

UNHEARD, THEATRICALY SPEAKING

**Does the Integration of Physical Theatre and Folk Media in Theatre for
Development Enhance or Inhibit Communication in Community
Interventions?**

A CASE STUDY ON SEKA THEATRE TROUPE

By

BENNE E. BANDA

**A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND,
WITS SCHOOL OF ARTS IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE AWARD OF A MASTER
OF ARTS IN DRAMATIC ARTS DEGREE BY COURSEWORK AND RESEARCH REPORT**

UNIVERSITY OF WITWATERSRAND

FEBRUARY 2012

PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

I, Benne Erastor Banda hereby declare that this research document is the result of my own work and that I have not submitted it previously at any other tertiary institution. This is in fulfillment of a Masters of Arts in Dramatic Arts degree by course work and research.

1. I know that plagiarism is wrong. It is to use another person's work and pretend that its one's own.
2. I have used the author date convention for citation and referencing. Each significant contribution to and quotation in this thesis from the work of other people has been acknowledged through citation and reference.
3. This reflection is my own work.
4. I have not allowed and will not allow anyone to copy this work with the intention of passing it off as their own
5. I have done the word processing and formatting of this thesis on my own and I understand that the correct formatting is part of the mark for this assignment and that it is therefore wrong for someone else to do it for me.

.....

Signature

.....

Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly to my wife Naomi Banda nee Chirwa (Nartjie) I grant my gratitude for the love and unwavering support, encouragement, patience and confidence that saw me through the grueling 2010 and 2011 academic years and all the challenges they came with. To you I pledge my undying love.

Secondly, to Tamara Guhrs my supervisor, whose diligence, resilience and wisdom I shall forever be indebted to, I thank you sincerely. It was divine intervention to have worked and spent valuable time with you on both my BADA (Hons) and MADA research papers. To Warren Nebe, Kennedy Chinyowa, Tamara Gordon, Munyaradzi Chatikobo, Vinoba Krishna and all staff of University of Witwatersrand and guest lecturers who shared their enriching skills and experiences I pass my gratitude.

To Miranda Guhrs-Rashid and her mother Pam— both artistes par excellence, SEKA Theatre Troupe, Prof. Dickson Mwansa and all other research respondents for giving up your valuable time to be my case study group, hosting me and granting me interviews when you were supposed to be on break, I say nutamya. Your contribution to this study and cache of intellectual property built from your immense knowledge and deication to the improvement of needy communities through your theatrical interventions is amazing, to say the least.

To my many friends - Tshakane, Mookho, Phalafala, Abreu, Mia and the Drama for Life and Wits School of Arts scholars, too many to mention individually, I will be forever grateful for making my learning experience at Wits a memorable one. You were family and you made Johannesburg my home away from home for two long years. It is gratifying to know that I have expanded my network of friends and joined a wider professional family of applied theatre practitioners continent-wide.

To my parents Mr. and Mrs. Erastor M.C. Banda, my brothers and sisters whose patience and long suffering I could not have done without in the last two years. I say, may your lives be full of prosperity, good health and glory. Your support emotionally, economically and socially meant the world to me. All of you who stood by me through the research, the writing and the editing process providing some valuable points and candid views on this research. I grant my appreciation.

In finality, to the omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent Almighty, I thank you for seeing me through this programme successfully, raising me where I faltered and making me believe in myself when it mattered most

DEDICATION

This fruit of perseverance yielded after a torrent of blood sweat and tears is dedicated to my wife who held fort, shed tears and waited patiently for the two long years.

Naomi Banda nee Chirwa, this is for you!

ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken in Mfuwe, the South Luangwa Game Management area in the Eastern province of Zambia, to interrogate the declining integration of folk art, traditional media and visual aesthetics in Theatre for Development (TfD). SEKA Theatre Troupe was the entity under the microscope in this ethnographic research process conducted through Theatre for Development performances.

The lamentable decline in the use of the abundant traditional cultural resources in the TfD practice in Zambia has led to the flourishing of a loquacious top-down message delivery system in an era where the artistes are no longer an authoritarian all-knowledgeable spoon-feeding entity. The performance artiste must be a change agent who facilitates new thinking through the practice of an empowering living theatre as espoused by theatre performance gurus such as Peter Brook and Augusto Boal.

The survival and prosperity of the Zambian cultural heritage is at stake in face of a western cultural onslaught proficiently facilitated through the multi-pronged approach of the international media. The artiste is the bastion of hope that buffers the intensity of such cultural onslaught. The robust cache of traditional intellect is being sidelined to the periphery of a people's lives, in the traditional homelands where it is flaunted as tourist attractions instead of being a cherished and nurtured way of life.

This study's findings give pointers to solutions to heal the heartrending growing gap between the Zambian performing artistes, especially in TfD, and the vibrant local cultural forms of expression. It foregrounds how important it is to salvage the remaining precious gems of Zambian indigenous heritage for posterity as well as prosperity.

All hope is not lost yet, as demonstrated by SEKA Theatre Troupe, which has daringly chosen to embark on the less popular Theatre for Development genre among Zambian Community /TfD practitioners.

SEKA, through integration of popular arts and cultural practices has taken the rural voice of the common man in the wilderness of South Luangwa Game Management area and made it heard in the corridors of policy makers internationally; be it on the HIV and AIDS scourge or championing the restoration of the world's ecosystems or even their mainstay – mitigating the wildlife and human conflict through theatre in Mfuwe.

LIST OF ABBREVIATION

TfD	:	Theatre for Development
TfA	;	Theatre for Africa
SEKA	:	Sensitizing and Entertaining through Kunda Arts
HIV	:	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
AIDS	:	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
PRA	:	Participatory Rural Appraisal
RRA	:	Rapid Rural Appraisal
AIR	:	American Institutes of Research
COP	:	Community Outreach Programme
WWF	:	World Wildlife Fund
WCC	:	World Conservation Congress
SADC	:	Southern African Development Community
SADCC	:	Southern African Development Community Countries
IUCN	:	International Union of Conservation of Nature

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 a.	Sample of Respondents' Data Sheet /Release Form
Appendix 1 b.	Sample of Underage Respondents' Data Sheet
Appendix 2 a.	Questionnaire for Practitioners
Appendix 2 b.	Questions for Audience Members
Appendix 2 c.	Questions for SEKA Members
Appendix 2 d.	Miranda Guhrs Response to Questionnaire

List of Photos

Appendix 3 a.	Photo of Meeting the Honey bagger
Appendix 3 b.	Photo of the Elephant Raiding the Village
Appendix 3 c.	Photo of SEKA's Shelter and Rehearsal
Appendix 3 d.	Photo of Baboons Raiding a Maize Field
Appendix 3 e.	Photo of Sams engaging the Audience