



Creating the Contemporary Christian Theatre: An X-Ray of Sight & Sound Theatres

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Abstract: The proliferation of media technologies has redefined theatre performance in contemporary times. This modification which includes mixed-media and mediatization; interactive media; social media; aesthetic communication and spectacle have resulted in a high level of change. As audiences visit the theatre with an increased level of aesthetic taste and newer lens to view performance, theatre directors and designers struggle to find newer methods to tell the dramatic story and create performances to meet the high demand. Sadly, for Christian theatres, especially in Nigeria, the handful of theatre directors and designers actually embracing these new developments have barely scratched the surface of the ongoing renaissance in theatre performance. And this is due to a dearth of documentation on the modus operandi necessary for the creation of these contemporary Christian theatre performances. Sight & Sound Theatres (USA), is a faith-based Christian Theatre in the league of Broadway Theatre with several biblical stories presented on sophisticated stages. This paper engages Ole Thyssen's 'Aesthetic Communication theory' as theoretical framework. It is a descriptive study which engages a content analysis of Sight & Sound's performance of "Joseph", and documents the technical details of creating contemporary Christian performances with the example of "Joseph". Observably, Sight & Sound Theatres prioritizes the inclusion of media and technical elements into performance to enhance performance quality and ensure effective communication of the dramatic story. Hence, by documenting these elements, Sight & Sound Theatres provide a template for the creation of performance in contemporary times, indeed, Christian theatrical productions around the globe.

Keywords: Contemporary Theatre, Christian Theatre, Communication, Mixed-Media, Directing.

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INTRODUCTION

Undeniably, theatre performance has received several modifications in the world today. This change owing to the proliferation of media technologies among other inventions have affected the preparation and practice of theatre in contemporary times. Theatre audiences have adjusted the lens with which they view performances and thus, by implication, directors and designers are mandated to adjust the factors embedded in performance and the quality of the performance

created. For Christian theatres, the challenge remains the same considering the development in audiences' aesthetic taste coupled with the modification in media gadgets on a universal level. However, despite this, there is need for the display of a renewed artistic arsenal capable of wielding the modified media elements, put the demands of the contemporary audiences under control, and sustain effective message communication.

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Sight and Sound Theatres is a faith-based theatre based in the United States renowned for the production of robust Christian productions with a mastery of the use of sophisticated media gadgets, sustenance of audience attention and effective communication. Hence, this study seeks to explore the currencies that contributes to the successful creation of Sight and Sound's phenomenal productions, so as to serve as adoptable models for subsequent theatres.

The production of *Joseph* is a biblical dramatization of the story of Joseph, who was loved with a high level of affection by his father, Jacob, among his other brothers. Jacob had loved him unconditionally because he was the first son of his most loved wife, Rachel, who died while giving birth to Benjamin, her second child. Joseph happened to be a dreamer and was constantly hated by his step brothers because his dreams always seemed intimidating. In this hatred, his brothers sold him for a fee to Ishmaelite traders and he lived as slave from house to house in Egypt until he was imprisoned. While, in prison, Joseph found favour with God and the jailer, and soon was requested to stand in front of the troubled Pharaoh, who became restless after he had two dreams. Joseph, filled with the wisdom of God, interpreted his dreams and gave recommendations to forestall the tragedy about to befall the entire Egypt. Stunned by his brilliance, Pharaoh decided to honour Joseph with the role of a Prime minister and saddled him with the responsibility of overseeing the plan and saving the nation from the predicted famine. Soon, his brothers visited Egypt to buy grain and that occurrence was the major bridge leading to their reconciliation. The story of *Joseph* was recreated by Sight and Sound theatres and brilliantly retold, and the technicalities which got the contemporary audience engrossed in the magical theatrical experience shall be richly discussed in this study.

Definition of Key Terms **Contemporary Theatre**

The word, 'contemporary' literally means recent or modern practice. In the context of performance, contemporary theatre is today's theatre; that is, the emerging patterns necessary for the creation of theatre in contemporary times. Okeke defines the theatre today to mean the kind that is at par with technology on a global scale. He explains that "theatre practice, in recent times, has adopted current trends in digital technology in order to withstand the challenges posed by advancements in the cinema and film...The theatre has strided into the age of digital technology through the employment of multimedia staging techniques in its practice in order to be abreast with the global trends in the world of show business" (52). Here, Okeke paints the

contemporary theatre as one that partners with technological advancements to maintain its position in the world of show business and remain unrivaled with film and cinema.

Thus, since the contemporary theatre seeks to create a new and special reality, by identifying new and effective ways to achieve this, and one of the most effective ways to do this is to enter into a deliberate interaction with technology. Hence, in the contemporary theatre, interpretation is not limited to mere application of theatre convention and basic techniques of script interpretation but, seeks to find out ways where technology can be included in the process of doing these things. This contemporaneity cuts across all the elements of performance as each element is being channeled in ways that will improve interpretation. Therefore, contemporary theatre relates to the modus operandi of creating theatre performance today, especially for media-savvy audiences, who have enjoyed a great level of exposure to media-technology. Hence, beyond the interpretation of the dramatic text, creating theatre today requires a dynamic application of media-technologies in performance which includes "costumes, lighting, scenery, sound and projections" (Bailey 345).

Hence, an attempt to understand the nature of theatre today, will lead to the discovery of the diverse elements and techniques in use. As such, what makes a theatrical production contemporary will not just be as a result of the time the performance is staged but more importantly, the elements and techniques the performance employs. However, a basic description of contemporary theatre lies in the use of "elements of science and technologies for its sustainability and viability (Okeke 52). Therefore, beyond the conventional interpretation of the script, the contemporary theatre is particular about using the most suitable method of interpretation capable of sustaining audience attention and meeting the audiences' level of aesthetic taste.

Christian Theatre: An Exposé

To conceptualize this, Christian theatre connotes the practice of theatre by genuine Christians for the proliferation of the gospel message and the (re)connection of human souls to God. It is a contemporary nomenclature attached to a kind of theatre performance specifically focused on the communication of God-centred messages by Godly theatre professionals using contemporary methods, styles and techniques for the consumption of contemporary audiences in a contemporary world. Although, the practice of 'Christian theatre' is not entirely new as it dates to back to the introduction of theatre in the church in the 14th century Medieval era by the Roman Catholics, however, this can be

arguably tagged as the genesis but definitely not the proper practice. Following the 'Message; Messenger; Method and Motive' principle (Bamiloye 42), the medieval dramas, especially after the outlaw from the church premises, lost the first, second, and fourth elements of the principle as the drama messages were recreated to suit the demands of the aesthetics-hungry society and for the benefit of making profits. Hence, the messages were adjusted by the trade guilds, which debatably consisted a haphazard blend of Christians and non-Christians to perform the dramas. Thus, it took years to properly correct this anomaly with a renaissance of Christian Theatre through the establishment of another theatre -the Sight and Sound Theatres, USA, 1976, and today, the theatre due to their commitment to the 'Message; Messenger; Method and Motive' principle have become a model for budding and established Christian theatres around the globe.

Methodology and Theoretical Framework

This is a qualitative study that seeks to document the production model of the Sight & Sound Theatres, a leading Christian theatre in the United States by interrogating the modus operandi involved in the creation of their phenomenal performances from the preparatory to the post-production stages. It is also a descriptive study that showcases Sight & Sound's quintessential elements of production using the performance of *Joseph* as a case study. The video recording of the performance was retrieved, previewed and subjected to a careful content analysis.

Ole Thyssen's Aesthetic Communication theory (2006) as a framework seeks to establish aesthetics as a separate medium of communication. This is possible through a deliberate mix of verbal and non-verbal communication elements, and by placing emphasis on the application of these elements to generate spectacle. Aesthetic communication recognizes that communication is interaction, and in the theatre, contemporary audiences have redefined their preferred method of interaction; aesthetics. This is due to the fact that people in the world have come to acknowledge and appreciate the several display of aesthetics from their encounter with aesthetic elements on a daily basis. Hence, as a result of this, aesthetic communication seeks to present aesthetics as a currency for interaction in today's theatre.

Sight and Sound Theatres: An Overview

For more than 40 years now, Sight & Sound Theatres has been saddled with the responsibility of bringing Bible stories to life through sophisticated theatrical stage productions, with the patronage of more than a million people from around the world annually. Theatrical productions at Sight and Sound

theatres are targeted at interpreting the Bible to audiences using audio-visual elements to make the scriptures turn out in more lucid forms when biblical passages are embodied by actors using robust technologies. This is done deliberately through a seamless connection with media technologies and performance elements to achieve phenomenal and more graphic outputs. Since its establishment in 1976, the mission of Sight and Sound theatres is 'to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ and sow the Word of God into the lives of customers, guests and fellow workers by visualizing and dramatizing the scriptures, through inspirational productions, encouraging others and seeking always to be dedicated and wise stewards of our God-given talents and resources' ("Our Story").

The records of theatrical productions at Sight and Sound Theatres include the following *The Wonder of It All* (1978); *A Land of Our Own* (1976); *Behold the Lamb* (1987–2006, 2009); *The Glory of Spring* (1997); *Celebrate America* (1997); *Abraham and Sarah: A Journey of Love* (2000–2004, 2008–2009); *Psalms of David* (2005–2007, 2010); *The Eternal Flame* (1991–1992); *Noah* (1995–1996); *Noah - The Musical* (1998–2001, 2004, 2013); *The Miracle of Christmas* (1998–2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019), *Daniel* (2002–2003, 2008); *Ruth* (2005–2006); *In the 58 Beginning* (2007–2009); *Joseph* (2010–2011, 2015); *Jonah* (2012, 2017); *Samson* (2016); *Jesus* (2018–2019); *David* (2022); *Moses* (2014–2015, 2023); *Queen Esther* (2020–2021, 2023–2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Creating the production of *Joseph* is a technical but detailed process. This section shall give an overview of the techniques and rudiments of creating Christian theatrical production in contemporary times using Sight and Sound's production of *Joseph*. This section shall pay a keen attention to the elements engaged by Sight and Sound Theatres, to recommend them as necessary currencies for the creation of Christian theatre productions in contemporary times. The results shall be carefully discussed below:

i. Creative Storytelling (Adaptation)

Adaptation as the name implies is the process of replicating an idea, especially in this context, a literary work, from an existing 'original' to fit into another form, culture or background that is different from the original. The Penguin's English dictionary explains adaptation to be the process of "adapting or being adapted; adjustment to prevailing or changing conditions...modification or an organism or its parts, fitting it for better existence and successful breeding under the conditions of its environment. *A composition rewritten in a new form or for a different medium, esp a play or film.*"

(Emphasis added, 14). Admittedly, the creative additions in dramatic adaptation may not happen exactly at it is being projected but no doubts, they aid in the understanding of the context and overall message.

Joseph, is a biblical adaptation of the story of Joseph as contained in Genesis 37-47. The story was (re) created as captured in the bible, but was also fleshed up with the creative license of the team to contain other performance elements for the purpose of effective communication. Hence, the story of *Joseph* was not copied verbatim from the passages of the bible but was adopted and creatively edited to include other subtextual details, which although were not captured in the bible passages but served as valuable addition to the creation of the story and understanding of the entire production. The script had prominent characters with original names as mentioned in the bible: Jacob, Joseph, Benjamin and the rest of the 10 brothers as contained in the bible, and that of the locations such as Canaan, Shechem, Egypt, among many others.

Significantly, for Sight and Sound theatres, the script is an original and all-inclusive document that gives direction to the cast and the crew, and this script, which usually serves as the primary document for rehearsals is carefully edited to enhance message communication and suit the aesthetic demands of the contemporary audience.

ii. Aesthetic Communication

Aesthetics is 'the study or philosophy of beauty'. That is, the deliberate identification of the several things that could appeal to the senses, and communication is an act of interaction using verbal or non-verbal codes. However, in performance, communication goes beyond the use of lines, dialogues, scenes and set to include the intentional use of aesthetics as a bait to attract audience, engage their imagination, and then establish a basis for communication.

Aesthetic communication is more specific about the process of using audio-visual elements (aesthetic elements) for communication. Thyssen reveals that "the differences that make an aesthetic difference are not the empirical themes, nor the practical rules of communication, not even the normative principles, but rather the mode of communicating" (1). In the same vein, Thyssen causes an attention shift from the rules of communication to the medium of communication and also re-echoes the possibility that message information can be passed in several ways so long the goal is to foster understanding of the information. In his postulation, he identifies that it is "*not by what is said or written, but by how the message is delivered.*"

We might accordingly define aesthetics as the suggestive power in a sensuous and cognitive pattern" (2; emphasis added). Since the principal objective of aesthetic communication is to engage more means of communication that can appeal to the audience's critical sense of viewing performance by breaking the rigidity that comes with communication principles. Ojo and Olatunji explain that the application of aesthetic communication "could be done through verbal and non-verbal means of communication. While verbal communication depends on the use of vocal words as its message-passing medium, non-verbal communication creates alternate ways to communicate beyond the use of words" (76).

Therefore, since theatre audiences appreciate elements that appeal to their sense of aesthetic taste via senses other than the mere sense of hearing, thus, aesthetics becomes an additional language. The production of *Joseph* leveraged aesthetic communication at different levels to sustain audience attention and foster effective message communication. These elements shall be discussed below:

a. Live and Pre-recorded Sound

To enhance audio quality, sound and music recording are prioritized with series of technical rehearsals ranging from raw audio record, sound mixing, musical record, sound effects etc. Conversely, music contributes to the beauty of any production, and priority is given to music rehearsal. Music cues with the use of instrument playing during the performance cues had cross modal, effects on the perception of auditory expressivity the present study is designed to extend the findings and provide additional information about sight and sound in the perception of the theatrical experience of the musical performance which help in highlighting the importance of non-auditory cues for music which induced emotions. The audio in Sight and Sound productions engaged 90+ speaker system including (4) QSC Wideline 10 Arrays with 8 cabinets in each array Nuendo 7.1 main audio track playback system LCS & Peavey Neon routing systems for FX, delay and 44 surround sound zones Recording/mixing studio with Nuendo system containing over 500 tracks.

Sight and Sound engage a good number of songs and instrumentation which have been pre-recorded before the actual performance as against the use of live orchestra sitting in a designated area of the orchestra pit. These songs are performed and recorded during the rehearsal phase to achieve a high quality maintain a seamless connection with the dramatic action during production. Oftentimes, the recording of the songs and music is done during rehearsal either by the team or by external

mercenaries as the case maybe or depending on the peculiarity of the project.

b. Interactive Media

The concept of interactive media in performance is a deliberate effort to allow the live media form to connect with other external media forms in a single flow. As an illustration, the use of interactive media could be as basic as using still images, videos or light in line with the ongoing live stage action. The use of these external elements into the ongoing live action is referred to as being interactive. Interactive media in *Joseph* played out in several ways from the use of videos to images, to projection and lights among many other instances which shall be explained below:

Video Animations and LED Projections - Animation was introduced into the ongoing live stage action on two occasions. First was where Pharaoh sent for Joseph to interpret his dream. As he explained the dream with his voice, a visual presentation of the dream was given on the LED screen with a vivid presentation of the two dreams. The first was that of the seven fat and seven lean cows, and the other was of the seven stalks of grain. The animation painted the scenario vividly and was used interactively with the Pharaoh's dialogue as they played on the LED screen spontaneously as the Pharaoh spoke. The other instance was during Joseph's coronation immediately after he successfully interpreted the dream and was honored by Pharaoh. The use of animated video at this point to tell the Egyptian story and get Joseph; the new Prime Minister to be familiar with the history, peculiarity and strengths of the people. In this case, the LED screen gave a vivid display of the Egyptians on the screen as the Pharaoh was talking about them.

Another amazing media technology feature in Sight and Sound Theatres is the availability of an inbuilt LED screen. Simultaneously, LED screens were used to complement the scenery produced by the set pieces through the presentation of animations, videos and still images to enhance the tangible set pieces, create mood and to offer a wider dimension to the entire mise-en-scene. Oftentimes, the LED was not used in isolation from the scenery but in interaction with the performers, the colour, background set and the mood. Glen Broderson, the resident technical director for Sight and Sound, explains that the concept of having a LED screen in a show is to enhance interpretation, create mood and aesthetics. He adds that it also functions as a tool to give a strong foreground with actors, midground with the set and interactive background. The hope is that the use of technology within the show, from the large set to the big LED screen, the guests (audiences) can connect to the story ("Go Behind the Scene"). The

screen which is 113 feet wide, 30 feet high (equals 3 stories) with a weight of 120 tons is valued at \$1.3 million. They have the largest LED screen, the latest cutting edge that comprises 1,242 individual 500mm X 500mm panels with almost 21 million pixels.

This LED screen is used majorly to create an immersive realistic experience for the audience. It also played major supportive roles in the progression and interpretation of the plotline. The essence of the screen is so great that it has the loudest voice on stage, due to its massive brightness. In fact, in most occasions, only 6% of its brightness was used in order to create realism. However, it is good to have discovered that the screen is not static and can be lowered onto and raised off stage.

c. Machine Technology

Fundamentally, Sight and Sound theatre is famous for the use of media technologies and machines in performance. These technologies and machineries are introduced into the live performance in different ways and are targeted at serving a purpose. The use of machineries in Sight and Sound performance is predominant and also phenomenal. In contemporary theatre productions like the case of Sight and Sound, the use of machineries for performance simplifies the job of designers in managing and controlling the massive set pieces however, the absence of these machineries can be frustrating (Hashim 69).

Lift and Elevators - In his dream, Joseph saw himself levitate into the sky while the sun, the moon and stars bowed to him. This aspect of his dream could have been reported but the availability of technical gadgets such as lifts and pulleys at Sight and Sound made it to be achievable rather than reported. Joseph was lifted into the sky of the gigantic theatre as the audiences stared at him with their eyes in awe.

iii. Design

At Sight and Sound Theatres, design form an integral part of the production. The design which ranges from costume design to lights, sound, set and props design are used as major channels of communication to complement the narration of the dramatic story.

Set & Props Design -In the case of set design, the set construction begins after the creation of mock designs and illustrations of the set pieces to be used in the production. The set designers usually create models that can serve as prototype for the actual design envisaged. Ahead of the actual design, the set design is prepared as 3D using Maya & MODO SketchUp, Solid Works, WYSIWYG, AutoCAD and ZBrush Design/Engineering Tools. Richardson refers to this as the perspective sketch which is generated

via computer-aided design (CAD) tools. He explains that “the designer’s *perspective sketch* is a rough 3-dimensional picture that indicates the general feel of what the set is to look like. Producing the sketch usually requires a fair degree of artistic talent, which is why computer-generated set renderings are sometimes used to show the look and feel of the set” (28). As regards the CAD software, he explains further that the “CAD software allows easy design, layout, and editing of measured drawings. Advanced CAD packages can even generate 3D models from the data entered by the designer. These models can be exported to other packages and rendered” (Richardson 29-31). Ododo and Fanyam affirms the relevance of the CAD technology in set design by agreeing that “The computer aided design (CAD) technology has greatly enhanced the practice of *décor* in some scenic depicting and transmission on stage by simulations. These designs help to enhance the mood on the background where actions are presented” (447).

After the success of the 3D models and the eventual preparation of the set pieces, they are rigged with the provision of a 100 plus CM chain motor which hangs above the main stage, Motion Labs chain motor control system on all electrics with active load monitoring, and Primary drop rigging provided by 13 JR Clancy Power Lifts. At Sight and Sound, the massive sets float effortlessly across the stage using Vetex automated wheel units controlled by a Raynok stage control system, which also interfaces with three 100-foot-long performer rigs. The automated sets find their way around the stage with the help of an iTrax positioning system that is powered by an enormous amount of technology and man power. In the words of Mingo Arvizu, the Deck Chief at Sight and Sound theatres, he explains Raynok to be a guiding system for the set to receive communication data that command where each set piece goes, and it is built of Vetex framework. The Vetex are the conceptual cones on its wheels that allows the set pieces to move in 360 degrees, and these pieces are controlled by systems that guide them across the stage. Technicians with the use of Raynok can create a pattern of how they want things to go, send signals to the set piece and the set piece will receive communication from Raynok and guide it in a seamless manner across the stage (“Go Behind the Curtain”). The inclusion of technology into the process of rigging and striking stage set pieces is a phenomenal idea that eases the work on set designers as well as the stage managers assigned the task. In the words of Hashim, “most large-scale musical theatre productions require the use of technology, such as stage lifts, side wagons, portal bridges, side stage equalisers, rear wagons, flying bars, or cycloramas” (69). That is, Sight and Sound’s inclusion of technology into the process of design and execution of the set pieces is not mere

glamour but a contemporary dimension to stage set design.



Fig. 1.1: Raynok



Fig. 1.2: Raynok Control Joystick

Significantly, some incredible technology goes into the staging of Sight and Sound performances. The massive sets are controlled by computers and they are programmed on GPS technology to move around the stage at the precise time to the exact location where they belong. Every detail magnificently comes together to transport the audience into the meaningful story. In some cases, the actors needed to leverage the use of media gadgets while at some other cases like set design, there was reliance on machines like lever and pulley systems to transport and arrange the set depending on the effect desired and the kind of *mise-en-scène* involved in the scene to be set.

Costume Design -In performance, costume is a critical aspect that contributes to the aesthetic feeling and quality of any production. In Sight and Sound productions, costumes usually form an integral part of the aesthetic and storytelling experience. However, the process of costume creation cuts across the costume creation process (costume design), costume fitting and costume change. In most cases, the costume designer begins to

create the costumes for the production as soon as the preparatory phase kicks off and the actors have been ascertained. The costume designer relates with the artistic director to understand his directorial approach and general interpretation of the production. In creating costumes in Sight and Sound Theatres, the Costume department works in corporation the Director on choosing appreciate costumes, Set and Lights on choosing Costume colours as a red dress under green light could be pictured by audience as purple.

The costumes used in *Joseph* were majorly dated back in time according to the custom and traditions of the people at the time. These clothes were majorly robes typical of the Israelites and those of the Egyptians. *Joseph* does enough justice to the creation of the costumes in the exact similitude of the classical times. However, besides the general robes and sashes, *Joseph* also engaged the use of special costumes. These shall be highlighted below:



Fig. 1.3: Footwears and Robes

For the footwears, it was identified that all the characters wore the same footwear and the reason for this could be likened not only to the era in which the stories were drawn but also to the peculiarity of the stage on which the story is performed. By observation, the Sight and Sound stage is mostly glossy and this kind of specification for footwears becomes the most suitable for the stage because of its firm grip on the stage floor.

Light Design -As a result of the magnificent 40-feet high structure of the theatre space, there is need for a large number of light equipment that is capable of providing a balanced illumination for the performance. Basically, there are 1,250 lights in the theatre building with different intensity and grades. However, the number of lights to be used in dependent on the nature of the production. These lights tell the story of the different scenes through adjusted brightness, positioning, and appropriate colour filters. The lights are taken through the process of cleaning, rigging, setting and actual implementation phase where they are focused, programmed and to see the designs come to life on the stage. The underlying idea behind lighting is to create a realistic feel of the scenes and the setting, hence, the lights are used creatively and properly

mixed. This requires the services of an expert lead light designer and an efficient team of light designers to handle this task.

The use of light in *Joseph* was beyond mere illumination. The production used several kinds of modern lights such as fogs; moving heads; and LEDs, however, more significantly, the theatrical production engaged light as a tool for aesthetic communication as well as a tool to pass subtextual messages to the viewing audience. In fact, light was used interactively with other performance elements such as music, costume, dance, acting and also as a complement to the scenery created by the set designs. Besides the use of floodlights, in some situations when specific actors moved across the stage, light also moved alongside with them, and this happens in interactively with their movements/gestures. In this regard, the concept of interactivity is to cause a synchronization between the lights and other elements of performance. At other instances, light was used interactively with the colours on the LED screen to give a unified aesthetic quality. Also, a significant look at the scenes with dances, reveals that light was used as a complement to the dominant colour on the stage. The scene at the Nile River is a relevant example.



Fig. 1.4: The light in synchrony with the scenery

The above image displays the use of light to enhance the presentation of the scene and the aesthetic communication. The scene is intended to be an illusion of the deep blue sea (the Nile River). Hence, the addition of blue lights to the scene further enhanced the scene and also interacted with the ongoing procession and worship of the Nile River. Thus, beyond illumination, light served a higher function to enhance scenic communication.

iv. Transition

Raynok Systems -Transition can be referred to as the solar plexus of performance. It serves as the point of connection that link scenes and sustains audience interest. Therefore, like other elements of performance, attention is paid to transition and the process of transition. Basically, for Sight and Sound, transition within scenes is mostly automated through the use of the Raynok systems. The transitions are seamless to ensure the sets move on their own through a GPS-oriented equipment that can move up to 10,000 pounds. The transition from one scene to another is being done in front of the audience seamlessly. Drive systems for some of the acts made the sets move. Conversely, control systems were also adopted alongside the GPS mobility. The invention of these drive systems was specifically designed for the stage performances of Sight and Sound. Hence, it was a new buy in the tech market of theatrics. The constructed set structures are positioned on the device and controlled to move towards desired stand point as detailed by each plot. In every Sight and Sound production, the mobility of the stage is always conspicuous and unhidden from the prying eyes of the audience. This drive system is the machinery responsible for this mobility.

Background Tracks and Music- Also, the performance of *Joseph* is well laced with music and variegated dance movements. Music and dance also functioned as stratagems for scene change. Within scenes, dance was used to change or separate scenes

while for transition, music was used majorly at the end of scenes to connect scenes (the previous with the next) or to serve as feelers during the period of scene change. These musical interludes and dances served various functions in the performance. Virtually all the scenes in the performance had background songs and introduced into them. These songs which were properly recorded during the stage of preproduction were used as background music to accompany the scenes and define the feel of the entire scene and also carry the audiences' perception. The melodious songs were recorded and inserted into the scenes. In the same way, there were also sound effects inserted into the background of the scenes. Example of such were the suspensory sounds placed at the background when Joseph narrated his first dream and his brothers started getting envious. The application of mischievous sound effects at the background sent signals of mischief to the audience having read the minds of Joseph's brothers.

v. Mediatisation and Mediation (Video Mixing)

Mediatisation in this case, refers to the application of media elements within live theatre production to enhance interpretation to a media-savvy audience, who are used to those elements in their daily lives. As seen in the theatrical production of *Joseph*, there were instances where media elements like the animations, videos and image projections were used interactively by the actors alongside the live production. Video mixing is another reality in Sight and Sound theatres which provides a bridge for audiences in cyberspace to also have a great feel of the performance in a mediated format.

Conversely, mediation means the extension of the production beyond the perimeters of the theatre to more audiences, who could spontaneously watch the production as it happens in the theatre through Video-on-demand networks from the comfort of their homes using their smartphones and

computers –this is synonymous to live transmission. This is made possible through the spontaneous mixing of video footages recorded by the cinematographers, who were recording the production live. These footages are to be mixed/edited by a team of video operators through an editing console to select camera angles and shots being recorded to allow the online audience (though watching via 2-dimensional screens) to catch a close glimpse of the ongoing 3-dimensional production experience. If the video is not transmitted live, the mixed videos can be uploaded (or premiered) online after the live production for the benefit of the online audience.

In Sight and Sound Theatres, the availability of the video mixing studio, allows the operators monitor the live production on stage and also communicate with the actors. The operators make use of the Coolux video system controlling 14 projectors, Video mapping on sets for specified scenes and 114' X 30' rear projection screens and the Coolux video system is called the Pandoras box media. The Pandoras Box Player systems offer an ideal, cost-effective software solution for professionals with multi-media requirements. It offers up to 4 video-layers and unlimited graphic-layers for easy and swift programing and editing. Several easy-to-use dynamic effects as well as FULL HD playback turn the Player into a powerful tool for creative projection and design. The Pandoras Box Player system can be set up as a standalone playback device, network playback client or in console mode for direct DMX Control. A combination of disguised pre-visualization software, Adobe photoshop, Modoc and after effects are used to create the custom content projection.

Hence, a perfect combination of the different video shots is done through the use of the Coolux video system which allows multiple video shots to be recorded and mixed. The implication of this is to also allow the online audience have access to the phenomenal performance experience when they watch online or stream the offline version.

DISCUSSION

From Sight and Sound's standpoint, the creation of Christian theatrical productions in contemporary times is a herculean but beautiful endeavour. Putting the production of *Joseph* in perspective, this study reveals the quintessential currencies that are necessary for the creation of Christian theatrical productions in the recent world, if effective communication is to be prioritized. These currencies range from the artistic creation or adaptation of intended stories from the lens of the contemporary audience; the deliberate use of aesthetic communication which further includes the

introduction of live and prerecorded sound into performance, interactive media, and the use of machine technology; technical design which include costume, sophisticated set structures, and interactive lighting; swift and seamless transitions; mediatisation and mediation.

These elements have proved effective for Sight and Sound Theatres, as audience patronage has grown exponentially across the years with the theatre buildings filled with audiences that are eager to be wowed by the brilliant use of the above-listed currencies to create outstanding performances.

Hence, the wave about Sight and Sound's successful productions have swept across the world and have challenged the creation of Christian theatres. Therefore, by applying and adapting the currencies as highlighted in this study, Christian theatrical production across the globe is set to experience a paradigmatic shift.

CONCLUSION

The persistent trends in media technologies have redefined the mode of creating and viewing performances, and for some directors, it has been quite challenging to fit into the demands of contemporary audiences. However, with the example of Sight and Sound theatres, directors and designers are urged to explore newer ways to create performances for contemporary audiences by paying close observation to the currencies as exemplified in the performance understudy for subsequent productions.

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