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THE VIABILITY OF SOCIAL MEDIA THEATRE IN NIGERIA AND THE PROLIFERATION OF ACTORS AND AUDIENCE IN THE CYBERSPACE

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Abstract
The emergence of the social media has indubitably altered the Nigerian theatre space. The social media stage has created a niche for individuals to somewhat independently practise theatre. The horde of actors and acting on the social media space or cyber space draws to itself a teeming audience that is better described as *participators* as they take active part in the performance through their views, reactions, comments, and replies. This deportment is so evident on the Nigeria social media space, creating new personalities such as Mama Uka, Ada Egara Nsukka, Oliver Nayoka, Mr. Funny (Oga Sabinus), and Brain Jotter. Using the media richness theory to attempt the development of social media theatre theory, this study takes an analysis of select Nigerian social media actors, their theatrics and relationship with their participators to appraise the viability of theatre on the social media stage. Their teeming followers – participators comprise people of disparate backgrounds who could have been cut off from the show if they were to attend the performances of those actors in the physical theatre, thus the proliferation of actors and participators on the social media space. Our conclusion is that the social media has improved, defying the physical limits of the traditional theatre. As individuals and groups begin to cultivate their theatre adventures on the cyber space which have observably received widespread participation, resulting from its elastic spatiality and impartation, professional theatre artists and groups need to cultivate more, the social media space for a sustainable theatre culture.

Keywords: Social media theatre, Digital era, Actors, Participators, Cyber space, Audience.

From the Physical Theatre to the Social Media Theatre

The intricacies, allurements and propositions of the modern digital era have come with both excitement and anxieties on the fate and survival of theatre. Observably, the digital era has given birth to a new theatre form on the online platform, producing a lot of actors and participators on the social media space. It is the viability of this social media space, leading to proliferation of actors, participators, creativity, acting and participation on the Nigeria social media space, and how these activities carry within the new media space the components and perhaps wholeness of the physical theatre that this study offers to appraise. The term social media theatre is used to refer to the performances, theatricalities and theatrics on the social media

space/stage, another term that refers to the performance platform offered by the social media or cyber space.

Enrico Prampolini, the Italian artist and foremost exponent of futurism (1894-1960) appears to have conceived of the dimensions theatre has taken today especially with the digital technology. As a scenographer, Prampolini wanted the stage to have more life by deploying moveable scene architecture against the painted still scene that had lasted. Prampolini more futuristically, saw the stage "as a multidimensional space in which spiritual forces (represented by light and abstract forms) would play out a drama of semi-religious significance" (Brockett and Hildy 419). Today, the theatre stage has become multidimensional on various media platforms, to wit the social media. Abstract forms – light, lines, figures, illustrations, colours on social media animate actors, actions and settings that are more or less like spirits on the digital space, yet conceived in their liveliness as much as in their physical state. Prampolini also did predict a future where the audience would become the actor (Causey 87). Incidentally, it is happening. Aided by the great features of the social media stage, the audience are so actively participating in performances; therein we refer to such audience as participators. On social media stage such as Facebook, the participators, sometimes, through comments and reactions highlight an aspect of the performance not explicitly revealed by the actors or initiate a new drama, a subplot altogether.

Social media has democratised theatre. It has democratised the stage. Stephen Dixon avers that social media "constitutes the largest theatre in the world, offering everyone 15 megabytes of fame" (qtd. in Kumar et al. 8). That is to say, anyone can achieve some fame as an actor or participator in the social media theatre. For conservationists, stripping theatre of its physical platform to an online platform alters theatre's nature as a live performance and so a threat to what is known conventionally as theatre. But for liberals, the social media theatre only suggests growth and development. A pertinent question ought to be asked: would the recent theatre and theatrical trend on social media drive the physical theatre out of space? Again, did the developments of radio and television see an end to theatre practice? As long as humans remain physical beings, theatre will not cease to exist on the physical space for it is almost impossible to separate the daily activities of human beings from theatre.

Theatre is flexible and adapts to new forms with developing technologies. Theatre is almost as adaptive as life. From its traceable origin to the modern digital era, theatre forms and structures, features and contents have been affected by the changes and developments of the times. Looking at theatre's evolutionary history, anthropologists hold that theatre originated out of rituals. As humans observed the forces that controlled the earth, seasons of rainfall and of dryness, production and reproduction of plants and animals, natural phenomena, they sought out means to be thankful of, influence and manipulate these occurrences. The activities involved rites which grew to rituals. And then the rituals had performative elements (Brockett and Hildy 1; wa Thiong'o 36). As at these early beginnings, theatre was uniquely a live outdoor activity, but it would soon grow to a live indoor activity with the technologies that were to be developed. When theatre was ultimately an outdoor activity, the sun served it a source of natural lighting. But with the development of artificial lights,

candles and lamps, theatre was adapted to an indoor nocturnal event. Technology continued to influence it: "A closed stage, in combination with footlights, blackouts, a fourth wall, tiered seating in the dark and other new technologies allowed theatre makers to transmit messages to a more affluent set of ticket-buying spectators" (Hadley 1), although it is important to mention on the aspect of ticketing that the payment of admission fees of the sum of two obols by spectators had already been recorded on the theatre and drama of the ancient Greece (Brockett and Hildy 31).

Theatre continue to take new forms on emerging platforms. With radio technology, radio drama developed; with camera, motion pictures and the art of movie making emerged. The Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA) acknowledged this changing form or platform of the theatre with developing media when it said on its call for paper ahead of its 35th International Conference, 2022, that "No discourse of the Nigerian theatre in the digital era and economy will be complete without recent development on video film industry that ostensibly grew out of the theatre" (SONTA par.1). Taking from this, is to say, film as well as other forms we have mentioned are new forms theatre found itself, and scholars cannot shrink from discussing the emergent forms it has continued to develop into. Hadley claims that "the uptake of social media in the theatre has the potential to upset the status quo for artists, art organisations, audiences and the public at large" (4-5). The potential in reference is already glaring: on the status quo for artists, individual artists are emerging and making it surprisingly ahead of the "professional" artists who have certificates on the profession. In Nigeria, such individual artists include comedians Mrfunny, Brain Jotter, Mama Uka, musician Oliver Nayoka and poet-actress Ada Egara Nsukka. So, there is already an influence on the status quo of a performer who is or not on the social media.

Apparently, arts organisations are striving to find their ways to the social media. The theatre audiences and members of the public have also gained more say on the performance they are viewing, a power that allows them to instantly review the shows and equally review the review of co-audience members from the comfort of their locations due to the elastic and democratic nature of the social media. While Krishna et al. assert that, "theatre has always been an effective method of expression which plays a potential role in causing self-realisation and creating social transition" (2675), they go ahead to posit that, a notion exists that theatres lose importance nowadays but still there are a few forms of mediums that develop strategies to keep up the popularity of this art form. The attitude of the young generations towards theatre today depends upon the exposure these theatres portray through new media (2676). It will be a disservice to theatre's impact, if every means to sustain it is not adopted. The younger generations are growing with the new media as their companion. Therefore, the information they accumulate in their growth stage becomes of and noticeably attached to the social media, influencing their sense of dependency on it. It is difficult to separate the daily activities of the younger generations from the social media. It is in this regard that this study examines the viability of the social media stage with such actors as Mama Uka, Ada Egara Nsukka and Oliver Nayoka.

The Social Media: Nature and Classification

The social media is one of the greatest things that happened to the world in the 21st century. It truly brought the world together as a 'global village' where anyone can talk to anyone, or everyone to everyone. It transcends the Web 1.0, the internet web that allowed only for a one-way reception of information. The social media have become very interactive and more engaging. Consumers can now respond to producers and producers can now reply to consumers and responses and interactions between consumers too are now possible (Omoera and Guanah 2). This is why the social media is known as the Web 2.0. In simple terms, social media can be defined as an interactive media which allows users create and respond to contents on digital platform/web. Deliberating on the nature of social media and how it is great a platform for theatre practice, Hadley avers that,

> The advent of social media has allowed the internet to move beyond being a database, bulletin board, and basic search engine (Web 1.0) and become a more interactive, democratic, user-driven communication medium (Web 2.0). The emergence of social media has allowed all internet users to become what Axel Bruns (2006) has called "producers" – participants able to both produce and use content. As producers, theatre artists, theatre audiences and the public today can use these new social media platforms to make, manage, manipulate and contest theatre's meaning together. (Hadley 2)

In other words, Hadley is of the view that with the social media, everyone can freely create theatre contents or participate in the one created by another. This anchors on the social media, the status of a theatre supporting media. Various social media platforms currently exist. Some of the very popular ones among Nigerian users are Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and more recently TikTok. Facebook is a household name among many Nigerians including the older generation who do not use it, but hear of it. Many scholars agree that Facebook is the most widely used social media (Dolan 21; Hadley 32; Krishna et al. 2675; Alidu 147; Ehiemua and Omoera 185-186).

The social media platforms are classified based on their orientation or operation, features or services. Thus, we have different types of social media. Aichner and Jacob classify the types of social media as "blogs, business networks, enterprise social networks, microblogs, photo sharing, product/services reviews, social book marketing, social gaming, social networks, video sharing and virtual worlds" (qtd Dolan 19). Hadley details his classification with examples thus,

Type/orientation of site	*Examples*
Personal communication and Networking	Microblogs, blogs, social networking site (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, WordPress, Blogger, Mashable, Weibo)
Professional communication and networking	Social networking sites (e.g. LinkedIn, Google+)

Real-time communication and conferencing	Text, visual, video conversation sites (e.g. Skype, Snapchat)
Content collaboration	Document and project-management sites (e.g. Googledocs, Dropbox, Basecamp) Content curation Tagging, bookmarking, pinboarding and Wiki sites (e.g. Wikipedia, Instagram, Pinterest, Delicious, Tumbler)
Content presentation and sharing	Live or delayed sharing/streaming sites and apps in sites (e.g. YouTube, Vimeo, Flickr)
Publishing	Text-sharing sites (e.g. Scribed)
Location tracking	Geomapping sites and apps in sites (e.g. Foursquare)
News, reviews and ratings	Reviewing sites [e.g. Reddit, Digg, Buzzfeed, Yelp, TripAdvisor, Zomato (formerly Urbanspoon)]
Virtual worlds	Games, simulations (e.g., Second Life, Sims, World of Warcraft)
Crowdsourcing	Pledging sites (e.g. Pozzible, Kickstarter)
Petitioning	Petition sites (e.g. Change.org)
Dating and relationships	Dating sites (e.g. Tinder, Grinder, MeetUp). (Hadley 32)

The comprehensiveness of Hadley's classification is noteworthy. Hadley's classification is based on what he considers the preponderant nature or feature of the social media types because it is evident that some social media platforms of a type equally share some features that can situate them to another type. For example, Facebook which Hadley classifies as personal communication and networking site, serves greatly too for professional networking site. Facebook also shares averagely the features of all other types. It is not surprising, therefore, that Facebook is the most popular social media platform. We may then classify Facebook as a 'social world.' Technically, it is complex in content but simple in operation.

Social Media and Theatre
The proliferation of actors on the social media especially on the Nigeria social media space is the primary spur for this study. It has been established that theatre is an

art form that has the potential to adapt to changes with technology and development. The social media have become a digital technology that affect individuals, things and art forms. We have come up with the term, the social media theatre to explain the proliferating theatre or theatrical activities taking place on the social media or cyber space. The democratisation of the social media has made everybody on that space an actor. Individuals with the potential of acting, hence, leverage the platform to explore their creative talents almost independently. Hadley reiterates Blake's inference of Victoria Doidge's assertion that the deployment of social media in theatre is a "game changer" (3).

Hadley agrees that "theatre makers have always been eager to embrace new media technologies. These include technologies that help them provoke emotion, entertain, educate and proselytise in the auditorium" (21). He posits that "social media is the latest in a long line of technologies that have the potential to produce an evolution, if not a revolution, in theatre's ephemeral form, ecology and mechanisms for making meaning" (22). These changes have given birth to the concerns of two schools of thought which Hadley calls advocates and detractors respectively. Accordingly, the advocates are on the one hand positive about the social media, seeing it as a platform for theatre to reach a larger world audience. On the other hand, the detractors are negative about the social media theatre. Their concerns are that the ease to produce theatre on social media will "produce a proliferation of poor quality content, with little relation to the live experience that has traditionally been central to theatre's effectiveness" (5). But there is a reason why Hadley calls this second school of thought detractors; it is because he believes the social media technology has more to offer theatre than it would take from it. Extrapolating the ideas of Cann et al. and Page, Hadley argues that:

> The distinctive feature of these technologies is that they allow artists, audiences and the public at large to engage with, debate and determine the meaning of a show... They are often called "participatory media" because they allow artists, audiences and the general public to participate in the creation of content, and the distribution of content, not just the reception of contents... This collaboration occurs in the public context of a network of friends, followers or follow users. (22-23)

In terms of audience participation, the social media theatre has thus taken a relative characteristic to the traditional African theatre where the audience are active participants of the performance.

Social Media Theatre: Impacts and Divergent Views

Theatre has always been about the audience. The show is about and for the audience. The engagement of the audience with the artwork, they are common traits and reactions and responses are all important parts of the theatre. Hadley recalls, historically, how "theatre makers in the West have asked audiences to make meaning of their shows through cheers, cries and clapping, conversations after the show" and argues that the new technologies which developed during and after the enlightenment

such as electricity, lighting, and print media went ahead to improve a controlled audience behaviour in collecting their responses about the show (1-2). This explains the advances technology has added to theatre in terms of audience participation, and this cannot be denied of the social media. Facebook for instance, through its reaction menu and comment section avails the users the opportunity to air their views on a particular work on the social media. Interestingly, the accessibility and democratic nature of this social media through its digital features have turned almost everything on the media space a theatre. More so, a news broadcast by the hitherto traditional media or print media that are now operating on the social media space such as Facebook, receives spontaneous reactions, comments, and replies to comments, a boisterous activity that breathes life to the broadcast and turns it nearly a performance of call-and-response between the broadcaster/broadcast and the viewers. Similar thing goes with most engaging posts by online influencers on social media. The social media has turned nearly everybody an active online actor or participator.

Kumar et al. infer that theatre has all the time welcomed and adapted to emerging technologies, "from the deux ex machina of Greek theatre to the revolutionary introduction of electric light in the 1800s and today's high-tech multimedia extravaganzas" (6). This position was derived from their quantitative research among youths – students at Amity University, Lucknow Campus to determine the impacts of an avalanche of social media dramas, of which the result showed that the majority of the youths who were initially deprived of theatre at its physical form are now opportune to watch performances on the social media. In terms of the relationship between artists and audience, more than an average of the youths was of the view that same relationship is shared between artists and audience online as with the physical theatre. The majority of the youths also revealed that the flexibility of time on the social media endears their preference to experience theatre rather on the social media. There is also the privilege of ability to give feedback and interact and of intercultural and international viewership, as well as capacity to be of more economic value over the physical theatre. The youths, however, largely agreed that there exists a difference between theatre on the physical space and theatre on the social media space (14-16). This difference, Kumar et al. did not explain. But we take it as the difference in platform rather than Kumar et al's contradictory statement that technology is "making audiences passive" (6). Perhaps, it was Auslander's "study of the mediatization of live theatre" that influenced such notion of Kumar et al., which contradicts the result of their research.

Auslander's argument is that taking theatre to the electronic media gives theatre the features and understanding of film and television, thereby altering the lively phenomenology of the physical theatre. Auslander also imagines how virtual theatre could abruptly be brought to an end perchance the digital network on which it is hinged on truncates or ceases (as cited in Kumar et al. 4). In his article, "The Theatre and Health Education: Impact of Social Media-based Short Drama in Combating Covid-19 Vaccine Hesitancy in Nigeria", Alidu reports his successful experiment on the usefulness of social media drama in sensitising the Nigerian community on Covid-19 vaccination. The experiment sprouted on the background of glaring vaccine hesitancy

in Nigeria. According to Alidu, 470 social media users were shared into two groups – the treatment and the control groups respectively. The two groups were hesitant to Covid-19 vaccination prior to the experiment. Alidu exposed one group – the treatment group – to 30 minutes short dramas on social media that centred on Covid-19 prevention. The result showed that after the experiment, the treatment group "indicated readiness to take a dose of the vaccine. However, respondents in the control group did not significantly improve on their vaccine intake intention" (145). With this, Alidu confesses that the social media "have completely liberalized the media industry" as well as being the miracle of the 21st century, making information very much accessible and affordable and breaking the monopoly once enjoyed by the traditional media such as newspaper, magazine, radio and television which indisputably limited access to information to some high class of the society (147).

      Information and free access to information are prima to the development of any society and democratic state. The social media has made information and access to information almost free. This is corroborated by Alidu's observation that the social media has birthed "a phenomenon of short drama(s) that are usually posted online by armature" (sic), and even though this drama is spread and popular across various social media platforms, adequate attention has not been paid to evaluating its impact (147). We understand his use of "amateur" to relate to our position that social media has bred very many social media individual actors without prior professional training. However, it is important to note that the social media, like an ecosystem, has continued to shape and sharpen these actors – who already have potential for acting – to achieving a professional taste. It is therefore undeniable that professional actors, institutions and industries of theatre arts need to, with urgency, penetrate the social media space.

Social Media Theatre Theory
      There is apparently no outstanding theory of social media theatre. However, scholars have strived to implicate theories for social media operation and uses. Such theories include the media richness theory propounded by Daft and Lengel, social exchange theory with such exponents as Homans, Kelley and Thibaut, psychological ownership and perceived control theory, and uses and gratifications theory which owes much to the works of Blumler and Katz. We choose to advance the media richness theory to attempt the development of social media theatre theory. The media richness theory holds that the richness of the medium determines the quality of information conveyed. That is to say, communication varies with relation to the media's richness (Emakunu and Guanah 431). This, therefore, shares, though not holistically, with McLuhan's idea that the medium is the message (Krishna et al. 2678). The media richness theory holds that hence the medium affects the message, the medium should be rich enough – not over simplified, not over complicated – as the main goals of communication are "resolving ambiguity and reducing uncertainty" (Emakunu and Guanah 431-432). The scholars believe the social media is an appropriate platform that satisfies the propositions of the media richness theory as the social media has the ability to bring the world together, "to communicate in all directions at any time by any possible digital means", and clearly advantageous, "the social media can avail those

who are not physically present at the venue of the performance to be part of it through live streaming" (Emakunu and Guanah 432). It is also a privilege that the social media can be accessed through mobile phones.

In a sense of Shakespeare's statement that the world is a stage and we all merely actors, the social media richness carries in itself the world as theatre; thus the social media theatre. The social media theatre theory then holds that the viability of theatre and theatrical performances on the social media space which has birthed new actors and countless participators is due to the media's richness in satisfying and enhancing the features of the physical medium of theatre. These social media features include abilities to interact, create, view, listen, participate, act, and react on the platform. As the social media has this richness to carry virtually the theatre, actors and theatre practitioners are encouraged to explore this space creatively and productively.

Social Media Actors and Participators on the Nigeria Social Media Space
The Nigeria social media space implies the stage and magnitude of social media enjoyed by Nigerians, or of the Nigerian people and environment, of the Nigerian content and context. On this space, a lot goes on – contents such as news, posts, arguments on various subjects, campaigns, enlightenment, theatre among others. The features of social media as an interactive media make almost all these contents on it theatrical or performative. Everyone on the social media is either an actor or participator or both in a sense. However, our focus here is to look at the actors and participators who act and participate on the Nigeria social media space in what obtains in the physical conventional theatre form.

It is evident that there is proliferation of actors and participators on the Nigeria social media space. There is a common assumption that the economic recession in Nigeria pushed some Nigerians to discover the utility of social media for theatre as they began to make creative contents on and for the social media, and making gain and fame from the art. What is pertinent is that the richness of social media played a key role in the emergence of social media theatre and rise of social media actors and participators. Actors such as comedians Mama Uka, Mr. Funny, Brain Jotter, poet-actor Ada Egara Nsukka and singer Oliver Nayoka are among the Nigerian actors who have made it or sailed through the social media, especially Facebook. While we make reference to the actors above, we study closely three, namely, Mama Uka, Ada Egara Nsukka and Oliver Nayoka. Their career and performances prior to and on the emergence of the social media and then their relationship with their social media audience participators are examined.

Mama Uka (Sunday Odinakachukwu Eze) is a Nigerian social media cross-dresser actor, specialising on comedy. He has accounts on four social media platforms which are Facebook as Mama Uka, Instagram as Mamauka, TikTok as Mamauka, and YouTube as Mama Uka. His Facebook page created in 2019 has got 2.2 million followers between that 2019 and 2022, with his comedy performances receiving thousands of views in hours (Mama Uka). In a personal interview the researchers conducted with him, he revealed that it was the social media that launched him into fame. He had struggled for years as a song producer but was not known except for, in

his words, "those I produce their songs and few others within my locality" (Mama Uka). From the interview, Mama Uka enjoys the active viewership and participation of his followers through their comments which help him make reviews on his next performances.

Ada Egara Nsukka (Blessing Chidiebere Emmanuel) is an oral poet-actor who sailed through the social media. Accompanied by a flutist, she performs the traditional oral poetic rendition of Igbo Nsukka known as *Egara*. This type of performance exists in other Igbo communities with different names. Communities in Anambra State call it *Ima Mbem*. It is a cultural performance art form that is common in Africa. Egara requires a fast rendering of proverbial words delivered orally and rhythmically. Egara is largely enjoyed by Igbo Nsukka people as it is highly spirited. However, many of those who have the talent and have from ages performed on the physical theatre, have not achieved the fame Ada Egara Nsukka has achieved within a short period of time for taking her talent to the social media space. According to Ada Egara Nsukka, she started from childhood to practise the talent. However, in her words, I wasn't well known as Onye Egara (a person who performs Egara) before coming out on social media. Social media really boosted my career. Within the period of two years after my first video went viral on Facebook, I've been invited in so many places/occasions (Ada Egara Nsukka).

She equally revealed that after her art flourished on Facebook, she has performed nationally and internationally in Nigeria and the United Arab Emirates respectively. She has been hosted in so many radio and television programmes such as Raypower Radio, Aso Radio Abuja, Ojemba on African Independent Television, Isimbido TV on Star Time, Ugwumba TV and TsTV Africa, and then got a political appointment as the Technical Assistant on culture from the Governor of Enugu State, Rt. Hon. Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi. Her fame on the social media theatre has also thrown her to Nollywood as she was recommended by the US based scriptwriter Val Eze to play the role of Ezenwanyi Mmiri Adere (priestess of the water goddess) in a film titled *Return of the Oracle* directed by Ifeanyi Orji. Ada Egara Nsukka embodies the testimony of social media theatre. The status she has achieved buttresses the fact that the social media does not only give the actor fame but projects the actor to the physical theatre and other media platforms, establishing the actor economically, socially and politically. This is why she continued to cultivate the social media to grow her performances which is yielding positive results. Ada Egara gave out the following words heartily, "all thanks to social media and my more than 100,000 followers" on Facebook, a platform with its participators that led her to limelight. Ada Egara confirmed she goes through the comments of her followers for review. She is currently on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok and Twitter as Ada Egara Nsukka.

We turn attention to Oliver Nayoka as his highlife music performance on Facebook as a theatrical form. Oliver Nayoka whose real name is Okwudili Oliver Anisobi is an Igbo highlife music artist who takes after the late Oliver de Coque. His exquisite imitation of the former high life king, Oliver de Coque which makes his participators argue he is perchance a biological son of de Coque – even though Nayoka has many times revealed his biological parents – is an art that deserves a separate study.

Here we look at how he rose to limelight through performances on Facebook. According to his interview with BBC News Igbo, Nayoka started playing the guitar as a young boy around 1980s. He released his first album titled *Oke Ima* in 2013 and subsequently released *Oche Di Mma* in 2014. Although his talent was phenomenal as that of de Coque, he was rarely known. His music was not thriving as a result of a hostile platform. Marketers who could have promoted him were rather more interested in making profits from popular artists than an up-and-coming artist like him. However, the emergence of social media broke the jinx as he started performing especially on Facebook (BBC News Igbo).

Cultivating the Facebook theatre space, Nayoka began to practise to fullness his art. His style is to sing and play and perform with his guitar along with his band and sometimes solo before his Facebook participators who appreciate the art with comments and reactions. This is why Nayoka's music performance is highly theatrical. Apart from his finesse in playing the guitar with fingers, he employs other dramatic and theatrical skills. He uses his mouth, the tripod of the microphone or any object he walks up to while performing to play the guitar too. The guitar is his signature. His movements, singing and gestures, and the comments and reactions of his fans or participators all join with the aforementioned to embellish his performance theatrically. With his Facebook performance, he has created a network of fans and participators from all around the world – African countries, "France, Columbia, South America and others" (BBC News Igbo). The social media theatre space has equally projected him to physical performances at events with his band, as his international online participators continue to invite him.

From the foregoing, it is glaring how the three social media actors rose to limelight through performances on cyber space. It is also interesting to note the numeric value of their teeming participators from local and foreign nations which is not more easily achieved in the physical theatre. Social media, like a projection space, has equally projected them to audiences in the physical theatre. In terms of actor-audience relationship, the social media in fact, improved it as the audience participators can easily air their views on the performance and the actors can as well access these reviews easily on the same platform. The audience participators whom the theatre is about, are at freedom to participate in the theatre at the comfort of their homes and appraise the performances as soon as they see it or want. This is why we say that the social media has improved what we may call a breakage of physical limits to transcendent freedom in sustaining the theatre.

These teeming participators also send money through online bank transfer to the actors –Oliver Nayoka to wit – on certain conditions attached to the performances. Interesting too, Facebook has added a feature of star used to make money on Facebook by content creators. Some of these social media actors like Mama Uka, Brain Jotter and Mrfunny have started utilising it to make money. They do this by appealing to their participators to send them stars, or stating that a certain number of stars or money should be sent to them for the performance to continue or for such participators' names to be mentioned in the performance. With time, this star feature of Facebook and many other features of the kind that would develop on various social media platforms, will

solve the problem of ticketing, a traditional aspect of the theatre which is to an extent, for the time being, under threat by the social media theatre. But the programmers of these social media platforms, especially Facebook deserve our appreciation for being proactive, even as we continue to give them reviews on areas to improve on.

Conclusion

Theatre is an old art form which has continued to adapt to various platforms with emerging technologies. These technologies have played important roles in sustaining the theatre practice. Therefore, the emergent social media theatre cannot be overlooked. Like the technologies that had come before it which played important roles to sustain theatre liveliness, the social media is a welcome development. With its rich features that support and improve theatre practice and for being a highly democratised medium, the social media has opened up doors for actors and participators to freely explore their potential and enjoy the theatre without the spatial limitations of the physical theatre. As many individual actors and teeming participators are emerging and thriving on social media as evident on the Nigeria social media space, it is pertinent that professional actors and theatre groups cultivate the social media platform more for a sustainable theatre culture. Although the social media theatre is still developing, the social media space is found viable for theatre and theatrical performances. Whether or not full length plays with many actors −as in the physical theatre– will develop and become common with the social media is a question of time. And whether the social media theatre will remain known with one or few actors acting in short performances is still a question of time. Whichever distinction and, of course, similitude that theatre takes on social media, as it had taken with the technologies that came before social media, it is important for scholars and professionals of the theatre to appreciate the utilisation of social media adequately for theatre.

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