these foreign elements was the fact that although the Department was part of the Party and Government most of its officials were cut off from the policy making structures of the Party. They were ignorant of the Party policies and programs and therefore feared to contradict the Party.

One other task of the Cultural Service Department that is of major relevance to the development of theatre in Zambia is the role of providing and recommending financial assistance to institutions and organizations whose aims were directed towards the promotion and preservation of

culture in Zambia. Between 1964 and 1969 the only theatre organizations which received grants from the Government through the Department of Cultural Services were Theatre Association of Zambia and Zambia Arts Trust. From 1970 to 1975 Theatre Association of Zambia and Bazamai Theatre received financial assistance from the Government through the Department of Cultural Service. This financial assistance, obviously, had a long-lasting effect on the projects and programs of these organizations. For instance, Zambia Arts Trust was able to employ full-time workers, send them abroad for theatrical training, and hold festivals and workshops. Bazamai Theatre purchased a mini-bus for its traveling theatre tours. However, since 1970 many indigenous people have taken the Department of Cultural Services to task for financially supporting a segregated, racial, expatriate dominated Theatre Association of Zambia whose programs were not directed towards the promotion and preservation of Zambian culture, but were directed towards the white expatriates. Their theatre activities were directed towards the promotion and preservation of western and neo-colonial culture. The former all-white Association spent the funds from the Government hiring British dramatists to adjudicate plays which were entered for the

Association's festival and performed mainly for the white audiences. Most of the theatres in the country were built by the Mining Companies and Municipal Councils and handed over to amateur drama groups. By this time most of the expatriate theatre clubs considered these theatres their own properties. They continued with European theatre and charged exorbitant fees, making it difficult for Zambians to become members and to attend their performances. Most of these theatres were built in former all white residential areas. Those Zambians who had moved into these areas at independence joined these clubs only to patronize their bar facilities. The few secondary schools which became members of the Association did European theatre because their directors were expatriate teachers. There was no way this Association was helping in the promotion and preservation of Zambian culture at all. It was only an example of a white established culture that was able to get money from the Government and the multi-national corporations to maintain itself forever.

Many people, especially members of the University Dramatic Society and lecturers from the English Department of the University of Zambia, tried hard to change the Association policies of competitive festivals, hiring foreign

adjudicators, and performance of plays which the local people could not understand or appreciate, but failed. The Department was asked to intervene in the debate but in most cases the Department refused to take any actions against the Association. It took the Department until 1973 to change its policy and withdraw the annual grant from the Association. Why did it take that long for the Department to reach such a decision? Why is it that many small traditional dance and drama groups seriously involved in the promotion and preservation of Zambian culture did not receive financial and manpower assistance from the Department? One of the main reasons was that the Department found itself in contradictory policies. The white expatriate theatre officials penetrated into the Department and clearly influenced its officials, especially those who were invited to perform special and official functions at the Association's festival and other events. At the Association's Annual General Meeting a number of resolutions were passed to convince the Government for financial aid, but were never fulfilled.

#### Zambia National Dance Troupe

In 1965, a team of Government officials were sent to all the provinces to organize cultural dance competitions

in order to choose traditional dancers and musicians who were to represent Zambia at the first Commonwealth Festival of Arts in London that year. Although a group was not put together in time for the festival this project led to the creation of the core of the National Dance Troupe. The Troupe became the most important project of the Department of Cultural Services and was therefore used to present to the people, traditional performing arts in such a way that they would appreciate them.

It was essential therefore from the very beginning to make sure that all regions were represented in the National Dance Troupe. This was important not only to put together a large variety of dances but also to prevent any political implications in the selection. It is, however, not possible to represent all the ethnic groups in the country in such a project because of the nature of traditional dances in each region. For instance, some of the big dance attractions, vimbuza, nyau, fwemba, and ndendeule, are all from the Eastern Province. There are not many provinces which have as many major and attractive dances. So if the balancing element was based on the number of dances or a number of people from each province, it was not easy to achieve. And yet the political situation of a newly independent

country like Zambia necessitated some form of balance based on political decisions as well as the cultural and artistic ones. The second problem was the question of what to perform and what not to perform in public. The fact the Troupe was responsible for the preservation and presenting of Zambian traditional dances did not mean that the Troupe would not find opposition from the people concerning the performance of sacred and private rituals and dances. Many people did not like the way the Troupe was presenting the dances outside their original, realistic and functional contexts. They believed that this was neither promotion nor preservation of Zambian traditional dances but a deliberate process of transformation. It is true that the National Dance Troupe in the process of fulfilling what it considered as its objectives was unfortunately involved in the destruction of the major aesthetic elements and functional characteristics of the traditional performing art forms. Thirdly, there was the problem of presentation. Because of the fast growing differences between the rural areas and urban areas, original setting, dance forms and modes of presentation which were considered normal in rural communities became controversial when done in urban areas. Unfortunately, at this time the Department was involved in

a war against foreign form of dressing, such as mini-skirts, and foreign dances which were considered immoral. The dilemma was that many traditional dance groups, including the National Dance Troupe, in their effort to be as original and as realistic as possible, performed in traditional costumes which were controversial considering the Department's war on immoral forms of dress. For instance, there were a number of dances where girls danced bare-breasted or in traditional costumes much shorter than mini-skirts and costumes which revealed more of the private parts of the body. There were also a number of women dances where the exaggerated waist movements and gestures were considered by many people as encouraging sexual perversity. Therefore, it became a big problem for the Department to condemn mini-skirts on one hand and accept these revealing traditional costumes on the other hand, and to condemn cheek-to-cheek ballroom dances and accept the exaggerated waist movement dances. These problems encouraged major changes in the costumes, styles and presentation of many traditional dances and dance-dramas.

In 1966 the newly created National Dance Troupe represented Zambia at the First World Festival of Black Arts in Dakar, Senegal. This was a unique experience for the young

and improvements of the traditional performing arts rather than a mere passive acceptance and revival of traditional performing arts. This was considered by others as a deliberate transformation of traditional dances. Those who believed that the main role of the National Dance Troupe was to preserve Zambian performing arts felt that this element of modernizing traditional dances as a destruction of the very elements of Zambian culture that must be preserved for future generations. Edwin Manda's production of a full length dance-drama Nsombo Malimba with the National Dance Troupe demonstrating his ability to utilize traditional dances from various provinces and ethnic groups into one unique dance-drama. Nsombo Malimba is based on a traditional folk tale.

The story is all about a young girl, Nsombo, the only daughter of a chief who lived a long time ago. This girl had not smiled since her birth. The chief tried his best to provoke a smile by gestures and by calling witch-doctors but they failed. Naturally he was worried. Eventually Nsombo came of age and the chief decided to get her married. He held a competition and anyone who was able to make

her laugh or smile would win her hand plus total affection. Narrated in the form of dances, the Nsombo Malimba story embraces different forms of artistic expression like dancing, miming, drumming, music, etc. 26

In this dance-drama various dances from various areas and ethnic groups are used in the original and functional contexts as much as possible to tell the story or for their symbolic role.

When the girl comes of age, the Nyau dancer from Eastern Province, purifies the area under the guidelines of ritual dancers. Then the friends of Nsombo perform the Ndendeule dance of the same province. This is followed by Lilombola from the Western Province danced by the peers of Nsombo, both male and female. Fwemba Lundazi of Eastern Province is performed by people who bring gifts to Nsombo. Kayowe of the Western Province also becomes a prelude to the competition for the bridegroom. Other dances like Lujpa of Eastern Province, Chingande

26 "Nsombo Malimba Goes on Film," Z Magazine No. 41 (October 1974), p. 10.

of Southern Province, Mganda and Vimbuza of Eastern Province was performed by competitors. The competitor who dances Vimbuza wins - making Nsombo beam with a big smile for the first time in her life. <sup>27</sup>

This arrangement enables the performers to present, in a dance-drama, a "cross-section of the best type of traditional dances in Zambia, woven in the form of an interesting story present in every tribal repertoire of the country."<sup>28</sup>

It was also a technique that was to influence other dramatists interested in dance-theatre. Masautso Phiri's Kuta and the author's three dance-dramas, Who Will Dance, Shave Caravan and Mwazona, are some of the successful dance-dramas which have been influenced by Edwin Manda's dance-drama experiments with the National Dance Troupe.

The National Dance Troupe has been a major influence in the development of Zambian theatre. Probably the biggest contribution to Zambian theatre by Edwin Manda is his weekly one-hour television program, ZAM-ARTS. In this program the National Dance Troupe performed dance-drama,

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

sketches and improvisations. The dramatic and comic sketches the dancers performed helped to destroy the myth that television was an exclusive media for the English speaking Zambians only. In these sketches the performers spoke in their own languages. This was a major breakthrough. No local languages had been spoken on Television Zambia before. The short plays and sketches on ZAM-ARTS were mainly dramatizations of folk tales, dramatic and comic situations about town life. The sketches were also used to illustrate various elements of the National Philosophy of Humanism. Although these dramatic and comic situations were mainly educational in approach, they were very entertaining indeed. This simplicity of presentation and the usage of Zambian languages and English in one play became a pattern of many dramatic performances by school groups and other Zambian theatre clubs. Many traditional dance groups were founded in the Copperbelt towns and Lusaka. These dance groups performed the same dances, dance-dramas and sketches they saw on the ZAM-ARTS program. One such group was the Kabwata Youth Traditional Dance Group that won many awards at cultural dancing competitions organized by the Department of Cultural Services. More and more traditional dance groups in secondary schools and the

University were taking pride in their own traditional performing arts because of the leadership role taken by Edwin Manda and the National Dance Troupe.

However, there are people who believe that the National Dance Troupe and the Department of Cultural Services have departed from their original objectives. Peter Chakulanda's comments represents those critics.

However the effects of the Zambia National Dance Troupe as a means of promoting national theatre have not been very successful. Firstly, as the name suggests, the Troupe was intended for the masses but it turned out to be a tourist attraction and only the minority who own television sets managed to see its performances. Secondly, the National Dance Troupe has turned to be an organ for state house functions and those state functions are only attended by minority group of Zambian society. <sup>29</sup>

This is the biggest criticism of the Troupe by many Zambians. They believe that the Troupe has defeated its original aims and objective by performing mainly at pri-

<sup>29</sup> Peter Chakulanda, "Towards a Zambia National Theatre," Chikwakwa Review, (1974-75), p. 14.

vate state functions, airport receptions for visiting dignitaries and at many Party and Para-Statal functions and working like a band that is hired to entertain special guests and those ordinary Zambians who are invited to the various state functions. Most of these people begin to think that it is the Troupe's role to dance and sing to them. This is not only contrary to Zambian culture, it is also completely against the Party ideology of self-reliance. President Kaunda made a very important point about this when he said:

The idea of solo performances in music is foreign to us. It is an intolerable strain to sit passively in concert halls and be played or sung to.<sup>30</sup>

What President Kaunda said is a problem now. Everyone is getting used to being played or sung to by the National Dance Troupe; they even behave like foreigners to their own culture. The situation where people would join in the dancing is slowly disappearing and eventually what will remain is a few specialized and expensive professional traditional dancers. This should be regarded as a dangerous

<sup>30</sup> Kenneth D. Kaunda, op. cit. p. 53.

development that is turning out Zambians who are passive observers of their performing arts.

Secondly, television has played a significant role in this controversy. There is no doubt that television has helped in popularizing the National Dance Troupe and many traditional dances. However, this same media has had its own disadvantages. The first problem is that the element of being "played and sung to" is clearly demonstrated in programs like ZAM-ARTS. Viewers have developed the attitude that the National Dance Troupe is paid to provide them with such type of entertainment. The other problem with the National Dance Troupe's performance week after week on television is that many children who grow up in towns seeing the same artists begin to think that no one else can do these dances. There is also a tendency among the people that the dances they see on television are the only dances that exist. Because of manpower limitations the National Dance Troupe tends to specialize in very few dances from each region and ethnic group. When the viewers see, week after week, chingande being introduced as the dance from Southern Province, they begin to think that that is the only dance in Southern Province. The solution with this problem lies in changing the whole purpose of the program

from a perfect presentation of only the attractive and exciting dances to an illustrative and discussion program where various artists exhibit their dances, discuss the original functional and social contexts of the dances. Even the monotonous dances such as the ngoma dance should be featured in such a program. It is from such a program that people will grow with an extensive and realistic knowledge of the dances and other traditional performing arts. This is also the best way to preserve traditional performing art forms.

Lastly, many people object to the idea of creating a permanent National Dance Troupe because they feel that the money being spent on the salaries of this permanent Troupe and the cost of transporting the Troupe to international festivals and cultural exchange programs should be spent on reorganizing traditional dance groups in the nation. These are the dance groups which perform free of charge to members of their own communities, providing a major source of recreation for the masses. The argument here is that too much money is being spent to entertain a very few privileged Zambians. The lack of entertainment in the communities has been blamed for the heavy beer drinking tendencies among the ordinary Zambians. There are also those who

argue that the existence of a paid National Dance Troupe has discouraged the emergence of voluntary traditional dance groups which used to perform at welfare centers in the early sixties. These people would like to make money performing like those in the National Dance Troupe.

However, whatever criticism of the National Dance Troupe may be, it has definitely influenced the development of Zambian theatre. Dramatists and actors interested in a truly Zambian theatre cannot afford to ignore the contributions of Edwin Manda and the National Dance Troupe. A closer working relationship between the dramatists and such institutions as the National Dance Troupe is essential in the process of creating a Zambia National Theatre that is capable of challenging the ever-growing white theatre establishments.

## Zambia Arts Trust

Zambia Arts Trust was founded by individual Zambian artists with the assistance of the Government of the Republic of Zambia "to promote the development of indigenous culture-drama, dance and music with a Zambian flavour." The trust was officially launched in 1964 during the Independence Celebrations. Zambia Arts Trust consisted of the department of traditional arts under the chairmanship of Gideon Lumpa, who was also the overall manager of the Trust. The department of theatre and drama under the supervision of Kenneth Nkhata was created to encourage the development of "Zambian dramatic activity and forms." Both departments operated from the Zambia Arts Trust Centre in Kitwe. The Centre comprised three offices, a committee reading room and a renovated rehearsal hall that could seat more than 200 people.

Zambia Arts Trust's first major task was in May 1965, when the Trust organized the Zambia Arts Festival in Luanshya. The Festival, which was a mixture of drama, traditional dancing and singing and jazz competition, was officially opened by the then Vice-President, Reuben C. Kamanga, who said:

With these varied cultures in our country, we have a rare opportunity for each other to evolve and to grow together over the years into something new and Zambian in form.... It is a solemn thought that we mould the future now and that we all have a part to play. I might add that this government holds a watching brief on sporting and cultural activities and of course would assist in any way it could with cultural problems. <sup>31</sup>

The plays in the Festival were adjudicated by an Irish man- Alan Simpson. Zambia Arts Trust entered Gideon Lumpa's Iyi eyali imikalile and John Simbotwe's Ifyabukaya.

Gideon Lumpa's play won the fourth prize. This Festival was organized on the same basis as that of the expatriate dominated Theatre Association of Zambia Festival, although there were plays in local languages.

During the same year Zambia Arts Trust received a grant from the Government to "ensure its continuation and development." <sup>32</sup> With this grant Zambia Arts Trust was

<sup>31</sup> "Zambia Arts Festival," Nshila (May 7, 1969, p.2.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

able to send Gideon Lumpa to Israel to study various aspects of theatre management and production with the Habimah Theatre for three months. He was at that time working as a mine personnel officer. When he returned from Israel he established a drama class in Chingola and taught some of the aspects of theatre he learned in his three-month stay in Israel. At about that time Gideon Lumpa was planning to establish a Zambia National Theatre. However, there are records of what he actually planned to do.

In 1966, Kenneth Nkhata left Zambia Broadcasting Services to become Zambia Arts Trust's full time Field Organizer. He was immediately sent to study theatre production under the British League in London. On his way to Britain he toured Nigeria and Belgrade, studying under various theatre organizations. In April of that year, Gideon Lumpa led the newly created Zambia National Dance Troupe to the First World Festival of Negro Arts in Dakar, Senegal, and after the Festival, Gideon Lumpa remained behind in Dakar studying the various staging techniques which were used by the organizers of the various traditional dancing troupes which took part in the Festival. When he came back to Zambia he produced another of his plays in

Chibemba, Kalufyanya, which was performed at Mufulira Teacher Training College and other centers in the Copperbelt.

1967 was Zambia Arts Trust's most successful year. The Trust produced a special presentation for Independence Celebrations, The King Must Die, which was a successful adaptation of Aeschylus' The Oresteia. The King Must Die was adapted and directed by Bill Harpe, who was hired from Britain and was assisted by Kenneth Nkhata. The production involved more than one hundred actors and actresses, dancers and musicians recruited from various cultural and drama clubs in Kitwe and other parts of the Copperbelt. The play was taken to all the major provincial centers from 18th October to 19th November. They used a bus, eight lorries and two land-rovers to get to these centers. Laban Nyirenda designed the set and the costumes for the production and John Simbotwe narrated the main story of the play in Chibemba, Chinyanja, Silozi or Chitonga, depending on where the play was performed. Bill Harpe's production was a shortened dance-drama utilizing various Zambian traditional dances as the main basis of the adaptation. The King Must Die was well received wherever it went. Most of the newspaper reviews were very enthusiastic

about the performance and the adaptation.

In 1968, Zambia Arts Trust organized a one-act play festival in Lusaka with the assistance of the Cultural Services Department. Two Zambian plays in English, Kabwe Kasoma's The Long Arms of the Law and Johanne Mutombela's Three Faces of Man, made their debut in this festival. Other plays which were performed at this festival were Wole Soyinka's The Lion and the Jewel, G.B. Shaw's Androcles and the Lion, Christopher Fry's A Pheonix too Frequent, Obotunde Ijimore's Woyeni and Jiriruni's Keeping up with the Mukasas which was performed by Roma Girls Secondary School's Drama Club and was awarded the first prize. In July, 1969, the then Chairman of Zambia Arts Trust, Alick Nkhata, received, on behalf of the Trust, a donation of K940 from the Government of United Soviet Socialist Republic. Unfortunately, most of the prominent members had either left Kitwe or had become very busy public officials in the Government and the Party. Gideon Lumpa continued with the Trust and in that year he directed Joe De Graft's Sons and Daughters at Kitwe Little Theatre.

Although Zambia Arts Trust had been very successful with theatre projects there seems to have been very little that was done in the department of traditional arts. Very

few art exhibitions were held and most of the exhibitions were by Tomson Simpasa who was also a prominent member of the Trust. However, it is not clear whether the original aim of the Trust was merely to become a theatre club or a theatre organization that was to help establish many Zambian theatre clubs in the Copperbelt Province and other provinces. On the other hand it seems that the Cultural Services Department was regarding it as part of its operation - its drama department. This is probably the main reason why the Trust received annual grants from the Government. It is also not clear why Zambia Arts Trust adopted the policy of hiring foreign adjudicators and holding centralized competitive festivals just like the white expatriate-dominated Theatre Association of Zambia. The whole idea of the establishment of this Trust was a very revolutionary move but there seems to have been lack of careful planning and guidelines for the whole project. If the Cultural Services Department had envisaged a theatre organization that was to help establish many theatre clubs in the nation then one could say that Zambia Arts Trust did not really achieve its goal. Its influence was very much limited to the Copperbelt and although both Gideon Lumpa and Kenneth Nkhata had received valuable theatre training,

there are no records of any drama workshops organized by the Trust except Gideon Lumpa's Chingola drama classes. This means that the two men's vast theatrical experiences were not adequately utilized. There is no record of any Zambia Arts Trust drama club founded outside the Copperbelt province. Even in the Copperbelt province these seem to have been clubs under the direction of the leading members of Zambia Arts Trust Executive Committee only.

However, these individual and scattered efforts by Gideon Lumpa, Kenneth Nkhata, Kabwe Kasoma, John Simbotwe and others who were involved with Zambia Arts Trust made major contributions to the development of the contemporary Zambian theatre. Some of the members, such as Kabwe Kasoma, are now in the forefront of the revolutionary theatre movement in Zambia. Zambia Arts Trust center in Kitwe should be seen as a landmark in our cultural revolution. It was a major challenge to the expatriate-dominated theatre movement although it only operated for four years. Zambia Arts Trust, like many other pioneer cultural movements in Zambia, had its own major problems and one such problem was the lack of skilled dramatists, artists and directors. Most of the directors, such as John Simbotwe and Gideon Lumpa, could not find any good Zambian plays to

produce. Instead they had to write their own plays and direct them and as a result they could only produce two to three short plays or improvizations annually. It is not possible to compete with the expatriate-dominated theatre clubs with such a program. During this time many Zambians regarded plays in Zambian languages as inferior and almost all Secondary Schools were producing plays in English. So it was not easy for the Trust to attract good actors from secondary school drama clubs and other educated Zambians, especially those who considered theatre only in terms of Shakespearean productions and other plays published in English. It is interesting to note that in all the competitive festivals Zambia Arts Trust organized and took part in, their plays were the only ones in Zambian languages. Since 1969, when Zambia Arts Trust became inactive, very few Zambian theatre clubs have produced plays in Zambian languages and very few playwrights have written plays for performances in their mother tongues. This is why it is unfortunate that Zambia Arts Trust faded away at the time many capable Zambian actors and directors were surfacing and the time when movements like Chikwakwa Theatre were advocating for popular Zambian theatre. It is also unfortunate that the national and popular theatre

movement in the country has lacked continuity of ideas and tactics from one movement to the other. In fact what has happened is that each indigenous theatre movement has disregarded the efforts and achievements of previous theatre movements. When Zambia Arts Trust was founded, a good number of outstanding Zambian actors were still involved in the Waddington Theatre Club but very few of these good actors and directors were drawn into Zambia Arts Trust. Chikwakwa Theatre Movement and the University of Zambia Dramatic Society became leading advocates of popular theatre but most of those plays which had been written in Zambian languages by members of Zambia Arts Trust were never done by University of Zambia Dramatic Society. Instead a good number of short plays from West Africa were done. Chikwakwa Theatre and University Dramatic Society did not use the experience and materials of Zambia Arts Trust at all. Many plays written and performed during the Northern Rhodesia Youth Drama and Choir Festival (1959-1961) and during Zambia Arts Trust's time (1964-1969) disappeared forever. They were never published and it is very difficult to find copies of such plays today. What is even more surprising is that there are so many Zambians with vast experience in theatre management, acting, directing and

designing who worked in various types and aspects of theatre from as early as 1958 whose services and experience have not been requested by the current leadership of the national theatre movement. And lastly, all these efforts and major achievements of these pioneers have not been recognized by the contemporary Zambian dramatists, historians, artists and cultural revolutionaries at all. As a result, many people mistakenly consider Chikwaka Theatre as the pioneer movement in the search for a truly Zambian theatre, and ignore all these efforts.

## Zambia Dance Company

In 1969, Titus Mukupo, then owner and publisher of a monthly magazine called OUTLOOK, recruited Pat Maddy from Sierra Leone. It is not clear whether Pat Maddy was recruited to come and found the Zambia Dance Company because of his impressive record as actor, director and dramatist or mainly to come and work in the Mukupo Publishing Company because of his previous experience as an editor of a newspaper in Sierra Leone. Titus Mukupo met Pat Maddy at the 1969 OAU sponsored Pan-African Cultural Festival in Algiers. Pat Maddy had led a professional theatre group of twenty Africans, West Indians and Americans in Copenhagen in Denmark where he directed and acted in many African plays. He also worked with the Drama and Cultural Department of the Danish Radio for three years. From Denmark he went back to Sierra Leone and became the director of Radio Sierra Leone where he wrote and produced for Radio Sierra Leone a very successful drama series. In 1959, he created the Zambia Dance Company which operated from Titus Mukupo's offices in Lusaka and used a renovated warehouse in the industrial site on the road to Matero as a rehearsal room. However, from the beginning there seemed to be major

differences between Titus Mukupo and Pat Maddy on the nature and organization of the Zambia Dance Company (ZADACO). It seems that Pat Maddy's idea of the Company was that of small professional dance and drama company, though initially sponsored by Mr. Mukupo, but very much on the line of what he had done in Denmark. There were many problems with that idea from the very beginning. Firstly, whereas in Denmark he dealt with professional artists, it was impossible for Mr. Mukupo to provide, at that stage, enough funds for Pat Maddy to hire full-time actors, actresses, dancers, musicians and other related artists, let alone adequate salary for Pat Maddy. In fact, Pat Maddy often made it known to the rest of the company that he was being wasted, that he was worth much more than what Mr. Mukupo and many Zambians were able to realize. There was no doubt about his ability. He knew what he was doing and probably tried too hard to push for things Mr. Mukupo could not provide at that time or felt were not really necessary. Depending on what Pat Maddy was promised by Mr. Mukupo, it seems that he came to Lusaka with a big misconception about the situation of theatre in Zambia. He was probably thinking about professional theatre. There are many instances when it was quite clear that Pat Maddy

felt deceived by the offer to come to Zambia, especially when whatever he was trying to achieve was not made possible because of the non-availability of funds. So Zambia Dance Company was founded with manpower and funding problems.

Secondly, when the auditions for the first ZADACO production were held most of the people who turned up were those Zambians who were either fully employed in equally interesting and well-paying professions or full time students and school leavers who had not yet decided about their future careers. For instance, the first ZADACO group was made up of a radio and television personality, two full time musicians who were singing with a very popular band, a Zambia Airways employee, a banker and two school leavers, including the author who had just graduated from St. Mark's Secondary School.

The third and most difficult problem Pat Maddy faced concerns material. He needed a good number of relevant plays, especially plays about Zambia. It turned out that material that he had done in West Africa and in Denmark, such as the 1969 production of Wole Soyinka's The Road. The problem with the production of The Road was that most of the actors did not understand the play. Although the director, Pat Maddy, tried to explain various aspects of

the play he made no attempt to adapt the play to the Zambian situation. The cast and the audience did not understand the various traditional elements and symbols used in the play and the characters themselves. There was no attempt made to adapt the songs and dances and as a result the cast and the audience did not understand or appreciate the West African songs and dances which were used in the play. Most people could not understand why a company calling itself "Zambia Dance Company" was singing and performing foreign songs and dances.

Probably the only successful aspect of this production was the excellent and somewhat dominating acting ability of Pat Maddy, who played the role of Professor and the great potential of Jeff Sitali, who played the role of the leader of the gang. The Road was a financial failure. Its failure to attract a full house demoralized Pat Maddy, who was already disgusted by the poor facilities of Evelyn Hone College Hall, where the play was performed and by what he called an ignorant theatre audience and an unmotivated childish cast.

From what Mr. Mukupo's representatives did and said, one can deduce that Mr. Mukupo's idea of ZADACO was that of a small company that was to remain a non-professional group

until it had raised enough money, gained enough experience and fame to become a professional company, then tour the world and represent Zambia at international cultural and drama festivals. This was probably the best of the two ideas but it had its own problems too.

The biggest problem was the rehearsal time table. Since all the members of the company were either full time students or full time workers, the rehearsals were held late in the evening and went on long into the night. The rehearsals were often too demanding for people who were already exhausted or preoccupied with their own jobs. This in turn caused considerable friction between the director, who was the only full time member of the company, and the cast. Pat Maddy was not only too impatient with the cast but also demanded rather too high acting standards for people who had never acted before and who did not consider themselves professionally involved. There was no doubt about his capability. He had acted in professional companies and had directed professional groups before. However, his tough and sometimes inconsiderate attitude threatened many individuals, especially those whose habits of learning lines were either poor or were affected by the demands of their work. This friction between the cast and

the director could not be avoided as long as there were major conflicts between the actors' full-time occupations and the rehearsals. The only major solution would have been to employ the actors full-time in the production.

Although a lot was said about what the company was going to do, nothing was said about the company itself, the constitution or contracts and main objectives. Mr. Mukupo's sponsorship was treated as ownership and the actors were not sure who was in charge - the director or Mr. Mukupo's representatives (his daughter and son) who performed the roles of producers, stage manager, production secretary and transport officers. So whatever Mr. Mukupo's idea about ZADACO was, very few members of the company actually knew what this idea was. What was evident was the constant conflict between what Pat Maddy wanted done for the group and what Mr. Mukupo could afford to provide.

The most frustrating problem the company faced was with regard to the recruitment of actresses. Both the rehearsal timetable and poor publicity were responsible for the poor response by the Zambian women. It became clear that in order to attract young women, the company would have to change its rehearsal timetable. Many young women were not prepared to go home that late in the night and

most parents would not let them. Changing the rehearsal time from night to day was not possible unless the whole group was employed by the company. Pat Maddy's choice of Wole Soyinka's The Road may have been influenced, to a greater extent, by the realization that he could only put together an all-male cast. The other problem was transport for the cast to their homes after each and every rehearsal. The sponsor, Mr. Titus Mukupo, actually provided the company with his own luxury car which took the members of the cast, in turns, to their homes. In most cases the members of the cast waited for more than one hour for the car to return from one part of Lusaka. This was one of the biggest causes of the many conflicts between the director and the stage manager - Miss Florence Mukupo.

At the end of the performances of The Road, the cast was brought together and each member of the cast received an envelope with "the pay". The very fact that the actors were given this money at the end of the performance clearly demonstrated the confusion that existed concerning the nature of the company. If the company was based on a non-profit making and non-professional idea this salary would not have been necessary. On the other hand, this little "salary" had clearly shown that the time for a full-time

professional theatre in Zambia had not yet arrived. The end of Zambia's earliest effort in professional theatre was so dramatic that a month after the production of The Road, nothing was heard again about ZADACO.

However, Titus Mukupo and Pat Maddy's efforts had given encouragement and confidence to such people as Jeff Sitali, who later became a very important founder member of another independent theatre group - Bazamai Theatre, and the author who joined the University of Zambia Dramatic Society and became its chairman for two years.

It is interesting to note that Bazamai Theatre was formed after the 1970 Chipata Theatre Workshop organized by Michael Etherton and attended by Masautso Phiri and other students who later became prominent leaders of the University of Zambia Dramatic Society and advocates of Chikwakwa Theatre Movement. Masautso Phiri's ideas were very much the ideas expressed by the Chipata Resolutions - a creation of a Zambian theatre that would produce Zambian plays by Zambian dramatists, make use of the enormously rich local material such as folklore, dance and music and to create a small, independent and self-supporting theatre group that would "take theatre to the people", hence Bazamai (Lozi: "Lets go"). It is not very clear, however,

why Masautso Phiri left Chikwakwa Theatre Movement and yet his ideas about Zambian theatre were the very ideas Chikwakwa Theatre stood for. However, Masautso Phiri's Bazamai Theatre differed with University of Zambia Dramatic Society (UNZADRAMS) and Chikwakwa Theatre on the issue of affiliation to Theatre Association of Zambia and participation in the Association's theatre competitions. Bazamai Theatre never affiliated itself to Theatre Association of Zambia (TAZ). It never took part in TAZ's so-called theatre festivals. University of Zambia's policy towards TAZ was not only vague but often confused as it continued to criticize TAZ openly and strongly and yet continued to take part in TAZ festivals and elections. This was the major difference between Bazamai Theatre and the University of Zambia Dramatic Society, but it is not clear whether this is what forced Masautso Phiri to leave Chikwakwa Theatre and UNZADRAMS to form almost a rival theatre group.

The organization of Bazamai Theatre was simple.

a) There was no permanent residence for the group and in fact the University of Zambia was to a greater extent its headquarters.

b) The group raised its members mainly from secondary schools, Evelyn Hone College, the University of Zambia and

from among the working class.

c) There was a loose framework of executive organization although most of the executive duties were handled by Masautso Phiri.

d) The group raised its funds from various sources such as meager subscriptions, gate takings and donations. The biggest donation came from the Cultural Services Department who donated funds which enabled Bazamai Theatre to buy a mini-bus.

#### Problems

Bazamai Theatre's problems were very similar to those of Zambia Dance Company (ZADACO). Firstly, there was a definite mixture of genuinely interested actors and actresses and those who came looking for boyfriends and girlfriends. Secondly, like Mphala Creative Society, it seems that it was only Masautso Phiri who really knew what Bazamai Theatre was trying to achieve and why. He was not only the backbone of Bazamai Theatre, he was its director, writer and producer. There were of course other important members, such as Jeff Sitali and Charles Magwali, but it was he who clearly understood the aims and objectives of Bazamai Theatre. All Bazamai Theatre's major productions, for instance, were either written or directed by him. One of the

most successful productions of Bazamai Theatre was Stephen P.C. Moyo's The Last Prerogative which was directed by Masautso Phiri and featured him and Jeff Sitali prominently in the leading roles. The Last Prerogative is a very ambitious modern play about an African president, President Ngosa Chikwakwa, who leads his people to freedom and democracy but then finds himself being forced by the same people to become their president for life. He believes that this would remove a great part of what he fought for and so he refuses. A dissident minister, Chifwaisha, plans a coup to overthrow him. The play was performed in 1971 in Lusaka Playhouse. This was a very successful production and a very rare collection of excellent actors. Bazamai Theatre succeeded very much, with very little help, to put together a very technical production and made use of the Playhouse facilities adequately. It was a very impressive show which made many people look forward to many more Zambian productions of such high quality. Bazamai Theatre also produced Masautso Phiri's adaptation of Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart, and his historic play, called The Nightfall, which deals with the Ngoni people of Eastern Province of Zambia. Both plays were directed by Masautso Phiri and were performed at the open-air stage of the Cultural Village near Munali

Secondary School. Masausto Phiri also wrote a dance-drama called Kuta, a number of short sketches and one-act plays which were performed by a self-help secondary school in Lusaka's Howard Compound.

The main problem with Bazamai Theatre was that almost everything about the Theatre lay heavily on the shoulders of Masautso Phiri. He wrote, directed and supervised all the productions. As a result, when he became academically busy during his final year at the University of Zambia, Bazamai Theatre deteriorated greatly. At the end of 1972, when Masautso Phiri graduated, Bazamai Theatre was already disintegrating. A year later it was dead. The only thing that remained alive to remind the people of Lusaka about this once-successful theatre group was its mini-bus with "BAZAMAI THEATRE" well written on its sides and parked outside the Department of Cultural Services Headquarters.

## Chapter Four

### The Chikwakwa Theatre Movement and the Great Debate

#### Introduction

At independence very few expatriate white theatre clubs had made any significant policy changes at all. They were still opposed very much to the idea of allowing black people, especially Zambians, into their theatre clubs as full members. Many white theatre clubs maintained a policy of consessional membership. This meant that black people could be considered members as long as the play under production required black characters. After such performances their membership was terminated. Other expatriate theatre clubs invited, once every year, a Zambian producer with his cast and a production, mainly African or Zambian play, to perform in their theatre as part of their annual program so that if anybody ~~questioned~~ them about their racial policies they could always use these productions to argue their case. The majority of expatriate theatre clubs were only interested in allowing Zambians who were not interested in acting but were prepared to work as stage hands, carpenters, painters and ushers who could always be kept behind the

curtains or those Zambians who were only interested in patronizing their bar facilities. The biggest fear by these whites was that allowing interested Zambian actors, producers and directors as full members was the first step in allowing the local people to take over the theatre houses in the nation.

The situation was made worse by the fact that majority of Zambians who knew their rights and who were politically influential were rushing into such former all-white clubs as golf clubs, tennis clubs and night clubs at the former all-white hotels and bars or to administrative positions in football and other athletic clubs. Secondly, because these theatre clubs only produced plays which the majority of Zambians, even the educated, could not understand, this prevented most of the Party and Government officials who were now living in the former all-white residential areas from going to these theatre clubs.

In 1966, the University of Zambia was established. This development became a significant challenge to the expatriate theatre movement. It was quite clear that the University was soon to produce Zambian intellectuals and writers who would not only question the policies of the expatriate theatre organizations but would vigorously

demonstrate what should be done to nationalize the theatre houses.

## University of Zambia Dramatic Society

Writing an introduction to the 1971 University of Zambia Dramatic Society's Gudu Walia production of James Ene Hanshaw's This is our Chance, Hudwell Mwacalimba, then chairman of the Society, said:

The University of Zambia Dramatic Society (UNZADRAMS) has been in existence since this academic institution was founded way back in 1966. UNZADRAMS has as its guiding philosophy a program dedicated to the promotion of theatre among the Zambian masses. This we are doing by presenting such plays and sketches in which Zambian audiences can recognize their own ethos - the basis of theatrical appreciation. Emphasis is therefore being placed on locally written plays; or those adapted to local situations. <sup>33</sup>

This is quite an adequate summary of the main aims and objectives of the University of Zambia Dramatic Society (UNZADRAMS). Although UNZADRAMS was founded in 1966, it was not until 1968 that this guiding philosophy which

<sup>33</sup> Hudwell Mwacalimba (This is our Chance program), 1971.

Hudwell Mwacalimba has stated above became a solid challenge to the white expatriate theatre clubs in the country. It is also at this time that UNZADRAMS began to define "genuine Zambian Theatre", as:

...a theatre that is aimed at promoting and encouraging deep understanding and appreciation of theatre and arousing interest in theatre arts among the Zambian masses by presenting among other things plays that portray a Zambian way of life, both past and present and to struggle without flinching for an establishment of a truly Zambian theatre. <sup>34</sup>

With the help of lecturers from the English Department of the University the Society began to experiment on the production of African and Zambian plays such as Kabwe Kasoma's The Long Arms of the Law which made its debut at the Zambia Arts Festival in Lusaka and Obutunde Ijimore's The Fall. In 1969, UNZADRAMS main production was Michael Etherton's adaptation of Ferninand Oyono's novel, Houseboy, which was entered into that year Theatre Association of Zambia Festival. Although Houseboy was not well received by many

<sup>34</sup> Constitution of UNZADRAMS (Preamble).

of Theatre Association of Zambia critics (the white audiences) many Zambians were very much impressed by both Michael Etherton's production and by the dramatization of this famous African novel. Houseboy became a major controversy not only among the white members of Theatre Association of Zambia (TAZ) but also among Zambians who saw the play at the University of Zambia and other places in Lusaka. The controversy helped to publicize UNZADRAMS although most of the critics actually misunderstood the purpose of the production and Michael Etherton's production technique. Such a misunderstanding is exemplified by Chiman Vyas's statement concerning Houseboy's adjudication night's production at the festival:

Houseboy was a great step towards the mergence of African and European cultures for the sake of stage presentation, although the acting lacked technique. <sup>35</sup>

Houseboy was not a stage presentation aimed at showing the mergence of African and European cultures. Houseboy was simply a tragedy of an African boy who found himself in the unfortunate position of being the "houseboy" of a white

<sup>35</sup> Chiman Vyas, Cultural Events in Africa, No. 64, 1970, p. 3.

oppressor. A boy whose reaction to the white man's way of life can only be understood and appreciated by Africans who experienced such life under the colonialists. It was about the brutality of colonialism and the fate of a helpless African boy reduced to sub-human standard. It showed how Africans stood this brutality of oppression with humor and it is in this humor that the African was making his point about the oppressor. Obviously the acting technique was deliberately patterned to the way this houseboy behaved in the actual situation. This realism offended the white critics. They were offended by the play because it revealed the misconceptions and other aspects of the white culture which were strange and comic to the Africans. The white people were angry because the production showed how stupid and ignorant of the African the white master had been. Houseboy vividly portrayed an element of colonialism which the present white man is ashamed of. Obviously Michael Etherton was determined to crush some of the staging conventions that made this white theatre irrelevant to the Zambian situation and such a festival was a unique opportunity. However, as Michael Etherton puts it:

The exciting thing about the production of Houseboy was that for the first time, things

were being said on the stage that a number of Zambians had felt were not possible to say on a public platform. Things were being said about the white master in a way which absolutely indited them, and I think people felt at last things were being made articulate; that their own thoughts, their own ideas were being made very articulate. <sup>36</sup>

The controversy created by Houseboy production brought UNZADRAMS to the center of the new controversy about theatre in Zambia. This was the beginning of a debate between UNZADRAMS and TAZ that was to last for a long time and be responsible for a lot of changes in the nature of theatre in Zambia. Houseboy was a challenge to TAZ not only because it raised many questions about the future of the white expatriate theatre but because it was a bold statement by UNZADRAMS that things were going to change and that this change on theatre in Zambia was inevitable. It also created a hardened feeling among the members of TAZ towards Michael Etherton and UNZADRAMS. In fact Houseboy

<sup>36</sup> Michael Etherton, "Interview by John Barnor," Cultural Events in Africa, No. 64, p. 8.

was a model of the type of theatre TAZ was going to discourage and the hired and foreign adjudicator's comments were part of this discouragement.

Houseboy was also the first UNZADRAMS' production to tour a rural area when it was taken to Kasama in Northern Province after its successful runs in Lusaka. This was a clear challenge to TAZ. It demonstrated to TAZ that UNZADRAMS was very serious about "taking theatre to the people". This trip to Kasama became a model for the Travelling Theatre Movement that mushroomed under Chikwakwa Theatre from 1970 onwards. Michael Etherton, who led the tour to Kasama, made the following observations about rural audiences and the production's impact:

The production in Kasama, of course, was a very different thing and I think we must differentiate between Urban theatre and rural theatre. Basically in the rural area people want to have a much greater degree of reality, much less stylization, something that is much closer to themselves. In towns, we can draw on a much wider cultural reference and use a number of styles which

wouldn't be acceptable in rural areas.<sup>37</sup>

Such realization is what made the Travelling Theatre projects to the rural areas very successful. UNZADRAMS also produced during that year Simukonda's Fear of the Unknown, and With Strings. Both productions were very well received by the University community.

#### UNZADRAMS and the Chikwakwa Theatre Movement

In 1970, two very important developments took place at the University of Zambia that were to have a far-reaching effect on the development of theatre in Zambia. The first was the establishment of the drama course within the English Department under Michael Etherton and Andrew Horn. \* Although the class was limited to a few students, it became a very important step in the development of Zambian theatre. Most of the members of the first drama class were also leaders and prominent actors in UNZADRAMS. It is within this drama class that major discussion about the state of theatre in Zambia began to take place and this atmosphere naturally affected UNZADRAMS. Before coming to the University of Zambia, Michael Etherton had worked with

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

Kabulonga Boys and Girls Secondary Schools where he directed, among other plays, Aeschylus' Agamemnon and Shakespeare's Hamlet. Both Michael Etherton and Andrew Horn were very enthusiastic about Zambian theatre and were also very lucky to get such a group whose talent and views were responsible for the impact the class made in the campus. The second major development was the conception and the actual building of an open-air theatre by the students in the drama class, members of UNZADRAMS and a number of lecturers from the English Department. Besides Michael Etherton and Andrew Horn was another major force behind the creation of this open-air theatre, the then chairman of the English Department, Professor John Reed, who was the main link between the builders and the University administration. The open-air theatre was built with mud, poles, grass and cement on a former tobacco barn about three miles east of the Great East Road (Main) Campus of the University. The building took place on Saturday afternoons. The tobacco barn's two rooms were renovated into a costume storage room and a dressing room. The whole theatre was surrounded by a grass-thatched wind breaker. The open-air theatre was named Chikwakwa Theatre. The word "Chikwakwa" is a Chinyanja word for "grass cutter" which

was the first major tool that was used to clear the ground but which eventually assumed a symbolic meaning for "theatre at the grass-roots level". Michael Etherton explained some of the reasons for the building of this open-air theatre.

A reason for building what is essentially a temporary structure is that the theatre work in the provinces which the university is involved in and which inspired the building of Chikwaka, necessitates preparing a place for performance wherever it tours. Temporariness also means that the theatre can either revert to the bush when its function has ended, or it can be expanded, as we hope it will, into residential accommodation, an indoor theatre-cum-dining pavilion, and a recording studio built out of the same materials as the open-air theatre. <sup>38</sup>

Younson Simukoko, one of the first students in the drama course and founder member of Chikwaka Theatre states very

<sup>38</sup> Michael Etherton, "Indigenous Performance in Zambia," Theatre Quarterly, April-June 1973, Vol. III, No. 10, p. 47.

well the main philosophy of Chikwakwa Theatre:

Chikwakwa Theatre is a theatre dedicated to the development of a truly Zambian theatre for the people through existing cultural and social conditions....to be a people's theatre that also embraces the intelligentsia; to perform relevant social plays; and to encourage the development of a new Zambian drama. <sup>39</sup>

Chikwakwa Theatre became from the very beginning, not only a special open-air theatre, but a specific theatre philosophy and movement whose main slogan was, "take theatre to the people". Various ideas and production concepts began to be regarded as Chikwakwa concepts. In reality Chikwakwa Theatre was primarily a concept of theatre of experimentation as Michael Etherton put it:

The main aim of theatre experimentation in Zambia is to get to the audience and actors in a joint exploration of the potential of a new theatre aesthetic, the basis of which is the addition of certain elements like dialogue and uncertainty of outcome to the

<sup>39</sup> Youngson Simukoko, "Chikwakwa Theatre," Chikwakwa Review (1971), p. 15.

traditional performing situation.<sup>40</sup>

Chikwakwa Theatre concept was also a specific commitment as Michael Etherton argued.

Chikwakwa Theatre therefore is more than an open-air theatre building in the bush near Lusaka; it is a commitment to the development of theatre in Zambia from existing cultural roots as they are manifest the performing arts and ritual.<sup>41</sup>

These concepts were popularized by Michael Etherton, who tried to make a major difference between Chikwakwa Theatre as a place and Chikwakwa Theatre as a revolutionary cultural concept. One concept which was identified Chikwakwa Theatre nationally, especially during the Travelling Theatre Movement, which was in itself a concept of Chikwakwa Theatre was what Michael Etherton envisaged as:

...the development through self-help, theatre places in various urban and rural areas in Zambia that would allow an expansion of tra-

<sup>40</sup> Michael Etherton, "Indigenous Performance in Zambia," Theatre Quarterly, April-June, 1973, Vol. III, No. 10, p. 48.

<sup>41</sup> Michael Etherton, "Chikwakwa Theatre," A paper for Director of Cultural Services, 1971, p. 2.

ditional performing arts into drama in which  
the spoken word developed the action. <sup>42</sup>

Chikwakwa Theatre also became a significant place where UNZADRAMS was to try and do what it had argued Theatre Association of Zambia to do. Firstly, the location of Chikwakwa Theatre itself (surrounded by Kaunda Square Township and the Chamba Valley Community area) was considered a significant way of preventing the theatre from becoming an "exclusive campus facility" or an elite theatre as was the case with most of the white expatriate theatre clubs within Theatre Association of Zambia. The idea was that the theatre would be a community facility that would be available for use by community cultural and drama clubs. Although these communities were still sparsely populated, it was hoped that in a short time Chikwakwa Theatre would be completely surrounded by three large communities. Secondly, one of the main features of Chikwakwa Theatre that UNZADRAMS and the drama course felt was the main difference between Chikwakwa Theatre and the white expatriate theatre clubs was the entrance fee to all UNZADRAMS and the Drama

<sup>42</sup> Michael Etherton, "Zambia Popular Theatre," Chikwakwa Theatre, 1971-72, p. 9.

Course productions in Chikwakwa Theatre. It was argued that it must be a fee which the ordinary Zambians were able to pay. As a result the entrance fee was always limited to about 20n. UNZADRAMS regarded this the major effort to enable the Zambian masses to come to the theatre. Thirdly, UNZADRAMS decided to bring people to Chikwakwa Theatre by sending buses to the compounds and the town center, colleges and secondary schools. The students and members of the larger community used the buses free of charge. These projects and decisions became some of the most controversial features of Chikwakwa Theatre.

Chikwakwa Theatre was officially opened in May 1970 with an excellent production by the drama class of Mukuku Sabi's The Chief Banishes his Heir, directed by Michael Etherton and an adaptation of LeRoi Jones (Amira Bareka) Home on the Range which was directed by Andrew Horn. The Chief Banishes his Heir included many traditional dances and songs from various ethnic groups. It featured some of the best talents ever to act in Chikwakwa Theatre - Masausto Phiri, Musisimi Fwanyanga, Panwell Munantamba, Tisa Chifunyise (Tisa Mwape), Kabwe Kasoma and David Nkhata. This production clearly established the atmosphere, the staging and acting techniques, which became the main char-

acteristic of Chikwakwa Theatre. Many dialogues in the play were in various Zambian languages. This also became a model for future productions in Chikwakwa Theatre.

One of the major productions by UNZADRAMS in 1970 was Kabwe Kasoma's Fools Marry. The play was directed by Kabwe Kasoma and performed successfully at Chikwakwa Theatre. Fools Marry was also taken to Matero and Chilenje Welfare Halls as a "take theatre to the people" project but was performed before very disappointing, childish and disorderly audiences. The Welfare Halls were very bad. The acoustics were horrible and the cast had to scream to be heard. Coupled with the unruly audience, the whole exercise was very disappointing. "Taking theatre to the people" became a hard reality. Not many Chikwakwa enthusiasts, especially members of Fools Marry cast, who had been through this situation, were prepared to take theatre to such audiences and in such poor facilities. It was clear that a lot needed to be done if such theatre facilities were to be of any use for the masses.

Fools Marry was UNZADRAMS' entry into the 1970 Theatre Association of Zambia Festival which was held in Luanshya. Like the 1969 entry of Houseboy, Fools Marry was a big controversy. It was very realistically staged, with domi-

nant Zambia humor. This realism, unfortunately, was responsible for some of the controversy and some of the problems of the play's presentation. For instance, there was a comic scene in which a drunkard urinated on stage. Although this scene was acted using hidden instruments and water, most people, especially the white audiences, could not stand this realism. Even the cast found it very difficult to accommodate the act despite the determination and excellency of Mark Chibala, who played the role. However, the majority of the white people who filled the playhouse during the adjudication night misunderstood the play and its realistic Zambian humor. The play's major comic element hinges mainly on literal translations from Chibemba to English. The adjudicator obviously did not understand the meaning of these literal translations, which are the most important and attractive aspects of Kabwe Kasoma's plays. In fact, the adjudicator was offended by the fact that he could not understand why the Zambian audiences were laughing. He was not prepared to admit that he did not understand the whole comedy. Instead he criticized what he considered as turning a very tragic play into a comedy by poor staging and acting techniques. The cast and the director, however, were very much convinced that those

Zambians and expatriates who understood the language used in the play, understood and enjoyed the play. They questioned whether an adjudicator who obviously did not really understand such type of language should in the first place be allowed to adjudicate and comment on such a play. This is what began the controversy. The cast accused the organizers of the festival of racial segregation and plotting against UNZADRAMS by using well-planned method of preventing Zambians from attending the performance during the adjudication night. They deplored the publicity machinery and ticket booking system whose complications discouraged the average Zambians from attending the festival. The organizers in turn claimed that Zambians were not interested in theatre. They argued that there was no way the Association was going to meet the cost of the festival by reducing fees to allow the average Zambians to attend the festival. Those Zambians who were able to attend the festival were mostly school children whose drama clubs were taking part in the festival. Unfortunately these were guided by their teachers to attend specific shows, especially those their teachers considered good. This obviously excluded the controversial UNZADRAMS' productions.

One major problem with the production in the playhouse

at Luanshya was that the cast was unable to get help from the members of the playhouse concerning lighting and hanging of scenery. To many members of the cast the playhouse was quite an unfamiliar place and as a result no one in the cast was able to operate the sophisticated lighting and rigging gadgets of the playhouse. The cast found itself with incredible problems. These problems were obviously responsible for the staging errors which the adjudicator picked up and spent his time criticizing. These problems, coupled with the poor reception and unfavorable reviews were responsible for the clash that took place between UNZADRAMS and TAZ at the 1970 TAZ Annual General Meeting held in Lowenthal Theatre in Ndola soon after the festival. The Annual General Meeting was split into two warring camps. UNZADRAMS was led by the then Chairman, Hudwell Mwalimba, and comprised of Obbi Mazombwe, Kabwe Kasoma and the author, who was the secretary of the Society. The rival group of the white expatriate theatre clubs was led by David Wallace, a Mukuba School teacher and director of Mukuba Workshop, whose production of Mr. Johnson was very well received. The meeting turned out to be a heated debate between the two sides, UNZADRAMS' representatives attacked the whole idea of the festival, the adjudicator

and TAZ. They also defined Chikwakwa Theatre concepts and asked for drastic changes in the Association's philosophy about the festivals. Kabwe Kasoma and Hudwell Mwachalimba, who were the main spokesmen, tried hard to define what Chikwakwa stood for and why UNZADRAMS was proposing for all these major changes within TAZ. Firstly, they suggested that black dramatists, especially Africans, should be invited or hired to be adjudicators at the festival. They argued that it is such people who are able to understand both the African theatre and the European theatre whose comments would be relevant to Zambian theatre. Most of the white expatriates dismissed the whole suggestion as unrealistic and even claimed that there was no black dramatist, actor or director capable of adjudicating a festival of such a calibre. UNZADRAMS suggested a number of black dramatists such as LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka) and Wole Soyinka. A good number of expatriates claimed that they never heard of these black dramatists while others declared that the fact that Wole Soyinka and LeRoi Jones were very successful playwrights did not mean that they were capable of judging most of the plays which are entered by the white expatriate theatre clubs. The proposal was not even put to vote, although there was a general feeling that the in-

coming Executive Committee of TAZ was going to enquire into this issue. Secondly, UNZADRAMS proposed that the festival be centralized to allow more Zambians to attend the festivals and also to increase the number of Zambian theatre clubs in the festival by allowing them to perform in theatres of their own choice and to their own communities. UNZADRAMS pointed out that because of some of the problems they experienced in Luanshya Playhouse, they would in future only perform for the Festival in Chikwakwa Theatre and hope that many Zambian theatre clubs would come forward and use Chikwakwa. This raised the question about facilities in Chikwakwa Theatre. Many directors of white expatriate theatre clubs asked whether Chikwakwa Theatre had as good facilities as Lowenthal Theatre. When UNZADRAMS disclosed that Chikwakwa Theatre was an open-air theatre with no electricity, and no sound system, most of the people considered the whole idea ridiculous. Unfortunately, among those who really ridiculed the Chikwakwa Theatre concept were Lazarus Chewe and Cosmos Chipulu, then school representatives of Mukuba Workshop, who teamed up with their teacher, David Wallace, to attack UNZADRAMS about Chikwakwa and the other issues UNZADRAMS raised. Many people argued that the whole idea of decentralizing the festival was

unnecessarily expensive. Thirdly, UNZADRAMS questioned TAZ about the enormous salaries the adjudicators hired from Britain were getting. Besides the attractive salary, a new car was bought for them. UNZADRAMS also argued that the balls which were held at the end of the festival were an unnecessary extravaganza. All these propositions were overlooked or considered irrelevant. Probably the most frustrating part of this meeting was when elections were held. UNZADRAMS was completely isolated. It failed to get anyone from UNZADRAMS or sympathetic to Chikwakwa Theatre elected to the main executive posts. The only consolation was the election of Kabwe Kasoma as a committee member.

The 1970 Annual General Meeting of TAZ and all its controversy brought UNZADRAMS into a controversy of its own. A number of people within UNZADRAMS were arguing that the 1970 TAZ Annual General Meeting had clearly demonstrated that no change would ever take place in TAZ and that the best way was for UNZADRAMS to withdraw from the Association and its festivals. However, many Chikwakwa enthusiasts argued that such a move was no solution, and that the best way was for Chikwakwa to penetrate into the white theatre clubs with its own indigenous Zambian graduates as ordinary

club members, actors and directors who will in turn get elected into responsible positions of policy making and authority. These Zambians were expected, eventually, to initiate Chikwakwa Theatre concepts in these clubs and TAZ. This whole idea was very unrealistic. Firstly, there were very few Zambian graduates from Chikwakwa Theatre who were prepared to join the white expatriate and segregated theatre clubs. Since 1964, very few Zambians had joined these clubs and had been given a chance to direct Zambian or African plays. It was clear that as long as Zambians remained a small minority in these clubs, there was no way these clubs would accommodate Chikwakwa Theatre concepts, the idea of producing plays relevant to the Zambian masses and of taking theatre to the people.

Other Chikwakwa advocates felt that the best way was not to join as individuals into the expatriate-dominated theatre clubs but for UNZADRAMS to remain a member of Theatre Association of Zambia and fight hard to be elected into the Association's Executive Committee. However, this idea was as questionable as the previous ones. The 1970 Annual General Meeting had demonstrated that when it came to electing the Executive Committee, the majority of the voters were either members of the white theatre clubs or

expatriate Secondary School teachers who represented their school drama clubs. Those few Zambian secondary school students who voted such as Mukuba Workshop, voted exactly what their teachers advised. The other limiting factors were the unwritten qualifications for the office bearers such as the requirements that the chairman ought to have a car and a telephone; the secretary typing and secretarial skills; and the treasurer, knowledge of accountancy. This made it completely impossible for Chikwakwa supporters, most of whom were students, to be elected in TAZ's Executive Committee's main posts. The two Zambians who were elected into the Theatre Association of Zambia Executive Committee in 1970, Kabwe Kasoma and David Foko, found themselves as token Zambians who were to be used to convince the Zambian people that TAZ was no longer a segregated and racist organization. In the case of Kabwe Kasoma, it was clear that TAZ was trying to appease pro-Chikwakwa supporters who had made such an impact at the Annual General Meeting. Secondly, many expatriates realized that if Kabwe Kasoma was not elected, he was going to make a lot of trouble, just as he had proved controversial and bitter at the Annual General Meeting. As it turned out, Kabwe Kasoma was soon to realize that he was completely powerless but

that he was helping TAZ to continue being what it was. He realized that he was being used to authenticate the Association within Zambia and abroad. While in the Committee, Kabwe Kasoma was chosen to represent TAZ at a theatre festival in Europe. When he came back he realized that he was being used to maintain Government subsidy to TAZ. UNZADRAMS was in a very weak position during that time with regard to taking part in TAZ festivals. This is one of the reasons why UNZADRAMS entered Andrey Masiye's Kazembe and the Portuguese into the festival on a non-competitive and unadjudicated basis in 1971. That year's TAZ adjudicator, David Pownall, became the most controversial hired adjudicator when he decided to get involved in the debate about the hiring of foreign adjudicators. By this action UNZADRAMS was trying to demonstrate to the expatriate theatre clubs what it meant by decentralizing the festival and protesting, on the other hand, against the element of a competitive festival which it claimed prevented clubs from sincerely learning from each other that it made the whole project expensive and beneficial to few privileged white people. David Pownall's views about UNZADRAMS and Chikwaka Theatre made very many Zambians very angry because of his ignorance about what he was talking about. He was in-

interviewed by a Times of Zambia special correspondent and said:

I like to see theatre brought together and I was disappointed that UNZADRAMS opted out. Chikwakwa Theatre is something that has been absent in this country. It's one of the most interesting new theatre forms in Africa and I think it's marvelous....<sup>43</sup>

Obviously he did not know anything about Chikwakwa Theatre and like many other expatriate whites he did not realize that Chikwakwa Theatre was doing what had been going on in the Zambian culture for many years. Even the type of theatre - open-air theatre - was not new to many of the Zambian masses. He did not know that there was already a form of theatre among the Zambian masses, especially the rural people, that was not at all different from what was going on in Chikwakwa Theatre. Chikwakwa Theatre was only another way of projecting what already existed in the Zambian culture. He obviously did not know enough about Zambian culture and the traditional performing arts. This

<sup>43</sup> David Pownall, "Why the Adjudicator," Times of Zambia (June 23, 1971), p. 8.

was one aspect that Chikwakwa Theatre protested strongly about. The fact that people who knew very little about the Zambian way of life were being given such a situation where their comments were being taken by the press, the expatriate theatre clubs and many people as the most authoritative views. David Pownall went on to say:

By withdrawing from the festival UNZADRAMS is putting up walls and starting to be very prestigious. Theatre belongs to everyone. Not just a class, or a city or a country and any theatre can be a valid theatrical experience for me, no matter where it is. <sup>44</sup>

Here again David Pownall commented with what many people considered as ignorance of how UNZADRAMS operated. No one who knew how the University operated would call Chikwakwa Theatre a prestigious organization or a theatre belonging to a class. It is the theatre of the expatriate clubs that belonged to an English speaking people; people who lived in the former all-white residential areas; those who had cars to drive to such theatres and enough money to pay the expensive entrance fees. That expatriate theatre belonged to

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

the city people and was established for the European culture by the Colonial Government. He decided to ignore all these facts. Instead he decided to project himself as a God-sent judge when he said:

If school kids will put their play in front of me and ask me what I think, I see no reason why the University as a focus of Zambian intellectual and cultural life should decide not to. <sup>45</sup>

This statement clearly demonstrated what most of these hired adjudicators thought their responsibilities were - to come and evaluate individual performers and productions and sense how far Zambia has come theatrically. That was also the main purpose of the festival. Money and time was spent not providing entertainment to the Zambian masses but to impress a hired and well-paid adjudicator. Anything that was not scripted was not considered theatre and could not be entered into the festival. Scripts had to be sent to Britain to the adjudicator many weeks before the festival began. It was clear that what this adjudicator was talking about was not Chikwakwa Theatre or Zambian theatre.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

He was talking about European theatre. He was not talking of a festival that Zambians knew; he was talking about a competition. When he was asked why the festival or the competition should not be put into two categories, Zambian and European, he said something that clearly displayed his misconception about theatre in Zambia.

I think it would be a pity to compartmentalize the festival when there are already such tendencies. It's better that African and European theatre come together and establish a kind of a dialogue. Shakespeare is becoming part of Africa and African life and culture is part of Europe and America and any one trying to stop this process would be committing a crime against civilization.

Zambia means something to me and I would like to find that theatre here is run by people who want a form of expression that is recognizably Zambian. By that I don't mean tribal dancing and African traditional life. I mean a theatre of urban Zambia in 1971. <sup>46</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

To David Pownall, Zambian theatre is that "theatre of the urban Zambian." And who are those if not the expatriate whites and a few Zambians in high income brackets? It is a theatre of the 20% Zambians who live in the urban areas. And by Zambian theatre he did not "mean tribal dancing and African traditional life", but European culture often referred to as modern way of life. David Pownall also made a big mistake of thinking that Shakespeare is now part of African life and culture. Absolutely not. What Africa is that? Is it the white Africa and the Africa of the white expatriate workers or the Africa of the few educated Africans who were forced by colonial educators and the Christian church to memorize Shakespeare as a sign that they had mastered the master's language and culture? Who among the 80% Zambians in the rural areas and those who live in the urban areas who have never gone to school know who Shakespeare is? If African culture is now part of Europe and America, why is it that he would like a Zambian theatre that is run by people whose form of expression is recognizably urban Zambian and not "tribal" and African traditional life? - To David Pownall, when Africans study Shakespeare and produce European plays they are involved in a process of civilization and therefore "tribal" dancing

and African traditional life are not part of this process of civilization and that UNZADRAMS that was involved in these dances and Zambian traditional life was involved in "a crime against civilization." It is unbelievable that people like David Pownall come to Africa and talk about African and European theatre coming together and establishing a kind of a dialogue when they pretend that no African knows anything about theatre and therefore they have to be hired to come and "evaluate how far Zambia has come theatrically."

Kazembe and the Portuguese by Andrey Masiye was performed in Chikwaka Theatre and David Pownall decided to invite himself to the performance. Unfortunately, that day the University of Zambia was involved in a demonstration against the French Government for its role in South Africa military build up. The demonstration ended violently and many students were arrested. Among those arrested were those taking part in Kazembe and the Portuguese, who were released after the Vice-Chancellor's intervention. They arrived in Chikwaka Theatre amid fears that the performance would be cancelled.

Michael Etherton's production of Kazembe and the Portuguese was a unique theatrical experiment in both pre-

sentation and the utilization of Chikwakwa Theatre. As in the production of Che Guevara in 1970 he experimented successfully on how traditional music and dance could be used to enhance the production. In this production, for instance, the audience was made to sit on the stage and the action took place in the seating area. This demonstrated how the idea of space and time could be conveyed by using the vast seating space. Various stages in the movement of the Portuguese from Portugal to Kazembe were illustrated by this technique. Another technique that had never been used before in Chikwakwa Theatre was the use of masks to characterize white people in the play. This enabled the director to solve the problem of a lack of white people to take the parts of the Portuguese. But probably the most successful aspect of this production was the way the traditional music and dances were used to convey the whole story and to dramatize the slavery and the inhuman treatment of the Africans by Portuguese traders. Unfortunately, the student demonstration led to the closure of the University of Zambia and the expulsion from the country of Michael Etherton. - This was a very sudden death to a very promising theatrical experiment.

## Chikwakwa Children's Theatre

During the 1970 rehearsals of Che Guevara by Mario Fratti, produced and directed by Michael Etherton in Chikwakwa Theatre, many primary school children from nearby Kaunda Square, Chamba Valley and Munali School area came to watch these rehearsals. After the rehearsals, the children remained in the theatre trying to perform what they had observed, especially the traditional dances and songs of the production. Soon they had not only mastered some of the dances and songs but had learned the dialogue in English. Many University students, members of the cast, and lecturers who saw what these children could reproduce were surprised at the enormous talents and interest the children exhibited. Some members of staff in the English Department and members of Chikwakwa Committee felt that this children's group should be incorporated into Chikwakwa Theatre's programs either as an independent group or as an integral part of Chikwakwa Theatre. Fay Chung, who became the director of Chikwakwa Theatre after Michael Etherton left the country, felt that the Chikwakwa Children's Theatre group should become a pilot project or a children's theatre project supported financially by Chikwakwa Commit-

tee and directed by various drama students who would take the project as an academic project. Professor John Reed, then Chairman of the English Department and Chikwakwa Committee and other lecturers, such as Michael Ward, Tom Morris and Bob Fraser supported the project.

By 1971-72 season, the group had a collection of good singers, dancers and actors. Judging from their type of dances, songs and costumes, the group was modeling itself to the National Dance Troupe. When Obbi Mazombe, then secretary of the University Dramatic Society and a member of the drama class, became the director of the Children's Theatre group, his idea and that of Fay Chung, was that the group would concentrate mainly with dramatizations of popular traditional folklore and incorporating as much as possible traditional dances and songs from various ethnic groups. Fay Chung, Andrew Chirwa and Obbi Mazombwe selected a number of popular folktales and dramatized them in Chinyanja, Chibemba and English. At the beginning many of the children were not interested in performing in their mother tongues or Chinyanja and Chibemba. They wanted to do all the plays in English because they were only thinking of performing in Chikwakwa Theatre for the University audience. However, during the 1971-72 season Obbi Mazombwe,

Fay Chung and Andrew Chirwa had put together a very impressive drama program. The group performed in Chikwakwa Theatre, then toured a good number of primary schools around Lusaka. These performances received excellent reception in Chikwakwa Theatre and in every school they visited.

In 1973, Obbi Mazombwe graduated from the University of Zambia. Chikwakwa Children's Theatre found itself in a leadership crisis that affected the whole purpose and program of the project. In the Chikwakwa Review report of 1973-74 season, Fay Chung had this to say about the Children's Theatre.

This important area was almost completely neglected in the 1973-1974 academic year except for some work done by Michael Ward of the Literature and Languages Department. This was due to lack of time. Students were not involved in organizing Children's Theatre at all, in contrast to previous years. <sup>47</sup>

By the end of 1974, the Children's Theatre program had completely disintegrated.

<sup>47</sup> Fay Chung, "Children's Theatre," Chikwakwa Review, 1973-74, p. 38.

There are many reasons why Chikwakwa Children's Theatre project failed besides the lack of time, as Fay Chung indicated. By 1973 a number of boys in the group had completed primary school education but had failed to qualify for places in secondary schools. These boys felt that their theatre group should become a source of income. So they decided to bring into the group a guitar and banjo section. The emphasis was now shifting much more towards mere traditional dancing, and pop music assuming the structure of the Rising Stars, a popular children's music band based in Lusaka and directed by a Catholic priest. This brought a major disagreement between Fay Chung and the group. Fay Chung wanted the group to continue with improvisation and dramatization of traditional folk tales as before. As the group became more and more independent and disagreeable to this idea, more and more Chikwakwa facilities and funds were withdrawn from the group, leaving it more independent of Chikwakwa.

During the 1973-74 season, the Children's Theatre group was trying hard to be included in UNZADRAMS and Drama Section's programs in Chikwakwa Theatre with the hope of sharing the gate-takings. Unfortunately, UNZADRAMS and the Drama Section often included the group in their performances

but completely disregarded sharing with them, the gate-takings. Although one of the main reasons why UNZADRAMS did not share the gate-takings with the Children's Theatre group was that the gate-takings were very little, many students and staff felt that the group should not be encouraged to consider the drama project as money-earning project. This unfortunately made the group bitter and lose the desired motivation for creativity.

The third reason has to do with the group's pre-occupation with the idea of earning an income from their drama activities. It seems that some members of the group felt that the membership should be limited to the original group so that there would be no problem in sharing whatever money they would raise. Although more members were leaving the group no steps were taken to recruit new members. The idea of a limited and permanent membership differed greatly with the original idea of using Chikwakwa as a training ground and the group as a model for other Children's theatre and cultural groups. This meant that individuals impressed by the group's performances were expected to come and join the group or form their own groups and utilize Chikwakwa Theatre. This tightly controlled group soon developed leadership rivalry and personality differences which in

turn led to confusion and hatred. Fay Chung tried to pull the group together but these personal accusations and lack of discipline had torn the group apart.

One of the most unfortunate developments within the Children's Theatre was that by 1973, the group was considering itself primarily as a University group. They sought University identity with whatever they were doing. Initially the group got transport, food, costumes and instruments from Chikwakwa Committee. Because of this majority of the Children's Theatre members began to demand better treatment which they felt they were eligible for. Fay Chung and some of the student directors tried but failed to make the group realize that they were not employees of the University, and that they should aim at becoming an independent and self-reliant group. Many people felt that the University had made a mistake by providing student directors to a group that started on its own and had the potential of unique self-organizing ability. They argued that although the student directors mainly provided the group with the materials such as stories and plays, the group should have been left alone to decide what type of activities and programs they were to pursue and to create a leadership from within the group. But because the group depended very much on

student or staff leadership, as soon as such leadership disappeared, the group was unable to follow its own leadership and soon crumbled.

## Chikwakwa Travelling Theatre

Chikwakwa Theatre concept expressed by Michael Ether-ton and the Chipata Workshop resolution of "taking theatre to the people" gave birth to the Chikwakwa Travelling Theatre Movement involving lecturers in the English Department, drama students and members of UNZADRAMS who toured provinces with a repertoire of plays specially prepared for Zambian masses; plays that utilized local materials such as myths, folklore, music and dance and usually written and performed in the language spoken by the majority of the people in the province. The Chikwakwa Travelling Theatre Movement had a number of basic aims and objectives. Firstly, the main argument by many of Chikwakwa Theatre enthusiasts was that since theatre was for the people it was therefore necessary to find a way of taking theatre to them. Although Chikwakwa Theatre was already reaching many urban people this was not considered adequate at all. Therefore the travelling theatre was considered as the only effective way of taking theatre to the rural areas of Zambia where the majority of the people live. Secondly, Chikwakwa Theatre recognized the fact that the rural areas were still rich with authentic Zambian culture,

traditional dance music and other forms of performing and creative arts and that travelling theatre was to enable University dramatists, students and lecturers:

to gain first hand knowledge of the people, the society and culture in various provinces and also to establish a closer link between the masses and the emerging Zambian dramatists. 48

Thirdly, many Chikwaka Theatre enthusiasts felt that the rural people were a unique audience which actors, playwrights and directors were to observe and assess whether their plays, performances and techniques meant anything. Fourthly, such a venture was considered capable of making the rural people feel that they were not neglected by the urban elite and that the travelling theatre movement would strengthen the national spirit of "One Zambia, One Nation". Fifthly, most people felt that the University lecturers and students would use this opportunity to enable the rural people to participate in the theatre activities; involve the people in acting and writing workshops and production of plays and improvisations. This project was expected to give the students an opportunity to study local situations,

48 Youngson Simukoko, op. cit. p. 15.

and to create Chikwakwa type of theatre in schools, colleges, village and town centers.

The first travelling theatre tour was held in 1969 in Kasama in the Northern Province and was led by Michael Etherton with his adaptation of Oyono's Houseboy that had been entered for the TAZ Festival that year. The second tour was in Chipata in Eastern Province. This was also led by Michael Etherton and co-ordinated by the resident tutor of the Department of Extra-Mural Studies of the University of Zambia. The group that included Kabwe Kasoma, Masautso Phiri, Tisa Chifunyise (Tisa Mwape), Misisimi Fwanyanga, David Nkhata and other members of the drama course, performed at various places in Chipata and Chief Mwase's court a repertoire of plays that included Misisimi Fwanyanga's Homecoming, Ezekiel Mphahlele's The Return of Nsato and Andrew Horn's adaptation of Lady Gregory's Spreading the News. The most spectacular aspect of the tour was:

...the successful drama workshop in Chipata where a group of University personnel produced a series of plays closely related to the life of the province. These plays included adaptations of folk tales originally written in English, on spot transcriptions were made,

incorporating the local language, local  
idioms and, to a limited context, local  
types. <sup>49</sup>

Bob Leshoi, the then head of the Drama Department of the University of Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania, was one of the leaders in this workshop. The plays in the tour were directed by individual students. Out of this workshop came the Chipata Resolutions which became the guidelines for Chikwaka Theatre and the Travelling Theatre Movement.

The first travelling theatre to Southern Province was led by Fay Chung and Tom Morris in May 1972, and involved the following students: Obbi Mazombwe, Martin Ndemena, Syamukayumbu Syamujaye, Ruth Tembo, Japhet Msimuko, Sebastian Chilala and Reginald Sibanda. The tour took place from May 1st to May 31st and used a University of Zambia mini-bus. According to Fay Chung, the group performed at 24 centers and to more than 13,000 people. The group's production consisted of Cheelo Ca Mudaala that was translated into English by John Reed from Plautus' Mostellaria and from English into Citonga by Syamukayumbu Syamujaye, who also directed the play; Kalyabantu, a play dramatized

<sup>49</sup> "Introduction," Report on Monqu Theatre Workshop, UNZA, 1972, p. 3.

by Obbi Mazombwe from a traditional story by Njekwa Kama-yoyo; Clifford Odets' Waiting for Lefty, adapted and directed by Tom Morris; Oyono-Mbia's Three Suitors, One Husband, directed by Martin Ndemena; Mucaala, a dramatization of a Tonga traditional story transcribed by Patrick Hamujompa and Petros Watambwa's Waterheard. Fay Chung made some very interesting observations about the tour when she said that the most popular plays in the tour were the dramatizations of traditional stories, Mucaala and Kalyabantu.

The success of Mucaala as well as Kalyabantu is a good reminder that there is a wealth of traditional material which can be used in drama, both through improvisation and through scripted dramatizations. <sup>50</sup>

When the group returned to the University of Zambia, they performed three of their tour productions to a capacity audience in Chikwakwa Theatre and put up an excellent performance that introduced Martin Ndemena, Japhet Maimuko, Sebastian Chilala to most of the new Chikwakwa audience.

From 1969 to 1972 all the travelling theatre tours were organized and led by lecturers from the drama course

<sup>50</sup> Fay Chung, "Southern Province Travelling Theatre," Chikwakwa Review, 1971-72, p. 10.

and the English Subject. As from 1973 students began to organize and lead their own travelling theatre tours. The first all-student travelling theatre was the Southern Province Travelling Theatre that was led by Martin Ndemena and the author from the beginning of May to the beginning of June 1973. The group comprised of Sebastian Chilala, Maybin Konse, Fairchild Chibomba, Danny Hakasenke and Jack Chombe. This tour was also the first of its kind where the group travelled from one area to another using public transport (trains, buses, lorries) and even hitch-hiked. Previous travelling theatre groups had used University buses and landrovers. Although this tour was a follow-up of the successful 1972 tour led by Fay Chung and Tom Morris, the main difference between the two tours was that the 1972 emphasized on performing to as many people and at as many places as possible, whereas the 1973 tour's main emphasis was on holding as many drama workshops as possible at secondary schools and colleges in the province. At every school, following the night of performance, the group held a day's drama workshop with the drama and dance clubs, creating plays, mimes and improvisations which were then performed the same evening to the whole school with the assistance of members of the Travelling Theatre team. In

most schools the performances were excellent. Each member of the Travelling Theatre team was in charge of group of students. They discussed about various aspects of Zambian theatre. The members of Travelling Theatre also talked to the group about the most effective club organization and program planning. In schools where drama and cultural *dancing clubs did not exist the team met with the school* administration and helped in the creation of one. In some schools the team was asked to intervene into the rivalry between drama and cultural dance clubs and tried to integrate them. This was a great educational experience for the team who found themselves solving club problems, answering questions about the state of theatre in Zambia, and many aspects of playwriting, acting and directing.

Most of the plays which were performed in this tour were created by members of the tour during the five days workshop at the University of Zambia before the group left for the tour. The program included two major productions, Kabwe Kasoma's Poisoned Cultural Meat and the author's District Governor Goes to a Village. These turned out to be the most popular plays in both rural and urban areas during the tour. The other plays were The Unfaithful Witchdoctor, a traditional story dramatized and directed by

Martin Ndemena, Wife by Post, directed by Maybin Konse, Inheritance, dramatized and directed by Danny Hakasenke, and The Old Man, which was dramatized and directed by Sebastian Chilala. The most popular play with the rural audiences was the District Governor Goes to a Village, mainly because it was a play about themselves. They obviously identified with the characters and understood much more about the issues in the play than in those which dealt with the urban life. At one of the afternoon performances in Chief Mukuni's court, outside Livingstone, the chief decided to address his people who came for the performance, using the play to illustrate why development projects failed in his area. He took the play scene by scene and used the incidents and characters to teach his people. The cast was thrilled by this. We had entertained many people before but we had not realized how powerful this comedy was. We now realized how important it was for this audience that the play be realistic and accurate because they took everything for granted. We were also thrilled and sometimes frightened by the audience participation. In the play The Old Man, a young man leads a band of thugs at the railway station in Lusaka and robs a very old man, who unfortunately happens to be his grandfather. The young man

had never seen his grandfather before because his parents had never taken him home to the village. We did not realize that the violent scenes in the play would be received with tears. Many women were weeping while the men were shouting warnings to the old man and insults to the young man. They were angry and we did not know how to deal with the situation.

The most successful aspect of the 1973 Travelling Theatre tour to Southern Province was the excellent drama workshop projects which were held in four secondary schools. These workshops not only helped consolidate what the 1972 tour had established but demonstrated that most of the groups could create in one afternoon a successful evening program for the whole school. Most of the plays which were created from local situations and traditional stories were so good that most of the school teachers could not believe that these plays had been devised, dramatized and directed by their own students. In those schools where both drama and traditional dance groups were active, the shows were even much better and easier to put together.

In August that year two other Travelling Theatre tours were undertaken. One to the Northern Province led by Maurice Chishimba and Cosmos Chipulu and consisted of

twelve members of the University of Zambia Dramatic Society (UNZADRAMS) and the drama course. This was also the first all-student tour to the Province since the 1970 Michael Etherton tour. Although the tour lasted only ten days the group performed and held drama workshops at eight secondary schools and town centers. The group performed Kabwe Kasoma's Poisoned Cultural Meat, Grant Lumbwe's Drown in a Drink and two plays by the author, District Governor Goes to a Village, and Blood. After watching these plays, the Principal of Malole Secondary School made the following comments about Zambian plays:

Well, take for example, plays like Julius Ceasar and others, such as A Mid-summer Night's Dream by Shakespeare; and plays by other people. In order to grasp the exact situation, you would need to transpose your thinking from African background to the European literary type of thinking, you know, which in turn means to be reconstructed mentally, physically and so on. In the end it is an impossible situation. But what we are doing is contemporary, not classical; what we are doing is something we are experi-

encing everyday; it is local not foreign.

Even the vocabulary we are using is direct and straightforward.<sup>51</sup>

The unique thing about this tour is that all the plays were rehearsed while on the road, and although this was a very short tour, its impact was great. The group managed to put on all the planned performances and workshops.

During the same period another Travelling Theatre group led by Fay Chung was touring Katete, Lundazi, Chadiza and Chipata, towns in the Eastern Province. Here again the emphasis was on Zambian and African plays and especially those written by drama students and other members of Chikwakwa Theatre. The group performed Grant Lumbwe's Drown in a Drink, Three Suitors One Husband by Oyono Mbia, Mucaala by Patrick Hamujompa and the District Governor Goes to the Village by the author. Like the Northern Province Travelling Theatre tour, these plays were rehearsed while on the road. Charles Mafika, one of the organizers, gave a summary of the tour.

Was the tour a success? At all places we went

<sup>51</sup> Marice Chishimba, "Report on the University of Zambia Northern Province Travelling Theatre, 10th-20th August," Chikwakwa Review, 1973-74, p. 7.

to the spokesman of the people were unanimous. The plays were educative. All the plays served their purpose and carried the meaning to the people. In Katete, The District Governor Goes to the Village was felt to have been like hitting the nail on the head because some high official had been suspended for offences not very different from what the play portrayed. <sup>52</sup>

Two weekend drama workshops were also held that year as part of the Travelling Theatre project. Cosmos Chipulu and Lazarus Chewe led the Kitwe Drama Workshop and Kalunga Lutato, a member of staff in the University of Zambia's Literature and Languages Department, led a drama workshop in Mongu. These workshops involved primary school teachers and secondary school students who were members of the drama clubs. The Kitwe Workshop was mainly aimed at those secondary schools which still supported the expatriate-dominated Theatre Association of Zambia and also to exchange views about Zambian theatre and establish a contact with the club leaders. Although the workshop was very

<sup>52</sup> Charles Mafika, "University of Zambia Travelling Theatre to Eastern Province, 9-19th August," Chikwakwa Review, 1973-74, p. 18.

successful, it did not manage to get the support of the student leaders from those drama clubs which were still members of Theatre Association of Zambia. The Mongu Workshop was aimed at continuing with the contact which had been established by the 1972 Mongu Workshop and to "stimulate an interest in drama where such groups did not exist."

In 1974 David Kerr led the only Travelling Theatre of that year and the first of its kind to the Western Province. Previous Chikwaka Theatre activities had been directed towards Mongu communities and schools and colleges. David Kerr's Western Province Travelling Theatre was quite different from previous tours held in various provinces. Previous tours had been by members of the University of Zambia Dramatic Society and members of the drama course who went to the province with programs of plays and performed only these plays to the areas they visited or held drama workshops and out of these workshops produced plays with the participants. In the 1974 Western Province Travelling Theatre project David Kerr went with only four students and two plays by the author, The District Governor Goes to a Village and Blood. The cast for these two plays were selected at the workshop which the team held. At this workshop, too, the participants, with the guidance of David

Kerr and the members of the team, created three plays in the local language. These plays were Mulimi ya Bulali (The Wise Farmer), Likumuca (The Man from Joni), and Mwa Kuta (Court Session). These plays became part of the program when this newly-created cast joined the University group and toured the province. David Kerr makes some very important observations in his conclusion remarks about the tour:

The experiment of using students from the local secondary schools as the main actors in the Travelling Theatre was enormously successful. Since we had such large numbers at the Senanga workshop we were able to select a troupe of excellent actors who are used to working with each other, who knew the local conventions and whose morale was high because of the glamour of working with Chikwakwa Theatre. In an amazingly short time some of the actors matured sufficiently to pitch their performances to the very different stages and audiences which they were exposed to. We feel that this kind of experience is of more value than displaying theatre skills from Chikwakwa without local

participation and is the best way of promoting a theatre tradition in the rural areas. <sup>53</sup>

### Open-Air Theatres in the Rural Areas

Arising out of the Chikwakwa Travelling Theatre Movement was the idea of creating permanent theatre establishments of Chikwakwa type open-air theatres in all the major provincial town centers. It is this idea that led to the 1972 Mongu Theatre Workshop organized by the Department of Extramural Studies and the English Department of the University of Zambia to construct Kamuhelo Open-Air Theatre in Mongu, Western Province. The workshop was supervised by Bob Johnson, Bob Fraser, Oscar Sibetta and Michael Ward, involving participants from local secondary schools and teacher training colleges. Kamuhelo Theatre was built in two weeks' time but as Michael Ward pointed out, the major difficulty in the building of the open-air theatre on the edge of the plains was the possibility of danger of flooding during the winter season:

This would obviously affect the type of con-

<sup>53</sup> David Kerr, "Diary-Report on Senanga Theatre Workshop and Western Province Travelling Theatre," Chikwakwa Review, 1974-75, p. 29.

struction we put up. We had been warned by the architect in Lusaka that any kind of permanent establishment would not be feasible on land with very high water level. This was confirmed by officials in the Water Department in Mongu. However we were assured by the Department that the flood very seldom came up to the proposed area. 54

So the team went ahead, convinced by the assurances from various technicians and Government officials to build the theatre. It was a unique experience for both the team and local people. Bob Fraser summed up the whole experience this way:

The opening of Kamuhelo Theatre was an achievement of three sorts. First it was a project in which representatives of an entire community participated - a communal effort to create something of great cultural and social significance. Second, the project was completed on the surprisingly small budget of K700.00, one third of which was spent on petrol and travelling

54 Michael R Ward, "1972 Mongu Theatre Workshop: Notes," Report on Mongu Theatre Workshop, May 1972, p. 6.

charges for the landrovers and on living expenses for the UNZA team and daily refreshments for the participants for one month. Third, it was an achievement which sprang out of the cultural heritage of one group of people in one part of Zambia. The performances on the Sunday afternoon was of popular interest to children, students, workers and leaders of the community because the dancers and plays were drawn from their own traditions and experiences spoken in a common language and were relevant to their own lives. This had the effect of making the theatre a place of great excitement. <sup>55</sup>

Kamuhelo Theatre was the first of many Chikwakwa type of theatres which had been planned. Many people at the University of Zambia considered this as the beginning of a very important implementation of the idea of taking theatre to the people. In fact other Travelling Theatre groups discussed with drama clubs in secondary schools and colleges about building this type of open-air theatre. However, two

<sup>55</sup> Robert B. Fraser, "A Report on the Construction of an Open-Air Theatre in Western Province," Report on Mongu Theatre Workshop, May 1972, p. 26.

years later David Kerr led a Travelling Theatre team that visited Kamuhelo Theatre. He made the following comment:

We pay a visit to the theatre which was built in May 1972 by the Chikwakwa Theatre Workshop. Alas it is now a folly! What moment of insanity caused it to be built on the flood plain? It now looks like a pathetic archeological site. A crumbling mound indicates the vague outline of the seats; there is a borehole in the middle of the stage and a village garden approaches nearby. <sup>56</sup>

Kamuhelo Theatre is an example of a project that received no follow-up and died because of that. Although Bob Fraser indicated that the project received an overwhelming support from the local people, it does not seem that these local people were interested in using this theatre at all. The condition in which the theatre was in 1974 shows that it was not used by the local people and the nearby secondary schools after all. Was it because this theatre had been initiated by people from outside the area or were the floods the main reason why people did not use this theatre?

<sup>56</sup> David Kerr, op. cit. p. 23.

If the local people really wanted to use this theatre the question of floods would not have been the main problem because many areas are flooded and people often shift to higher grounds during the winter and come back after the floods. So the floods were not really the main reason. The main reason may be the lack of leadership.

Chikwakwa Travelling Theatre is the most significant theatre project. Its influence on the development of theatre in Zambia has been the greatest and its results tremendous. Since 1970, when the first Travelling Theatre was held, this project has been the major difference between Zambian theatre and the expatriate white theatre. When the idea of taking theatre to the people was expounded in 1970, no one really knew how this was going to be achieved, but now, looking at the number of tours which have been undertaken, the number of drama and dance workshops which have been held in urban areas, provincial centers, villages, secondary schools and colleges; the number of people who have attended the performances; the number of plays that have been created by the teams and the participants, one can conclude that the University of Zambia Dramatic Society has fulfilled its main objectives. The Travelling Theatre Movement has gone from staff led and

organized to student-only tours. Now it has assumed the most significant nature, as demonstrated by the 1974 Western Province Travelling Tour led by David Kerr, where few students travel to the province and use local artists to create a provincial travelling theatre group. This is the nearest Chikwakwa Theatre can get to the people because it means not only taking theatre to them but getting the people themselves, the Party local Government officers, headmen and school children involved in the planning of the tours and the production of the shows. For a long time the people in the rural areas have been ignored when it came to entertainment. A lot of money is spent by the Government in building huge football stadiums, hiring pop groups from abroad to perform to the urban area people, building theatre houses and music halls for the town people, and providing other entertainment facilities, such as cinema houses, hotels and night clubs. The rural people who make up the large majority of Zambia's population are completely ignored. Therefore what Chikwakwa has established is a very important self-help project which will produce entertainment groups within the rural areas. These groups will provide the type of entertainment the people in these areas want and take part in. This is Chikwakwa Theatre's

major advantage over the elitist expatriate-dominated Theatre Association of Zambia. And because Chikwakwa Theatre has contact with the people at the grass roots level it has therefore become the real people's theatre. This is what makes it Zambian theatre.

## Failures of Chikwakwa Theatre

Michael Etherton and many other pro-Chikwakwa Theatre Movement advocates argued that in order to attract indigenous people to the theatre entrance fees to all performances in Chikwakwa Theatre must be low and should be such that the ordinary Zambians can afford easily. Because of this philosophy, all performances in Chikwakwa were limited to about 20n. This low entrance fee was responsible for some of the following problems. Firstly, Chikwakwa performances by UNZADRAMS or by Drama Course were unable to raise any money to maintain Chikwakwa Theatre and to fulfill the projected development of Michael Etherton's proposed Chikwakwa Complex. All Chikwakwa projects were made possible by an annual grant provided by the University. When the University began to experience financial problems funds for Chikwakwa were scarce and there was no major enthusiasm by the University to develop Chikwakwa. The Chikwakwa Committee became less organized and less effective. Chikwakwa began to deteriorate. The oil lamps which were used for lighting the theatre were broken and never replaced. The lawn on the stage was poorly maintained. Drums, costumes and other essential props disappeared from Chikwakwa and were never

replaced. It was often difficult to get firewood for the fires. The main platform built during the Che Guevara production was eaten by termites and was not rebuilt. There was no money for new costumes and materials to build sets for any production. This affected the quality of certain shows as well as the general condition of the theatre itself. This also affected the number of performances in Chikwakwa Theatre. The original idea was that Chikwakwa would be a beehive of many cultural activities, not only by the University Drama Course and Dramatic Society, but by cultural groups from all over the city. There was no money for Chikwakwa to sponsor such cultural activities at all.

Secondly, it became evident that many Zambians, especially those who patronized the expatriate-dominated Lusaka Theatre Club and film theatres, regarded the low entrance fees to Chikwakwa performances as an indication that Chikwakwa Theatre programs were inferior. Of course this was not true. Many of Chikwakwa Theatre programs were of very high standards and artistically superior to some of the shows which went into expatriate-dominated little theatres and playhouses all over the country.

Thirdly, there was definitely a misunderstanding con-

cerning this idea of low fees among those who advocated for it. Certainly in UNZADRAMS the question about the entrance fee came up in each and every Executive Committee but there was never a decision to raise the fee above 25n. It is not clear whether most of the people who patronized Chikwakwa Theatre could not afford to pay more than 25n. Chikwakwa Theatre did not really manage to bring the ordinary Zambians from the nearby Kaunda Square, Chelston and Chamba Valley communities. These are the people whom the Chikwakwa Theatre advocates believed could not afford fees higher than 25n. Most students could easily afford to pay at least 50n. They did not pay for the transport to the theatre. Definitely all the lecturers who patronized Chikwakwa Theatre should have been made to pay at least K1.00.

Probably the biggest problem with Chikwakwa Theatre was its location. Being three miles from the main campus on Great East Road and about nine miles from Lusaka town center, Chikwakwa Theatre was a very isolated place and very difficult to get to. Although many Chikwakwa Theatre enthusiasts argued, "as we have already seen," that the location was an advantage, as it prevented Chikwakwa Theatre from becoming an exclusive on-campus facility, after the

first season it became very clear that the location had major disadvantages. For instance, it was very difficult to direct people to Chikwakwa from the town center or any part of Lusaka. Although there were signs at the junction between the road to Chikwakwa and the Great East Road and all along the road to Chikwakwa Theatre, many people could not see the signs because the road to Chikwakwa did not have lights. Chikwakwa Theatre did lose quite a good number of potential audiences because of this problem

One other problem with Chikwakwa Theatre's location is that because it was located in the bush, very few people could walk to and from Chikwakwa in the dark. As a result the University of Zambia had to provide free buses to all the students of the University, the nearby secondary schools and occasionally residents of Matero, Kabwata and other townships and the town center. Transport became the biggest headache for Chikwakwa Theatre administrators as well as a big financial burden for the University Student Union and the Chikwakwa Committee. The problem with the buses was mainly administrative and disciplinary. Shows in Chikwakwa Theatre often began thirty minutes late because the buses arrived late. In some cases buses went to secondary schools and colleges and came back with nobody because

the bus drivers did not keep to the time-table. One of the most frustrating experiences for the artists who came to perform in Chikwakwa Theatre was that towards the end of the performance all the student audience would rush out of the theatre for the buses, disturbing the performance in the process and sometimes ending the performances prematurely. Sometimes UNZADRAMS asked the drivers to go back to the campus and to come back at a certain time, a few minutes after the end of the performance. Unfortunately, the drivers found this a great opportunity to take the buses to their own homes. They returned late and often made Chikwakwa Theatre pay for this extra mileage. Apart from this problem, drivers often demanded very high overtime rates. This brought many bitter conflicts between the drivers and UNZADRAMS officials who felt that they were being exploited by the drivers. So transport became one of the most difficult problems for Chikwakwa Theatre, affecting not only the number of people who came to the performances but the quality of the performances.

The nature of the theatre itself caused some problems. Chikwakwa Theatre, as we have already seen, is a unique open-air theatre. However, because of being an open-air theatre, Chikwakwa Theatre's programs were very much dic-

tated by the seasons. During the rain season (December - April) it was very difficult to stage any type of shows in Chikwakwa Theatre. During this period Chikwakwa was often very dormant. UNZADRAMS and the Drama Course programs were also dormant during this time and for the rest of the months until July the University was on a long vacation. This caused both the Drama Course and UNZADRAMS to squeeze all their programs into the dry season, resulting in the performance of inadequately prepared plays. During the big part of the dry season, Chikwakwa Theatre was quite cold and although fires were lit within the theatre between the stage and the audience it was still quite cold and windy for those seated on the outward edges of the theatre, especially for those who were used to the comfort of conventional little theatres and playhouses. This was certainly one of the reasons why Chikwakwa failed to attract many people from the townships and other communities near Chikwakwa Theatre.

#### Publicity

Chikwakwa Theatre Movement suffered heavily from poor publicity even during its most successful season under the directorship of Michael Etherton. There was clearly no

well-organized press, radio and television publicity campaign. Michael Etherton's idea of a truck with the cast in their costumes going to the town center distributing pamphlets, singing, dancing and talking to the people about a performance in Chikwakwa Theatre was successful as a public campaign but whether this strategy managed to bring anybody to Chikwakwa Theatre is another question. The problem with this type of publicity campaign was that most of the people who received the pamphlets and listened to the students were mostly people who were in town to shop or work but lived in townships far away from Chikwakwa. They could not make it to Chikwakwa Theatre.

Even within the University itself, many lecturers and staff did not know what was happening at Chikwakwa Theatre because the only form of publicity was through hurriedly hand written posters often patched on crowded notice boards within the campus. Because of poor financial position most Chikwakwa programs were not advertised on television, radio, or in newspapers.

It was unfortunate that during these budding years of Chikwakwa Theatre and Chikwakwa Theatre Movement, almost all drama critics who wrote for the two national newspapers were either members of the expatriate theatre clubs or

sympathizers of the Theatre Association of Zambia. These critics rarely reviewed any plays which were performed in Chikwakwa Theatre. Under Michael Etherton, Chikwakwa Theatre sent free tickets to the two national newspapers but very few reporters came to the shows. Even during the eleven public performances of Che Guevara during the 1970 Non-Aligned Conference in Lusaka the press coverage was very poor. Michael Etherton commented on this in his review of the production.

At the three performances which followed the audiences were disappointingly sparse. The Lusaka public was not very interested, it seemed. The Times of Zambia did not find room for us, though the Zambia Mail had a very encouraging report of the play.<sup>57</sup>

The publicity of Chikwakwa productions, however, could have been very successful if a team had been constituted to review and publicize all Chikwakwa programs. It is true to say that the publicity of Che Guevara was badly handled although Michael Etherton said good things about Tessa Armstrong who handled the publicity.

<sup>57</sup> Michael Etherton, "Che at Chikwakwa," University, No. 12, December 1970, p. 13.

Also at this early pre-rehearsal stage we were joined by Mrs. Tessa Armstrong who took over publicity. She had just arrived in Lusaka from the United States - she is an Afro-American - and she amazed us all by the speed with which she found her way around the mass media circuit of Lusaka. <sup>58</sup>

The fact that she was so new to Lusaka makes it questionable whether she could actually succeed in mounting a successful media publicity. As it turned out many hurried arrangements were made at the last minute with television, radio and the press who had already committed themselves to covering other conference events. It is also questionable whether one individual could have adequately publicized such a huge production. Although Michael Etherton claims that Mrs. Armstrong knew "her way around the mass media circuit", she obviously knew very little about the character of the Zambian mass media. Like most of Chikwaka productions, Che Guevara was an excellent production which was seen by very few people because of an inadequate publicity campaign and failure to utilize various cheap and

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

and effective mass media.

One other big failure of Chikwakwa Theatre Movement is its failure to initiate an effective fund raising project or projects. From the time Chikwakwa was founded funds for maintenance of the Theatre and for various productions in the Theatre and the Travelling Theatre came from the University through Chikwakwa Committee. As from 1972, the Committee was finding it more difficult to solicit for funds from the University. Up to this time there was no clear fund raising policy. There has never been any public fund raising campaign except the University of Zambia Dramatic Society's public fund raising campaign of 1970-71 under the chairmanship of Hudwell Mwacalimba that raised enough money for the Society's programs until 1973. Chikwakwa Committee did not initiate any public fund raising project even though the Committee knew that University was having many problems in fulfilling Chikwakwa's financial requests. When Chikwakwa was built, one of the ideas about Chikwakwa was, as Michael Etherton put it:

...its present physical environment in Chamba Valley near the University is suitable and effective since it enables the University community to use it easily without it becoming

an exclusive on-campus facility. It has caught the imagination of both the students (who now espouse the concepts it embodies and who feel at home in the place) and of a large number of Lusaka's citizens. The theatre cannot develop solely for the better placed in society, and we are therefore concerned over the slow pace of the development of Kaunda Square. <sup>59</sup>

And yet even with all this realization, Chikwakwa Committee did not involve any members of the surrounding communities in the planning, building, maintenance and raising of funds for the Theatre. If Chikwakwa Committee was really serious with the idea of involving the people of Lusaka, it should have at least involved the City Council, the Cultural Services Department, the Party and secondary schools and colleges in the fund raising drive for the building of the Theatre.

In Michael Etherton's paper to the Cultural Services Department, in which he proposes the development of a Chikwakwa Theatre Complex, he suggested Government's in-

<sup>59</sup> Michael Etherton, "Chikwakwa Theatre " (A paper prepared for the Cultural Services Department), May 1971, p. 1.

volvement in the development of Chikwaka Theatre, and that the project be included in the five-year National Development Plan. But nothing was ever done by Chikwaka Committee to see if this proposal could be considered by the Government. Michael Etherton's idea about the development of the Chikwaka Theatre Complex was discarded and one of the main reasons given was the lack of funds. It is not clear whether Michael Etherton had a well-documented fund raising program for the development of this Theatre Complex besides the Government aid he implied in his paper. However, it seems that he was not able to capitalize on the 1970 fame of Chikwaka Theatre's Che Guevara production to get the Government's commitment in funding more cultural programs at Chikwaka Theatre. It was quite clear that President Kaunda had endorsed the philosophy of Chikwaka Theatre by accepting the Theatre to put on Che Guevara for the Non-Aligned Conference. President Kaunda's speech, as Michael Etherton pointed out after the performance, was a clear sign that the Government was very willing to help in the building of Chikwaka Theatre. It needed a careful plan and approach to turn this Presidential endorsement into an annual grant for the Theatre.

After Michael Etherton and Andrew Horns' departure

from the University, one big problem that followed was that many people, especially members of Staff of the University, felt that that was the end of Chikwakwa Theatre. Although many successful programs were held in Chikwakwa after Michael Etherton's departure, many people, including students, had made up their minds that without Michael Etherton nothing worthwhile could ever come out of Chikwakwa. So it took quite some time to convince them that even without Michael Etherton, Chikwakwa Theatre could still be Chikwakwa Theatre. There is no doubt, Michael Etherton had been a major driving force behind the development of Chikwakwa Theatre and its philosophy but there are indications that either the Chikwakwa Committee had left a lot of thinking about Chikwakwa Theatre to Michael Etherton or Michael Etherton had, without Chikwakwa Committee's hand, advanced what he considered as the best idea of Chikwakwa Theatre when he wrote "Chikwakwa Theatre" (a paper prepared for Cultural Services at the suggestion of Mr. Laban Nyirenda). It is in this paper that he outlines the development of Chikwakwa Theatre Complex. However, six months after he wrote this paper, a team of lecturers, Fay Chung, Tom Morris, Bob Fraser and Michael Ward, issued a paper in which they disagreed with Michael Etherton's priorities on

the development of Chikwakwa Theatre and issued a paper they termed "Amendments to Michael Etherton's Paper on the Development of Chikwakwa Theatre", stating their major differences with Michael Etherton's proposals: the installation of electrical lighting and sound system in Chikwakwa Theatre, and the building of a restaurant, a bar, and indoor theatre. This difference shows clearly that Michael Etherton's plans about Chikwakwa Theatre had not been initially discussed or endorsed by members of the English Department and Chikwakwa Committee to which these four lecturers belonged. This also demonstrated that Michael Etherton had far-sighted and serious plans for Chikwakwa which no one else in Chikwakwa Committee seemed to have. These differences were responsible for the death of Michael Etherton's ideas about the development of Chikwakwa Theatre Complex. After his departure from the University of Zambia no one took a significant forefront role in pushing forward for the development of Chikwakwa. In fact, there were now differences among members of Chikwakwa Committee, not only on the issues raised by Michael Etherton in his paper but on the future of Chikwakwa Theatre and its production philosophy. Obbi Mazombwe, who was UNZADRAMS' representative to Chikwakwa Committee during 1971-72 season

indicated, for instance, that Kabwe Kasoma supported Michael Etherton's proposal and was arguing for the Committee's practical implementation of Michael Etherton's proposals but was strongly opposed by Fay Chung, who was now the director of Chikwakwa Theatre. She saw no need for the complex. Obbi Mazombe also observed that this difference led to the creation of a sub-committee that has been referred to earlier and which not only disagreed with Michael Etherton's proposals but became the main core of Chikwakwa Committee and eventually responsible for Chikwakwa's future. It was no surprise that Fay Chung announced in the 1972 Chikwakwa Theatre publication, CHIKWAKWA REVIEW:

We are hoping to build our own little theatre on the campus along similar lines as Chikwakwa Theatre. A site has already been chosen opposite Engineering Department near one of the lakes. The spot can be inspected by any interested people - at present it is little more than a spot between two anthills on which you will find a tree apiece.

We want to get started on the construction of the theatre as soon as we get the green light from the powers that be. At present we have to wait

until the earth moving going on in that area is completed. We hope students and staff will come out and build the theatre. This is very much a self-help project. Quite a few days of manual labour is involved, but if we can get a shift system going it may only involve working there for a few hours. Come and build your own theatre! <sup>60</sup>

This is a clear example of the confusion in Chikwakwa Committee during the 1971-72 season. Why this project of "our own little theatre on the campus along similar lines as Chikwakwa Theatre"? Was Chikwakwa Theatre no longer their theatre? What were the reasons for another theatre while plans were being discussed for the building of the Chikwakwa Theatre Complex? It seems that some members of Chikwakwa Committee were not prepared to go along with Michael Etherton's Chikwakwa plans, and were not happy with Michael Etherton's seemingly ever-present dominating shadow. This confusion could only come about if there were certain individuals in Chikwakwa Committee who felt that

<sup>60</sup> Fay K. Chung, "Open Air Theatre on the Campus," Chikwakwa Review, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 20.

after all the location of Chikwakwa Theatre is a great disadvantage and therefore the Theatre should be discontinued. Obbi Mazombe, who was present during the discussion about the building of the "little theatre", said that at the beginning of the discussion he thought that the idea was to build a sort of an open-air theatre for rehearsal purposes in order to cut down on expenses incurred by UNZADRAMS, who hired buses to and from Chikwakwa during the rehearsals. But as the discussion went on, Obbi Mazombe felt that it became clear that this "little theatre" was going to replace Chikwakwa Theatre. Obbi Mazome became one of the most vocal opponents of the "little theatre on campus" project, as he felt that all the advantages of Chikwakwa Theatre's location; an off-campus facility with the reach of people from Chamba Valley, Kaunda Square and Chelston, and the fact that students liked the idea of going out of the campus symbolized by the trips to the performances in Chikwakwa, were all going to be destroyed by the "little theatre on the campus". Besides, many members of UNZADRAMS argued that if certain people were arguing for a theatre on campus, why shouldn't they propose for the building of a conventional, all-purpose and all-season little theatre or playhouse, rather than build another open-

air theatre with the same problems and disadvantages as Chikwakwa Theatre. However, in the long run nothing was ever heard about the "little theatre on campus" nor the development of Chikwakwa Theatre Complex. The director of Cultural Services Department's reply to Michael Etherton's paper was never known and Chikwakwa Theatre's maintenance deteriorated year after year.

## Chapter Five

### The New Approach Era and the Integration Movement

#### Introduction

By 1973 it was becoming clear that the debate between UNZADRAMS and TAZ was getting more and more complicated. There was a need for a new approach by both Chikwakwa Theatre Movement and the expatriate Theatre Association of Zambia. However, it was interesting that the Chikwakwa Travelling Theatre tours to the rural areas had taken the debate to rural secondary schools and colleges. Unfortunately, while more and more rural secondary schools and college drama and dance clubs were seeing Chikwakwa Theatre as the foundation of truly Zambian theatre, more urban secondary schools and college drama clubs were joining Theatre Association of Zambia.

Chikwakwa Theatre advocates and UNZADRAMS realized at this time that a very new approach was necessary if they were to defeat TAZ and its European theatre influence in Zambia while Theatre Association of Zambia decided that its new technique was to be the integration effort. This was time of less public debate and more private campaigns, and

secret meetings with the authorities and other influential individuals in the nation for both Chikwakwa Theatre advocates and TAZ Executive Committee. Both organizations were experiencing a lot of changes. Chikwakwa Theatre was losing its directors and student leaders while new people with different views were being elected to TAZ Executive Committee.

## Theatre Association of Zambia and the Integration Effort

Theatre Association of Zambia's major effort to integrate Chikwakwa Theatre and other Zambian theatre clubs into the Association without changing the policies and philosophy of the Association actually began seriously with the election of Kabwe Kasoma and David Foko in 1970, as we have already seen. The next major effort was directed towards new University of Zambia students and new members of UNZADRAMS, who joined the University in 1971 and who were expected to eventually hold responsible positions in UNZADRAMS' administration. Two such students were Cosmos Chipulu and Lazarus Chewe, who came from Mukuba Workshop and who had been the most outspoken anti-Chikwakwa and anti-UNZADRAMS Zambian critics at the 1970 TAZ Annual General Meeting. TAZ considered them supporters of European theatre whose views were very well known. The two found themselves representing Zambia at an international theatre workshop organized by the International Amateur Theatre Association (IATA) in Denmark. They were accompanied by John Matchikiza. The two young men were selected not only because of their enormous acting potential but mainly because they were promising young Zambians whose

attack on Chikwakwa Theatre concepts and UNZADRAMS at the 1970 TAZ Annual General Meeting demonstrated that they could pull UNZADRAMS back to TAZ. So this was a coaching process. The two young men had not yet changed their views. When they came back from Europe, they were very eager to put into practice all the theatre techniques they had gathered at the workshop. They approached TAZ Executive Committee and proposed that they organize a national drama workshop at Chikwakwa Theatre for TAZ clubs and many other school drama clubs in the urban and rural areas which TAZ was to sponsor. TAZ saw this as a great opportunity to demonstrate to critics that by sponsoring the workshop in Chikwakwa, TAZ was willing to work with UNZADRAMS and even use Chikwakwa Theatre. Cosmos Chipulu, who was now a member of the Executive Committee of UNZADRAMS easily won the confidence of the author, who was the chairman, and the whole Committee and went ahead with plans for the workshop. Cosmos Chipulu and Lazarus Chewe wrote to many school clubs and planned everything to the last detail. A lot of discussion took place between the team and TAZ Executive Committee. Even strong anti-TAZ critics, such as Fay Chung, UNZADRAMS adviser, saw the project as a major sign of change in TAZ. But when the time came for the workshop, TAZ Execu-

tive Committee could not guarantee the payment and so the workshop was cancelled. This blow enabled Cosmos Chipulu and Lazarus Chewe to realize how unreliable TAZ was and how unwilling the expatriate theatre clubs were in getting involved in spending money for drama workshops or to work with UNZADRAMS.

TAZ's efforts to use Cosmos Chipulu and Lazarus Chewe to pull UNZADRAMS back into TAZ did not end there. The following year the young men were elected into TAZ Executive Committee. At that time UNZADRAMS did not take part in TAZ festivals. It did not pay the annual subscription fees. UNZADRAMS had nothing to do with TAZ at this time. There is no reason, therefore, why these two young men were elected into TAZ this time, and yet in 1970, when UNZADRAMS was a very active member, its representative fought very hard to get at least Kabwe Kasoma elected into the Committee. So this was another effort to drag UNZADRAMS back into TAZ. Soon Cosmos Chipulu and Lazarus Chewe, like Kabwe Kasoma and all the Zambians who had been elected or co-opted into TAZ Executive Committee, soon realized that they were being used. By 1973 these two young men had joined ranks with Kabwe Kasoma, Obbie Mazombwe, Hudwell Mwalimba, Fay Chung and the author to reject anything to

do with TAZ and to ask the Government of the Republic of Zambia to withdraw its subsidy and recognition from TAZ. The whole team went to see the Director of Cultural Services and appealed to him to withdraw the subsidy and recognition from TAZ and to help in the formation of an indigenous theatre association that would extend its membership to all cultural and drama clubs in schools and colleges in the urban and rural areas of Zambia. The team found the Director very understanding but very unwilling to take specific actions against TAZ. Unfortunately, the main target of the delegation, Edwin Manda, was not prepared also to commit himself into doing anything specific about TAZ. Edwin Manda had been co-opted into TAZ Executive Committee. This position made it very difficult for him and the Department to do anything. His membership with Lusaka Theatre Club, an expatriate-dominated club, also made it very difficult for him to support what the team had come to ask him and the Department to do. The team came out of the meeting convinced that the Department of Cultural Services wanted to continue playing the middle role, although the Director seemed to imply that the Department would help any cultural activities by indigenous Zambians. It was also clear that the Department of Cultural Services was not will-

ing to assist Chikwakwa Theatre financially or to officially recommend for Government subsidy and recognition. It is this disappointment and helplessness that led to the creation of a permanent team to work on the establishment of a theatre national association. The team comprised of Japhet Msimuko, Mary Mzeche, Maurice Chishimba, Juliana Chileshe, Lazarus Chewe, Cosmos Chipulu and the author. The team met at Fay Chung's house and held a number of discussions, with Fay Chung as the adviser. The new association was called Zambia National Theatre Arts Association.

In the meantime Theatre Association of Zambia and Lusaka Theatre Club continued to draw Government endorsement in more practical ways, as well as to make sure that nothing would make the Government change its policy of providing Theatre Association of Zambia with an annual grant. Edwin Manda's membership to Lusaka Theatre Club proved to be a greater advantage for the Club and Theatre Association of Zambia than any other previous initiatives they had made to win Government and Party moral and financial support. Edwin Manda, having won in 1972 Theatre Association of Zambia Festival's best actor award for his role as Othello in Lusaka Theatre Club's production of Othello by Shakespeare and the Scheweppes Service Award for

his contribution to theatre was considered as the most important Zambian actor. There is no doubt, Edwin Manda is Zambia's leading actor. However, many people suspected the way Edwin Manda was being projected by Theatre Association of Zambia after winning the awards. After the performance of Othello, Edwin Manda accepted an invitation to accompany the British adjudicator and perform the same role in a production in Britain. Many people felt that besides endorsing the competitive element of the Festival, Edwin Manda had no objection to the way Theatre Association of Zambia operated and the whole idea of hiring British adjudicators. To officials of Theatre Association of Zambia, if it was all right with the Head of State, the Director of Cultural Services and the most popular Zambian actor for TAZ to operate the way it did, then all the Chikwakwa Theatre Critics were not only irrelevant but misguided.

Theatre Association of Zambia had now developed a very successful plan of involving the Government of the Republic of Zambia in its annual festival. Besides the annual grant which enabled TAZ to hold its annual festival, the Association managed to get the President, Ministers, Ministers of State, or the Director of Cultural Services to officially open the festivals and present awards to the

winners. In 1972, the then Minister of State in the Department of Cultural Services officially opened TAZ festival at a party held at the TAZ chairman's farm in Lusaka West which was attended mostly by Zambian journalists, radio and television personalities, Government officials and executive members of the expatriate-dominated theatre clubs. Chikwakwa Theatre representatives were Cosmos Chipulu, Lazarus Chewe, the author, and Ben Obumsele, then Chairman of the Literature and Languages Department at the University of Zambia. In the official opening ceremony the Minister of State read a speech that was prepared either by TAZ Executive Committee or its Chairman, in which he endorsed the activities and policies of the Association including the idea of the competitive festival. Chikwakwa representatives were introduced to the hired adjudicator with the hope that he was going to make them reverse their decision not to enter Leonard Kibera's production of the Strong Breed by Wole Soyinka into that year's TAZ festival. Unfortunately, this extravaganza only hardened our views against TAZ and the festival. The adjudicator was not invited to Chikwakwa Theatre where The Strong Breed was performed. However, he decided to invite himself to Chikwakwa Theatre and to comment on the production. He said that he

could not understand why UNZADRAMS could not enter a production that was capable of winning many awards, although he claimed he did not understand Wole Soyinka's play. This only helped to demonstrate that Chikwakwa representatives were right by saying that most hired British adjudicators did not understand Zambian and African plays, especially those like The Strong Breed which deals with some specific aspects of African culture and customs.

From 1972 onwards, TAZ was mainly interested in securing the membership of secondary school drama clubs. TAZ Executive Committee did this by doing exactly what UNZADRAMS advocated at the 1970 TAZ Annual General Meeting. Firstly, UNZADRAMS demanded that the festival be decentralized so as to allow more Zambians to see the plays. But this was rejected by 1970 and 1971 TAZ Annual General Meetings. Chikwakwa productions of Kasembe and the Portuguese and The Strong Breed were all attempts by UNZADRAMS to demonstrate this point. And yet, in 1972 TAZ Executive Committee decided to allow clubs to perform at the venues of their own choice and the adjudicator to travel from one town to another. This gave a chance for many secondary school groups to perform in their home towns. Secondly, UNZADRAMS pointed out at the 1970 TAZ Annual General Meet-

ing that it was unfair for secondary schools, colleges and the University Dramatic Clubs to compete with big and well-financed established theatre clubs who had enough money and time for elaborate and well-rehearsed productions. Unfortunately at this meeting David Wallace, Cosmos Chipulu and Lazarus Chewa accused UNZADRAMS of suffering from an inferiority complex and claimed that Mukuba Workshop had won awards and praises despite the stiff competition from the expatriate-dominated and established theatre clubs. They also claimed that the problem with UNZADRAMS was that it had badly trained actors and directors. But two years later TAZ Executive Committee and Annual General Meeting decided to establish a schools festival running concurrently with the main festival and adjudicated by the same hired adjudicator. However, this gave a chance for secondary school drama groups to compete with each other. But all these half-measures did not make UNZADRAMS change its policy against competitive festivals and the hiring of foreign adjudicators, and above all, the way TAZ operated.

#### David Wallace and the Mukuba Workshop

David Wallace was elected Chairman of TAZ in 1970 after a very carefully planned campaign against Chikwaka

Theatre and UNZADRAMS that assured many expatriate whites that Chikwakwa Theatre or any Zambian organization was not going to succeed in changing the basic structure of TAZ. He effectively handled the white people and the representatives of his Mukuba Workshop, the most outspoken Zambians against Chikwakwa Theatre and UNZADRAMS, and defeated all the other candidates. He became a major link between the conservative white expatriate and the young Zambian actors, most of whom misunderstood what Chikwakwa and UNZADRAMS stood for. David Wallace's first major drama project was with a secondary school in Luapula Province in the sixties where he constructed an open-air theatre and directed a number of plays. His first TAZ festival entry with Mukuba Workshop in 1969 was Mr. Johnson, which was very well received by both the audience and press. Chiman Vyas reviewed Mr. Johnson.

Mr. Johnson was the display of great theatrical discipline among the large cast in both presentation and acting. Any secondary school would have been very proud of Mr. Johnson.<sup>61</sup>

In 1971 David Wallace entered for TAZ Festival, the produc-

<sup>61</sup> Chiman Vyas, Cultural Events in Africa, No. 64, 1970, p. 3.

tion of his play, Do You Love Me Master, which won Dismus Musonda the best actor award. The play was performed for President Kaunda and his guests in Lusaka. David Wallace also wrote and directed The Good People of Chimwemwe, which he entered for the 1972 TAZ Festival with Mukuba Workshop and was hailed as an excellent Zambian play. Joel Chansa reviewed the play for the Daily Mail.

The play is about Zambia now. It begins in the street with a typical township scene - traders, bystanders, dancers - these are the good people of Chimwemwe. They come into the theatre, exploit its possibilities for entertainment and leave, prompted by a strange man in whites who berates them for their careless and irresponsible behavior. There is a lot of comedy that leans on local situations for its laughs. <sup>62</sup>

Probably the biggest theatrical adventure by David Wallace was his production of his own play, Jesus Christ (Z) Superstar, an adaptation of the popular musical Jesus Christ Superstar. He entered the play into the 1973 TAZ

<sup>62</sup> Joe Chaonsa, "Do You Love Me Master," Times of Daily Mail, June 5, 1971, p. 7.

Festival and won himself a lot of praise. David Wallace's major success was the outstanding group of young actors he produced out of his Mukuba Workshop, such as Emmanuel Chileshe, Brown Jila, Dismus Musonda, Lazarus Chewe, and Cosmos Chipulu, who became outstanding actors and administrators at the University of Zambia. Although many members of UNZADRAMS disliked David Wallace because of the role he played in 1970 at the TAZ Annual General Meeting, they were amazed at the quality of the actors he turned out of his Workshop. From 1971 to 1975 ex-Mukuba Workshop students were some of the best actors in UNZADRAMS and very bitter critics of TAZ. When they came to the University they began to see things in a different perspective and came to realize that UNZADRAMS was right. Although they were now anti-TAZ they remained very loyal to David Wallace.

#### Theatre Circle

By 1973 David Wallace had not only become a strong critic of TAZ but was now interested in working with UNZADRAMS and Chikwakwa Theatre. He moved to Lusaka and began a completely new theatre project, not in the Lusaka Theatre Club or a secondary school, but with Zambian workers and

college students. Some of his former students at the University of Zambia tried to get him to produce some of his previous plays with UNZADRAMS, but he decided to form his own theatre group, Theatre Circle, at Waddington Center with Haggai Chisulo, Tanda Mumba (his former students), Mann Sichalwe and many of his former students at Evelyn Hone College and other colleges in Lusaka. However, there were still fears that many of his former students in UNZADRAMS were going to join Theatre Circle, but most of them were graduating from the University of Zambia when the Theatre Circle was founded.

Theatre Circle was a unique theatre experiment, a much more significant approach to Zambian theatre than David Wallace's previous work with Mukuba Workshop. He was now a leading advocate of the type of theatre Chikwaka Theatre was experimenting on - the utilization of traditional folk lore, traditional dance and music in creating plays about the Zambian people. He began to experiment on popular traditional Kalulu (hare) tales found in many of the ethnic fables and parables. David Wallace brought his Theatre Circle production to the 1975 Zambia National Theatre Arts Association (ZANTAA) Festival which was held in April at the University of Zambia to select a play and

dance-drama for the Second World Black Arts Festival. Tisa Chifunyise reviewed Theatre Circle's production.

To end the evening program was a play performed by Theatre Circle. The play is called Mr. Elephant's Beer Drink, written and directed by David Wallace. Theatre Circle is a group of actors, most of them workers, who get together several evenings a week at Waddington Centre. They are working on a series of Kalulu plays from the traditional stories about kalulu and his cunning ways. The play is done on two levels on the stage. The original stories are told on a lower level and the present day interpretation on the upper level. The actors and actresses in the play have all had some experience in acting and the secondary *school clubs benefited quite a lot from their* acting techniques and Mr. Wallace's production technique. In spite of the play coming late in the evening, the audience was kept laughing throughout the 45 minutes of the show. <sup>63</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Tisa Chifunyise, "Report of the Drama and Dance Workshop and Festival," ZANTAA Bulletin (May 1975), p. 2.

David Wallace's experiments with Theatre Circle were very successful indeed. This approach demonstrated by his production of Kalulu plays has begun a unique stage in the development of a truly Zambian theatre. The production of Mr. Elephant's Beer Drink demonstrated a very successful way of using the traditional storytelling element in creating a unique dramatic presentation. Although the play was in English, the language was with traditional symbolic and literary values, which made it a unique Zambian play.

#### The New Approach

By 1974, Chikwaka Theatre had made such a great impact in all the rural areas the Travelling Theatre had been. Zambians in the urban areas, especially the Copperbelt towns, where Theatre Association of Zambia was very strong, knew very little about Chikwaka Theatre. Drama workshops which had been in Copperbelt towns and in Lusaka had not made any impact because they involved very few secondary school and college students. Some Chikwaka Theatre advocates felt that a new approach was necessary in order to reach many of the urban Zambians. The idea of taking theatre to the people by taking shows to township welfare halls and performing at market places had proved less suc-

cessful than originally conceived. This search for a new approach led to the establishment of "Play For Today", a thirty-minute weekly program on Television Zambia.

Mulenga N'gandu, one of the founder members of "Play For Today" on Television Zambia (TVZ), traced the development of the program in his article on the program in Chikwakwa Review.

There has been a chain of events leading to the birth of this drama program on TVZ, the major ones being political events in the country, and the UNZA students belief in trying to serve the common man with open, alert, searching and critical minds and to use what we have gathered from this institution to make the life of this nation more beautiful and real than it was before. Politically, Zambia had just introduced what I might call "Cultural Revolution" with the hope of getting rid of foreign values, so as to enhance self-identity.

Soon all the government institutions and non-government institutions felt this new wind of change. The mass media were also ordered to scrap their foreign-oriented materials and replace them with those reflecting the nation's aspirations.

Television Zambia, being under the total control of this government had to conform to this new change without delay. This posed many problems because this cultural revolution, like many others before it, had been taken without first establishing the resources to back its success. The government had the machinery and the man power - producers and directors. But it had few artistic resources; as this country has got no professional artists. The result was that TVZ either closed early around 21.00 hrs. or just put radio programs (interviews) in front of the cameras. It is at this point that Mr. Edwin Zulu and myself sat down to devise a program which could replace the controversial "University in Perspective" as well as to try and bring something which could reflect Zambian way of life. Chikwakwa was seen as our main source of material. Three-quarters of the plays put on this program have been performed by the University students. However, at the moment other groups have now entered, so that we now receive plays from as far as Livingstone.

But the most important factor to note is that

"Play for Today" is a direct product of Chikwakwa activities which are transmitted. The plays on this program reflect contemporary Zambia. For instance Stephen Chifunyise's I Resign (which I personally think is the best on our program) gives an analysis of Zambian Humanism. There are many others which touch on almost all aspects of Zambian life. <sup>64</sup>

"Play for Today" was received with mixed feelings. Obviously Chikwakwa Theatre enthusiasts were very much encouraged by the program. This was a major victory to them. Many members of the University of Zambia Dramatic Society and other Zambians were very much excited by the program. But the press were neither impressed nor satisfied. They became the leading critics of the whole project. It received such bad press reviews that many people began to question TVZ why the program was allowed to continue. Many people agreed with the negative reviews of the program by Martha T. Paynter and Clara Sikeneta, who were the television critics for Times of Zambia and Zambia Daily Mail, respectively. There was no doubt, the program had

<sup>64</sup> Mulenga N'gandu, "Play for Today," Chikwakwa Review 1973-74, pp 16-17.

many faults but these press reviews were just too discouraging for such a pioneer television project.

There are things which both Martha T. Paynter and Clara Sikaneta overlooked or did not understand about "Play for Today". Firstly, they compared TVZ's "Play for Today" to the drama and comedy films from Hollywood and BBC, and yet the earliest scripts for this program were stage plays which were completely unsuitable for television production. Most of the earliest plays, such as Kabwe Kasoma's Poisoned Cultural Meat and the author's Blood, were done with very little adaptation for television. But the team believed that they had to begin somewhere if any attempts were to be made to cut down on the number of foreign films on TVZ. This was a good beginning. Secondly, most of the actors and actresses were not only amateurs but also full time students who did not have enough time to rehearse the plays adequately. Thirdly, these pioneers found themselves with very poor or no facilities at all for the type of project they were involved in. The studio was too small for most of the plays the groups performed. There was no money or manpower for the construction of sets. All the plays used the same set, the same old furniture and the same back drops. There were no editing facilities.

The plays were often rehearsed under stage conditions, out of the studio. The cast was not given a chance to rehearse in front of the camera before taping because of limited time. The cameramen knew nothing about the play or the scripts and saw the play for the first time while taping. In some cases, the director, Mr. Edwin Zulu, did not even have enough time to see the play through before taping. So the cast often performed as if performing for stage and no clear directions were given by the director. One, therefore, can say that most of the problems with "Play for Today" were largely technical and studio problems. This the critics did not seem to realize. They vigorously criticized the playwrights and actors.

However, despite all this criticism, the quality of scripts from the beginning of 1975 was improving tremendously. Many script writers for "Play for Today" had now known about the technical problems, the studio limitations and poor recording facilities. They were now writing short, tight controlled and uneditable scripts. The first of such scripts to receive favorable press review was the author's fourth teleplay, I Resign, about which Clara Sikaneta in her "Tele-View" column in Weekend Mail of Zambia Daily Mail wrote:

The play, I Resign, was excellent, constructive and very realistic in today's society. At last Mr. Chifunyise has shown that it is not only drunkenness, broken marriages, joblessness and the like which characterize the Zambian society.... I could not believe it that the play was actually written by Stephen Chifunyise. Mr. Chifunyise made us think that he is not capable of writing good plays such as Staying Together which had no plot and no meaning.... But I would like to congratulate him very much on writing the best play that has ever been on Television Zambia....<sup>65</sup>

MEC, writing in his "Inside TV" column had this to say about the same play:

"Play for Today", I Resign, by Stephen Chifunyise, was better than most, starring the playwright and another of the series contributors David Kerr.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Clara Sikaneta, "Tele-View," Weekend Mail (April 26, 1975), p. 7.

<sup>66</sup> MEC, "Inside TV," Sunday Times of Zambia (April 27, 1975), p. 8.

There are certain things responsible for the excellence of I Resign besides a good script. One factor was the role played by the director, Mumba Kapumpa, who insisted on a studio rehearsal and the presence of cameramen during the rehearsal. This enabled both the cast and the cameramen to familiarize themselves with the studio and get precise camera directions. The second factor and probably the most important was that all the actors in the play were mature and experienced actors who managed to make the characters believable. It was often very difficult to cast the plays to mature people. Most of the grown-ups followed the newspaper critics closely and feared to be a part of the "disaster" as most of the plays were described.

More and more writers were also beginning to take into consideration various aspects of good scripts, such as clear characterization, a small cast and easy stories. They were learning a lot about the character of the media they were writing for. For instance Mulenga N'gandu's Jobless Existence, David Kerr's Pay Day, Kwalela Ikafa's Dambwa and the author's A Thorn in our Flesh were very good teleplays. They were written for television and a lot of consideration was taken in connection with the limitations of the studio and other technical facilities.

"Play for Today" made a big impact despite the outcry of the critics. It showed many people that Zambians can write, direct and produce their own television dramas. Many people began to write for television although there were few constant contributors such as Light Musonda, Julius Chongo, Mulenga N'gandu and the author. It was now possible, because of "Play for Today", for Zambian playwrights who had no chance for their plays to be done by the expatriate-dominated theatre clubs or the University of Zambia's Chikwaka Theatre to be assured that someone was going to try their plays for television. In fact Edwin Zulu's policy was that groups chose their own plays, rehearse the plays, then ask him to come and review the production. It was after this review that he would accept the play for television. Unfortunately, and because of the big demand of the plays, almost all the groups who prepared their plays managed to get them on "Play for Today". This was partly responsible for the poor quality of some of the plays. Some of the plays performed in competitive school festivals were also shown on "Play for Today". So the program became a very important forum for many new Zambian playwrights. Being a general program rather than a specific comedy or drama series was of a major advantage.

For instance, it was possible because of the nature of the program to feature dance-dramas, such as the author's Who Will Dance and Mwaziona, which contained traditional songs and dances and were performed by the students of Matero Boys Secondary School and Matero Girls Secondary School, although it was the studio's policy to present only plays in English.

There are, however, many issues which the Government and Television Zambia must address themselves to if such locally produced television programs are to compete with foreign produced ones. The Government must be prepared to spend money to build bigger and better recording studios. A whole change of policy is necessary. At the moment it seems that Television Zambia or the Government are not interested in full time actors and film makers. Most of those individuals who acted and produced "Play for Today" received a very minimum fee to pay for transport and other costs. In most cases the fees were too low to cover the costs. And yet Television Zambia paid a lot of money for similar foreign television dramas. The whole "Play for Today" project was in the hands of one man - Edwin Zulu - who acted as the story editor, executive producer, director and in many cases as technical director. The studio was

often available for recording only for one hour. It is unrealistic to expect a good thirty-minute program from a one hour studio time. Lastly, it may be necessary for a complete review of both the programming policy and the priorities of Television Zambia if television is going to play a more significant role in the cultural revolution in Zambia.

## Conclusion

We have examined, in this study, the development of theatre in Zambia; the development of traditional performing arts, various theatre clubs, organizations and associations, and the role the Government of the Republic of Zambia has played in this development. This development has taken a long time and can still be considered as being in its primary stages. There are those who believe that that theatre called Zambian theatre has not yet been achieved and that all that has happened is the beginning of what will create Zambian theatre. There are also those, such as Chikwakwa Theatre and the Zambia National Theatre Arts Association, who believe that they know what is Zambian theatre and that they are actively involved in it. Whatever the case may be, it is clear that the dominant expatriate theatre and the influence of foreign culture makes it very difficult for many people to identify what is Zambian theatre and recognize those organizations actively involved in it.

However, there are great signs of encouragement with the newly created Zambia National Theatre Arts Association

and other various independent theatre clubs directed and composed of graduates of the University of Zambia, such as Tikwiza Theatre, whose efforts will soon make it easy for people to understand what is meant by Zambian theatre.

These organizations have been able to grasp those elements which make up Zambian theatre. Chikwakwa Theatre is still consolidating itself as the core on which Zambian theatre is being established.

There are problems which the Zambian theatre has to face. Unfortunately, some of these problems have been ignored. They are the very problems which have obscured the character of Zambian theatre. Firstly, what are the Zambians going to do with the expatriate theatre that continues to enjoy enormous publicity and to operate exclusively in all the little theatres and playhouses in the nation? Are these theatres going to be left alone, as has been the case so far? This is a problem the Government must try to solve. Most of these little theatres and playhouses belong to the people of Zambia and that does not only mean the expatriate people. Secondly, there is the question of trained and skilled manpower to administer and operate these theatre houses if the Government decrees that Zambians should take over. Do we have that type of man-

power or are we going to recruit expatriate directors, managers and technicians for these theatre houses? This dilemma may necessitate a long delay in the Zambianization of these theatre houses. The answer really lies with the University of Zambia. It needs a theatre department that is capable of producing theatre artists and technicians. Theatre houses are not the only problem. The Government is currently building a 16 Million Kwacha multi-media complex that includes facilities for color television. Where do the artists, administrators and technicians for such a media complex come from if the University of Zambia cannot train them? The obvious answer is expatriate manpower. As long as Zambia continues to depend on expatriates to operate the theatre houses, Television Zambia, and other important publicity medias, Zambian theatre will always remain obscure and impractical. This is a time for major decisions. These decisions must be taken in the interests of the indigenous people and as part of the current political and educational reforms in the country. They have to be political because purely artistic and theatrical decisions have favored the continuation of the expatriate theatre establishment.

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