

**THEATRE SPACES AND THEIR SUITABILITY FOR PRODUCTIONS:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE EFUA SUTHERLAND DRAMA
STUDIO AND THE NATIONAL THEATRE OF GHANA.**

BY

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DECLARATION

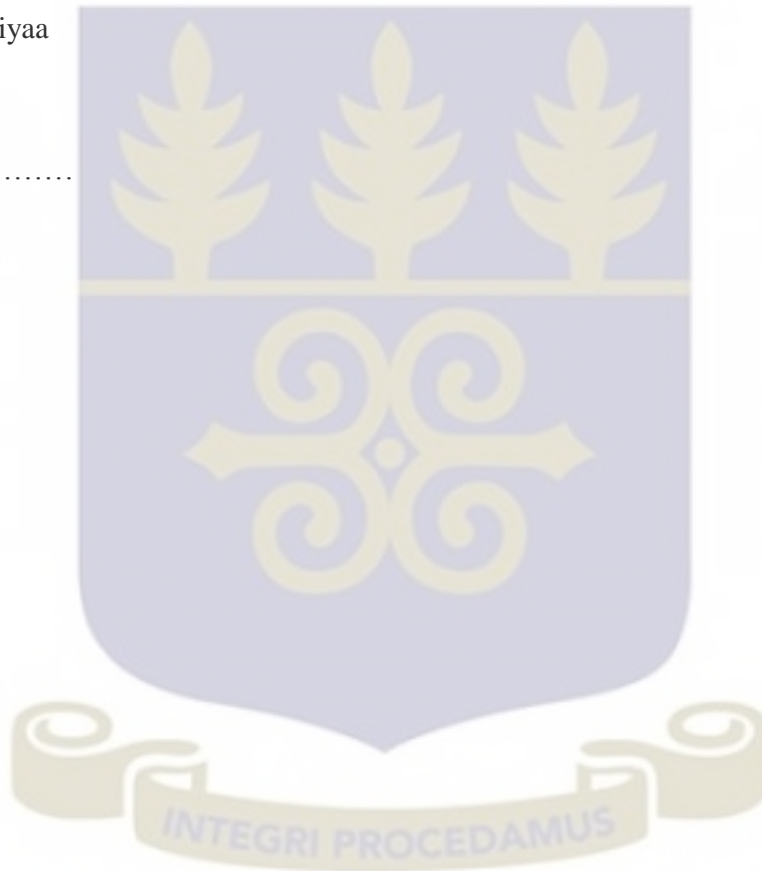
I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research, and that no part of it has been represented elsewhere with all references duly acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the suitability or otherwise of the National Theatre of Ghana and the Efua Theodora Sutherland Drama Studio (E.T.S Drama Studio) at the University of Ghana, taking into account what these structures entail as theatre spaces for productions. This research then became significant because the researcher realised not much documentation has been done on these structures especially in terms of what each possesses and what it does not. Hence this study seeks first to fill the vacuum and to add up to existing knowledge. The study is based primarily on library materials, including books, web documents, and journal articles both electronic and print. Among these is *The Legacy of Efua Sutherland: Pan-African Cultural Activism* (2007). The researcher employed the qualitative research design and purposively sampled her respondents for the interviews. The data collected was analysed with various productions to establish how suitable or otherwise each space presented itself for the various kinds of productions mounted in them.



DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my dear mother Paulina Afia Sakyiwaa Danquah of blessed memory, in the celebration of her life on earth and beyond. I love you mother. I know where ever you may be, you are proud of me for this achievement.



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To God be the glory great things he has done in my life. Really God has been faithful.

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CHAPTER ONE

1: 1 INTRODUCTION

Within the study of dramatic theatre, space is one area which is inevitably necessary. No theatrical performance has been able to do without a performance space. As Wilson (1998)¹ rightly puts it, “[t]he theatre experience does not occur in visual vacuum.” All forms of theatre available in the academia such as Applied Theatre, Creative Theatre, Technical Theatre and others have in one way or the other depended on space to enact their performances or productions. Locally in the Ghanaian setting, one realizes that, even the local storytelling session also has peculiar places where audiences gather to listen to the storyteller as he or she tells the story.

Theatre has been around since people first gathered together to listen to others tell a story in open places. The two parties shared the responsibility of audience and players. Although modern theatre may be more formal; whereby trained actors provide the action and audience supplying the reactions, the idea of sharing energy between live actors and live audience have ever since remained the same. Now the biggest difference one could ever notice are the buildings where theatre takes place. Theatre buildings have evolved from the open-air Amphi-Theater of the ancient Greeks and Romans to the incredible edifices we see today. ² In Ghana it has evolved from the courtyards, town squares, and under trees to the conventional theatre spaces we see in the country presently of which the National Theatre of Ghana and the E.T.S Drama Studio are examples.

The scale of many productions depends on the size of the theatre space, its stage, setup, availability of equipment, the type of performance, and the number of audience expected,

¹ Wilson, Edwin. *The Theatre Experience* (7th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill. 1998. p.355.

² www.theatreproject.com/files/pdf/Resources_Ideasinto_typesandformsofttheatre.ddf.

with each variable influencing the other. Consequently, in totality the artistic and technical benefits of any theatre space should always be considered before a successful dramatic production can be mounted. A successful theatre for live audience supports the educational, psychological and emotional exchange between the performer and the audience as well as among members of the audience,³ and where will this phenomenon take place? Obviously within a theatre space. Consequently, theatre spaces (conventional) have become an essential feature in the study of dramatic theatre.

In recent times the growth of theatre studies has become immense in many countries and Ghana is no exception. As a result, almost all the government Universities in the country offer theatre arts courses as part of their curriculum. Again many private Universities in Ghana are considering getting accreditation to run theatre art courses of which Methodist University has been the pioneer, accredited to the University of Cape Coast⁴. Further, with the emergence of many private production houses such as Roverman Production, Globe Production, H2P Crew, Theatre Cannons, Vision Theatre Company and many others, the researcher is of the view that, it is very important for us as theatre practitioners to have and also know the appropriate habitat conducive enough to hold theatrical performances.

The study therefore seeks to research into two very important theatre facilities that have contributed greatly to the development of theatre education in Ghana. They are the National Theatre of Ghana and the Efua Theodora Sutherland Drama Studio (E.T.S. Drama Studio) of the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana. The researcher seeks to do a comparative study of these two spaces as to how suitable or otherwise each is for productions. In other words, how best have productions been managed within these theatre spaces, taking into account their stages, capacity, nature, equipment, and auditorium. The

³ www.theatreproject.com/files/pdf/Resources_Ideasinto_typesandformsofttheatre.ddf.

⁴ Prof. Martin Owusu, member of the visiting panel: National Accreditation Board.

study will further evaluate the two buildings with two productions staged in both spaces as well as five others which were staged in either of the spaces to establish how suitable or otherwise each will be in handling productions.

This chapter therefore presents the background to the study, the problem statement, objectives of the study, significance of the study, research questions, scope of the study, methodology, and the organization of the thesis.

1:2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The background to the study touches on the following: first, it defines some key terms within the topic of the study; secondly, it discusses the establishment of both theatre spaces, and lastly, the motivation for doing this research.

The New International Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language, Encyclopedic Edition (2004)⁵ defines production as “the act or process of producing: involving creating”. The Oxford Thesaurus of English (2009)⁶ further explains that, for the aspect of producing, it can be in a form of a performance: staging; play, drama, film, concert, musicals, and shows. Based on the above explanations the study can deduce that there are many types of productions in the field of theatre but the focus of this research is on stage productions of plays and drama. The perception one gets from reading, a play has never been the same as opposed to the individual watching a production on stage. Brockett (1984)⁷ asserts that, “in reading only two elements are involved: the written word and the readers’ capacity to understand and envision what is conveyed through the written word”. However, a production involves several elements.

⁵*The New International Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language, Encyclopedic Edition.* Naples Florida: Trident Press International. 2004

⁶*The Oxford Thesaurus of English 1.* (ed.). Maurice Waite. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2007.

⁷ Oscar, Brockett. *The Theatre An Introduction.* 4th ed. New York: CBS College. 1976. pp. 61-62.

This is because a production brings together a lot of elements in order to create a meaningful performance. For Brockett, “a live performance translates the written word into speech and gives concreteness to movement, setting, costume, atmosphere, and all else that must be imagined”. For all these to be applicable, the performance (production) needs space to collaborate these entire elements to create an artistic piece. The study therefore agrees with Russell Brown (1997)⁸ when he posits that “a good theatre production is made by many talented individual working creatively and together.” This suggests that the director, costumier, set designer, sound designer, producer, cast, and the light designer collectively play very important role in making the production a success. Finally since the production needs to be performed to exhibit its creative and artistic capabilities, the acting area always continues to be one variable which will affect productions. The study therefore considers many of these elements in arriving at how suitable or otherwise the theatre spaces are with regard to productions.

According to *The New International Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language, Encyclopedic Edition*, something is said to be “suitable” when it is, “capable of suiting; appropriate; applicable; or proper.”⁹ This means that in order for something to be referred to as suitable, it must be able to fit correctly whatever it is meant for or it should be applicable or appropriate to the situation at hand. This position also dovetails well with the *Word Web Online Dictionary's* definition of “suitability” which states that; “The quality of having the properties that are right for a specific purpose”¹⁰. This further explains the standardization of something that has its features accurate for a particular purpose. In a nutshell, the researcher posits that, something is said to be suitable when it has been raised up

⁸ John, R. Brown. *What is Theatre? An Introduction and Exploration*. Boston: Focal Press. 1997. p.129.

⁹ *The New International Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language, Encyclopedic Edition*. Naples Florida: Trident Press International. 2004.

¹⁰ “Word web Info.” 2013, 01-11-2013. <http://wordweb.info/free/>

to its task. Therefore a theatre space can be said to be suitable if it meets the requirements for the purpose for which it was built.

The *Word Web Online Dictionary* again defines “comparative” as “Relating to or based on or involving comparison”¹¹. This is a clear case of evaluation of two things that share something in common. In linguistics, the word “comparative” is a syntactic construction that serves to express a comparison between two or more entities or groups of entities in quality, quantity, or degree.¹² This means that one can compare two or more entities which share some common features.

In the case of this research the comparison here stems out of the fact that, these two facilities are theatre spaces and they all hold theatrical productions. Also the spaces have contributed to the development of theatre education in Ghana. More importantly the Act that established the National Theatre (Ghana National Theatre Act 1991[PNDCL 259] Section 2) mandated it to help in the promotion and development of the performing arts in the Republic.¹³ The E.T.S Drama Studio as part of the School of Performing Arts being educationally oriented is also mandated to train performing arts students to be practically equipped in order to educate the general populace through the performances.

Consequently the researcher can conclude that both theatre spaces are serving the same purpose but at different environments. Again the study has noted that, they are indispensable to each other. To some extent, they need each other for sustenance. Thus, while the National Theatre needs fully trained personnel to function as an entity, students and graduates from the School of Performing Arts also need the National Theatre to work and also experiment on a

¹¹“Word web. Info.” 2013, 01-11-2013. <http://wordweb.info/free/>

¹²“Comparative” online Wikipedia the free encyclopaedia, 12-06-2013, 02-11-2013. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/comparative>

¹³“Ghana National Theatre Act” Ghana Legal Online, 22-06-2013, 12-02-14, <http://ghanalegal.com/?id=3&law=517&t=ghana-laws>

bigger platform. Therefore, if comparison can be done between two entities which share some common features, then the researcher wishes to compare the two theatre spaces based on the above reasons. The researcher wishes to point out at this juncture that, the ‘comparative study’ as used here concentrates on just comparing the two structures based on productions to point out the capabilities each space possess or otherwise.

By suitability, the study explains that, it is the quality of having the properties that are right for their specific purposes to be achieved. However, do the two spaces have the right properties structurally needed for their specific purposes? These are what the study seeks to inquire. The term “theatre space” according to Balm (2008),¹⁴

[r]efers to the architectural conditions of theatre, and encompasses performances and spectator space [...]. The term ‘theatrical space’ is in itself a site of terminological contestation because the word ‘theatre’ implies [...] (both etymologically and historically) a building or, at least a fixed area.

Carlson (1993)¹⁵ also defines the term as; “a permanently or temporarily created ludic space, a ground for the encounter of spectator and performer.”

Again, Bellman (1977)¹⁶ calls it the ‘Theatre Plant’ and mentions that,

[L]iterary, the physical theatre is the building in which theatre production takes place; it is a piece of architecture. This edifice may be a valuable piece of real estate, a matter of civic pride, a center of community activity...but most important, it is the structure for the production of art works, i.e., play.

All the three definitions talks about a permanently constructed building for theatre productions, which are specifically designed for such purposes. Carlson, however, inculcates the temporal kind of theatre space; here the acting area does not become a permanent place.

¹⁴ Christopher, Balm. *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. P. 48-49.

¹⁵ Marvin, Carlson. *Theories of the Theatre: A Historical and Critical Survey from the Greek to the Present*. (2nd and expanded ed.). New York: Cornell University Press, 1993. P. 8.

¹⁶ William F. Bellman, *Scenography and Stage Technology an Introduction*. New York: Thomas Y Crowell Company, 1977. P. 51.

This is called Created and Found Space; here the show takes place in an unconventional type of spaces which most often are not meant for such purposes originally. It could be a street, market, stadia, barn, and many others. These types of performance spaces are normally common in Theatre For Development (TFDs) and Drama in Education productions, which occasionally happen within the communities or schools where the theme, message, or subject matter of the production is of utmost interest to the target audience. The acting space then becomes temporal which accommodate lots of improvisation in the building of set and the audience area.

It is essential to point out that, the study recognizes the unconventional types of theatre spaces as unique in its own way. However, the focus of this research has to do with the conventional type of theatre space such as the Efua Theodora Sutherland Drama Studio and the National Theater of Ghana which are permanently built for theatrical purposes.

1:2:1 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EFUA THEODORA SUTHERLAND (E.T.S) DRAMA STUDIO

The University of Ghana, Legon, has two facilities where theatre performances take place: the Amphi-Theatre at the Commonwealth Hall and the E.T.S Drama Studio. The E.T.S Drama Studio is at the School of Performing Arts and it was named after Efua Theodora Sutherland (1924-1996), a dramatist who was also referred to as the “mother of Ghanaian theatre movement”. She was one of the pioneers of theatre activities in Ghana. It has always been said of her that, she had the desire to have a studio with a shape like a huge traditional stool with a sitting capacity of about 500 people. Sutherland had this desire fulfilled by building a studio with the help of a Danish building firm, Greelack and Gilles. The Drama Studio, as it was called then, was later opened by Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah, the then President of Ghana, in October 1961, and it was located where the present National Theatre is situated. On the 25th October 1963, President Kwame Nkrumah opened the Institute of

African Studies (IAS) at the University of Ghana, Legon, charging it to do the very things Efua Theodora Sutherland was championing; that is, promoting history, cultural institutions, language and arts of Ghana and Africa. Manuh and Sutherland-Addy (2013)¹⁷ posit that, to achieve these goals, a School of Music and Drama was set up within the Institute of African Studies. In May 1963, Efua Theodora Sutherland was invited to join the staff and she became a Research Associate of the Institute. According to Anyidoho, (2001)¹⁸ her appointment to the Institute brought transfer of ownership of the Drama Studio to the University of Ghana, so that it could be used as an extension of the School of Music and Drama, now known as School of Performing Arts. However, in 1989, the Government of Ghana through the National Commission of Culture decided to pull down the Drama Studio to pave way for a new multi-purpose National Theatre. This was done under the Chairmanship of Mohammed Ben Abdullah in 1990. Gibbs (2012)¹⁹ further states that, a consensus was reached that a replica of the Ghana Drama Studio be built at its present site, and was named Efua Theodora Sutherland Drama Studio. The Studio as a unit is designed for Research, Workshops and Performances by the three main disciplines of the School of Performing Arts: Music, Dance and Theatre Arts. The architecture incorporated Western and African arts, accordingly it is a multi-functional studio, with a Proscenium Stage, the Arena (Theatre-in-the-Round) which is more recognized and used in the African setting, as well as the End Stage. The exterior design has a symbolic stool at the front of the Studio literary meaning “welcome” or ‘Akwaaba` in Akan. Another feature which makes the Studio one of a kind in Ghana is its

¹⁷ Manuh, T. & Sutherland-Addy, E. *Africa In Contemporary Perspective: A Textbook for Undergraduate Students*. Accra: Sub Saharan Publishers, 2013. Pp. vi-x.

¹⁸ Kofi, Anyidoho. “Dr. Efua Sutherland A Biographical Sketch.” James Gibbs & Kofi Anyidoho (eds.). In *FonTomFrom, Contemporary Ghanaian Literature, Theatre and Film*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000. p.79.

¹⁹ James, Gibbs. “History of Theatre in Ghana.” Helen Lauer & Kofi Anyidoho (eds.). In *Reclaiming the Human Sciences and Humanities through African Perspective volume II*. Accra:Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2012. p. 1350.

open air auditorium. In terms of capacity, the Studio takes maximum of four hundred audiences²⁰.

1:2:2 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONAL THEATRE

The National Theatre is located in the Victoria Borg district of Accra, Ghana. It has a building area of 11,896, square metres, and it is situated near the junction of the Independence Avenue and Liberia Road, right in the heart of Accra. It was officially opened on the 30th of December 1992. The Theatre was born out of a technical co-operation agreement signed on September 18, 1985 in Beijing between the Governments of the Republic of Ghana and the People's Republic of China. The latter provided the funding for the construction of the National Theatre. The elegant and imposing National Theatre has a complicated construction moulding and novel exterior features. When looked at from a distance, the whole structure looks like a gigantic ship or a seagull spreading its wings. (See fig 1) The National Theatre houses three resident companies, namely, the National Dance Company, the National Symphony Orchestra, and the National Theatre Players (Abibigromma).²¹

1:2:3 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

The motivation and basis of this research is in two folds; first, the researcher would want to point out that, these two theatre spaces have gone a long way to help the creative industry by mounting artistic programmes such as stage productions, art exhibitions, and many others. However, it seems that, there has not been enough documentation on these two theatre spaces with regards to their exact configuration as a structure, technical equipment, artistic benefit, and how it is managed.

²⁰ www.ug.edu.gh/index1.php?linkid=939

²¹ ghana-net.com/national-theatre-of-ghana---accra

Secondly, in 1991 when the E.T.S Drama Studio was built, the total number of students in the School of Performing Arts was 37.²² Currently the School holds about 1,743 students offering Bachelor of Fine Arts courses in the three disciplines of the School. Within this number, 93 are foreign students from various countries across the world. There are also other students on the Bachelor of Arts programme who offer courses in one or two of the three disciplines mentioned above.²³ This confirms that, there are quite a number of students pursuing courses within the School at the moment. However, all the three disciplines within the School depends on the E.T.S Drama Studio to hold major productions because it is the most ‘appropriate’ space and the only Studio the School has which can hold quite a number of audience (400) and handle the productions artistically and technically. Consequently all the three departments within the School heavily depend on this space.

Considering its four hundred maximum capacity; the growing population of students within the School; theatre fans both within and beyond the University, it is only natural that one would expect that the Studio would have gone through some form of ‘growth’ since its establishment twenty three years ago (1991-2014). The School has been in existence for fifty two (1962-2014) years and the Studio has been part of the School twenty three years. You will agree with me that it is quite a milestone and ideally this growth should have affected certain structures of the School of which the E.T.S Drama Studio should not be an exception. Just like other courses within the University which are experimentally oriented, have their structures in place to receive the growing population of its students and courses, so should the E.T.S Drama Studio which serves as an experimental structure for the School of Performing Arts have. Though some renovations have taken place before as confirmed by Martin Okyere Owusu²⁴ and John Djesenu,²⁵ the studio since 1992 has not gone through any major

²² Public Affairs Directorate, University of Ghana.

²³ (Document from the Assistant Registrars’ office, School of Performing Arts)

²⁴ A professor at the School of Performing Arts.

refurbishment on its stage, auditorium, and front of house despite the growing population of students and expansion of the Schools' curriculum.

Students still change flats manually during productions as they use to do twenty three years ago. Electrical wires on the stage are still exposed; no proper security system has been installed, no permanent in-built sound and light equipment, just to mention a few. On the other hand, even though the National Theatre is structurally equipped with its basic stage gadgets in-place, it is also faced with inadequate stage lighting and sound equipment challenges after twenty three years (1991-2014) of its existence.

It is the inadequacy of this 'growth' and the minimal documentation on these spaces that has informed the study on the E.T.S Drama Studio as a training facility and the National Theatre; a civil service business oriented performance space. The researcher believes that, the two spaces depend on each other for human resource so it is appropriate on her part to research into their 'growth' in terms of their suitability, which can be a contributing factor of their sustenance or otherwise.

1:3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In this era of globalization where government and other agencies are seeking to promote works of art, it is not strange that, the increase in the patronage for stage productions has gone up. With the increase in student productions in the School of Performing Arts and the emergence of numerous production houses, it is only farsighted that researchers do their part by looking at the various theatre spaces that hold these stage productions and how suitable or otherwise they are vis-à-vis the present growth.

²⁵ A Senior Lecturer at the School of Performing Arts and the first studio manager of the E.T.S Drama Studio.

There is the need therefore to be proactive in researching into the performance spaces and think of more modernised ways of improving the technical and artistic purpose for which these facilities were built. Every conventional theatre space has its requirement as to whether or not; it can be categorized as up to standard for the purpose it is serving. Whether it is business oriented like the National Theatre or a training facility like the E.T.S Drama Studio, these standards should not be compromised. As a student of School of Performing Arts, the researcher have taken part and enjoyed in several productions on both theatre spaces; it was realised that these facilities fall short of many of the requirements they ought to have. Again in terms of documentation, little is known about these two spaces with regards to their exact configurations and other facilities as performance spaces; thus, type of stages, auditoriums, equipment, and many others. These two facilities obviously are the hallmark of theatre spaces in Ghana at the moment and for that matter deserve attention. It is this vacuum that challenges the researcher in the field of theatre management to study these two theatre space to provide a source material for patrons.

1:4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study seeks mainly to examine how suitable or otherwise the National Theatre and the E.T.S Drama Studio are in terms of handling productions. Specific objectives that guided this study are to:

- Find out the main purposes for which these theatre spaces were built.
- Document exactly what these two spaces comprise; stages and their dimensions, equipment available, types of auditoriums and their capacities, as well as their challenges.
- Examine both structures to know how well equipped each is technically and artistically for productions.

- Evaluate the advantages and challenges directors go through when mounting productions within both spaces.

1:5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study is significant because of two basic reasons:

The research, when completed, will add up to knowledge. The researcher intends to make available her findings and recommendations to the managements of both spaces so that appropriate actions and measures can be put in place if it requires such implementations.

Secondly the researcher believes her findings and recommendations will instigate policy makers to set their priorities right on the decisions they make on these two structures and subsequent ones yet to be built, since they all help in educating the general public and also promote culture.

1:6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study seeks to answer the following questions;

- What was the purpose for the establishment of these theatre spaces?
- To what extent has these two facilities been documented?
- How well are these spaces equipped technically and artistically to enhance productions?
- What challenges do management, directors, technical personnel, artistic directors go through when mounting productions.

1:7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This research focuses on two main structures: The E.T.S Drama Studio as a training facility for the School of Performing Arts and the National Theatre a civil service institution and a business entity. The selection was done on the basis that, they are both theatre spaces. The study will be looking at the structures of these entities taking into account, their stage, auditorium and the technical setup. It will further inquire into the capabilities each has to suit theatrical productions or otherwise, and access them comparatively with some productions held in the spaces.

1:8 METHODOLOGY

The research will focus mainly on the evaluation, analysis, and interpretation of the two spaces structurally. It will again take into account some productions that have been staged in the spaces. It will further discuss literatures on the history of both theatre spaces, its stages and how it has developed to its present state. This research will mainly use the qualitative approach to gather data for the study through the purposive sampling method. To achieve this, the researcher intends to undertake various processes and steps including the following:

- Interview studio managers, artistic directors, production directors, directors of the spaces and some scholars about both spaces to get their comments, perceptions, facts, and challenges in the usage of these theatre spaces. This is to enable the researcher have an objective observations and insight of other users on both structures. The sampling will be purposive because the researcher only needs people who have the technical know-how on these spaces.
- There will be interviews with theatre practitioners who contributed to the establishment of both facilities such as Mohammed Ben Abdullah²⁶, Esi Sutherland-

²⁶ Chairman, National Commission of Culture. PNDC, 1990.

Addy²⁷, and Sandy Arkhurst²⁸. This is to enable the researcher establish the chronology of events that surrounds the establishment of these two theatre spaces.

- The researcher will visit the archives of these two spaces and learn more about the purposes they are serving now, the reason for their establishment, their missions, objectives, and how the state of affairs are presently. This is to enable the researcher access the present state of the structures based on the purposes they are serving now.
- For the sake of continuity and safety the researcher will check how regularly equipment within these two facilities are maintained and how often new ones are brought in.
- The data collected will be analysed and further interpreted using the findings. This is to enable the study give the right recommendations based on its discoveries.

1:9 ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS

This thesis is made up of five chapters. Chapter one deals with the background of the study which defines some key terms in the field and also establishes the motivation and rational for embarking on the research. It again looks at the problem statement, objectives of the study, significance of the study, research questions, scope of the study, methodology employed, and finally the organisation of the thesis.

Chapter two is a discussion on the various literatures in relation to the study. This is discussed under four sub-themes; history of theatre stages, history on the establishment of both theatre spaces, perceptions of some theatre theorists on theatre spaces, and lastly the basic stage requirement for conventional theatre space.

²⁷ Deputy Secretary, National Commission of Culture. PNDC, 1990.

²⁸ Senior Lecturer at the School of Performing Arts and University of Education. Mentored by Efua Sutherland.

The third chapter also deliberates on the various techniques, methods, and approaches the researcher employed to collect her data. Captured as the methodology, it discusses the processes through which the primary and secondary data was examined to arrive at the findings of this study. The qualitative research design was employed. Data was collected through the purposive sampling technique in an unstructured interview section.

The fourth chapter presents a discussion on the data gathered from the various respondents, and a comparative analysis of two productions which were mounted in the two spaces as well as five others which were staged in either of the two spaces.

The fifth chapter is the concluding chapter of the whole thesis. It captures the summary of the whole thesis, conclusion, and the recommendations



CHAPTER TWO **LITERATURE REVIEW**

2:1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a discussion on relevant literature in the direction of the research on theatre spaces and how suitable they present themselves for productions artistically, technically and administratively. Theatre can be seen as the mirror through which the society sees itself; a tool that reflects life, therefore one could say that wherever there is life, there is theatre. Wilson (1998)²⁹ therefore posits that, Theatre, in this sense encompasses the performing arts, that is, dance, drama and music. Theatre has over the years evolved and reached a point where the spaces within which it happens play an important role in helping it reach its full potential.

Llewellyn, (2002)³⁰ also suggests that, the theatre space is a stage in totality through which the relationship of audience and actors could be fostered. According to him the moment the audience enter the theatre, the experience should begin, whether or not the actual play has begun. Every aspect of the auditorium should be consciously designed to put the audience and actors in the mood which forebodes the actions in the production. Lehmann, (2006)³¹ further states that: “The space presents itself. It becomes a co-player without having a definite significance. It is not dressed up but made visible. The spectators, too, however, are co-players in such a situation.”

²⁹ Edwin, Wilson. *The Theatre Experience* (7th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998. p.1.

³⁰ Jones, Llewellyn. “Understanding Theatre Spaces” *Essay on Documenting and Researching Modern production on Greek Drama: The Sources*. 2002.

³¹ Hans – Thies, Lehmann. *Postdramatic Theatre*. London: Routledge, 2006. P. 152.

According to Cassady, (2002)³² theatre buildings which represent performance spaces evolved from the open-air Amphi-Theatre of the ancient Greeks and Romans into the incredible edifices we see today.

Within this chapter, four sub-themes will be discussed. The first sub-theme will be focused on the history of some theatre stages. It will further discuss the chronology of events surrounding the establishment of the Ghana Drama Studio, the National Theatre and the Efua Theodora Sutherland Drama Studio (E.T.S Drama Studio). Also the study will review the perceptions of some theatre theorists on theatre spaces; and finally, some basic theatre equipment for conventional theatre space will be looked at as well as their functions.

2:2 HISTORY OF THEATRE SPACES

2:2:1 TYPES OF THEATRE STAGES

According to Wilson (1998)³³ throughout the study of theatre history, four basic types of stages have proven to be the most prominent. It is also clear that each has its own advantages and disadvantages, obviously some have proven to suit certain kinds of play and productions than others. It is again an undeniable fact that the experiences each gives to its audience differ from the other. The four types of stages are the Proscenium; the type in which the audience faces one direction towards an enclosed stage encased by a picture frame opening. The Arena or Theatre in the Round is the type in which the stage is at the centre where audience sit in a circle surrounding the stage. The Thrust is also the type of stage with a three-quarter seating arrangement, and lastly, Created and Found stage; spaces which do not conform to the traditional Proscenium, Arena, or Thrust configuration.

For the purpose of this research, only the Proscenium and the Arena stages will be discussed. This is mainly because these two types are the core stages mostly used within the theatre

³² Marsh, Cassady. *Theatre An Introduction*. Illinois: NTC Publishing Group, 2002. p. 41.

³³ Edwin, Wilson. *The Theatre Experience* (7th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998. p.333.

spaces being studied. Space has been and will continue to be one of the epitomes of theatre. Throughout the study of theatre many has defined, 'theatre' as either the physical space or a concept. Irrespective of how one traces the beginnings of theatre, space has evolved with it throughout the development of theatre to date. The study of theatre history in Western Europe and the United States reveals that there has been an evolution of constructed theatre spaces, from the outdoor classical Greek theatre to the Italian Proscenium stage.³⁴

2:2:3 THE PROSCENIUM STAGE

According to Cooper and Mackey (1995)³⁵,

[the] Proscenium arch theatres are still the most recognised form of theatre space. The name derives from the Greek word skene. This was the building for actors changing at the back of the acting area in a Greek amphitheatre; it suggested an early version of permanent sc(k)enery. Thus pro(before)-scenium would be a space in front of the back scenery. The word 'proscenium' is now taken to be the front opening of the stage and its surroundings.

This type of stage was first introduced in Italy during the Renaissance period, and the term Proscenium emanated from the word Proscenium-arch. Possibly the most familiar of all the stages, the Proscenium or the picture frame as some scholars refers to has been the model Broadway theatres used in staging most of their productions especially in the United States of America.³⁶ It used to be an arch in the past, but in modern times it has evolved to become like a frame, rectangular in shape which forms an outline for the stage. As the term picture frame suggests, it resembles a large picture frame through which the audience view the performance.

Before the 1950s, there was a curtain behind the proscenium which rose to reveal the picture, because the audience were viewing the other three walls of the stage. They assumed there

³⁴Edwin, Wilson. *The Theatre Experience* (7th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998. p.333.

³⁵ Simon, C. & Sally, M. *Theatre Studies an Approach for Advanced Level*. Cheltenham: Stanley Thones, 1995. p. 54.

³⁶ Edwin, Wilson. *The Theatre Experience* (7th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998. p.334.

was a transparent glass wall through which they were looking and it merited a new name; the ‘fourth wall’.³⁷ The proscenium stage gained popularity throughout the United States in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as Wilson, posits that; “Beginning in the late seventeenth century, the proscenium theatre was adopted in every European country.”³⁸

Copper and Mackey (1995) reiterates that, this general acceptance throughout Europe was probably due to the fact that the proscenium stage has a lot of merits, it is usually deep and it necessitates elaborate scenery during productions. The proscenium is designed to conceal scene changes, and this provides a perfect arrangement for spectacle in the theatre. It also promotes realistic scenery which always looks good behind the proscenium frame. Illusions created here are much more real. Pickering (2010)³⁹ further attests that;

The proscenium arch stage is ideal for the creation of illusion and picture effects. Because the audience cannot see behind the surface of the proscenium it is possible to hide from view a great deal of stage machinery, lighting equipment, constructional reinforcement and scenery, in preparation for several transformations of the stage picture. By careful use of perspective, a designer can create the illusion of a larger space. Single flat surface can be painted to resemble buildings and landscapes or to make whatever visual statement the director desires. By cunning use of gauze and lighting, characters and scenes can be made to appear and disappear at will.

It can therefore be argued that, perhaps it is the aforementioned advantages that have contributed in making the Proscenium stage one of the universally accepted standardised stage widely used among most theatre spaces. It is therefore not strange that in Ghana traces of these European influences were inculcated in the theatre buildings where the Proscenium takes over all the other kinds of stages created for acting. This is evident in the type of stage mainly used at the National Theatre, the Regional Centre for National Culture and the E.T.S Drama Studio all in Ghana.

³⁷ http://www.theatreprojects.com/files/pdf/Resources_IdeasInfo_typesandformsoftheatre.pdf

³⁸ Edwin, Wilson. *The Theatre Experience* (7th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998. p.336.

³⁹ Kenneth, Pickering. *Key Concepts in Drama and Performance* (2nd ed.) New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. pp.219-220.

However the Proscenium provides the atmosphere of detachment or distancing of the audience from actors on stage. Again it possesses vocal projection problems especially theatres which lacks adequate acoustic gadgets. Also with the types where the distance between the audience and stage is a bit wide. Actors have to put on lapel microphones before they can be heard properly, which sometimes disrupts the actors. Usually characters are expected to remain in their own world, that is within the Proscenium but occasionally when an actor breaks the rule by talking to the audience, it is said that he/she has broken the imaginary 'fourth wall'.⁴⁰

2:2:4 THE ARENA STAGE

Unlike the Proscenium, the Arena stage or Theatre-In-The-Round has been designed to situate the acting area in the centre of the auditorium; the audience sit around facing the arena. With this kind of stage the audience are quite closer to the performance and as such provoke a feeling of intimacy and involvement in the actions taking place on stage. Being one of the oldest forms, many scholars believe that it evolved from the ancient Greek theatre.⁴¹

According to Wilson, (1998)⁴² Just after World War II, a movement began in the United States of America where a number of theatre practitioners decided to break away from the conventions the proscenium theatres tend to create. It was a part of an overall desire to bring many aspects of theatre closer to everyday life: acting styles, the subject matter of plays, the manner of presentation, and the shape of the theatre space. As against the conventional type thus, the Proscenium tends to separate the acting area from the audience.

⁴⁰'Theatre Design' <http://theatredesigner.wordpress.com/theatre-design-101/stage-types-proscenium-arch/2006> Accessed: 18-09-2013. 1:040pm

⁴¹'Craft&Heritage' http://wooddesign.dgtlpub.com/2011/2011-02-28/pdf/arena_stage_at_the_mead_center.pdf Accessed: 27-09-2013. 3:10pm.

⁴² Edwin, Wilson. *The Theatre Experience* (7th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998. p.340

One turn this reaction took was the Arena stage, a return, as one may call it to one of the most ancient forms of stage arrangement which foster actor audience integration. Boal, (2008)⁴³ also added that; “in 1956, the Arena entered into its ‘realist’ stage. Among its characteristics, this stage signified a ‘no’ to conventional theatre... the arena found out that we were far from the great cultural centres ...and wanted to create a theatre which would be close. Close to whom? To its public.” An example of the Arena stage is the Efua Theodora Sutherland Drama Studio (E.T.S. Drama Studio). (See fig 24).

This crusade did not only arise in the United States. A similar movement gradually emerged in the West African sub regions around the 80s; specifically Ghana and Nigeria where some scholars also reacted against the usage of the proscenium stage. Deandrea (2002)⁴⁴ attests that,

[t]he search for authentic and ‘rootsy’ forms of dramatic expression could not help involving the physical shape of theatrical space. Needless to say a westernized building with its proscenium-arch stage could not affect the desired organic integration of performers and audience. Traditional performances, after all, did not make use of such structures but of circular dispositions.

The researcher agrees with Deandrea in the sense that, in the search for what could be called ‘African’ or in a conscious effort to return to the roots, it became imperative to reconsider the physical space, where many of our gatherings occur in the African setting. Many of the rites performed in Africa normally take place in the courtyard. This promotes an intimate kind of integration between the performers and audience, creating some kind of euphoria which the proscenium stage could not affect.

It was quite clear that the Arena stage has gained publicity and hence became the choice of many countries in the sub region. This reaction conceivably could be attributed to the search

⁴³ Augusto, Boal. *Theatre of the Oppressed*. London: Pluto Press, 2008.p.136.

⁴⁴ Pietro, Deandrea. *Fertile Crossings*. Amsterdam – New York: Rodopi, 2002. p.205.

for an African aesthetics which started in the post-colonial era, just around the same period when Imperialism ideas were being rejected by Africans. Deandrea (2002)⁴⁵ again confirms this saying;

In Nigeria, the same dissatisfaction with proscenium-arch theatre was expressed by some critics and practitioners, in 1981, Meki Nzewi lamented the use of the Western proscenium structures: “the modern physical stage in Nigeria is an unimaginative transfer of Euro-American stage but devoid of the facilities of the latter.” Efiok B. Uwatt subscribes to this view and criticizes Soyinka, who complains about this borrowed frame but does not reject it, whereas he praises Ola Rotimi’s experiments, such as his employment in his companies of the ‘ theatre-in-the-round’ structure, the Ori-Olokun Theatre at the University of Ife (1968-76) and the Crab Theatre from 1981 onwards.

The researcher therefore agrees with Efiok Bassey Uwatt,⁴⁶ on his take, as cited by Deandrea that, “Rotimi himself associates such stage configurations, with the need for the audience participation he tries to attain in his performances; therefore, he accordingly terms the Western Proscenium ‘technical apartheid’.”⁴⁷ This is because in attaining actor-audience participation very effectively, the Arena stage cannot be ignored. In another sense it could be suggested that, it is a situation where the Proscenium, which is Western, does not encourage people socialising together as populates. This makes actors in the Proscenium (western) somewhat unapproachable, so to some extent there are restrictions. Consequently some level of segregation sets in, of which the Arena stage disregards.

Apart from its intimate nature, one other factor which contributed to the use of this type of stage is its less expensive nature in creating it. It does not really need the decorated ‘gold and red plush’ which looks more of a temple rather than a theatre space as Wilson (1998)⁴⁸ describes it. It should, however, be noted that because of the nature of this stage, special arrangements must be put in place when staging productions on it. The director must find

⁴⁵ Pietro, Deandrea. *Fertile Crossings*. Amsterdam – New York: Rodopi, 2002. p.207.

⁴⁶ ‘Head of English Department, University of Abuja Nigeria’ 2007. www.africanbookscollective.com/authors-editors/effiok-bassey-uwatt, Accessed: 06-12-2013. 02:20pm.

⁴⁷ Pietro, Deandrea. *Fertile Crossings*. Amsterdam – New York: Rodopi, 2002. p.208

⁴⁸ Edwin, Wilson. *The Theatre Experience* (7th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998. p.337

other means to set the scenes since curtains and backdrops cannot be used. Entrances and exits must be created within the audience, even though it hinders surprise entries. The actors need to ensure that their backs are not turned to any part of the stage for too long, because with that, then, the actor prevents other viewers from witnessing what he or she is doing. Stage lighting, sound, and other effects are also difficult to infuse and the director/designer needs to find appropriate ways of creating them.⁴⁹ Based on these pitfalls, one could say that, perhaps this explains the reason why scholars like Wole Soyinka complained about the Proscenium or the “borrowed frame” as it was described by Efiok Uwatt in Deandrea *Fertile Crossings* but did not reject it either.

Deandrea (2002)⁵⁰ further attests that;

[g]enerally speaking, in Ghana “there has been a commitment since the days of Nkrumah to place both traditional and contemporary performances where they belong, namely, in the very midst of the people.” Consequently, the Drama Studio in Accra was built on the design of a traditional Ghanaian household as an open-air space “embodied the flexible features of the early courtyard performance spaces for both proscenium and circular staging”

It should however be noted that despite all the reactions on which type of stage or space truly defines theatre distinctively, the Proscenium has proven to be the most widely used. This is so because many theatre spaces have this type of stage in it. This has indirectly made the Arena and the other types of theatre stages under-utilized. The researcher therefore shares the sentiments of Kotey⁵¹ (2000)⁵² when he expressed his opinion that many African play text from recognized playwrights has not been written to suit the Arena. He argues that since the circular formation of doing activities is an instinctive nature that characterizes African performances, play text or production could reflect on that phenomenon.

⁴⁹ http://www.theatreprojects.com/files/pdf/Resources_IdeasInfo_typesandformsoftheatre.pdf Accessed: 25 - 09-2013. 11:30am.

⁵⁰ Pietro, Deandrea. *Fertile Crossings*. Amsterdam – New York: Rodopi, 2002. p.206.

⁵¹ Former lecturer at the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana.

⁵² Godwin, Kotey. *Myth, Legend, History and the Story-Telling Tradition, A Resource For An Authentic African Theatre: The History of Yaa Asantewaa as a Test-Case*. University of Ghana, Unpublished MFA thesis. 2000.

2:3 THE GHANA DRAMA STUDIO, NATIONAL THEATRE, AND E.T.S DRAMA STUDIO IN RETROSPECT

The history of theatre spaces in Ghana cannot be complete without mentioning the chronology of events leading to the establishment of these three theatre spaces. The researcher therefore agrees with Gibbs (2012)⁵³ on his take that, “the symbolism of the sequence of events connected with these three buildings should not be missed.” Reminiscing from the past clearly shows that, these three theatre spaces have played an important role in the creative industry in Ghana by holding theatrical performances as well as promoting culture through arts exhibitions. Though the first studio the Ghana Drama Studio is no more in existence; the researcher believes that it was the establishment of that studio which sets the ball rolling for the subsequent ones to be built in the country. The focus of this discussion is therefore taking us back to the genesis of these theatre spaces and how they came into being. The research will also discuss their actual purposes, thus the objectives of their establishment will be unveiled and find out why the Ghana Drama Studio had to be demolished for the National Theatre to be constructed. Finally, the study investigates why a replica of the pulled down studio was built at the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana, and what it is being used for now.

It is not the mere fact that, in the Ghanaian society it is an abomination to speak ill of the dead, that, commendations are being hailed at Efua Theodora Sutherland. The researcher believes that, she earned it. So are many accolades such as the “mother of Ghanaian theatre movement.”⁵⁴ Indisputably, through her hard work and dedication to the works of arts she deserves to be acknowledged. As a member of the first phase of the National Theatre Movement which faced some challenges such as demands for permanent training schemes,

⁵³ James, Gibbs. “History of Theatre in Ghana.” Helen Lauer & Kofi Anyidoho (eds.). In *Reclaiming the Human Sciences and Humanities through African Perspective volume II*. Accra:Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2012. p. 1350

⁵⁴ ‘Background information of the Drama Studio’ www.ug.edu.gh/index1.php?linkid=939,2008. Accessed: 15-12-2013.06:50pm

and spatial inadequacies for proper training, any effort to address those challenges were of utmost priority to Sutherland. Sutherland (2000)⁵⁵ states that;

[t]he task has engaged the mind, talent, and toil of individuals and groups, the majority of whom have voluntarily rallied in support of the idea of a National Theatre Movement. From their trials, their losses and gains, and their hard-won perceptions, important lessons have been accrued to help determine, shape plans, and direct effort for the second phase of the Movement. What are the lessons? – Talent and efficiency were lost ...because of constant withdrawals from training programs ...for the realistic reason that they had to earn their living elsewhere. After the first few years the need for full time trainees had become obvious. – Problem of standards made the demand for a permanent training scheme for developing professionals both essential and urgent.

She further attests that peculiar problems occurred which needed to receive special attention in the training programmes. For example: The gap between theoretical knowledge and actual performance ability of the members. Actors were faced with serious frustration when there was the need to perform in English, and the most disturbing of them all was the slowdown in output of creative material, particularly dramatic literature.⁵⁶

According to Sutherland, recalling from the first phase of the Movement clearly shows that, a number of issues needed to be addressed, such as inadequate creative materials, financial constraints, and difficulty in getting premises for rehearsals. Sutherland then started the Theatre Programme as part of the second phase of the National Theatre Movement and the concept of this Programme occurred to her when she represented Ghana at Tashkent for an

⁵⁵ Efua Theodora, Sutherland. "The Second Phase of the National Theatre Movement in Ghana." Kofi Anyidoho & James Gibbs (eds.). In *FonTomFrom, Contemporary Ghanaian Literature, Theatre and Film*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000. p.48.

⁵⁶ Efua Theodora, Sutherland. "The Second Phase of the National Theatre Movement in Ghana." Kofi Anyidoho & James Gibbs (eds.). In *FonTomFrom, Contemporary Ghanaian Literature, Theatre and Film*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000. p.48.

Afro-Asian Writers Conference in 1957.⁵⁷ In a conversation Sutherland had with July (2007)⁵⁸, Sutherland narrated how the whole idea occurred to her thus;

What moved me there was to see a huge exhibition of books from all other countries that were represented, and see the African area ... the few shelves ... That hit me... I said to myself then that I would help fill those shelves... So I came back and the writers' movement was going on...we had started the idea of magazine... I came back more resolved that this thing shall work, and suddenly saw the problem about dramatic literature, the creating of dramatic literature... We needed a program to develop playwriting and I starting the thought that led to the beginning of the theatre, the Experimental Theatre, I called it. And then in 1959 to 1960, we started building the Drama Studio... that compromised the program... the idea of the program... and we opened it and we were away...in October of 1961... I knew that it was through that we would begin to create forms and style of dramas, of theatrical expression that would stand as Ghanaian.

This means that her intention was to create some originality, something that could be called Ghanaian. It is not surprising then, when she names her style *Anansegro* (spider play) which has its roots from 'Anansesem' (spider story) peculiar to Ghanaian Ananse story. For the experimentation of her style, she needed a space, as Wilson (1998)⁵⁹ rightly puts it "the theatre experience does not occur in a visual vacuum. Spectators sit in the theatre, their eyes open, watching what unfolds before them." Therefore audience and actors needed to be housed for the theatre experience to occur, hence, the theatre space. July quoted Sutherland regarding the search for the venue as having said that,

I looked at all the empty rooms and buildings I could find around the Ministry area. Up and down the Ministry steps, talking to people, saying I needed a place. I wanted to start a Program in drama. Eventually I talked with the Scouts people... It was in 1958 exactly. Right down the beach across from the Scouts headquarters there was this aluminium shed, and I asked about it. They said it was the Sea Scout' den, that they used it only occasionally. So I said, 'Could I have it?' They eventually relieved me of

⁵⁷ Robert, July. "Here, Then, is Efua': Sutherland and the Drama Studio." Anne V. Adams & Esi Sutherland-Addy (eds.). In *The legacy of Efua Sutherland: Pan- African Cultural Activism*. Oxfordshire : Ayebia Clarke, 2007. pp. 161-162.

⁵⁸ Robert, July. "Here, Then, is Efua': Sutherland and the Drama Studio." Anne V. Adams & Esi Sutherland-Addy (eds.). In *The legacy of Efua Sutherland: Pan- African Cultural Activism*. Oxfordshire : Ayebia Clarke,2007. pp. 161-162.

⁵⁹ Edwin, Wilson. *The Theatre Experience* (7th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998. p.355.

my problem by letting me use it for a little fee. I moved the group I got together into that place and used it as a regular Program building.⁶⁰

Undoubtedly, it became necessary to get a permanent space for the Programme. Through the help of the Rockefeller Foundation Fund, the Government of Ghana, and the Ministry of Education, the Ghana Drama Studio became a reality. Botwe Asamoah (2005)⁶¹ makes it clear the cost of the whole project. He states that;

In 1961, the Arts council, through the efforts Efua Sutherland established the Ghana Drama Studio. The construction was £G7,500. The Ghana government gave £G3,000, while Rockefeller Foundation provided £G 2,000, the remaining £G2,500 came from the Ministry of education's votes through an appeal by the arts council.

Anyidoho(2000)⁶² further attests that,

to provide an ideal rehearsal and performance space for the emerging National Theatre Movement, she [Efua Sutherland] mobilized funds and supervised the building of the Ghana Drama Studio, ensuring that its design was in harmony with performance demands of African theatre practice.

It is clear from the above that Sutherland needed not only a rehearsal space at the time for the programme but a symbolic space, something tangible that people could identify with and proudly say “that is a place where African drama, experimental African drama is going on. It was quite important to do that, so the Drama Studio as a building is really very important because it helped to make this whole idea gel for people.”⁶³ The researcher shares both Sutherland's and Anyidoho's sentiments on how important it was for the Movement to get an ideal premises of its own, one that is designed in accord with performance demands of African theatre practice as Anyidoho puts it. To a large extent it would raise the image of the

⁶⁰ Robert, July. “Here, Then, is Efua’: Sutherland and the Drama Studio.” Anne V. Adams & Esi Sutherland-Addy (eds.). In *The legacy of Efua Sutherland: Pan- African Cultural Activism*. Oxfordshire : Ayebia Clarke,2007. p. 162.

⁶¹ Kwabena, Botwe-Asamoah. *An African – Centered Paradigm for the Second Phase of the African Revolution*. New York: Routledge, 2005. p.167.

⁶² Kofi, Anyidoho. “ Dr. Efua Sutherland A Biographical Sketch.” Kofi Anyidoho & James Gibbs (eds.). In *FonTomFrom, Contemporary Ghanaian Literature, Theatre and Film*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000. p.78.

⁶³ Robert, July. “Here, Then, is Efua’: Sutherland and the Drama Studio.” Anne V. Adams & Esi Sutherland-Addy (eds.). In *The legacy of Efua Sutherland: Pan- African Cultural Activism*. Oxfordshire : Ayebia Clarke,2007. p. 163.

Movement and further clarify its focus. I can imagine how daunting it was for this new idea of African Drama to gain root and how people perceived the Movement that time when it had no permanent space; in view of the derogatory comments and name calling associated with such initiatives these days. In recent times and even with the extent of the growth of these programmes, they are still being ridiculed with the word “Dondology” which literary means “the study of drums”.

The Studio according to Kwame Botwe-Asamoah (2005)⁶⁴ had three objectives;

The first objective of the drama studio was “to create, stimulate and discipline the new Ghana theatre movement, and to provide opportunities for training artists through participation in dramatic productions and other related activities.” The second aim was to provide opportunities and a venue for the meeting of theatre artistes: writers, musicians, producers, actors, choreographers, designers” and others. Finally, it hoped to “provide talent, material and ideals for the program of the national theatre, when that institution is established”.

The question one must ask is whether these objectives were achieved before it was demolished. In an interview with Sandy Arkhurst,⁶⁵ he attested that, these three objectives had been achieved and even more. Arkhurst (2013)⁶⁶ further explained that, they had started developing audience for the studio as far back as 1965. According to him, they did this through three basic ways. First, they organised free productions. Then, a Theatre Season was organised where all the productions that were held within the year both in and outside Accra were performed again in the season. Finally a month within the year was chosen especially during the long vacation to tour the various regions with the productions that were produced within the academic year. Based on these achievements one would expect that the replacement which is the National Theatre and its replica (E.T.S Drama Studio) would continue from where they left. Perhaps at the end of this discussion it will be established as it

⁶⁴ Kwabena, Botwe-Asamoah. *An African – Centered Paradigm for the Second Phase of the African Revolution*. New York: Routledge, 2005. p.167.

⁶⁵ Associate lecturer, University of Ghana, Legon. One of the foremost performing arts student to got the advantage to work with Sutherland in the Studio.

⁶⁶ Sandy, Arkhurst. Personal Interview. Accra; 11th November, 2013.

were, whether these two facilities have been able to accomplish this. Sutherland herself also shared her thoughts on what she had wanted to do with the Studio after twenty five years of its function with Femi Osofisan (2007)⁶⁷ in an interview before her demise;

After the 25th anniversary of the Studio, I was using it as a transition, where you know, you go out to the district level and take all the experience of the Drama Studio work, and you lay it there. That was the next step. So I had a play producers' seminar within the anniversary program, where those people who had been producing plays were being got ready to go and do this work.

The Ghana Drama Studio was ready by 1960 but it was officially opened in October 1961. The inaugural ceremony was presided over by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah the then President of Ghana. Sutherland (2007)⁶⁸ added that; "Between 1961 and 1963 was a very creative period for the Ghana Drama Studio. And we were doing two things at once. We were finding talent and getting them involved in practical theatre work [...] and also developing an audience." However along the line Sutherland had to hand over the studio to the authorities of the University of Ghana.

According to Anyidoho (2002)⁶⁹, "in May 1963, Efua Sutherland became a Research Associate of the Institute of African Studies. As part of the move, she handed over the Drama Studio to the University of Ghana to be used as "an extension division of the School of Music, Dance and Drama." Sutherland (2000)⁷⁰ emphasizes this point saying,

the Ghana Drama Studio, established since 1958 as a training center for actors, writers and theatre personnel, and as a venue for experimentation in

⁶⁷ Femi, Osofisan. "There's a Lot of Strength in Our People Efua Sutherland's Last Interview" Anne V. Adams & Esi Sutherland-Addy (eds.). In *The legacy of Efua Sutherland: Pan- African Cultural Activism*. Oxfordshire : Ayebia Clarke,2007. p.206.

⁶⁸ Robert, July. "Here, Then, is Efua': Sutherland and the Drama Studio." Anne V. Adams & Esi Sutherland-Addy (eds.). In *The legacy of Efua Sutherland: Pan- African Cultural Activism*. Oxfordshire : Ayebia Clarke,2007. p.162.

⁶⁹ Kofi, Anyidoho. " Dr. Efua Sutherland A Biographical Sketch." Kofi Anyidoho & James Gibbs (eds.). In *FonTomFrom, Contemporary Ghanaian Literature, Theatre and Film*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000. p.79.

⁷⁰ Efua Theodora, Sutherland. "The Second Phase of the National Theatre Movement in Ghana." Kofi Anyidoho & James Gibbs (eds.). In *FonTomFrom, Contemporary Ghanaian Literature, Theatre and Film*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000. p.49.

the development of dramatic forms, was integrated into the School in 1963. This has made it convenient for the School to have an experimental base in town and to connect up with the tradition of performance for small critical audience that has had an unbroken run since 1961.

Within these periods the studio helped trained scholars like Martin Okyere Owusu, Ben Abdallah, Sandy Arkhurst, Asiedu Yirenkyi and many others, who are now great scholars promoting the arts in diverse ways both in Ghana and abroad.⁷¹

According to Sutherland (2000)⁷²;

Performance groups organized on a permanent basis under professional direction in music, dance and drama, are capable of handling regular performances, from the life of a Theatre Movement. Encouraging ones are: The National Orchestra; The Damas Choir; The Student Orchestra- School of Music and Drama; The Builder's Brigade Drama Group; The University Drama Studio Players; The National Cultural Center Agoroma; The Dance Troupe- School of Music and Drama; The Puppet Team of the Institute of Art and Culture.

The Studio remained as a theatre studies facility of the University of Ghana until its 25th anniversary in 1987, when the then government issued a communique` to pull the structure down to pave way for a bigger and a multi-purpose edifice to be constructed. This became a sad reality for Sutherland in 1988 when finally the Ghana Drama Studio was pulled down for the current National Theatre to suffice. Sutherland in a conversation with Femi Osofisan expressed her disappointment about the whole demolishing and says;

[W]ell, I call it... some foolish understanding of what we need to do. That kind of development venture, there's no such thing now in Ghana. The Drama Studio was there to help find out, and work with, and experiment towards new creations. But they didn't look at that. So we have the National Theatre there now that's just ... I mean, that's not a place for experimentation, though I haven't really ever been inside it. But I can't do *The Marriage of Anansewaa* in that theatre, as we could in the Drama Studio, very beautifully. Not there! I can't do *Edufa* there... But they didn't

⁷¹ James, Gibbs. "History of Theatre in Ghana." *Helen Lauer & Kofi Anyidoho (eds.) In Reclaiming the Human Sciences and Humanities through African Perspective volume II*. Accra:Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2012. p. 1349.

⁷²Efua Theodora, Sutherland. "The Second Phase of the National Theatre Movement in Ghana." Kofi Anyidoho & James Gibbs (eds.). In *FonTomFrom, Contemporary Ghanaian Literature, Theatre and Film*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000. p.49.

think of all that at all... Somebody came and said I will give you loan to build a big theatre... But I'm sure, when the artists want to do something again, they will develop their own theatre. I can see that happening in the future. Because this one won't allow developmental thinking... it's a monument.⁷³

I do share Sutherland's sentiments on the fact that, the Studio was purposely designed and created to suit the Ghanaian style of plays (*Anansegro*) and to experiment its feasibility as one of the styles in theatre. Again, it is inappropriate to downplay the difficulties Sutherland went through in establishing the studio. Therefore, if for no other reason the studio should have been left as a legacy. The replacement on the other hand cannot be best used as an experimental studio to test plays which follow the *Anansegro* style. These two spaces are different in both structure and stages and therefore mounting *Anansegro* in the National Theatre would appear some-what incongruous. However, since it is not the only style taught in Theatre Arts, I believe it was also proactive for the country to have possessed a more conventional or formal type of theatre space, that can accommodate other styles such as tragedy, comedy, melodrama, and the likes in theatre studies. Arkhurst (2013)⁷⁴ argues that, Sutherland wished that a facility that will promote the Ghanaian arts should have been built instead. According to him Sutherland would have preferred a "National Theatre" as an "art" and not "National Theatre" as a "facility". He further states that, "we are yet to build a National Theatre" that will promote our own style.

Mohammed Ben Abdallah,⁷⁵ on the other hand confirmed that, the idea of the establishing a National Theatre, had been one of the wishes of the first President of Ghana Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. Backed by an Act in the constitution of Ghana, PNDCL 1992: Section 1-

⁷³ Femi, Osofisan. "There's a Lot of Strength in Our People Efua Sutherland's Last Interview" Anne V. Adams & Esi Sutherland-Addy (eds.). In *The legacy of Efua Sutherland: Pan- African Cultural Activism*. Oxfordshire : Ayebia Clarke, 2007. p.206.

⁷⁴ Sandy, Arkhurst. Personal Interview. Accra: 25th November, 2013.

⁷⁵ The then Chairman of National Commission of Culture under the regime of the P.N.D.C Government. A playwright and a Senior Lecturer at University of Cape Coast.

“Establishment of a Ghana National Theatre (1) There is hereby established a body to be known as the Ghana National Theatre.”⁷⁶

It is therefore plausible that the nation can boast of such an edifice now. It was Nkrumah’s objective to use the arts which hitherto was seen as just a recreational activity to promote nationalism and patriotism. This kind of vision is manifested in a statement he made in 1963 as quoted by Jesse Weaver (2012)⁷⁷ that; “Our African theatre must help our people to appreciate the reality of the changing society, for it is only when there is a complete fusion between African culture and African politics that the African Personality will find its highest expression.”

Nkrumah’s intention of promoting the arts was phenomenal and this became apparent in his anxiety to endorse the arts through the National Theatre Movement and the Arts Council at that time. Nevertheless, at the opening ceremony of the Ghana Drama Studio, he expressed his disappointment about the failure of the Art Council as quoted by Botwe-Asamoah (2005)⁷⁸;

The Arts Council which I helped to form with such high hopes has not, I regret to say, come up to my expectation. It may have had its difficulty but the truth remains that it has failed to make sufficient impact on Ghana society. It has failed to give people any vision of the rich store of art and music which we possess. I hope that the Ghana Drama Studio even if it remains independent will operate within the framework of the Ghana Arts Council.

This clearly shows how passionate Nkrumah was in promoting the arts for national development and how he hoped that the Ghana Drama Studio, though independent, will to some extent function to promote the arts. It is consequently not surprising that, the idea of the

⁷⁶ ‘Ghana National Theatre Act’ <http://ghanalegal.com/?id=3&law=517&t=ghana-laws22-7-1991> Accessed: 05-12-2013. 02:20pm

⁷⁷ Jesse Weaver, Shipley. “The Best Tradition Goes On. Audience Consumption and the Transformation of Popular Theatre in Neo-Liberal Ghana” *Helen Lauer & Kofi Anyidoho (eds.) In Reclaiming the Human Sciences and Humanities through African Perspective volume II*. Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2012. p.1387.

⁷⁸ Kwabena, Botwe-Asamoah. *An African – Centered Paradigm for the Second Phase of the African Revolution*. New York: Routledge, 2005. p.168.

National Theatre started from his governance. Attesting to Abdallahs earlier submission, Rebeca Fofu⁷⁹ (2013) asserts that, the former president Jerry John Rawlings made possible Nkrumah's idea of having a National Theatre;

The idea of Ghana having National Theatre where the nation's best cultural performances could be displayed was the brainchild of Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, but this dream could not be materialized until our former president Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings during one of his state visits to China saw a similar structure, which he became interested in. Not long afterwards, an agreement was signed between Republic of Ghana and Republic of China in December, 1990 for the commencement of work.⁸⁰

As noted by James Gibbs (2012)⁸¹, the terms of the agreement were partly negotiated by the then National Commission of Culture chaired by Mohammed Ben-Abdallah. The contract was signed between the Governments of China and Ghana. It was agreed as part of the contract that, the Ghana Drama Studio should be pulled down to pave way for the National Theatre and the latter rebuilt on the campus of the University of Ghana.

According to Johnson Adu⁸² (2013), work began on the facility on the 8th of March, 1990. It was scheduled to be completed within thirty months. The National Theatre was completed on 16th December, 1992 as planned and commissioned.⁸³ John Djisenu⁸⁴(2013), however, asserts that, between 1992 and 1993 the National Theatre remained dormant. According to him, the legal instrument establishing the resident groups and some department had not been finalised yet, therefore, there were not readily available human resources to make the facility active, especially resident groups. This brought about the split of the University of Ghana,

⁷⁹ Public Relations Officer, National Theatre: Ghana. 2013.

⁸⁰ Rebeca, Fofu. Current P.R.O of the National Theatre. *Facts to Know A bout the National Theatre*. Unpublished Document, 2013.

⁸¹ James, Gibbs. "History of Theatre in Ghana." *Helen Lauer & Kofi Anyidoho (eds.) In Reclaiming the Human Sciences and Humanities through African Perspective volume II*. Accra:Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2012. p. 1350.

⁸² Johnson, Adu. a former artistic director of the National Theatre, a Tutor at University of Ghana and a lecturer, University of Cape Coast, Theatre Arts Department

⁸³ Johnson, Adu. a former artistic director of the National Theatre, a Tutor at University of Ghana and a lecturer, University of Cape Coast, Theatre Arts Department. *The National Theatre of Ghana* . Unpublished Document. 2013

⁸⁴ Senior lecturer at the School of Performing Arts, Legon.

School of Performing Arts resident groups, specifically Abibigromma and the Ghana Dance Ensemble. This turn brought about a serious contention between the University and the National Theatre. Some members left the University resident groups to join what Djesenu called ‘illegal’ resident groups as at that time at the National Theatre.⁸⁵

I am of the view that, this goes a long way to confirm Arkhursts’ position that, the country was not ready at that time for such a huge edifice, and the researcher agrees with him on that. Finally when the legal instrument recognising the resident groups was legalised, it established, “the Ghana Dance Ensemble, Abibigroma and the National Symphony Orchestra as the resident performance troupes of the National Theatre in the areas of dance, dramatic art and music respectively. [The object was mandated to the] promotion and development of the performing arts in the Republic.”⁸⁶

Johnson Adu (2013)⁸⁷ further mentioned that, operations started with a performance by the three resident groups, namely Abibigromma; Dance Ensemble and the National Symphony Orchestra. This was followed by a performance by a Chinese Cultural Troupe. The National Theatre was to spearhead the National Theatre Movement in Ghana and also provide the needed multi-functional venue for concerts, dance, drama, musical performances, exhibitions, and special events of national interest.

In addition, Jesse Weaver Shipley (2012)⁸⁸ is of the view that,

the Theatre was intended to “foster the development of traditional idioms of contemporary arts forms and to preserve the roots, growth and variety of the artistic forms that represent modern Ghana”. Many in the Ghanaian arts

⁸⁵ John, Djesenu. Personal Interview. Legon: 5th December, 2013.

⁸⁶ Ghana National Theatre Act’. <http://ghanalegal.com/?id=3&law=517&t=ghana-laws22-07-1991> Accessed: 12-12-2013. 03:40pm.

⁸⁷ Johnson, Adu. *The National Theatre of Ghana.* (unpublished document), 2013.

⁸⁸ Jesse Weaver, Shipley. “The Best Tradition Goes On. Audience Consumption and the Transformation of Popular Theatre in Neo-Liberal Ghana” *Helen Lauer & Kofi Anyidoho (eds.) In Reclaiming the Human Sciences and Humanities through African Perspective volume II.* Accra:Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2012. p.1395.

community saw the National Theatre as the fulfilment of Nkrumah's cultural nationalist vision for using Ghanaian forms of art for the unity and progress of the nation- and for African peoples more generally.

Though it was a step in the right direction, others like Arkhurst again argued that, the time was not ripe for the nation to have had a National Theatre (building) as huge as it is. At that point the Movement had not been able to achieve the vision of creating smaller studios in and around the city of Accra and other regions like the Kodzidan project in Atwea in the Central Region of Ghana, which will feed and supply the National Theatre with human resource as far as promoting the arts is concerned.

Arkhurst (2013)⁸⁹ believes that by so doing the industry would have been able to develop its audience to be loyal and consistent to the theatre. Because all these measures were not put in place before the establishment of the National Theatre, he believes that this might probably be one of the reasons why the National Theatre is having difficulty in filling the 1,492 capacity seat auditorium especially during artistic performances. He further reiterates that “the institution started from the roof instead of the foundation” and for him, the foundation was weak. If the industry had taken its time to build a solid foundation, he believes that it would have gone very far than it is now.

I agree with Arkhurst because, Nkrumah's intention to foster development through traditional idioms and contemporary art forms, as well as preserve the roots, growth and variety of the artistic forms that represents modern Ghana to some extent was not achieved before the establishment of the National Theatre. This is because, conceivably Ghana as at that period had not assimilated this vision enough to understand the importance of preserving such legacy as the studio. Therefore since there was a bigger one to be built others felt razing the studio down was not too much of an issue overlooking its symbolic connotation.

⁸⁹Sandy, Arkhurst. Personal Interview. Legon : 11th November, 2013.

Also Sutherland's visions after the 25th anniversary came to a halt which leaves us with the failure of the Movement not being able to reach the roots and thereby preserving it. Like Sutherland, Arkhurst further argues that, the National Theatre Movement did not have enough experience to manage that big theatre. He believes that, the nation should have acquired smaller theatres which are designed to suit the countries style of plays which in another sense would be less expensive in managing it.⁹⁰ Gibbs (2012)⁹¹ admits to this assertion and says that, "The design of the whole building [the National Theatre] requires very considerable expenditure on air conditioning – a cost that has rendered hiring the hall prohibitively expensive for many theatre groups." Presently there are few theatre companies who can afford to hire the theatre for performance because renting the space ranges between one thousand Ghana Cedis and seven thousand Ghana Cedis per day, depending on the type of auditorium one prefer, day, time and performance type. This information was confirmed by the Bookings Department of the National Theatre headed by Doris Wreko.

To some extent the researcher shares the sentiments of both Sutherland and Arkhurst because in every industry its foundation is extremely necessary. The foundation determines its future success, growth, continuity, and consistency. So if the foundation is weak it is very difficult for its vision to be feasible. On the other hand I also agree with Abdallah on his opinion that, the nation as at that time was not financially sound to sponsor such a big project like the construction of the National Theatre even as an "art" or "facility" and for that matter could not have rejected such a gargantuan offer from the Chinese Government. Abdallah (2013)⁹² affirmed that, China as at that period was fond of building stadia and theatres for third world countries. When the former president Jerry John Rawlings visited China and was offered this

⁹⁰ . Sandy, Arkhurst. Personal Interview. Legon : 11th November, 2013

⁹¹ James, Gibbs. "History of Theatre in Ghana." *Helen Lauer & Kofi Anyidoho (eds.) In Reclaiming the Human Sciences and Humanities through African Perspective volume II*. Accra:Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2012. p. 1350

⁹² Ben, Abdallah. Personal Interview. Accra: 29th October, 2013.

opportunity he opted for the multi-purpose theatre facility. Abdallah added that, if we had our own means maybe we could have inculcated other type of stages such as the arena which is quite peculiar to our part of the world and others like thrust, and end stages. Altering the architectural design was impossible, considering the political nature of the whole deal. The theatre was finally completed and commissioned by Jerry John Rawlings in 1994.

Work began on the replica studio at the campus of the University of Ghana on the 25th of June 1990 simultaneously with the bigger work of the National Theatre. According to Abdallah, the site between the Department of Agriculture and the Institute of African Studies was vacant, so the government and the University authorities agreed to place the studio there. The site was agreed based on proximity; as it was going to be closer to Institute of African Studies and the School of Performing Arts. Work on the studio did not take that long, as signed in the agreement that it would take nine month for completion. The studio was ready in February 1991.

According to the then Studio Manager John Djisenu (2013)⁹³, the studio after its commencement in 1991 faced serious drainage problems; the main stage could flood when it rained heavily. As part of the contract, the Chinese were to build a seven unit block for the School which currently houses the library, director's office, accounts office, computer lab, and two seminar rooms. When the contractors came back to complete that unit block they had not done earlier with the studio, they did a massive stage renovation to curb the flood and change some of the exits and entrances to where we find them now. They also increased the height of the proscenium stage.

Since then, there has not been any significant structural change though the School is growing in student population and expanded its academic curriculum. It was officially handed over to

⁹³ John, Djisenu. Personal Interview. Legon, 5th December 2013

the University authorities' on the 14th of March 1991. The studio which was named after the late Efua Theodora Sutherland, and currently known as E.T.S Drama Studio, has remained the property of the University of Ghana under the auspices of the School of Performing Arts. It has been the only viable Studio for staff and student workshops, experimentation, and productions.

2:4 PERCEPTIONS OF THEORISTS ON THEATRE SPACES

There have been various theories about the act of theatre as to which of its component is more important than the other. Is it the stage and its spectacle [artistic and technical inputs], the actor, or the audience? By suitability the researcher combines all the three because these components are indispensable to each other. I therefore agree with Copper and Mackey (1995)⁹⁴ with their assertion on the choice of theatre space that “what [one] need to consider, however, is which performance Space or area is most suitable” Again there has been further controversy on theatre spaces as to what can be termed conventional and unconventional. According to Pickering; (2010)⁹⁵

The most basic convention is that an audience watches and listens in a designated space while actors perform in another designated space... in which the audience accepts that a ‘stage’ space represents another space or that they can see into several rooms simultaneously.

By this submission one could say that, the Proscenium stage can form a conventional type of stage. Also the whole facility could also be termed as such, because within the auditorium we have a designated space for both actor and audience and each is expected to respect each other's space.

⁹⁴ Simon, C. & Sally, M. *Theatre Studies an Approach for Advanced Level*. Cheltenham: Stanley Thones, 1995. p. 54.

⁹⁵ Kenneth, Pickering. *Key Concepts in Drama and Performance*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. p.91.

Before and after the Second World War, there were scholars like Henrik Ibsen, Constantin Stanislavski, Antonin Chekov, and many others who believed in the stage and its spectacle and therefore wrote plays and developed concepts to promote Realism. According to Rush (2005)⁹⁶;

The simplest way to define realism would be to call it a style that attempts to depict life on stage as it is actually lived by the members of the audience. It shows us so – called everyday events happening to people like us who live in a world like ours and tells its story in a way that makes it appear logical and believable. However, two factors complicate this definition. The first is the reference to the audience, because realism is actually a relative concept. As culture change and modes of behaviour mutate, the way in which people live their “everyday” lives also changes.

Pickering also shares the views of Rush and asserts that;

The idea that a work of art can ever re-create or present ‘reality’ is debatable. There are many perception as what constitute reality: some would see it as a concrete world of time and space that perceive around us, and would argue that it is relatively easy to represent this on stage; others would maintain that reality is consciousness or some transcendent quality that can only be a dialectical view of the process of social change.⁹⁷

It should however be noted that, reality to some extent is subjective. The researcher therefore shares the same views with Rush and Pickering because society is dynamic. It changes and what would be considered reality in the classical period would not necessarily be considered realistic in the modern era. It can also be viewed in a cultural context, thus, the way people in Europe would live, would definitely be different from Africans and therefore the paradigms of reality will differ.

According to Jones (2012)⁹⁸, there were other scholars who thought the whole idea of realism was one big deceit; therefore scholars like Bertolt Brecht, Antonin Artaud, Jerzy Grotowski, and Peter Brook became the avant-garde theatre practitioners of this style. They then broke away from realism and the conventions Proscenium tends to create and

⁹⁶ David, Rush. *A Student Guide to Play Analysis*. Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 2005.

⁹⁷ Kenneth, Pickering. *Key Concepts in Drama and Performance*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. p.204.

⁹⁸ ‘Realism’http://homepage.smc.edu/jones_janie/TA%202/8Realism.htm 2012. Accessed: 20-12-2013. 10:05am

experimented with their own style. But have the perceptions and positions of these theorists stood the test of time?

Artaud's (1958)⁹⁹ idea of Theatre of Cruelty has been one of his excellent scholarly works. He believed that theatre should represent what he calls 'reality' and for that matter it must have an impact on the audience that are watching. He therefore combined excessively strange and disturbing forms of lighting, sound and other forms of performance elements to achieve this. He further explains that by cruelty he did not mean causing pain or sadness but on the grounds where there is a violent physical determination to shatter the false reality. Simon and Ruther (2010)¹⁰⁰ also reiterate that;

He wanted audience to find in the theatre not an area for escape from the world, but the realization of their worst nightmares and deepest fears. He therefore tried to provoke conditions that would force the release of primitive instincts he believed were hidden beneath the civilized social veneer masking all human behaviour.

Again Jamieson (2007)¹⁰¹ also clarifies that Artaud sought to remove aesthetic distance; he brought the audience into a direct contact with the realities or dangers of life. This he does by turning the theatre into a place where the spectator is exposed rather than protected.

Pickering (2010)¹⁰² further adds that;

The 'communion' element of Artaud's schemes was at the core of his beliefs. The audience was to be 'encircled' so that direct contact could be made. Seated in the centre of action the audience in swivel chairs would change their focus according to the movement of drama around the hall, which was to be similar architecturally to a 'holy place'. There was to be no vacuum in the audience's mind or sensitivity'. Their attention was to be persistent and persistently committed. 'Intensities of colour, light or sound...vibrations and tremors, tonality of light ...tremoring gestures' were fused, to create discord and to envelop the whole space and people so that

⁹⁹ Antonin, Artaud. *The Theatre and Its Double*. New York: Grove, 1958.p.96.

¹⁰⁰'TheatreofCruelty'<http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/staffhome/siryan/academy/theatres/theatre%20of%20cruelty.htm> 2010 Accessed: 20 -09-2013. 10:00pm.

¹⁰¹ Lee Jamieson. *Antonin Artaud: From Theory to Practice*. London: Greenwich Exchange, 2007. p.27.

¹⁰² Kenneth, Pickering. *Key Concepts in Drama and Performance*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. p. 172.

the experience was immediate and primal, `as exactly localized as the circulation of blood through our veins.`

Among Artauds' (1958) ¹⁰³ proposals is the physical theatre which he proposes that; "we abolish the stage and auditorium and replace them by a single site without partition or barrier to any kind, which will become the theatre of the action". His type of theatre intended to break the old traditions and its conventions and all the 'make believe' which accompanies it. He says he does not need any set but rather a white background to absorb the disturbing forms of lighting, sound and the other performance elements.

What baffles the researcher is why he chose to use light, sound and other forms of elements which enhance spectacle and the 'make believe' in theatre to remove or shatter the 'false reality' he sought to eliminate and not anything else. The researcher is of the view that, if he does not approve the 'make believe' then it is better to strip off everything that promotes it. Light, sound, and set enhance 'make believe' in theatre so why employ them. Perhaps this then confirm Wilson's submission that "Artaud is brilliant but inconsistent." ¹⁰⁴

I share Wilson's point of view because from the above submissions on Artaud's concept, I have been wondering how the whole theatrical experiences will be for both actors and audience. Does it mean characters will not move from one scene to another? Because if they would, since Artaud does not want a break within the show, it will be difficult for the characters to change to represent time, location, emotions, and ageing. With the excessive use of sound and light the researcher posits that, it would rather disrupt the actors and performance.

Though it sounds like an interesting experience, the researcher has been pondering over how he will be able to measure his impact on the actors and audience, because with the

¹⁰³ Antonin, Artaud. *The Theatre and Its Double*. New York: Grove, 1958.p.97.

¹⁰⁴ Edwin, Wilson. *The Theatre Experience* (7th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998. p.346.

employment of tremor, vibrators, intensities of light, sound and colour one would rather experience fear and panic. Yet Artaud believed that by this, the spectators would surrender themselves to the performance, live through it and feel it as well, rather than merely thinking about it. After his death many theatre practitioners have explored his ideas and among them is Jerzy Grotowski.

Jerzy Grotowski is a Polish theatre director and believed to be one of the innovators of Experimental Theatre. He was an innovative theatre director and proved himself to be a theorist whose approaches to acting, training and theatrical productions have significantly influenced theatre. Among his excellent works was his concept of The Poor Theatre. He wrote a seminal article on this concept and it was first published in 1965 in Poland. Being the first article in a book titled *Towards a Poor Theatre*; he introduces several fundamental concepts of the Laboratory Theatre he was working on.¹⁰⁵

Pickering (2010)¹⁰⁶ further expatiates on Grotowski's poor theatre that; his work evolved from fairly conventional staging approaches to a point where he abandoned the whole idea of theatre, preferring to think in terms of a "meeting". By this, he consistently pursued the twin objectives which he experimented;

The first objective is to strip down the barriers that inhibit communication, including the theatrical paraphernalia of staging and the 'mask' 'the daily mask of lies', behind which both actors and audience hide their sensitivity and vulnerability. The second objective was to take these exposed and receptive parties to a confrontation with their cultural myths in communal 'trying out' of traditional values. So far as staging is concerned, Grotowski reflected his 'inductive technique' or 'technique of elimination' in acting by the concept of the 'poor theatre, which dispenses with the notion of theatre as a 'synthesis of disparate creative discipline - literature, sculpture, painting, architecture, lighting, acting'. Grotowski accuses this 'synthetic' theatre of suffering from 'artistic kleptomania'. Whenever possible he reduced reliance on any element other than the actor himself.

¹⁰⁵ <http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/staffhome/siryan/academy/theatres/..%5Ctheatres%5Cgrotowski,%20jerzy.htm>

¹⁰⁶ Kenneth, Pickering. *Key Concepts in Drama and Performance*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. p.166.

In this article Pickering explains the focus of Grotowski's Laboratory Theatre and he outlined his objectives that, he was seeking to define what theatre is distinctively, and what separates this activity from the other categories of performance and spectacle. He further mentions that his productions are detailed investigations of the actor-audience relationship.¹⁰⁷ It is quite clear that Grotowski was only interested in the actor-audience relationship and not the spectacle the stage and its equipment create.

Slowiak and Cuesta (2007)¹⁰⁸ also affirms that;

Grotowski says that he arrived at the concept of poor theatre as the result of a long process trying to define what theatre is distinctively and after a detailed investigation of the actor-audience relationship. Grotowski demands that theatre should seek how it is different from other categories of performance, especially television and film. The outcome of this questioning is a poor theatre—stripped of spectacle, makeup, and superfluous decoration—grounded in the belief that the personal and scenic technique of the actor is the core of theatre art: Theatre can exist without make-up, without autonomic costumes and scenography, without a separate performance area (stage), without sound effects and lighting, etc. It cannot exist without the actor-spectator relationship of perceptual, direct, 'live' communion.

The researcher does not agree with Grotowski when he says he is seeking to define what theatre is distinctively and only concentrate on the actor-audience. According to Edwin Wilson the word 'theatre' encompasses the actors, audience, space (stage), light, sound, costume, and any other thing that makes it theatrical. Hence how does one define what theatre is distinctively excluding all these features except the actor and audience? The researcher therefor agrees with Wilson(1998)¹⁰⁹ on his take that "A performance results from coming together of many forces- some tangible, some intangible- including the physical presence of the performers, the colours and shapes of costumes and scenery, and ideas and

¹⁰⁷ Jerzy, Grotowski. *Towards a Poor Theatre*. London: Methuen, 2002. p.19.

¹⁰⁸ James, S. and Jairo, C. Jerzy Grotowski. New York: Routledge. 2007.p.44.

¹⁰⁹ Edwin, Wilson. *The Theatre Experience* (7th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998. p.8.

emotions expressed in the words of the playwright.” Thus one does not define theatre distinctively and ignore some of the elements that make it theatrical.

Schechner and Wolford (1997)¹¹⁰ assert that, unlike Artaud who uses disturbing light and sound to break away with the ‘false reality’ as he puts it, Grotowski strips everything off including costume; make-up, superfluous decorations and any other component except the actor and audience. His experimentation investigated and suggested that the actor is the core of theatre art and he used the term ‘poor theatre’ to explain his desire to explore and utilise basic dramatic elements that could enhance communication between actors and audiences. He called the theatre space he opened in Opole a laboratory. This is because he saw it as a centre of research but, unlike other centres of research, he argued that poverty should not be a drawback and lack of funding is not an excuse for inadequate performance.

I beg to differ from this assertion because perhaps Grotowski’s idea about the act of theatre might have made him think that way. For him the actor is the most important component. Therefore this assertion becomes subjective in a way. It depends on one’s notion, time and place. Possibly the actors he worked with understood his concepts and therefore decided that, it is not about money. But one cannot say the same thing presently. Times have changed and everything is extremely different now. Some actors and actresses actually earn a living out of the performance they do. Again, getting the auditorium and the stage ready for a production is another huge expenditure. Therefore in modern times poverty and lack of funds are, and will continue to be a challenge for inadequate performances. Currently, all the three components; actor, space, and audience are very essential to a successful production and directors and producers cannot afford to risk any of them. Grotowski’s ‘poor theatre’ style of

¹¹⁰ Richard, S. & Lisa, W. *The Grotowski Sourcebook*. London: Routledge, 1997.

drama was however very popular during the 1960s and 1970s and was imitated by a variety of theatre groups around the globe.¹¹¹

Artaud's influence again gave birth to another avant-garde theatre practitioner; Peter Brook. Just like Grotowski, Brandt (1998)¹¹² affirms that, Brook also established an International Centre of Theatre Research in the 70s at Paris. There, he distinguished between what he called Deadly, Holy, Rough, and Immediate Theatre. In distinguishing between these creative works he drew inspiration from his own experience to propose what was vital and meaningful in contemporary theatre. He has since been known as a strong campaigner of improvisation and also sympathetic to Artaudian ideas.

Unlike Henrik Ibsen, Chekhov and Stanislavski who promoted the conventional type of theatre and realism, Brook like his other colleagues Grotowski and Artaud argues differently. In his book *The Empty Space*, Brook posits that; "I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged."¹¹³ For him, the act of theatre should not be any extravagant affair, it is therefore not surprising to learn that he dwelt much on improvisation. This explains the reason why he further states that;

Yet when we talk about theatre this is not quite what we mean. Red curtains, spotlights, blank verse, laughter, darkness, these are all confusedly superimposed in a messy image covered by one all-purpose word. We talk of the cinema killing the theatre, and in that phrase we refer to the theatre as it was when the cinema was born, a theatre of box office, foyer, tip-up seats, footlights, scene changes, intervals, music, as though the theatre was by any definition these and little more.¹¹⁴

From the above, one could deduce that, Brook thinks that by employing all these theatrical accessories such as set, light, sound, costume, and props all in the process of 'make-believe',

¹¹¹Richard, S. & Lisa Wolford. *The Grotowski Sourcebook*. London: Routledge, 1997.

¹¹² George, Brandt W. *Modern Theories of Drama*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

¹¹³ Peter, Brook. *The Empty Space*. Ontario: Pelican Books, 1976. p.11.

¹¹⁴ Peter, Brook. *The Empty Space*. Ontario: Pelican Books, 1976. p.11.

we are rather promoting the cinema and killing the theatre. He further reiterates that these are two different things in the arts. For him any space can be his stage, it doesn't really have to possess any equipment to make it enough for a theatrical act to occur.

On the other hand Joanne Gleaves (2011)¹¹⁵ a site specific practitioner disagrees on this notion. She argues that the statement "I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage" is quiet problematic within the field of site specific circles. Because no space is truly empty. She is of the view that the space or site possesses some qualities that enables performers and spectators to engage in it. The researcher agrees with Gleaves because, before an acting space will be chosen for a performance, it should possess some qualities which instigated such a choice, especially in the field of site specifics.

Like Gleaves, the researcher does not share Brook's views, because before a decision will be made on a particular acting space for a performance, there should always be features about the space which will inform ones choice. The researcher believes no decision is done for nothing. So if Brook claims to ignore the qualities of the space, but goes ahead and chooses it for a performance, then to some extent he did not just prefer it; there might be a reason for his choice. Nevertheless he believes that a performer and one audience is enough for an act of theatre to take place. Again Brook strips the other features such as light, sound, costume, props and set off, which I honestly think are equally important.

Now one would ask that, which of these two paradigms are mainly promoted within academia, and on the commercial front? Is it the theatre that tries to combine all the components such as the stage and its spectacle, actors, and the spectator for an act of theater to take place or the others that concentrate on only the actor and audience as the core for an act of theatre to take place? It is an undeniable fact that avant-garde ideas are being taught in

¹¹⁵ Gleaves, Joanne. *The Reciprocal Process of the Site and Subject in Devising Sight Specific Performances*, University of Birmingham, Unpublished Thesis. 2011.

various schools. It is again been experimented by directors. However, the majority of theatre buildings being built within the last century in Ghana are the ones that promote the act of theatre that combine all the features extensively. Evidence to this assertion on theatre spaces in Ghana are the ones being studied in this research, and they are all conventional spaces which promote all the elements of theatre. It is therefore not surprising to see many of the theatres today designed to promote performances in the Proscenium.

Other forms of stages like Thrust, Arena and the End stage are mostly inculcated in the theatre space to enable the facility to be versatile which in itself is very spectacular. But most often than not, the Proscenium is mainly utilised against the others. I would therefore agree with a German historian, Max Herman on his third observation with regards to what really makes a theatre space, as cited by Balm (2008)¹¹⁶ that, “ this transformation from one realm (the physical and the actual) to the aesthetics or ‘artificial’ can only be described in experiential terms”.

Upon experimentation it has been proven that, perhaps some stages have gained more recognition than others and on that note the researcher agrees with Balm when he also asserts that;

Theatre history teaches us, however, that the flexibility provided by environmental theatre was seldom regarded by authorities or performers as a particularly desirable state of affairs. We find instead a general tendency to restrict and regulate the spectatorial gaze and the spatial coordinates of the actor-spectator relationship. The reasons for this are manifold: they include aesthetics, religious, political and economic considerations.¹¹⁷

Artaud, Grotowski, and Brook to some extent shared the ideas of the environmental theatre concepts because they ignored the formal conventional theatre space and said that, the act of theatre can happen anywhere, stripping off its accessories. But these models were seldom

¹¹⁶ Christopher, Balm. *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. p.50.

¹¹⁷ . p. Christopher, Balm. *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. p.48.

preferred by authorities because it possessed restrictions. Perhaps this could explain the reason why many plays within the present centuries are the ones that are written to fit the proscenium stage as Godwin Kotey earlier argued.

Now because of technology, audience and viewers within this century prefer to see the act of theatre more realistic and even sometimes naturalistic. It has therefore become necessary to give the audience what they yearn for, especially when you are business oriented. This is because patrons have to get value for their investment, either in the rate they pay at the box office or as a producer. Though audience willingly suspend their disbelief, they would like to see the theatre piece as familiar or realistic as possible. Therefore the employment of light, sound, costume, set, props, scene changes and many others should be indispensable to heighten reality and creativity in conventional theatre spaces. Based on some of these trends, the study would consequently consider all these factors to determine whether or not the National Theatre and the E.T.S. Drama Studio are suitable or otherwise for production.

2:5 THEATRE SPACE AND ITS BASIC EQUIPMENT

Though some scholars in the art do not see the stage and its spectacle as theatrical, as discussed on an earlier page, the hard truth is that, it has come to stay. Every formal theatrical space should possess some basic theatre equipment, those that will enhance theatrical effects during productions. Whether the theatre space is for business or for educational purposes the researcher is of the view that, these basic facilities should be present. It should, however, be noted that, for commercial purposes, extra equipment may be required for the nature of its purpose. This is to present the facility to be versatile and fully equipped for hiring. This is because the commercial ones are profit oriented and normally its management invests in this extra equipment to make the facility suitable for hiring. Most often than not, the educational theatre unfortunately tends to suffer in terms of inadequate basic equipment; probably because of its academic focus as compared to the business oriented ones.

The speed of the growth of educational theatre has been immense and therefore it is not too strange that the spaces that have succeeded in bringing live performance to countless audience have issues. Arnold Gillette and J Gillette (1981)¹¹⁸ assert that;

Considering the speed of its growth, it is not too surprising that the educational theatre should make mistakes in planning the stage that were to house its productions, or that some of these mistakes and limitations should be perpetuated in yet other theatre by architects and building committees unfamiliar with the requirements of the stage or of the productions to be presented there.

This goes a long way to suggest that, the educational theatre have issues in terms of planning its laboratory as the researcher may call it. One would expect that with time these findings would be factored into the present ones in a form of a renovation or other future educational structures, yet to be built. Possibly this speed could explain the reason why the E.T.S Drama Studio has some limitations. That notwithstanding the study is of the view that, enough time has passed already for policy makers and stakeholders to factor in some of these limitations in order to make the facility reach the height it deserves in this era of technical advancement in theatre.

Tanner (1996)¹¹⁹, states clearly the basic stage equipment for a theatre facility; “Act or Front Curtain, Apron, Back wall, Backing, Battens, Border, Cyclorama or Cyc, Flies, Fly Gallery, Gridiron or Grid, Ground Cloth, Legs, Pin Rail, Proscenium Arch, Proscenium Opening, Right Hand Stage, Teaser, Tormentors and Trap.” All the above gadgets have specific purposes they play to help make the conventional theatre a better place to do theatrical productions. Without these facilities the theatre space will not function as expected.

Tanner defines **Act or Front Curtain** - as the curtain that masks the acting area from the audience. The front curtain of every theatre stage opens normally at every beginning of

¹¹⁸ Arnold, Gillette. & J.M, Gillette. *Stage Scenery Its Construction and Rigging*. New York: Harper& Row, 1981. p.257.

¹¹⁹ Fran Averett, Tanner. *Basic Drama Projects* (6th ed.). Kansas: Clark Publishing, 1996. p. 219.

performances and closes between acts and scenes. It is usually in a draw form which parts in the middle to reveal the stage or performance. A. Gillette and J. Gillette further expatiate that;

States or city laws may require the installation of asbestos fire curtain as part of the safety equipment of the theatre. Should a fire occur an asbestos curtain can be lowered to prevent the spread of the fire from one part of the theatre to another? The composition of an asbestos material is such that it cannot be pleated or folded and it must be rigged so that it hangs as a two-dimensional plane.¹²⁰

Apart from its purpose of concealing the stage, some theatres fix this type of curtain for safety purposes. By suitability, safety is definitely an important aspect. There are many types of curtains as the Gillettes' point out. According to them there is the **Fly Curtain**, which normally becomes the main curtain of the theatre. It is mostly flown in and out of sight and they believe that it is the quietest method of operation. An example can be found at the National Theatre of Ghana. (See fig 8 & 9). There is also the **Draw Curtains**; this is mostly found in theatres with inadequate grid height for the operation of Fly Curtain. It usually opens by parting in the middle and being pulled to either side of the proscenium arch. The **Tab Curtain** is also a type which is operated by two lines that run through a series of rings attached to webbing, sewn diagonally across the back of each curtain section. Lastly there is the **Roller Curtain**, though old fashioned, the Gillette's posit that, a nineteenth century melodrama would be considered incomplete without such a curtain, simple to operate because one just needs to roll it up and down.¹²¹

Tanner further defines **Apron** – as a narrow acting area between the front edge of the stage and the front of the main curtains which normally holds monologues and asides. The National Theatre of Ghana has an apron of 5.3 metres which holds a mobile orchestra and the E.T.S Drama Studio has a 4.5 metre apron also. Tanner (1996) again defines the rest of the devices

¹²⁰ A. Gillette, J. Gillette. *Stage Scenery Its Construction and Rigging*. New York: Harper& Row, 1981. p. 262.

¹²¹ A. Gillette, J. Gillette. *Stage Scenery Its Construction and Rigging*. New York: Harper& Row, 1981. pp.262-266

as; **The Back Wall**; this is painted white and it is mainly opposite the proscenium opening. **Backing**, these are flats used behind the windows and doors of the set on stage to conceal or mask the backstage area from audiences view. **Battens** are long pipes from which curtains, lights, flats, banners, and others are hanged, it is sometimes referred to as bars. (See fig 10). The National Theatre of Ghana for instance has 38 battens on which are used to hang drops, drapes, and also rig stage light. It is regulated electronically. The E.T.S Drama Studio on the other hand makes use of wooden beams to hang its stage lights and drops. (See fig 23 & 24) **Borders** - Short curtains hanged at intervals above the acting area to mask lights and other scenery from audience as shown in *fig 7*.¹²²

Copper and Markey (1995)¹²³ define **Cyclorama or Cyc** as the background flat or curtains covering the stage back or the back wall and its sides. It is normally painted to represent the sky. The E.T.S Drama Studio for instance does not make use of a cyclorama because of its lack of fly area. The National Theatre on the other hand makes use of a cyc because of its adequate fly area. According to A. Gillette and J. Gillette, continued experimentation of cyclorama has led to the development of various types of cloth cyc that have proved to be highly satisfactory. The **Fly Cyc**- is a modern type which is an unbroken expanse of canvas; either dyed or painted sky blue, suspended from a U-shaped pipe batten, and enclosing the acting area on three sides. **Trip Cyc** – is another variation of the Fly Cyc. This can be used in theatres with too little grid height for the regular Fly Cyc.¹²⁴ Copper and Markey also defines **Cyclorama** as “the back ‘wall’ (frequently made of cloth) of the stage, which is sometimes slightly concave so that it can receive projected images effectively. It is often used to represent a large expanse such as sky.”

¹²² Fran Averett, Tanner. *Basic Drama Projects* (6th ed.). Kansas: Clark Publishing, 1996. p. 219

¹²³ Simon, C. & Sally, M. *Theatre Studies an Approach for Advanced Level*. Cheltenham: Stanley Thones, 1995. p. 55.

¹²⁴ A. Gillette, J. Gillette. *Stage Scenery Its Construction and Rigging*. New York: Harper& Row, 1981. pp.262-266

Copper and Markey further defines **Flies** as “the area above the stage, which should be at least the height of the stage area. Scenery is flown from there on a series of pulleys, usually operated electronically in modern theatres”.¹²⁵ Evidence to this definition is the National Theatre where the fly area is approximately the height of the stage which is 25 metres. The Gillettes’(1981)¹²⁶ also define **Flies** as the area above stage where scenery and other equipment are hung out of view. They (Gillettes’) further describe the functions of other gadgets such as; **Fly Gallery**; it is a narrow platform usually about halfway up the backstage side wall from which the lines for flying scenery are worked. **Gridiron or Grid** - this is a framework of beam above the stage, it is used to support rigging for flying scenery. **Ground Cloth** – Usually referred to as the Floor Cloth, it is generally made up of a canvas to cover the floor of the acting area. It normally comes in dark brown, tan or gray green. The Gillettes’ furthermore attests that; “the **Floor Cloth** improves the appearance of settings and also serve to muffle the noise created by shifting scenery between acts and scenes.” At both the National Theatre and the E.T.S Drama Studio a polished wooden T&G is used instead of the floor cloth. Tanner also describes the rest of these devices and spell out their functions as follows; **Tomentors** - This is a curtain or flat at each side of the proscenium opening used to regulate the width of the opening. **Legs** - These are drapes hanged in pairs precisely left and right behind the tomentors to conceal the backstage. The National Theatre has two tomentors and three legs. (See fig 7). The E.T.S Drama Studio on the other hand has none of these but makes use of wooden flats to regulate and conceal the backstage. **Pin Rail**; these are rails on the fly gallery or on backstage wall with which lines are pulled and tied off. **Proscenium Arch** is the frame for the opening of the stage, whilst **Teaser** is a heavy curtain or canvas-

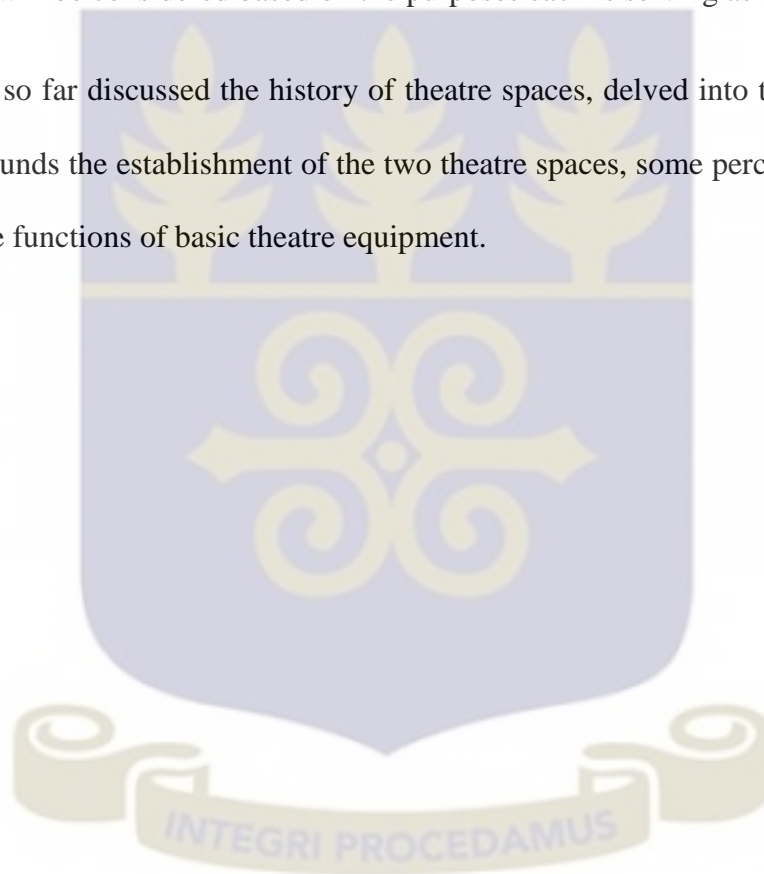
¹²⁵ P. Simon, C. & Sally, M. *Theatre Studies an Approach for Advanced Level*. Cheltenham: Stanley Thones, 1995. p. 54.

¹²⁶ A. Gillette, J. Gillette. *Stage Scenery Its Construction and Rigging*. New York: Harper& Row, 1981. pp. 270-281.

covered wooden frame hung above the proscenium opening to adjust the height of the opening.¹²⁷ (See fig 9)

The above mentioned devices are the basic equipment every conventional theatre facility should possess. As it was earlier discussed, considering the purpose the theatre space is serving, some extra equipment may be required for bigger and special effects productions. In assessing and determining how suitable the National Theatre and the E.T.S Drama Studio are, all these factors will be considered based on the purposes each is serving as a theatre space.

The chapter has so far discussed the history of theatre spaces, delved into the chronology of events that surrounds the establishment of the two theatre spaces, some perceptions of theatre theorists, and the functions of basic theatre equipment.



¹²⁷ Fran Averett, Tanner. *Basic Drama Projects* (6th ed.). Kansas: Clark Publishing, 1996. p. 219

CHAPTER THREE **METHODOLOGY**

3:1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a discussion on the various approaches the researcher employed in gathering information for the study. The data involves the suitability or otherwise of the National Theatre and the E.T.S Drama Studio for productions. This was done by examining the structures in terms of their artistic and technical benefits for production as well as management inputs. The study employed the qualitative research approach which further informed the researcher on the type of primary and secondary data needed for this study.

The research employed these approaches for the purposes of ensuring that, the objectives of the study were properly substantiated and also to ensure adequate data for the analysis of both theatre spaces. This was to enable the researcher establish reliable data which eventually informed her in the recommendations she gave. The primary data focused on the information the study gathered through personal observations on the edifices, an in-depth interviews with individuals who had the technical know-how in theatre, and finally the researcher examined the spaces with some productions she watched which were mounted in the spaces. Among these productions, two of them; *Bukom* and *It Runs in the Family* were staged at both spaces. The study therefore used the two as the basis of analyzing the spaces. This in effect helped the researcher to envisage how the rest of the productions which were mounted at either of the theatre space would have been at the alternate space.

The secondary data concentrated on journals, books, articles, newspapers, internet sources and other related relevant documents like contracts and Memorandum of Understanding (M.O.U). This chapter will therefore focus on the following respectively; research design, library research, population for the study, sampling of population, data collection

instruments, types of data, administration of instrument, data collection procedures and data analysis plan.

3:2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The qualitative research approach was employed in this study. This method is appropriate because the study requires information that can be derived from experts well-rooted in theatre practice. Rudestam and Newton (1992)¹²⁸ attest that, “[q]ualitative implies that data are in a form of words as opposed to numbers” This research dwelt much on the information gathered from the interviewees and not necessarily the total number of respondents interviewed.

Wimmer and Dominick (2006)¹²⁹ further posit that, “interviewing, is a research strategy for understanding audience attitude and behavior [...] the people possess certain characteristics and are recruited to share a common quality or characteristics of interest to the researcher,” therefore, in order to arrive at a more reliable data and knowledge which would enrich this research; the study employed the interview technique. Consequently, interviewing the technical, management, and the artistic team which constituted a sub-section of the experts, became the most appropriate thing to do. This provided an opportunity and the environment for the study to concentrate on materials and facts that had been abandoned, situations that have been overlooked and problems that are longed overdue to be solved. Interviews the researcher had with some experts in the field of performing arts (Mohammed Ben Abdallah and Sandy Arkhurst) enabled her to establish the chronology of events surrounding the establishment of the two theatre spaces. This also informed her on the reasons why both facilities are in their current locations, and the purposes both are serving.

¹²⁸ Rudestam, K. E. & Newton, R.R. *Surviving Your Dissertation: A Comprehensive Guide to Content and Process*. California: Sage, 1992. Pp . 29-31.

¹²⁹ Roger, D.W. & Joseph, R. D. *Mass Media Research :An Introduction*. Boston: Wadsworth, 2006. P.128.

Again through the interviews with management, artistic, and technical teams of both theatre spaces, informed the study on how to analyse both structures in terms of suitability or otherwise for productions. The suitability of the spaces was further determined by two productions which had been mounted within the two structures as well as the others that were staged at just one of the spaces. These productions were considered in order to have an objective opinion on the spaces instead of basing the analysis on only one or two productions. Hence the two productions which became the basis of the analysis differed in form and production process.

The first production *Bukom*, a dance drama with a relatively large cast was created and directed by Francis Nii Yartey, a Professor at the Dance Department of the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana. This production was considered because the researcher realised the spaces do not only hold drama performances, it holds other performances from other disciplines such as music and dance. The second production was a drama, directed by a Directing student of the School of Performing Arts, Kobina O. Hagan, titled *It Runs in the Family*, written by Ray Cooney. The other productions the study analysed include: *The Slaves Revisited* by Mohammed Ben Abdallah, *The Legend of Aku Sika* by Martin Owusu, *Unshelved* by Alfred Elikem Kunustor, *The Future of Dance* by Nii Yartey and Oh! Nii Quaye Sowah, and *Song of the Pharaoh* by Mohammed Ben Abdallah. The information the researcher gathered from the various respondents, her observations and involvement in some of these productions informed the study on the analysis and interpretation in chapter four.

3:2 LIBRARY RESEARCH

The study began with an immense and comprehensive research from libraries, archives, files, and official documents on the two spaces. Libraries visited in the University of Ghana,

Legon Accra, were the Balm Library, African Studies Library, and School of Performing Arts Libraries from both Music and Theatre Arts Departments. Other libraries visited are the University Library of Bochum at Ruhr University of Bochum and the Community Library of Herne all in Westphalia Region of Germany. The purpose of this library research was to learn more about the reasons for the establishment of these theatre spaces; their historical background, how they are managed, basic stage equipment for every theatre facility, the purposes of their establishment, and their objectives as an entity. The information the researcher gathered from this search was not very sufficient but valuable, this enabled her to some extent, analyse and evaluate these theatre spaces for productions.

3:4 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The universe of a research, according to Kumekpor as quoted by Kwakye-Opong(2011)¹³⁰ is the total number of all units that are available to be investigated. This involves objects, individuals, facilities, and experiences with similar features and purposes. Based on this statement, the study investigated matters concerning the two theatre spaces. The interview covered experts who in one way or the other had something to do with these facilities. It also delved into management, workers, actors and actress, theatre practitioners, performing arts lecturers, theatre students, and public patrons on the whole to be reliably informed on how these spaces have presented themselves suitable for theatrical productions.

The population of this study was grouped into two, primary and secondary respondents. The primary was categorised into three groups with each set or category made up of groups of individuals in a common department. The secondary respondents formed just one set. Below is the arrangement;

¹³⁰ Regina, Kwakye-Opong. *Clothing And Adornment In The Ga Culture: Seventeenth to Twenty-First century*. Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Unpublished PHD thesis. 2011. P. 60.

Table 3:1 Schematic Overview of Respondents.

SET	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	POSITION OF RESPONDENTS
A	4	Management
B	6	Artistic
C	4	Technical
D	2	Secondary Respondents
TOTAL $4 + 6 + 4 + 2 = 16$		

The above table is interpreted as follows; set 'A', 'B', and 'C' constitutes the primary respondents and the last set, 'D' represents the secondary respondent. Set 'A' has 4 respondents because the study considered two management members from each theatre space adding up to 4. Set 'B' has 6 because two artistic members were considered in each theatre space and the directors of *Bukom* and *It Runs in the Family* productions were added as well. Set 'C' also has 4 respondents because the researcher interviewed 2 technical persons from each space summing up to 4. Lastly set 'D' (secondary respondents) is made up of 2 respondents; these members are living witnesses to the establishment of both spaces.

3:5 SAMPLING OF POPULATION

Kumepkor (2002)¹³¹ defines sampling as “the use of definite procedures in the selection of a part for the express purposes of obtaining from its description or estimates certain properties and characteristics of the whole.” Based on the above definition the sampling strategy employed in this study involved a careful survey of selecting the population. The researcher therefore employed the purposive sampling technique. The study used this technique because in arriving at a quality data, the study needed respondents who were knowledgeable in theatre. The universe or population therefore brought together the possible respondents purposively selected for the investigation. Though the population was gathered through the purposive sampling technique, the respondents within the various sets considered for the interview were different in terms of departments. Thus the grouping was done such that, each set was made up of individual experts with the technical know-how in a specific area about the theatre space.

The reasons which informed the groupings are as follows; the first category which is set ‘A’, brought together some members of management of these spaces, (the executive directors and the estate managers). What informed this category was that, the study needed information on how these facilities are run, its purposes, objectives, missions, staff strength, bookings, and what exactly the theatre space comprise as a building.

The second group, set ‘B’, was made up of the artistic directors of the two facilities and two directors who had worked within the spaces before. It was important to create this group because the research wanted to establish the capabilities of these spaces for productions, its’ challenges, types of acting areas and their dimensions, as well as the types of basic stage equipment available in the spaces.

¹³¹ Tom, Komekpor. T.B. *Research Methods & Techniques of Social Research*. Accra: Sunlife Press. 2002. P.132

The third category which was set 'C' comprises of the technical team (sound and light) of the two spaces. For any conventional theatre space to be conducive for productions, technical issues such as sound and light are indispensable, therefore this research would have been incomplete if the researcher failed to investigate into the technical issues of these two places. This group informed the study about the functional equipment the theatre spaces has and the ones that needs replacement or repair.

The last category, set 'D' was made up of two performing arts Senior Lecturers (Mohammed Ben Abdallah and Sandy Arkhurst) who are living witnesses to the construction of these theatre spaces. They were consulted because of their knowledge in history about the National Theatre Movement of Ghana and because they are empowered in the field of research work which in itself forms an intellectual discourse.

It is important to point out that, the creation of the purposive categories were extremely necessary because the researcher realised not much had been written on these two spaces. In fact, written literature and documentations on the spaces as a building was very minimal. There was no extensive information properly documented and published solely on these spaces as a structure to rely on. Finding documentations on past and present activities and projects the theatre spaces had embarked upon was a bit challenging. Therefore the interview sections became very obligatory in order to reinforce the data gathered from the library research.

3:6 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

The data collection instruments administered in this research included; the use of interview guides, personal observation, audio and video recordings and taking of photographs. Devices the researcher used in gathering the data include tape recorders, camera, and camcorder.

Wimmer and Dominick (2006) ¹³² asserts that; “qualitative research uses a flexible questioning approach. Although a basic set of questions is designed to start the project, the researcher can change questions or ask follow-up questions at any time.” To this end, the study employed the unstructured interview style. This style was chosen because the researcher needed some flexibility in the process. This was to enable the enumerator go beyond the guide if necessary as against the structured interview style which according to Kumekpor (2002),¹³³ “imposes an external indirect discipline on the interviewer to go straight to the subject matter and discuss only issues related to the subject under investigation.”

The researcher realised along the line that the issues concerning these two spaces had some sentimental aspects especially on the basis of how one studio had to be pulled down for another to be put up. The study realised that, some of the respondents are still employees of the spaces and naturally would have an interest to protect and memories to recollect. Therefore using the structured interview style would be too formal an approach to make the respondents open up more, consequently the unstructured interview style became the appropriate method for the research.

The stipulated time assigned for each set was one month. The interview guide was distributed to the appropriate departments for studying before the actual interview began. Respondents were to take two weeks to study the guide and find appropriate answers before the said dates for the one-on-one interviews. Depending on the date, the guide is made available to the interviewees; he or she was to take two weeks to study the guide. After that the enumerator and the respondent agrees on two dates scheduled within the two weeks left for the one-on-one interview to take place, based on the respondents’ availability and readiness. The various respondents which were considered for the interviews at the National Theatre are as follows;

¹³² Roger, D.W. & Joseph, R. D. *Mass Media Research an Introduction*. Boston: Wadsworth, 2006. P.116.

¹³³ Tom, Komekpor. T.B. *Research Methods & Techniques of Social Research*. Accra: Sunlife Press. 2002. P.188.

The Executive Director, Estate Manager, Technicians (light and sound), General Stage Manager, and the Artistic Director. The same procedure was administered at the E.T.S Drama Studio. Just like the National Theatre, members interviewed at the E.T.S Drama Studio are; Assistant Registrar of the School of Performing Arts, the University of Ghana Estate Manager, the Studio Manager, Artistic Directors, and the light and sound personnel. Two stage directors were also interviewed (under artistic) based on the two productions that were mounted within the two spaces.

The whole process took approximately six months to complete; September 2013 to February 2014. The first three months, September to November were used for observation of these spaces as well as an interview sections with the Senior Lecturers in category 'D' [secondary respondents], for the history of these edifices. The data gathered helped the researcher a great deal in the Literature Review. The rest of the months which were from December 2013 to February 2014 were used to interview the other sets; 'A', 'B', and 'C'. Every set was to take one month for the whole process to be completed. As stated earlier, respondents were given two weeks to study the interview guide before the actual interviews scheduled in the other two weeks. The reason why the researcher requested two dates was for the sake of posterity, thus, if it happens that a respondent is not able to honour the first appointment, then the enumerator would have another opportunity to make sure she meets the person on the second appointment date.

Secondly for the sake of clarity and authentication which qualitative design requires, the researcher thought it was judicious to have a second date which will give her the opportunity to investigate further when some issues crop up during the first interview sections. Thus, room was created for follow-ups if it becomes necessary. The stipulated period for some of the respondents in the sets exceeded few days into the other period scheduled for the other respondents, but everything went as expected.

The flexible nature of the guide also allowed some of the respondents to go beyond the guide, especially the Executive Directors, members in set 'D' (secondary respondents) and the technical team of the spaces. This drew the enumerator's attention to very pertinent issues about the suitability of the structures for productions. For the purposes of clarity and confirmation of data, all relevant issues that came up during the first interview sections were reconsidered during the second interview sections.

The first phase of the interview section was very successful, almost all the respondents availed themselves, except for few who could not make it. However, dates were fixed immediately to undertake the interviews. The second phase was a bit challenging because some of the personnel said it was enough if I did not see them again because they had given out all the information already. Nevertheless, it was important to clear some important revelations that cropped up during the first section. So it was extremely imperative to take the second phase with some of them. Some could not turn up on the appointment dates but rescheduled their appointment, but others granted me audience over telephone and through mails. In general many of them were available and the researcher received the information the study was seeking.

Due to lack of time, convenience, and meeting places, most of the interviews were recorded on tapes and played back after the interview for documentation. This method was adopted because asking questions, listening, and writing at the same time was not ideal for this style of interview, because it breaks the conversation. Again it would have required a lot of time, and since these respondents had equally important activities to attend to, it was prudent to record on a tape instead. Also this was done to have the whole conversation on tape as a backup. The use of the tape recorder enabled the researcher to follow the interview and ask questions appropriately and this also helped the whole process to be faster and enjoyable.

Wimmer and Dominick (2006)¹³⁴ further posit that; “qualitative research projects use small samples that eliminate a researcher’s ability to generalize the results to the population.” They further suggest that from 6 to 12 samples size is ideal. It is therefore important to explain that the study had 16 respondents though the study employed the qualitative research method. This is because the research was on two different theatre spaces. These two spaces have different managerial structure and working environment and therefore for each space, the researcher interviewed sets of individuals at the various departments, hence, the 16 respondents.

In order to gather appropriate data to meet the objectives set out to be achieved in this study, the interview guides were designed to cover the following areas in general:

- The main purpose for which these two edifices were established.
- The extent to which documentation has been done concerning the chronology of events surrounding their establishment, their capabilities and challenges, their visions, and their technological advancement and how the spaces are maintained for productions.
- How the spaces are well equipped for various kinds of productions and how management maintain these equipment.
- Whether directors, producers, actors, actresses, and other crew feel at ease mounting productions within these theatre spaces, the challenges and advantages, and what management is doing about the challenges.
- Processes in hiring the place, how much does it cost and what are the terms and conditions.

¹³⁴ Roger, D.W. & Joseph, R. D. *Mass Media Research an Introduction*. Boston: Wadsworth, 2006. Pp.116&128.

- What the structures entail; in terms of its various stages, auditorium, offices, various departments, staff strength, security and many other important issues affecting the theatre.
- How the spaces are run in terms of administrations.
- How advanced the spaces have developed technologically to suit modern trends in theatre studies.

3:7 TYPES OF DATA

The primary data for this study took the form of audio recordings for most of the interviews, video coverage, and photographs of the various parts of the theatres in general upon permission from the appropriate authorities. The researcher also got some of the footage from some respondents she interviewed such as the Estate Managers and other management members both at the National Theatre and E.T.S Drama Studio.

The secondary data were, however, collected through sources such as published books and articles, unpublished thesis, addresses, and other kinds of documents. Books on the history of theatre education in Ghana, The National Theatre Movement, and Efua Thodora Sutherland were also reviewed. These books helped the researcher to identify dates, the purposes of these spaces and the history behind their locations as well as areas that needed attention. It must be admitted that the history about their location and the sequence of events surrounding it were not sufficiently found in these books but the records of the actual occurrences were set straight with interviews conducted with Sandy Arkhurst and Mohammed Ben Abdallah, who are living witnesses to the establishment of the two spaces.

Abdallah was the Chairman of the National Commission of Culture in the P.N.D.C. Government of Ghana, in 1987¹³⁵; one person believed to be very instrumental in establishing the National Theatre, a Playwright, and a Senior Lecturer. Arkhurst is also a theatre practitioner and a Senior Lecturer at the University of Ghana. He was one of the foremost students of the School of Music and Drama who used the old Ghana Drama Studio as an extension division for practical work. He was also among the students Sutherland trained at the Studio to be professional theater practitioners. These two members constituted the secondary respondents in set 'D'.

It should, however, be noted that it became virtually difficult to get a published document or handbook solely on any of the spaces. There were no adequate books or journal projecting its history entirely. Neither was an active website displaying their activities and their state of affairs up to date. Other documents the researcher got from some management members (P.R.O, General Stage Manager, and the Estate Manager) were also not published and therefore lacked credible authenticity. It therefore became difficult to use some of them and also reference it. Despite all these challenges the study drew clarity and confirmation from archives, articles, brochures, newsletters, papers, journals, magazines, and internet sources.

3:8 ADMINISTRATION OF INSTRUMENT

When the researcher identified the specific and various respondents she wanted to interview, they were grouped into sets and an action plan was designed to follow, thus when and how routines should be followed. The first meeting the researcher made with respondents was to introduce herself, her intentions and what she was about. She used the opportunity to give out the interview guide and also set the dates for both the first and second interviews. This was to

¹³⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Provisional_National_Defence_Council

enable them prepare for the forthcoming interviews. The interview guides were in four different types, designed for each group of respondents depending on what information the study needed from them.

3:9 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Most of the one-on-one interviews took place at the various offices of the respondents'. Very few information were received through mails and some clarifications over the telephone. Many of the respondents availed themselves within the specified period but there were few ones that delayed the process, therefore some sets took almost five weeks to complete instead of the four. Respondents in Set 'D' and 'B' became the pioneers of the whole process and that took almost four months; September to December 2013. Set 'A' and 'C' followed suit from January to February 2014. Approximately the entire collection took six months one week to complete, September 2013 to first week in March 2014.

3:10 DATA ANALYSIS PLAN

The study examined many issues raised both in the primary and secondary data. The information gathered in the secondary data was buttressed by the primary data collected from the respondents. The data gathered were analyzed in accordance with the stated objectives in order to arrive at the present state of the two spaces. This was further to decide whether or not the theatre spaces were suitable administratively, artistically (structure), and technically (equipment) for productions or they proved to be more suitable for certain kind of productions than others. Obviously since they serve different purposes some variations would be expected. The information received at the end was then used to answer the problem statement and the research questions, which will be discussed in the next chapter on the analysis and interpretation of the collected data in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF DATA AND ANALYSIS

4:1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings, analysis and interpretation of data collected for this study. Apart from the National Theatre and E.T.S Drama Studio being part of the history and development of Ghanaian theatre education, they also play very important roles in the sustenance of the art industry in Ghana by holding artistic programmes. However, little documentation has been done on these spaces; thus there are no substantial materials detailing the structure, acting area, capacity, equipment, and auditorium of both theatres. Also there are limited references with regards to the history behind the establishment of these facilities. Nevertheless, the few available material accessed by this study lack information regarding the artistic benefit, technical advantages for productions; as well as some administrative information on how the facilities are managed. Consequently, public clients are deprived of any prior knowledge on the spaces since there are no documents to that effect; hence, these client are unable to ascertain the suitability or otherwise of the space for the required productions on time.

This chapter therefore seeks to first examine what these structures entail in terms of artistic and technical benefits for productions, and how management is handling the spaces. Additionally, the research will report on the challenges these theatres are facing in terms of handling specific kinds of productions. The researcher is reviewing these spaces under these three departments because, for any conventional theatre space to be functioning as expected, how it is managed and who runs it is very crucial for its smooth administration. Also artistic features within the structure to aid creativity have always been the backbone of theatre and

therefore cannot be over emphasized. Finally technical issues especially light and sound to compliment the creativity are always indispensable and this study will be incomplete if the researcher fails to analyse these theatre spaces technically. This would eventually inform her on the suitability or otherwise the study sought to establish with the spaces for productions.

This chapter will be analysed under two sections; the first part will be the presentation of data gathered from respondents under the categorisation of management, artistic and technical. The researcher will present the data collected from the National Theatre first and later, the data from the E.T.S Drama Studio. The second section will be a comparative analysis on the two spaces based on two productions mounted at both spaces as well as the five others that were staged at just either of the spaces. This will then be supported with the additional data gathered, as well as the researchers' observations and participation in these productions. In this instance, the researcher would discuss how the productions fared in a particular theatre space as opposed to how it will work on the other alternative space.

It is important to state that, the researcher transcribed the data collected from the respondents focusing on the findings instead of word-for-word reporting. This decision was informed by the realisation that, respondents in most cases presented overlapping ideas and responses. Also the various respondents sampled for the purposes of this study had common knowledge about their departments; therefore transcribing their views word-for-word might end up in repetition of answers.

4:2 THE NATIONAL THEATRE

4:2:1 THE MANAGEMENT OF THE NATIONAL THEATRE

In gathering views on management, the researcher interviewed the Executive Director and the Estate Manager; who constitute members of the management category the researcher created

as Set 'A'. Agyeman Ossei is a theatre practitioner, a Senior Lecturer and the former Artistic Director of Abibigromma, a resident theatre group of the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana, Legon. He took over the Executive Directorship of the National Theatre in 2012; and is currently serving a two-year term. During the interview, he confirmed that, constitutionally the Theatre is managed by a Board, chosen by the Ghana Government according to the National Theatre Act, Section 4 PNDC Law 1991.¹³⁶ The Board elects the Executive Director and two other deputies. One of the deputies is in charge of artistic issues of the Theatre, and the other in charge of Administration, Finance and Human Resource. These members take charge of the day to day administration of the National Theatre as clearly stated by Section 9¹³⁷ of the Act.

According to Agyeman Ossei, the National Theatre has 85 staff members; and among the 85, there are 3 top management members, made up of the Executive Director and the two deputies. There are also 2 management directors thus; Director of Administration and Technical Director, 8 heads of department comprising Administration, Programmes, Public Relation/Marketing, Estate, Accounts, Internal Audit, Front of House, and Technical. The Theatre also has 13 supporting staff,¹³⁸ made up of fire service personnel and auditors who are not on the pay roll of the National Theatre. These members constitute the administrative structure. The rest of the 59 workers fall under the above mentioned departments. However the resident theatre groups with the exception of the directors do not form part of this number. This is because they are autonomous, even though housed at the National Theatre.

¹³⁶ Section 4-Board of the National Theatre

The governing body of the National Theatre is the National Theatre Board consisting of (a) the chairman and five other persons, (b) the Director of the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana, Legon, (c) the Director of the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, and (d) the executive director of the Ghana National Theatre. <http://ghanalegal.com/?id=3&law=517&t=ghana-laws>

¹³⁷ Section 9-Executive director of National Theatre

There shall be appointed by the President in accordance with article 195 of the Constitution, an executive director for the National Theatre.

¹³⁸ (These are civil service personnel assigned to the Theatre from Ghana National Fire Service and Controller and Accountants Generals Office to back up the services of the safety and accounts departments respectively)

The National Theatre is under the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts (MOTCCA) which was instituted by the National Democratic Congress (NDC) government in 2012. Agyeman Ossei further stated that, the Theatre as a structure is the property of the government, managed by the Board through the Executive Director and the two deputies: hence these members are answerable to MOTCCA. The Theatre is a civil service agency, and all workers in the Theatre are on government pay roll including members of the resident groups.

He again reiterated that, the Board depend on government subventions and the returns accrued from the various productions they mount; thus, Internally Generated Funds (IGF) to run the Theatre. Just like every other government organisation in Ghana, the Theatre presents its annual reports and budget to the government to be considered for subvention.

Charges for the various acting areas within the National Theatre range between 1,000 and 7,000 Ghana Cedis. This depends on the type of day, period, time and the type of production. Hiring the main auditorium costs 7,000 Ghana Cedis per day for peak periods, such as Friday, Saturday, Sunday and public holidays. Hiring the exhibition hall ranges between 4,000 and 2,000 Ghana Cedis a day depending on the kind of programme, and the folks place is 1,000 to 2,000 Ghana Cedis. Government programmes, however, are not charged and could cancel any bookings if the need arises.

He also disclosed that, most of the artistic programmes held within the National Theatre usually are collaborations between the organisers and the National Theatre; hence the organisers acquire the space at a discount. According to him, the purpose of the Theatre which is to promote works of art primarily have not been fully achieved since the arts industry has not been able to properly market itself to the prospective audience. For this reason, management is compelled to give the space out for other activities such as church

services, workshops, banquet, among others in order to generate funds for the day-to-day running of the Theatre.

When asked about light, set, and sound gadgets, Agyeman Ossei confirmed that the Theatre does not have enough, so clients are allowed to bring in these items for their productions. He acknowledged that, the Theatre made plans to acquire such facilities under his administration. As part of this decision, 10 percent of the total costs of hiring the various auditoriums were set aside to generate funds to purchase these technical facilities. He further disclosed that, the cost of these items would be recouped, since the cost of hiring the auditorium would be increased for these additional services the Theatre will offer clients after acquiring these equipment. He was, however, quick to admit that this plan did not work to his satisfaction because there was so much pressure on the money generated; since it is being used for other activities such as maintenance of the structure and overtime payment for workers. However, he believes that the structure is designed to suit both productions and other programmes such as workshops, exhibitions, conferences, and launches in any of the three auditoriums.

4:2:1:1 OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL THEATRE STRUCTURE

Kwasi Wilson, the Estate Manager of the National Theatre has been with the institution for more than 15 years. He shared with me how the Theatre was built as well as all the parts of the edifice. According to him, the main structure was constructed with reinforced concrete and burnt bricks. The lower part of the exterior was laid with polished granite and the upper curved part decorated with mosaic tiles. The frontage is adorned with a three tier water fountain which also doubles as a reservoir for the Theatre's internal fire hydrants. The compound is embellished with a number of African arts portraits nicely displayed on some of the lawns and Foyer. (See fig 5 & 17). Presently, the Theatre has an 180KVA standby power

generator in case of electricity power shortage. In order to make his description very comprehensible, he divided the building into four parts.

Part one is the main audience wing of the theatre. It comprises of a waiting hall made up of a three-tier lobby with eleven marble “hyedua” finished pillars. Also, the floor is constructed with marble and terrazzo and wooden panel walls to accompany it. A big brass pendant lamp fixed with 289 bulbs hangs at a height of 11.4 metres above that floor. The ground floor has a large outdoor veranda, a three-tier 1,492 seating auditorium, a bar, sound control room, lighting control room, director’s observatory, a film projecting room and a presidential box. There is also a washroom for both male and female with sixteen water closets and eight urinal pots on this floor. It’s important to note that the three-tier 1,492 seating auditorium has made provision for the physically challenged; part of the seating area has been defined with special arrangement for such people.

Part two houses the terraced outdoor theatre with 300 seating capacity, a washroom for audience and a backstage preparatory room also with another washroom for performers. Adjacent to the outdoor theatre is a “Ghanaian style garden”, (see fig 17) housing a restaurant and bar. Also a set construction/carpentry workshop, the theatre’s main fire control room manned by the staff of the Ghana National Fire Service, an air handling unit for air-conditioning of the auditorium, a lobby, and the fresh water pumping room of about 5000 litre reservoir lays adjacent to the restaurant. The first floor of part two is located within the curved structure on the eastern part of the Theatre. It houses two rehearsal halls, both equipped with long mirror walls and T&G wooden floors. Again there is a prop room and a small resting room, all sited just before one enters the bigger rehearsal halls.

Part three is situated within the curved structure on the western part of the Theatre. The ground floor of this part covers an area of 300 square metres. This is an area designated for

Very Important Personalities (VIP) and it comprises the Presidential lounge, VIP lounge, utility rooms and a “Chinese style garden” with a pond. (See fig 16). Other rooms available in that wing include a space earmarked for a gift shop, the main electrical distribution panel room and the central air conditioning plant room. On the first floor of this section is the exhibition hall, with an area of 1,000 square metres. Additional facilities include a place of convenience for both males and females and a small storage unit where clients keep their equipment and other items.

Part four is located right between part two and three of the Theatre. It is the tallest part of the building, rising to about ten floors off the stage floor. This is where the flying bars holding the stage lights, curtains, cinema screen and other stage props are found. On the ground floor is the main stage with an area of 440 square metres with two holding wings. The floor is covered with polished groove wood and a mobile orchestral pit located within the apron of the proscenium stage. At the back of the stage are dressing rooms for performers which include two self-contained rooms equipped with washing basins, bath tubs and water closets. A reception and small storage unit are at both ends of the floor as well as washrooms with showers for both male and female.

The first floor of this part houses the changing rooms for the resident groups, offices for the Deputy Executive Director; Artistic and Directors of two of the resident groups (Drama and Dance) and their administrative staff. At both ends of this floor is another set of lavatories also with standing showers. The rest of the administrative staff of the Theatre occupies the second and third floors. There is also a library, costume construction & storage rooms, and an IT room all on these floors. The cooling tower and smaller air handling units for the central air condition plant are also located here.

According to Kwasi Wilson, the Theatre is a multi-functional facility and has hosted major local and international performing and visual art shows, seminars, conferences, exhibitions, fairs, and receptions (banquet, funeral, wedding, etc). He confirmed that, there has been two major renovation works since the establishment of the theatre. The first was done in 1995 to service the central air conditioning plant and the second was in 2004. The second renovation was more elaborate, covering the auditorium, air conditioning, stage, and firefighting pumps amongst others. He added that, the structure is a very safe facility; since the Chinese constructors used a lot of iron rods in the structure and designed the joints such that, they were not merged directly together with iron rod and concrete. (See fig 18). They sealed the two edges with a malleable substance which could stretch if there is pressure, tremor or storm. This means that in the midst of the unfortunate, the malleable substance will just stretch and allow the building to sway and come back to its position. This makes the edifice one of the safest structures in the country.

Apart from the two backstage exits the main auditorium has six exits and entrances which open either ways. The first floor of the main auditorium has three exits and entrances and the second floor has two. All these exits and entrances lead one to the lobby which has thirteen exits and entrances leading to the outside of the Theatre. He concluded that there cannot be any significant structural expansion. He explained that the reinforcement of the building with iron rods and concrete is such that, it will be an expensive venture to think of expansion. However he recommends that, another theatre be built if in future the National Theatre becomes too small for its audience.

4:2:3 ARTISTIC VIEWS ON THE NATIONAL THEATRE STRUCTURE

The Artistic Director of the National Theatre who doubles as one of the two Deputy Executive Directors is Amy Appiah Frimpong. She has been working with the Theatre for

more than a year; she is also a part time Lecturer at the School of Performing Arts. Appiah Frimpong was interviewed to solicit her artistic views on the National Theatre structure and how suitable it has been designed for theatrical productions. According to her the mandate of the National Theatre is that, it should be an avenue to promote the arts in Ghana. Expressing her views on the space as a building, she said confidently that, it is serving that purpose, because it has been designed artistically to cater for different kinds of audiences and various types of artistic programmes.

She confirmed that, the National Theatre has three main different kinds of acting space with different audience capacity. The folks place is an open air facility which has been designed to promote small and intimate productions, therefore the stage and the seating areas are quite close, with about 300 seating capacity. The exhibition hall was also designed not necessarily for stage performance, but the National Theatre recognises the role of the visual arts in Ghana; therefore the hall has been designed to promote exhibitions, trade fairs, and other activities. It has a seating capacity of 400. The main auditorium and its stage are one of the biggest that can be found in Ghana now; this she believes is helping theatre practitioners to be innovative in terms of its seating capacity, basic stage equipment, depth, height of the stage and many other features which in themselves are spectacular. It is for this reason that she regards the building as most appropriate for stage productions in Ghana.

She, however, acknowledged that having the structure is not all that it takes to make the Theatre work efficiently. With its internationally sized stage, there should be other components present to facilitate her work as the Artistic Director. The stage itself has been designed artistically to aid creativity but the technical equipment available to complement this creativity has always been the challenge. Most of the technical equipment are not working; the mobile orchestra for instance has not been working efficiently for almost three years. Initially it could be regulated to about four levels, now it can only be moved to the

bottom and back to its initial position. She concluded that, if there were enough funds to acquire current state of the arts stage lights, and sound equipment as well as repairing others, it would have helped the institution to save much of their IGFs which are used to hire some of these equipment when the National Theatre put up productions.

4:2:3:1 OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL THEATRE STAGES AND AUDITORIUM

The researcher also interviewed Jojo Quantson who is the General Stage Manager of the Theatre. Quantson has been working with the Theatre for more than a decade. According to him, the space has a main auditorium with a proscenium stage and two other small auditoriums: the exhibition hall and the folks place. Quantson posit that, the main stage is one of the largest that can be found in Ghana and has been designed efficiently with most of the basic stage gadgets needed to aid artistic creativity. The main stage covers an area of 440 square metres. From the proscenium arch to the cyclorama is 16 metres and from the proscenium arch to the end of the apron is 5.3 metres. Approximately the length of the stage from the orchestra to the cyclorama or back wall is 21.3 metres. The height of the stage from the floor to the proscenium arch is 25 metres, and from the floor of the stage to the end of the fly loft is 53.3 metres. The length of the auditorium is 21.3 metres.

The proscenium stage has 38 bars; 5 of which are for rigging of stage lights and the rest are for drops and drapes. Also there are two front curtains, one is regulated horizontally and the other vertically. One of the bars holds a big screen for projecting films. According to Quantson, the theatre makes use of split air conditioners; 8 at the ground floor, 6 at the first floor and 4 at the second floor. The Exhibition hall also covers an area of 1000 square metres; its stage covers an area of 85 square metres. It has a platform as its stage and it has a height of 1metre from the auditorium floor. The height of the stage is 3.6 metres and it lacks most of the basic stage equipment for stage productions; like stage curtains, teasers, tormentors, bars,

cyclorama, flies, and many others. Clients therefore do lots of improvisation when they opt to do productions there. The auditorium is not tiered and it has no permanent seats as well. Looking at the setup of this auditorium it will best fit exhibitions than theatrical productions. Notwithstanding, various performances have been held there over the years.

The folks place is another acting space of the Theatre; it is an open air facility with tiered auditorium and non-permanent seats. The stage covers an area of 64 square metres with a height of 3.6 metres. It also does not possess many of the basic stage equipment for productions. It has two preparatory rooms backstage for performers which can serve as an entrance and exit for the stage. For stage illumination there are 4 telescopic metal bars on which stage lights are rigged.

According to Quantson, some major challenges the Theatre faces is that, not all the acting areas are adequately equipped in terms of basic stage equipment as well as stage light, sound, and materials for set. This is in confirmation with the Executive Directors submission on an earlier page that, clients are allowed to come in with these things. Furthermore, the console which operates the stage bars is not working efficiently. It can only be operated through the panel instead of the console which is very risky since this involves direct contact with electricity current. The central air conditioner, for instance, has not been working close to seven years now and all efforts to fix it have proved futile due to the unavailability of spare parts. He concluded that structurally the Theatre is suitable for many type of productions, what is left is how management would be able to fix the issues of inadequate and non-functioning stage equipment.

4:2:4 TECHNICAL ISSUES AT THE NATIONAL THEATRE

The respondents from the technical department at the National Theatre in this interview emphasised that, technical issues especially in stage lighting and sound needs immediate

attention. They further explained that, the Theatre is operating below standard in terms of that. This is because even most of the inadequate sound and stage light equipment available are not functioning efficiently. Most of these equipment were installed into the infrastructure of the building by the Chinese; hence their repair or reinstallation would be a major work, requiring expertise and enormous expenditure.

According to the sound technician at the Theatre Clement Ossom Tetteh, the Theatre's inbuilt speakers are all not working at the moment because they are obsolete. The theatre now makes use of a pair of full range active speaker and its sub, which presently are lower in voltage so it virtually does not work. He admitted that, it is absolutely not enough for any show at the Theatre considering the size of the auditorium. The department like the resident groups hire some speakers when the need arises.

Ossom Tetteh added that, the Theatre only has 2 Omni Directional Microphones to aid voice projections, and even with that the intensity is very low. This situation has made it difficult for the microphone to work efficiently due to its unusually limited radio frequency between the microphone and its receiver. He added that, since the stage is big, 6 Omni Directional Microphones would have been perfect for performers' audibility in any production. Clients therefore fall on lapel microphones for their productions. He added that, the Theatre has only three lapel microphones but their receivers are not functioning at the moment. The theatre has a 24 mixer board sound console for regulating sound.

Ossom Tetteh reiterated that he would have wished that the Theatre had a sound library which is fully equipped so that, the department would not hire sound gadgets for the Theatre's productions. However, the issue of inadequate funds to get the required sets of these facilities that would befit the standard of the National Theatre has been a problem. He

concluded that, there are many shops in this country where good sound equipment can be purchased, but management claims there are no funds to acquire them at the moment.

Henry Martey has been working with the National Theatres' lighting department for 15 years. He reiterated that the department also has similar challenges like the sound department. The originally inbuilt assorted stage lighting of about 150 pieces which the Chinese installed in the theatre are all obsolete. According to Martey, the number of functional lights available at the Theatre for illumination is less than 20 PAR cans currently. Apart from stage lights that produce special effect, the Theatre needs 50 PAR cans for just illumination of the stage and auditorium. Other types like profile lights, spotlight both convex and fresnel which are used for focusing are all not working. The department also hire stage light when the need arises.

He added that the challenge facing the department at this moment is that, stage lights are very expensive and are also imported. Since there are not enough shops at the moment in Ghana which retails advanced stage lights, it is very difficult to acquire them. Unfortunately the Theatre does not have enough funds to import them either. Also the life spans of the stage bulbs are not long, coupled with the power fluctuations in the country in recent times, the strength of the bulb do not last. The Theatre's lighting console is not working at the moment, but its dimmer pack works.

He concluded that, it is worth mentioning that without lighting, nothing can go on within the main auditorium and the exhibition hall of the National Theatre because of the enclosed nature of the space. Subsequently, he would have proposed that, much attention would be given to issues about the auditorium and stage lighting. He suggested that it will be appropriate to have stage lighting equipment such as, Led (Light-emitting diode) light, automated light leasers, fog or smoke machine, ellipsoidal spotlight, beam projector, and follow spot (intelligent lights and pixel panels).

4.3 THE EFUA THEODORA SUTHERLAND DRAMA STUDIO (E.T.S DRAMA STUDIO)

4.3.1 THE MANAGEMENT OF THE E.T.S DRAMA STUDIO

Under the management of the E.T.S Drama Studio these members were interviewed; the Assistant Registrar and the Estate Director of the University of Ghana, Legon. The Assistant Registrar of the School, Bernadine Bediako-Poku was interviewed on administrative issues concerning the E.T.S Drama Studio. Bediako-Poku has been with the School for more than three years now and according to her, the Studio is the property of the University of Ghana under the supervision of the School of Performing Arts. It has been an experimental Studio for the School since 1992 where students test what they are taught practically and theoretically. The Studio is run by the University through the Director of the School, Assistant Registrar, the Accountant and the Studio Manager. There is also a Production Assistant who assists the Studio Manager in her duties. The Assistant Registrar and the Studio Manager run the day-to-day administration and make sure that, the Studio is used for the purpose for which it was established. The Studio gives priority to lecturers and students activities such as staff or student productions, lectures, rehearsals, durbars, project, workshops, tutorials, and practical exams.

From the beginning of every semester the Production Assistant sends a circular to all the departments under the School (Dance, Music, Theatre Arts,) as well as Abibigromma; the resident group. This is to inform them to send in their dates of programmes for the semester which will need the studio as a performance space. When all these dates are brought together the Studio Manager and her assistant factor in the various requests to draw a schedule for the semester. When all departments are adequately catered for, opportunities are given to other

shows which are private and artistic based; such as film premiering, drama, musical concert and art workshops.

Renting the studio at the moment costs 300 Ghana Cedis a day and it comes with the auditorium, stage, chairs, light, and sound. The client therefore decides on the gate fee. Currently the rate for productions by the School of Performing Arts is 4 Ghana Cedis for students and 10 Ghana Cedis for outsiders.

According to Bediako-Opoku, the funds generated from student productions return to the coffers of the School's IGF. The School takes the gate rate because every production held by the School is pre-financed by management; therefore the rate charged is just to solicit for what has been invested in the production. Unfortunately the gate proceeds are not even enough to cover the production cost, but the little gotten from these productions supplements the Schools budget. Other things the IGFs are used for include transportation for some studio staff that do not stay on campus but have to wait for productions to be over to perform certain duties. However, monthly salaries and overtime payments for employees are paid by the University who employed them.

She further mentioned that, the biggest challenge of the School is inadequate space to experiment more sophisticated gadgets in productions. The theatre space is an open air facility which has to contend with the forces of nature such as rain, sunshine and moon light. There are several instances when productions came to a halt because the rain fell during the production. Shows cannot also be held in the studio in the afternoon without canopies. Moonlight and streetlight challenging the concealment of scene changes during productions cannot also be controlled.

Bediako-Opoku added that, several attempts have been made over the years to do a massive renovation structurally on the E.T.S Drama Studio, but the University authorities did not give

their consent. According to her the reasons the authorities gave were that, the Studio has a symbolic meaning in the development of Ghanaian theatre and so touching it will be disrupting its significance and symbolism. Also an ultra-modern theatre is underway for the School therefore spending money to renovate the Studio should rather be channelled into the new structure. But the reality is that, this ultra-modern theatre which commenced in 2003 has not been completed up till now (2014). So it has been a challenging hurdle to jump from one stage to the other Bediako-Poku added.

She believes that, in terms of suitability for productions the Studio is suitable for certain kinds of production but not all productions. She assured me that management will continue to find ways to make the Studio conducive for many productions. What is left is how the Studio, as a structure, will be transformed to create an avenue for extra technical and artistic activities. Nevertheless, lecturers and students manage to use it for various productions with very spectacular outcome. She admitted that, it will not be prudent purchasing such equipment if there are no avenues to teach students how to operate them. It will also not be security wise to install these equipment because of its open air nature.

Bediako-Poku concluded that, the challenges the School is facing now are in two folds; inadequate space and secondly the School not being autonomous. Consequently, the School cannot do anything on its own. Every activity in terms of administration and management of the structure goes through the University authorities before approval. She added that there are plans in the pipeline to give the School an environmental facelift to change its ecological image which would also improve upon the Studios front of house.

4:3:1:1 OVERVIEW OF THE E.T.S DRAMA STUDIO STRUCTURE

The Physical Development and Municipal Service Directorate (PDMSD) are in charge of the E.T.S Drama Studio structure. It is under the directorship of Philip Azondow who has been

working with the PDMSD for more than two decades. According to him the E.T.S Drama Studio covers a total area of 6,838 square metres. The structure was constructed by the Chinese as the contract demanded, but the original plan of the old Ghana Drama Studio was modified a bit by the PDMSD in 1987, and some few changes were made before it was built here at the University.

First of all, the whole structure is bigger than the original one and the PDMSD inculcated some washrooms at its entrances which hitherto was not part of the old Studio. The location of the Studio was decided on by the development committee which was made up of the then Vice Chancellor, Pro-Vice Chancellor, two academic board members and two external advisors. It was agreed that the Studio be built at its current location because of its proximity to the School of Performing Arts and Institute of African Studies.

According to Azondow, the building has not gone through any massive renovation after 1992 when the PDMSD and the then Studio Manager John Djisenu, negotiated with the Chinese to renovate the stage and its drainage system which was posing a big challenge to the proscenium stage when it rains. He added that, under the administration of Awo Mana Asiedu, Acting Director of the School from 2010 to 2013, an attempt was made to construct a retractable roofing system for the studio so that it will take care of the unfavourable weather conditions and still provide the services needed as an open air Studio, but the expenditure on it was not feasible. Again under the administration of the current Studio Manager, Regina Kwakye-Opong, meetings have been held with PDMSD to tier the seating areas so that the Arena will not be affected. A metal platform was proposed at the meeting, but upon consultation with Azondow, fixing the metal platform at the studio will help its purpose, however, since it cannot be fixed permanently, it is obvious to create chaos and even loss of lives in moments of stampede. He was also quick to add that he is not sure if it will last since the metal will still be at the mercy of the rain and sunshine which might course it to rust.

The seating areas are versatile, depending on the kind of stage in use. Thus, if the action is going on within the proscenium, the arena and the end stages becomes the seating area. In an arena setting, the proscenium and the end stages serve as the audience seating area and when the action is on the end stage, the audience sit on the arena and the proscenium stages.

Because of this unique nature of the Studio, the floor could not be tiered for the seating arrangement, though it has never been part of its plan; seats are therefore not permanent. Currently the Studio has three exits and entrances and the proscenium stage has two exits and entrance leading back stage. Facing the back wall of the proscenium, the male changing room with its lavatory and bath, the studio manager's office, lighting room, scenic design room and music room are to the right. To the left are the female changing room with its lavatory and bath, costume room, costume storage room, and storage room of the resident group; Abibigromma. Facing the arena from the proscenium arch is, to the left; two entrances, box office, and three places of convenience. To the right are the sound and stage lighting booth, snack bar, three places of convenience and another entrance. Azondow concluded that from the original floor plan, some of the above rooms were not located where they are now. (See floor plan) However, he has no control over management's decision of what they want to use the rooms for; as long as the School will not touch the construction of the Studio.

4:3:2 ARTISTIC VIEWS ON THE E.T.S DRAMA STUDIO.

On artistic issue about the Studio John K. Djisenu, a Senior Lecturer at the School and a former Studio Manager from 1991 to 2000 was also interviewed. In expressing his views Djisenu stated that, the Studio structurally has some limitations but he also believes that these setbacks also challenge users to go the extra mile to adapt to the stages to do wonderful improvisations with their productions. Artistically he is of the view that since the Studio has flexible stage capabilities it makes it suitable for productions. He suggested that, if one thinks

using the proscenium stage is a challenge, there are other options like the arena and the end stages he or she can choose from.

Djisenu added that, because the Studio faces some limitations, a lot of changes were made to the original offices the Studio had during his tenure of office between 1991 and 2000, as the PDMSD director confirmed earlier on. A significant change is the relocation of the lighting room from the wings of the proscenium stage to its current position which used to be the waiting room. (See floor plan.) He added that, it is not artistically right according to the current trends of stage lighting, to operate on stage light without seeing the whole stage; besides the position of the booth as at that time, favoured only the proscenium stage.

He agreed with Bediako-Poku that the Studio is now too small a theatre space for the Schools population of 1,743, but the answer is not a significant structural change or renovation on the Studio. Structurally when a building has been put up from its foundation for a sub structure, it is not prudent to put a super structure on the sub structure which is the down floor. This is because, the depth of the foundation is meant to carry just the sub structure. Therefore he does not think the Studio was designed to carry any super structure of which the flies can be constructed within; for this reason it should be left as it is.

Again, the Studio can neither be extended in depth nor in size. This is because, where the structure ends is the exact alignment of all the buildings in that row within the University. So the Studio can never be extended horizontally according to the PDMSD regulations. What he believes should be done is that, the Studio should be managed so that funds could be channelled into the on-going theatre building for the School. Djisenu acknowledged the fact that, the purpose of the Studio as a performance space is to some extent accomplished; it is meant for stage production, and it is serving that purpose.

This is because it has three stages within it, the proscenium, arena, and the end stage, and he believes that, these avenues give students the opportunity to experiment with different types of stages when mounting their productions. According to him, having the space alone is not enough for the purpose of its establishment to be complete. Another reason for its establishment was to train students to be technically, artistically and administratively equipped to fit into the arts industry. Therefore there should be other facilities to make the space a lot more adequate and suitable to train these students practically.

He added that, even though the Studio is versatile because of its flexible nature he, however, believes that, a lot can be done to improve its suitability for productions in terms of its basic stage equipment. He concluded that within the Studio's peculiar limitations, it can be managed as a playing space because of its flexible environment, and thus suggested that the Amphi-theatre at the Commonwealth Hall of the University should also be considered as another performance space to ease the pressure on the E.T.S Drama Studio.

4:3:2:1 OVERVIEW OF THE E.T.S DRAMA STUDIO STAGES AND AUDITORIUM

The Senior Production Assistant in the person of Edmondson Sam was interviewed on the basic stage equipment and stage/auditorium dimensions of the Drama Studio. He has been working with the Studio for almost seven years and confirmed that; the Studio is always busy for academic activities every semester. Apart from productions being held almost every weekend, students undertake many practical lessons and tutorial at the Studio. According to, Edmondson Sam the proscenium has a height of 4.2 metres. Its depth from the proscenium arch to the back wall or cyclorama is 6.4 metres. The width of the proscenium from left to right is 10 metres. The proscenium covers an area of 286 square metres. From the Proscenium arch to the end of the apron which marks the beginning of the arena is 4.5 metres. Also from the proscenium arch to the end Stage is 23.7 metres. The arena covers an

area of 284.2 square metres with a length of 9.7 metres, whilst the length of the auditorium from the snack bar to the box office is 25.6 metres. The length of the end stage is 4 metres, and the width is 10 metres; the height of the stage wall is 2.4 meters. For stage illumination, the Studio makes use of wooden beams to rig stage lights on the proscenium and on the arena as well.

Edmondson Sam added that, the three stages of the studio do not have all the right basic stage gadgets; directors and set designers do a lot of improvisation with stage setups before a successful production can be held. Structurally the acting areas do not permit certain stage activities such as flying of sets, draping, rigging of sufficient stage lights, the use of stage curtains, among others. Again the proscenium stage does not have wings, teasers, tormentors, and metal bars for hanging backdrops. He therefore agreed with Bediako-Poku that the Studio's structure does not create the avenue for some of these basic facilities to be installed.

4:3:3 TECHNICAL ISSUES AT THE E.T.S DRAMA STUDIO

The Drama Studio's stage lighting and sound units are supervised by Edmondson Sam and Margret Lamptey handling sound and light respectfully. Both have been with the department almost seven years now. These two respondents were interviewed on technical issues about the Studio, especially on light and sound and the way forward. For stage lighting, Margret Lamptey admitted that, considering the size of the space, the Studio has enough stage lights for any 'normal' production which does not require extreme lighting effects. She added that, the Studio currently has 4 inches of 12 PAR sources of lights, 3 inches of 12 Plano convex spotlights, 3 inches of 6 Fresnel spotlights, a 24 digital channel console, and 4 dimmer packs. The Studio again has 6 telescopic standing bars of a maximum height of 3.6 metres and special effects stage lights like clouds, fire, and river. However, her biggest challenge is the

manner in which the various stages have been designed structurally, and how the electrical works hinder her creativity and work.

Lamprey reiterated further that, the electrical works on the Proscenium are not enough and conducive to rig most of the lights when necessary. She only makes use of the available power sources of about six to rig few of the lights within the stage and redirect some of the rigged ones to get the focuses she wants. Most often, actors are required not to move outside the focused area which she describes as restrictive. Whereas if she had rigged enough, the actors would have gotten enough acting area of illumination. For instance, the studio has a 24 channel programmable lighting console but has only rigged 12 because of inadequate power source and space. There are no proper metal bars fixed on the stages to hang stage lights. The available wooden beams only support the rigging of the stage lights, but they are not the required tool for it. (See fig 23 & 24).

Other issues Lamprey says need attention are, the concrete beams in between the flying area of the stage and the exposed electrical system. (See fig 24). This has virtually made it impossible to throw stage lights across; from right to left and vice-versa without any interruption. Since the height of the proscenium stage is low, bringing the stage light down to avoid the concrete frames would eventually expose the stage lights instead. It is always difficult to focus on one part of a set without the light spilling to the other set, in instances where there are multiple sets on stage. The end and arena stages do not have very tall telescopic standing bars for lighting up their stages and this makes it very difficult to illuminate productions held on it. (See fig 27). She concluded that, the electrical system on the various stages need a face lift to pave way for some equipment in stage lighting like Led (Light-emitting diode) lights, automated lights, leasers, fog or smoke machines, ellipsoidal spotlight, beam projector, and follow spot (intelligent lights and pixel panels) to work well, if the School is able to purchase some in the future.

The circumstances about sound in the Studio were quite alright, as Edmondson Sam, the sound personnel put it. He made it clear the types of sound equipment the Studio has. According to him taking the size of the Studio into account, there are enough sound gadgets to serve it. Currently the Studio has a 24 mixer board sound console for sound, 4 sets of PA system; 2 full range and two monitors with each set being passive and active. There are 3 lapel microphones and 3 Omni Directional Microphones to help voice projection on stage. Through the help of the Music Department of the School, sound studios for recording, composing, reproducing, and sound effects have not been a problem. Edmondson Sam added that, he would have wished to have two more monitors on stage hanged within the fly area of the stage which will enable actors to hear themselves on stage in order to be in real time. This would help actor to be in tune and on time with recorded, reproduction, and reinforcement sounds played during productions. But as earlier reiterated the power sources and the inadequate space in the fly area of the stage have still not been fixed.

4:4 COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE NATIONAL THEATRE AND THE E.T.S DRAMA STUDIO STRUCTURES: *BUKOM, IT RUNS IN THE FAMILY*, AND OTHER PRODUCTIONS

For the artistic and technical issues discussed within this chapter to be more applicable to the structures, *Bukom, It Runs in the Family* and other productions which were performed in the two theatre spaces were analysed. The analysis considered the stages within the National Theatre and that of the E.T.S Drama Studio and how these performances were affected by the nature of the stage dimensions and other facilities. In authenticating this, the researcher recalled on her own personal experience with different kinds of productions that she watched as well as those she was involved in. The study again considered the various directorial concepts employed by the directors who worked with both spaces; and not necessarily the content of the play text. More so, the study examined how the two structures are equipped in handling productions. This analysis will be done in two sections.

The first section considers the researcher's and the director's views on the various stages, sets, equipment, and auditoriums within the National Theatre and E.T.S Drama Studio, in analysing *Bukom* and *It Runs in the Family* productions. The second section focuses on other productions that have been mounted in one of the theatre spaces. This is to envisage whether or not these productions would be suitable on the alternative stage of the other theatre space. In studying these productions, the researcher also relied on her technical knowledge in theatre management.

As earlier stated in chapter three of the study, the researcher did not want to base the analysis on one production; since this might not yield much objectivity. Hence, the productions chosen differed in terms of production requirements, thus technical and artistic. *Bukom*, a dance drama with a relatively large cast, was considered because the researcher realised that, the spaces do not only hold drama productions, but also, other productions from other disciplines such as music and dance.

Bukom is written and directed by Francis Nii Yartey, a Lecturer at the School of Performing Arts, Dance Department. *Bukom* is a suburb located along the coastline in Accra, Ghana; and this dance drama was created to enact how some of the community members live. The drama specifically enacted the effects of some social vices, and how the community could be encouraged to help resolve them. This piece was performed at the E.T.S Drama Studio on the 17th of October 2012 and at the National Theatre on 16th November 2012.

In terms of the usage of the stage at the E.T.S Drama Studio, the researcher realised that, the director combined both the proscenium and the arena stages for the production; the reason was that, the production has a very large cast. Taking into account the proscenium dimensions of the E.T.S Drama Studio which has a length of 6.4 metres, width 10 metres, and a height of 4.2 metres, it became obvious that, the cast would be too large for the proscenium.

Also, considering the vigorous nature of the performance; which was basically dancing, running, and acting, it was appropriate that the director used the two stages. In combining both stages, the acting area was extended to the proscenium's apron to the arena stage which is a bit lower than the proscenium; and this created levels for the performance area. This situation brought out one unique feature of the E.T. S Drama Studio; thus the tendency of combining stages within it to suit productions. The above observations were confirmed by the director who disclosed that, the minimum cast size should be 40; however, depending on the space, a director can decide to add or reduce the number of cast.

At the National Theatre, the 40 member cast were able to fit on the proscenium stage. It was realised that, there was enough space to even add extra cast and to exhibit many concurrent scenes which were a challenge at the E.T.S Drama Studio. At the Drama Studio, the simultaneous enactments did not work effectively. Consequently, the attempt brought about some level of clumsiness and masking, making it difficult for the audience to concentrate on one particular action at a time. Nii Yartey then confirmed that at the National Theatre he was able to increase the cast size and again inserted the concurrent scenes because there was enough space to accommodate them.

A backdrop was used as set for this production; and the visual elements on the backdrop included compound houses, storey building, semi de-thatched houses, streets, the sea, coconut trees, canoes, and many others depicting a very busy community. According to Pickering (2010)¹³⁹, “[t]he proscenium arch stage is ideal for the creation of illusion and picture effects [...] [b]y careful use of perspective, a designer can create the illusion of a larger space.” However, watching the production from the ‘end stage’ at the E.T.S Drama Studio which is 23.7 metres away from the proscenium gave the researcher a different

¹³⁹ Kenneth, Pickering. *Key Concepts in Drama and Performance* (2nd ed.) New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. pp.219-220.

impression to Pickering's assertion about perspectives in the set. This was because the perspective in the backdrop did not really come out clearly for the illusion to be visible. It was realised that, actions were too close to the backdrop; hence the proximity did not allow the perspective to be achieved. In effect, the performers appeared bigger and taller than some of the visual elements such as buildings and trees. This, in the researcher's opinion, can be attributed to the fact that, the proscenium stage of the E.T.S Drama Studio did not give enough depth and height to hang the backdrop.

However, at the National Theatre, the researcher realised that the perspectives were very visible. The proscenium stage of the Theatre has a length of 21 metres, and a height of 25 metres. It also has a fly area of 25 metres with battens or bars on which drapes and drops are hung. It was therefore obvious that the backdrop worked at the National Theatre. Also, with an adequate stage area of 440 square metres, the level of masking and clumsiness was very minimal even though the size of the performers was large.

Moreover, there were some scenes that did not really come out well at the E.T.S Drama Studio because of its inadequate fly area and very limited apron. Considering its 4 metre apron which is also not covered by the proscenium stage roof, it was, however, the only viable area to erect a storey building as part of the set. Though the storey building was constructed at the Drama Studio, the researcher realised that the height was not favourable. However, at the National Theatre, the apron provided enough space to accommodate the set because it has a length of 5 metres and a height of 25 metres.

In terms of seating arrangement and auditorium capacity, the E.T.S Drama Studio auditorium was very versatile because it does not have permanent seats. This actually was of great help to this production (*Bukom*) because, as noted earlier, the director was able to extend the acting area, using both the proscenium and arena stages which affected the seating

arrangement. This is not possible at the National Theatre because of its permanent seating arrangement. However, the 400 maximum seating capacity of the Drama Studio was reduced because part of the seating area was converted into an acting space. This affected the number of audience that were admitted into the theatre for this production; consequently it could be assumed that box office was low. Nevertheless this resulted in the closeness of the audience to the acting area. The researcher realised that the director achieved the intimacy he required from the audience; since some of the audience played along with the performers as they sung some of the recreational songs. At the National Theatre the experience was different because it has a definite seating area of 1,492 seats. The actors therefore remained in their world as the audience also sat and watched. As a result, there was some level of detachment between the two variables which did not really help with audience participation.

The open air nature of the E.T.S Drama Studio has its own unique capabilities but there are challenges that come with it. To begin with, it was difficult to conceal scene changes because of the moon and street lights which could not be controlled. Thus, in as much as audience suspend their disbelief when watching theatrical productions, it should also not be too obvious that, for instance, an actor who is shot to die on stage wakes up to run off the stage when the stage light goes off. Some of these actions were noticeable when the stage light went off. This, the researcher attributes to the penetration of the moon and street lights coupled with the fact that the proscenium had no stage curtains. Stage curtains are supposed to be a key component of every proscenium stage according to Wilson (1998)¹⁴⁰.

Further, nothing can be done when it rains during a production; and unfortunately this situation happened on the second production night of *Bukom*. Apart from the fact that the show could not go on it was even difficult getting enclosed areas for the audience to stand. That notwithstanding, the researcher enjoyed the free flow of fresh air on the previous

¹⁴⁰ Edwin, Wilson. *The Theatre Experience* (7th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998. p.334.

performance night and the serene atmosphere made the production an enjoyable one. At the National Theatre, none of these inconveniences happened because it is an enclosed structure; rather it was realised that, the auditorium was a bit hot. Management confirmed that, the central air conditioner was not working; so the theatre makes use of split air conditioners which sometimes do not work effectively when the auditorium is full like it happened on that day.

In terms of technical equipment such as light, sound, and basic stage gadgets, it was realised that in staging *Bukom* at the E.T.S Drama Studio, light and sound was not a big challenge to the director. Since it was a dance drama, he relied heavily on sound and light, where most of the sound was produced by live drummers. Fortunately, the Studio had enough stage lights and sound equipment available for the performance. However, the director disclosed that, because he used both the proscenium and arena stages, he needed more light hence the need to hire extra. Also, the performers did not have to fall on lapel microphones for the performers to be heard, even though voice projection problem is normally associated with some proscenium stages. This challenge was not encountered because of the proximity of performers to the audience. Again, because of inadequate performance area, the drummers and some telescopic bars for stage illumination were placed on top of the waiting and sound booths. (See fig 28) From the researcher's point of view it was a very spectacular improvisation even though risky.

Pickering (2010)¹⁴¹ posits that, “[in t]he proscenium arch stage [...] it is possible to hide from view a great deal of stage machinery, lighting equipment, constructional reinforcement and scenery in preparation for several transformations of the stage picture.” On the contrary, the study discovered that Pickering's assertion is not applicable to the E.T.S Drama Studio.

¹⁴¹ Kenneth, Pickering. *Key Concepts in Drama and Performance* (2nd ed.) New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. pp.219-220.

Therefore, what the researcher describes as unartistic were the exposed stage lights both within the proscenium and arena. Some of the telescopic bars were within the seating area disrupting audience movements. (See fig 23 &26)

At the National Theatre the installed basic stage gadgets helped *Bukom* to achieve the illusions it requires, since none of the stage machinery was exposed. According to Nii Yartey, his major challenge was the unavailability of stage lights and sound equipment. Since the Theatre did not have its own equipment he, together with his team, hired some. Also confirming one of the disadvantages with very deep proscenium stages, the researcher noted that performers had to use lapel microphones in order to be heard which was very disruptive because of the echoes created. On the whole, by audience involvement, availability of equipment, voice projection advantage, were relatively better at the Drama Studio. However, the director preferred the National Theatre because of the adequate fly area and acting space which he believes helped his blockings and creative inputs on technical issues.

The second play the researcher watched was *It Runs in the Family*, written by Ray Cooney. This production was directed by Kobina Hagan, a National Service Personnel at the School of Performing Arts, who completed his Bachelor of Fine Arts programme in 2013 majoring in Directing. He directed the play as his final year project on the 11th of April 2013; and had the opportunity to stage the same play at the National Theatre on the 27th of July the same year. The play is about a doctor who in an attempt to hide his unfaithfulness from his wife turns the Neurological Department upside down into a mad house. He runs in and out of offices mistaking everybody for someone else; karate lessons, loony patients with either gout or piles all in order to hide the consequences. The play is set in a hospital within a storey building, precisely on the 5th floor where the doctor's common room is located.

At the E.T.S Drama Studio, the proscenium stage was used to mount this production even though the studio has two other acting areas; arena and end stages. Watching the production in the proscenium, the researcher realised the actions of the play were pushed forward. The director admitted that, he loved the Studio's proscenium stage because the stage naturally pushed the actions in the production forward. Considering the dimensions of that stage, which has been mentioned previously, it is an undisputed fact that the stage naturally pushes the acting area forward. The E.T.S Drama Studio has no proscenium wings; consequently, when a set is mounted on it, a space is always earmarked as a holding area where actors await their cues. This in effect pushes the set forward which propels the actions to go forward as well. With his 13 member cast, the proscenium stage became an ideal acting space for his production.

At the National Theatre the acting area could not be pushed forward so much because of the large size of the stage. Even though the stage was minimised with the teasers and tormenters the distance between the proscenium arch and the end of the apron which is 5 metres was still too long. Therefore, the actors remained in their world while the audience observed them. Further, in staging the production at the E.T.S Drama Studio, it was realised that, the pace was much quicker than it was at the National Theatre. This is due to the fact that, the Drama Studio stage is much smaller than that of the National theatre. Actors were therefore on cue since the offices built within the set were a bit closer to each other; hence the actors did not have to travel far before they entered the next office. Considering the fact that the play is a comedy and must therefore be fast-paced, the researcher thinks it worked effectively at the E.T.S Drama Studio than the National Theatre. Speaking to the director of the play, he admitted and explained that at the Drama Studio it was very easy to work on the pace of the production as opposed to the National theatre; in other words, the National Theatre's proscenium stage was too big for him to work on the pace easily.

According to Hagan, by his directorial concept, he decided not to elevate the stage even though the actions of the play happened on the 5th floor. The researcher is of the view that even if he had wanted to create levels, it would have been very difficult. Evident to this assertion is the 4.2 metre height of the E.T.S Drama Studio's proscenium stage, coupled with its concrete beams. At the National Theatre creating levels can work perfectly because of its adequate fly area of 25 metres. The director then used a backdrop at the back of the mounted set to represent the sky view of London and also indicate that the location is in a storey building. This, to the researcher, was ineffective at the Drama Studio since it was difficult to even recognise the backdrop through the windows of the various offices as the sky view of a city. What made the researcher realise the set was a storey building was the fact that, some of the performers kept peeping through the window and reported the actions that were happening at the imagined down stairs.

At the National Theatre the backdrop worked perfectly because there was enough depth (21 metres) and height (25 metres) for the perspectives to be visible. One could easily realise that the backdrop represented the sky view of a city. Even if the director had decided to erect a storey building set, he could have achieved it at the National Theatre.

In terms of seating arrangement and auditorium capacity, the National Theatre, to the researcher, had an advantage over the E.T.S Drama Studio. Since *It Runs in the Family* did not really require direct actor-audience involvement, it was appropriate for this stage. It can therefore be assumed that, the seating arrangement and the 1,492 capacity were of much help to the producers in terms of gate proceeds. Also, audience did not block each other's view when moving in and out because of the tiered nature of the auditorium.

However, there were issues with sight lines at the National Theatre; the wings of the apron are not too deep, hence the sight lines created were of major concern. In effect, actions could

not be seen properly by audience sitting at the extreme ends of the auditorium. The situation was quite different at the E.T.S Drama Studio because its proscenium stage does not even have wings. Also, because the auditorium is not tiered, audience were blocking each other's view when they got up or crossed to find seats.

The open air nature of the E.T.S Drama Studio, did not allow the concealment of scene appropriately. Evidently, even though the production took place in the proscenium which had a roof, the penetration of the moon and street lights could still not be controlled just like in *Bukom*. Again, because the Studio's proscenium stage lacks a stage curtain, nothing could be done about the concealment of scene changes. Stage hands were therefore seen running on the stage even from a distance of 24 metres (the length from the proscenium arch to the end stage). The researcher realised that at the National Theatre scene changes were concealed properly because of the enclosed nature of the structure and the presence of a stage curtain.

In terms of stage equipment such as light, sound and basic stage gadgets, Hagan admitted that at the E.T.S Drama Studio he did not use any extra sound and light equipment to complement what the Studio had. The researcher realised that the Omni-directional microphones were working; hence actors could be heard clearly. This can also be attributed to the proximity of audience to the stage. However, Hagan was not very happy with the fact that the Studio lacked basic stage gadgets such as teasers, battens, tormentors, curtains just to mention a few. In the researcher's view, the absence of these did not help him to create vividly some illusions he wanted in the production like the backdrop. According to Hagan, at the National Theatre he and his team members hired stage lights and sound equipment since the Theatre did not have them. One thing which came to the notice of the researcher was that the Omni-directional microphones at the Theatre were also not working; actors therefore used lapel microphones.

Nevertheless, the researcher was very impressed with the basic stage equipment the National Theatre has; since they complement the creative inputs of stage directors. In this regard, the teasers and tormentors helped the director to minimise the stage area. Also, the metal bars in the fly area helped him to drape his backdrop easily. Again, the stage curtain helped him to conceal his scene changes. (See fig 8 &10)

From the ongoing analysis on *Bukom* and *It Runs in the Family* with the two structures, the study deduced that productions that require very intimate actor-audience interactions will fit well at the E.T.S Drama Studio's arena stage. To further authenticate this conclusion, the study considered other productions. A directing student at the graduate level of the Theatre Arts Department, John Paul Asiedu staged *The Slaves Revisited* by Mohammed Ben Abdallah on both the arena and the proscenium stages. His focus was to examine how challenging it could be to adapt plays from conventional to unconventional performance spaces. *The Slaves Revisited* is about the daily life of a group of slaves in a dungeon. The group conspires against the dungeon overseer, a black who is helping the whites in managing the slave trade. The group takes a vow not to reveal the secret but one of them who happen to be the lover of the overseer betrays them.

The play is set in a dungeon with bare walls and few lights. Watching the production on the arena stage was quite different from the proscenium stage at the E.T.S Drama Studio. On the arena stage, the director could not erect any physical set. The seating area then comprised of the proscenium, the end stage and around the arena stage. One significant observation with the usage of the arena was that, audience enjoyed the performance very much, as against the one held on the proscenium stage with an erected set. One could tell this from the audience reactions on the two nights and some of the audience confirmed at the end of the production that, they felt as if they were part of the cast. Technically, the researcher realised that,

illuminating the stage area was a bit challenging especially the arena stage. This is because it was impossible to avoid the spillage of light into the audience.

The E.T.S Drama Studio's arena stage does not possess bars around it for stage lighting. The stage lights were therefore thrown from the apron of the proscenium and also from the mobile telescopic bars which has a maximum height of 3 metres; hence it was too low to focus the light on the arena alone to provide the needed illumination. Again, it was realised that because of the positioning and focuses of some of the stage lights, the make-up of actors were very obvious on the arena. On the other hand, watching the production on the proscenium stage, the researcher did not realise some of these inconveniences.

In a seminar organised for him on 3rd of April 2014 to present the outcome of the experimentation on the stages, he confirmed that; by the data he collected, audience enjoyed and followed the production more on the arena than that on the proscenium. This he attributed to the intimacy level the arena gives, and the researcher agrees with him. Asiedu also complained about blocking challenges on the arena; since it does not have defined acting positions. It was difficult blocking on the arena as against the proscenium which has well defined demarcations (down stage, centre stage and upstage) and conventions.

Another play the researcher witnessed at the National Theatre in November 2013 which she envisaged would be difficult staging at the E.T.S Drama Studio is *Song of the Pharaoh* written and directed by Mohammed Ben Abdallah. The play is a musical dance drama which tells the story of love, incest, politics, and religious transformation in ancient Egypt. It is based on the life and times of the legendary heretic, and the play is set in Egypt. On the proscenium stage at the National Theatre, the set was built like an ancient Egyptian palace with elevated areas, pyramids with broad and long pillars and various apartments. Considering the high scale nature of this production's set against the height of the E.T.S

Drama Studio's proscenium stage, it will be very demanding to mount the same production at the Drama Studio. This is impossible because of the stage's insufficient fly area. Elevating the stage to create the levels at the palace will reduce the height of the stage drastically, not to talk of the tall pyramids and the large pillars. Abdallah admitted that, by his directorial concept that enormous set is very significant because it portrays the status of Akhenaten the protagonist. Also taking into account the 25 member cast and the large extras, the researcher is of the view that mounting the performance on the E.T.S Drama Studio proscenium would appear to be incongruous. This is because the height, width, and length of the stage will automatically compel the set to be reduced which the director says he cannot compromise the size and significance of the set, with regards to this production.

The Future of Dance is another production which was directed by Nii Yartey and Oh! Nii Sowah¹⁴². The choreographic piece was staged at the end stage of the E.T.S Drama Studio and the researcher had the opportunity to be part as a dancer. The piece is a collection of various traditional and contemporary dances. The production was mounted at the end stage because the directors wanted to explore, thereby combining conventional and unconventional spaces. Behind the end stage at the Drama Studio is a very big tree which the directors used as part of the set. (See fig 25). Another platform was built at the back of the end stage which was extended to the tree; and this was used by dancers as entrances. Therefore the stage had three levels; the end stage, the raised platform of 2 metres, and the tree. Consequently, concurrent activities could be done without interruptions. What was very spectacular was how the dancers descended from the unconventional acting space (tree) to the end stage. However, it was difficult to use a follow spot light very effectively because of the open air nature of the set and also the penetration of street lights. Performers had to use the waiting and sound/ light booth as entrances and exits because the end stage had no pre-defined exits

¹⁴² Senior Lecturer at the Dance Department of the School of Performing Arts.

and entrances. The seating areas then became the proscenium and the arena stages. The sound and light crew had to be moved to the proscenium stage in order to have a clearer view of the acting area to operate efficiently.

Envisaging this type of production at the National Theatre will be very challenging because of the enclosed nature of the theatre. Looking at the directorial concept which involves combining the conventional and unconventional acting spaces, the researcher is of the view that none of the National Theatre stages would be able to hold such a production because of the conventional nature of its stages.

Unshelved written and directed by Alfred Elikem Kunutsor¹⁴³ is also another example of a production which worked very well in the proscenium stage of the E.T.S Drama Studio. Alfred Elikem Kunutsor takes the audience on a celebratory autobiographical journey of self-discovery into what constitute an individual. The choreographic piece is set on a bare stage with some drapes of semi-transparent materials which the actor uses occasionally. It was performed by only the director with almost ninety percent body movements and gestures. He hardly speaks, except some few words when he is getting to the end of the production. Because of the nature of the acting which involves critical attention to get the understanding of the piece, it will not be very communicative if the actor is placed far away from the audience. To the researcher, it will make the audience lose concentration. Therefore the actions should always be closer to the audience.

This kind of euphoria will be difficult to achieve at the National Theatre's proscenium stage. The researcher is of view this because the distance between the proscenium stage and the audience area at the Theatre is long. This will make the audience easily lose focus on the actor. However, one other acting area at the National Theatre which could be appropriate for

¹⁴³ A Tutor, Theatre Arts Department of the School of Performing Arts.

this kind of performance is the folks place. Considering its 300 seating capacity and a stage area of 64 square metres, it is likely that the audience will be closer to the performer. The distance between the stage and the audience area is 2 metres; a close range that will promote the kind of intimacy the production requires.

Finally one other play the researcher stage managed in 2013 in the capacity of a Graduate Assistant was *The Legend of Aku Sika*, written and directed by Martin Owusu. The play is about a young girl who loses part of her left arm at an infant age. Due to this deformity, the King's wife vehemently protests against her husband's decision to take her as a second wife. The play is set at three locations; the palace, 'heaven', and a river side. In mounting this play at the E.T.S Drama Studio's proscenium stage, blocking was not too much of a problem to the director. What became the challenge was how to change the scenes quickly; it was time consuming since students had to change the set manually. Also, some stage illusions could not be created easily; most importantly, the appearance of the snake which restores Aku's arm.

By Martin Owusu's directorial concept, the snake was to descend from the sky, but the proscenium stage did not have enough fly area for it to be hanged vertically. Again, the stage did not have metal bars to hold the snake which was almost 2 metre tall; consequently, the technical crew had to improvise. The only way out was to make someone climb up into the fly area and squat on the wooden beam to drop the snake and pull it back with a rope. Even with that, the rope was visible because the stage did not have legs and teasers to conceal it. On the other hand, if this same production were to be staged at the National Theatre's proscenium stage, none of these inconveniences would be experienced, because the theatre has enough metal bars to fly in the snake as well as flats which are regulated electronically. The Supreme Being, a character in the play who was supposed to disappear in three seconds

at the ‘heavenly’ scene, could have been flown up or even descended with the mobile orchestra with some smoke effect, which could have been very spectacular.

In conclusion, the researcher can affirm that, performance spaces impact heavily on the final output of every production. As a result, finding the proper space with the right accoutrements are very important components to the success of every piece of artistic performance. This chapter has so far discussed the presentation of data from the various respondents and analysed the two structures with some production comparatively.



CHAPTER FIVE **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.**

5:1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarizes the entire thesis and it captures in total all issues related to the objectives of this study. The chapter also captures the summary, conclusion, and the recommendations of this research.

5:2 SUMMARY

The objective of this research was to examine these two important theatre spaces which have contributed greatly to theatre education and experimentation in Ghana. The idea was to establish how suitable or otherwise these theatres are to clients as far as their structures are concerned. The research questions stated in chapter one of this research were appropriately answered in chapters two, three, four, and five.

Chapter two, which is the literature review, was discussed under four sub-themes. The history of some theatre stages were looked at, especially the types found within the spaces being studied. Then, the Ghana Drama Studio, National Theatre, and E.T.S. Drama Studio were discussed in retrospect, to find out the sequence of events surrounding their establishment. Views of some scholars who played very instrumental roles in the acquisitions of these theatre spaces, as well as perceptions and opinions of some theatre theorists on theatre spaces were reviewed. Lastly, some basic theatrical equipment for conventional theatre spaces was also discussed; this was done by outlining their functions and importance.

Having reviewed some literatures on the above sub-themes in chapter two, chapter three which is the methodology, outlined the various techniques and approaches the researcher employed in gathering reliable information or data to answer the research questions. The

researcher employed mainly the qualitative research design and purposively sampled her respondents. The collection of data was done in an unstructured interview technique.

Chapter four then presented the collected data gathered from the various respondents interviewed. Further, the researcher analysed and interpreted the data with some productions in a comparative manner on the structures which collectively reflected on the objectives of this study establishing the spaces' capabilities and challenges.

The fifth and last chapter also discusses the summary of the whole thesis, conclusion of the research and some recommendations gathered throughout the study.

5:3 CONCLUSION

The main objective of this study was to examine theatre spaces and their suitability for productions: by conducting a comparative study of the E.T.S. Drama Studio and the National Theatre of Ghana. In pursuing the above, the first objective of the study which had to do with establishing the purposes for which the two theatre spaces were built was achieved through the interviews conducted with the secondary respondents and management. The second objective aimed at documenting what exactly these spaces comprised of, in terms of the type of structures, its stages, auditoriums, capacities, dimensions, technical equipment, artistic benefits, and how they are managed. This information was successfully received through the interviews the researcher had with the management, artistic and technical department of the two spaces which were documented in chapter four of this study. The third and fourth objective which had to do with examining how equipped the structures were and the challenges directors go through in mounting productions respectively, were also authenticated as the spaces were compared using some productions. The process helped the researcher to point out what each space has or lacks. The purpose of this research is to provide patrons and stakeholders an insight into what each theatre comprises. The information will also serve as

an avenue for clients to opt for the kind of space that would be most appropriate for the kind of productions they want to put up. Again, it will further inform producers to anticipate the kind of preparations to make before holding a production in any of the theatre spaces. The study discovered that, while the National Theatre seem more appropriate for more conventional productions, the E.T.S Drama Studio is suitable for experimental and audience-involved productions.

In conclusion, the study, will borrow the words of Abraham Lincoln, a character in Ronald Gow's (1949)¹⁴⁴ one act play *The Lawyer of Springfield*, that, "no nation which sought to suppress the theatre has ever been truly great, or religious or democratic." The researcher strongly believes that, it was this vision that Kwame Nkrumah, and Efua Theodora Sutherland perceived which incited their desire to use the art to promote national development and cultural identity. When Ghana attained independence in 1957, Nkrumah, the then President, realised that one major tool that could instigate the rapid growth of this country is national unity. He further anticipated that, through the traditional art forms citizens can develop the nation and themselves better for the future. It was therefore not strange that just six years after independence both the Ghana Drama Studio (1961), courtesy Efua Theodora Sutherland, and the Institute of African Studies (1963) were established. All these were part of the move to progress through our own art forms. Nkrumah was very clear on this vision in the speech he delivered at the opening ceremony of the Institute at the University of Ghana on the 25th October 1963;

I hope that the School of Music and Drama, which works in close association with the Institute of African Studies, will provide this Institute with an outlet for creative work, and for the dissemination of knowledge of the arts through its extension and vacation courses, as well as through regular full-time courses. I hope also that this Institute, in association with the School of Music and Drama, will link the University of Ghana closely with the National Theatre movement in Ghana. In this way the institute can

¹⁴⁴ Ronald, Gow. *The Lawyer of Springfield*. Boston: Baker's Plays, 1949. P. 19.

serve the needs of the people by helping to develop new forms of dance and drama, of music and creative writing, that are at the same time closely related to our Ghanaian traditions and express the idea and aspirations of our people at this critical stage in our history.¹⁴⁵

Therefore the environment to promote such visions should be of utmost interest to the present government, academicians, and citizens of the country as a whole, so that this idea would continue to live and be realised even long after Nkrumah's death.

This study has made some original contribution to the documentation of what these theatres entail in terms of the various acting spaces, nature of the structures and their configurations, equipment available, stage dimensions, auditorium capacity, the kinds of productions that can suit the stages, and the challenges each is facing. For Nkrumah's vision to continue to grow, the challenges of these two spaces should be attended to, for the sustenance of these theatre spaces. It is now clear to producers the types of facilities each space possesses; this will inform their choices on the acting areas. The study revealed that, the two spaces are indispensable of the other in the sense that, in as much as both spaces serve different purposes, they inter-depend on each other for sustenance in terms of human resource. Upcoming performing artists need spaces to experiment their works and abilities on bigger stages and in the process, invest in their creative abilities to earn a living. Also, they will have another avenue to showcase their works; of which the National Theatre is a good grounding.

On the other hand, the National Theatre as an entity needs personnel such as graduates from the School of Performing Arts who are trained practically and academically to help run the theatre. Therefore the sustenance of these two structures are very instrumental for the continuity of the dream Nkrumah and Sutherland had years ago. The Ghana Drama Studio which became a reality courtesy Efua Theodora Sutherland has been the bedrock of the two theatre spaces under study. The final objective of the three objectives Sutherland emphasized

¹⁴⁵ Manuh, T. & Sutherland-Addy, E. *Africa In Contemporary Perspective: A Textbook for Undergraduate Students*. Accra: Sub Saharan Publishers, 2013. pp. x-xi.

about the old studio is what the researcher would want to stress on finally. It states that the Ghana Drama Studio will “provide talent, material and ideals for the program of the national theatre, when that institution is established”¹⁴⁶. This means that, even before the National Theatre was established in 1990, the vision of providing talent and materials from the Ghana Drama Studio had been born. These “talents” needs suitable habitats to stage their artistic works and in the process educate the general public as the vision requires. Therefore let us all join the clarion call of contributing in any way we can to help sustain these spaces for national development. I hope that this work provides the basis for further studies on these spaces so as to keep the vision in progress.

5:4 RECOMMENDATIONS

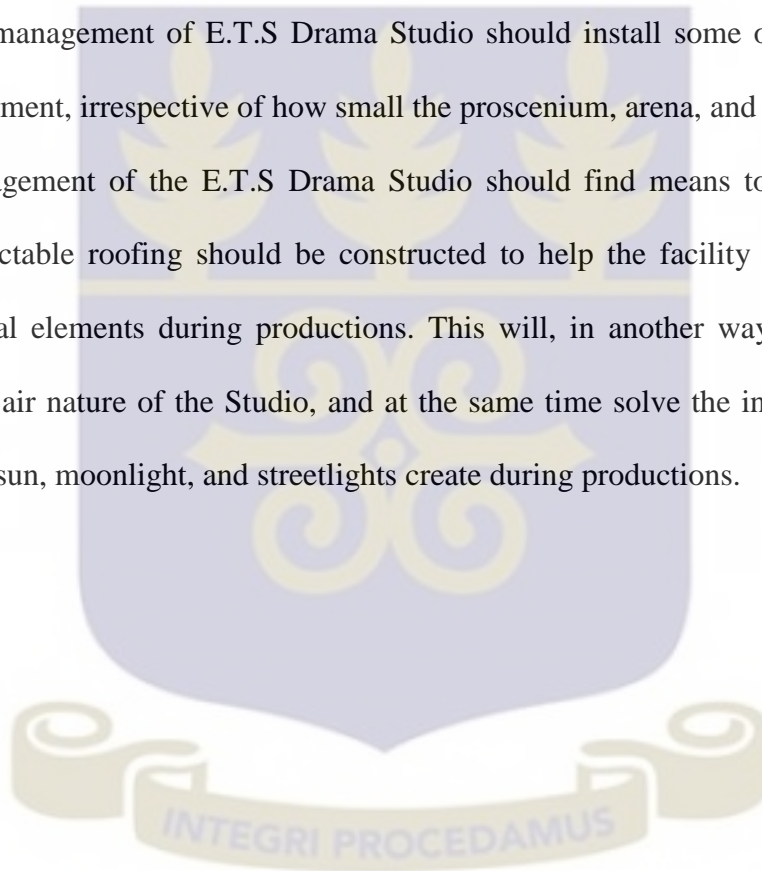
Based on the investigations conducted the study recommends the following;

- The management of both the E.T.S Drama Studio and the National Theatre should prepare and publish a document in a form of a handbook which will contain every aspect of these theatres. This handbook should contain information on their history, the type of structure the theatre is, types of stages and auditoriums within the theatre spaces, technical and artistic benefits as well as the services it can offer administratively.
- Considering how advanced the internet has been in the 21st century, the management of the theatre spaces should have a very active web page regularly updated. Here management should upload its various upcoming activities and at the same time provide an update on everything the theatre comprise. This is to enable prospective client to access the web page to have easy access and

¹⁴⁶ Kwabena, Botwe-Asamoah. *An African – Centered Paradigm for the Second Phase of the African Revolution*. New York: Routledge, 2005. p.167

knowledge about the spaces without necessarily being at the premises of the theatre spaces.

- The managements of the two spaces should collaborate and create an avenue where they can experiment with each other's space. In the process workshops should be encouraged where personnel can be trained to be equipped to handle stage gadgets, and also think of how best the theatre spaces can improve upon their structures' suitability for production.
- The management of E.T.S Drama Studio should install some of the basic stage equipment, irrespective of how small the proscenium, arena, and end stages are.
- Management of the E.T.S Drama Studio should find means to roof the studio. Retractable roofing should be constructed to help the facility contend with the natural elements during productions. This will, in another way, not disrupt the open air nature of the Studio, and at the same time solve the inconveniences the rain, sun, moonlight, and streetlights create during productions.



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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE

TOPIC:

THEATRE SPACES AND THEIR SUITABILITY FOR PRODUCTIONS: A
COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE EFUA SUTHERLAND DRAMA STUDIO AND THE
NATIONAL THEATRE OF GHANA.

Name:.....

Position:.....

Years worked:.....

An Interview Guide For Set 'A' (Management)

1. How is this theatre space run administratively?
2. How does the theatre generate funds for its administrative activities?
3. Where does the box office return goes to?
4. How much does it cost to use the theatre space?
5. Who pays the employees who work in this theatre?
6. Why does the Theatre allow private clients to bring in their own technical facilities?
7. Would you say the theatre space is suitable for productions technically and artistically or not?
8. What are the major challenges of the theatre space? And what is the management doing about it.
9. In terms of estate what does this theatre space comprise?

N/B: Any suggestions, inputs and corrections will be wholeheartedly accepted, I will be very grateful. The information I am seeking is purely for academic purposes only. Thank you.

INTERVIEW GUIDE

TOPIC:

THEATRE SPACES AND THEIR SUITABILITY FOR PRODUCTIONS: A
COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE EFUA SUTHERLAND DRAMA STUDIO AND THE
NATIONAL THEATRE OF GHANA.

Name:.....

Position:.....

Years worked:.....

An Interview Guide For Set 'B' (Artistic)

1. Do you think the Theatres' structure has been designed artistically for productions?
How?
2. Do these theatres spaces have facilities or equipment that assists you as the Artistic
Director to be more creative in your work? If no why?
3. If yes, are these facilities enough and functioning as expected?
4. What can be done or what have you done as the Artistic Director, about the
inadequate nature of facilities of the studio?
5. What challenges are you facing as the Artistic Director concerning the usage of this
theatre space?
6. Would you say the studio is suitable for productions artistically or not, and why?
7. What are the dimensions of the various acting areas within the theatre spaces?

N/B: Any suggestions or inputs will be wholeheartedly accepted, I will be very grateful. The
information I am seeking is purely for academic purposes only. Thank you.

INTERVIEW GUIDE

TOPIC:

THEATRE SPACES AND THEIR SUITABILITY FOR PRODUCTIONS: A
COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE EFUA SUTHERLAND DRAMA STUDIO AND THE
NATIONAL THEATRE OF GHANA.

Name:.....

Position:.....

Years worked:.....

An Interview Guide For Set 'C' (Technical)

1. What technical facilities has this theatre space got?
2. Are these equipment functioning efficiently?
3. Considering the technological advancement in theatrical equipment and facilities in this generation, would you say up the theatre space is up to standard in terms of that?
4. If not, what is preventing it from incorporating modern theatrical equipment?
5. Why does the theatre allow private clients to bring in their own facilities?
6. Is there any form of checks and balances which control these clients to make sure they do not end up mishandling the theatres sockets and basic equipment?

N/B: Any suggestions or inputs will be wholeheartedly accepted, I will be very grateful. The information I am seeking is purely for academic purposes only. Thank you.

INTERVIEW GUIDE

TOPIC:

THEATRE SPACES AND THEIR SUITABILITY FOR PRODUCTIONS: A
COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE EFUA SUTHERLAND DRAMA STUDIO AND THE
NATIONAL THEATRE OF GHANA.

Name:.....

Position:.....

Years worked:.....

An Interview Guide For Set 'D' (Secondary Respondents)

1. How did the government of Ghana acquire the National Theatre and the E.T.S Drama Studio?
2. Why was the old Drama Studio pulled down for the National Theatre to be built, were there not any other spaces available?
3. What was the purpose establishing both the National Theatre and the E.T.S Drama Studio and would you say it's serving the purpose?
4. If no, what do you think has contributed to this failure?
5. Why was a replica of the erased Studio built at the University of Ghana?

N/B: Any suggestions or inputs will be wholeheartedly accepted, I will be very grateful. The information I am seeking is purely for academic purposes only. Thank you.

PHOTO GALLERY



Fig 1: Exterior view of the National Theatre

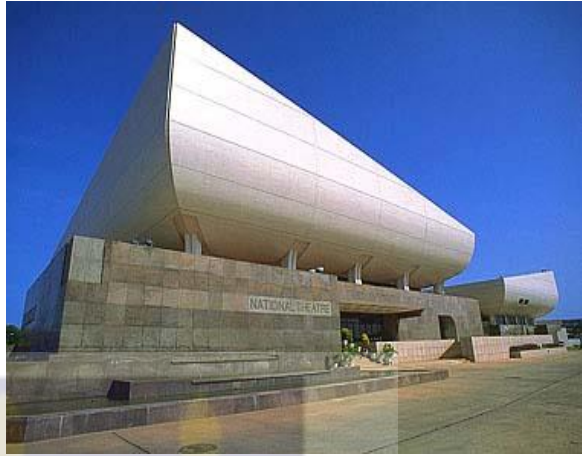


Fig 2: Front view of the National Theatre



Fig 3: Front view of the National Theatre



Fig 4: Front view of the National Theatre

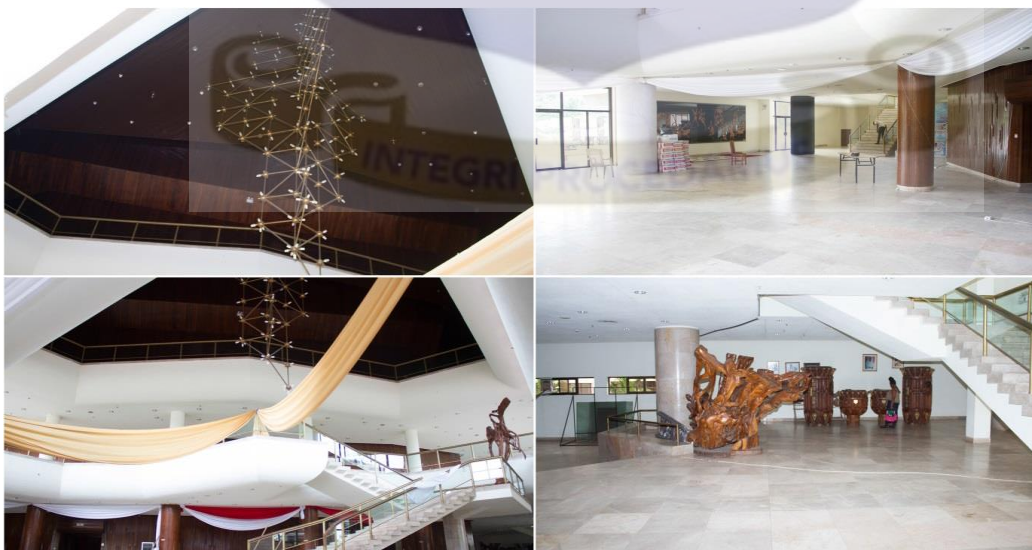


Fig 5: Lobby of the National Theatre



Fig 6: Interior of the main auditorium



Fig7: Interior of the main auditorium



Fig 8: The proscenium stage with rolled down curtain



Fig 9: The proscenium stage with rolled up curtains

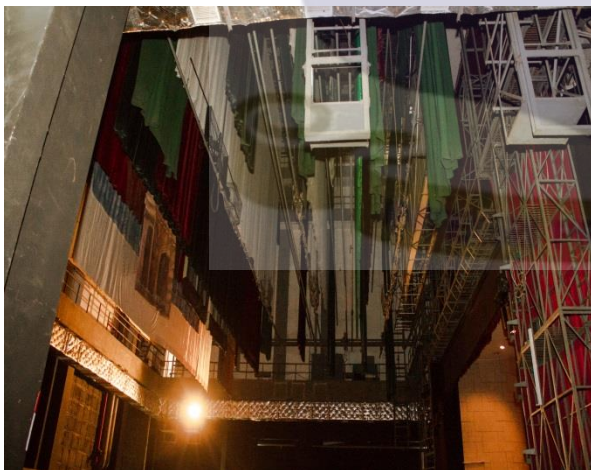


Fig 10: Fly area of the proscenium stage with bars

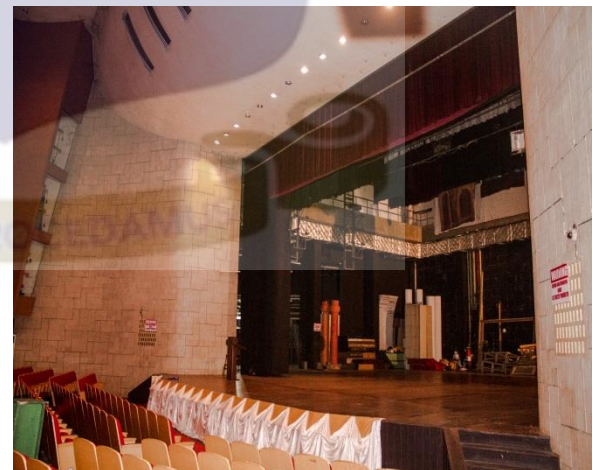


Fig 11: Half profile of the proscenium stage



Fig 12: The interior view of the folks place at the National Theatre



Fig 14: Exterior view of the folks place

Fig 15: Exterior view of the exhibition hall



Fig 16: The exhibition hall of the National Theatre



Fig 16: Chinese style garden at the National Theatre



Fig 17: Ghanaian style garden at the National Theatre



Fig 18: The National Theatre when it was being constructed in 1990. **Source:** The Estate Department.



Fig 19 : Exterior view of the E.T.S Drama Studio



Fig 20 : Sound and light booth; Drama Studio



Fig 21: Main audience entrance; Drama Studio



Fig 22: the proscenium stage at the E.T.S Drama Studio



Fig 23: Close-up of the proscenium stage



Fig 24 :The fly area of the proscenium stage



Fig 24: The arena stage at the E.T.S Drama Studio



Fig 25:The end stage of the Drama Studio



Fig 26 : Seating arrangement of a performance on the arena stage



Fig 27: the E.T.S Drama Studio being set up for a production



Fig 28: Students preparing the auditorium for a production



Fig 29: An erected set in the proscenium stage at the Drama Studio during the day.



Fig 29 :An erected set in the proscenium stage at the Drama Studio during the night.



Fig 30: Production in the proscenium stage at the Drama Studio.



Fig 31: The drummers of *Bukom* seated on top of the waiting booth at the Drama Studio

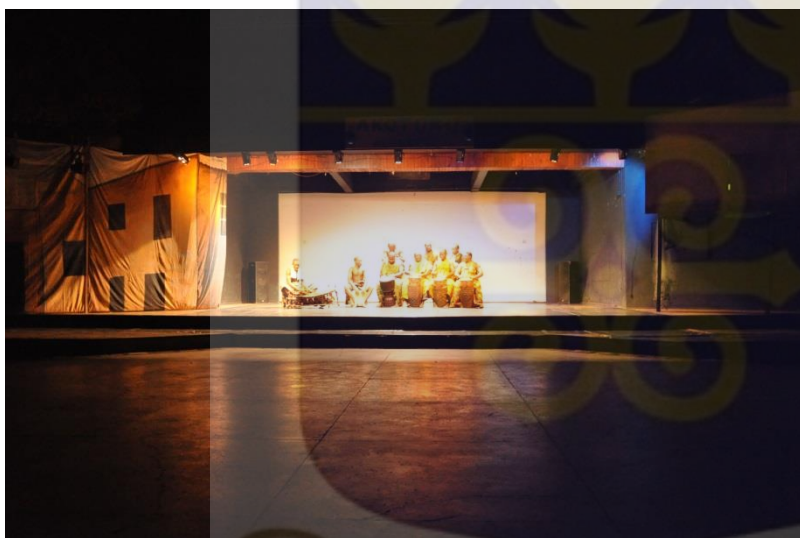


Fig 32: Scenes from *Bukom* at the Drama Studio in the arena and proscenium stages



Fig 33: Scenes of *It Runs in the Family* at the Drama Studio proscenium stage.

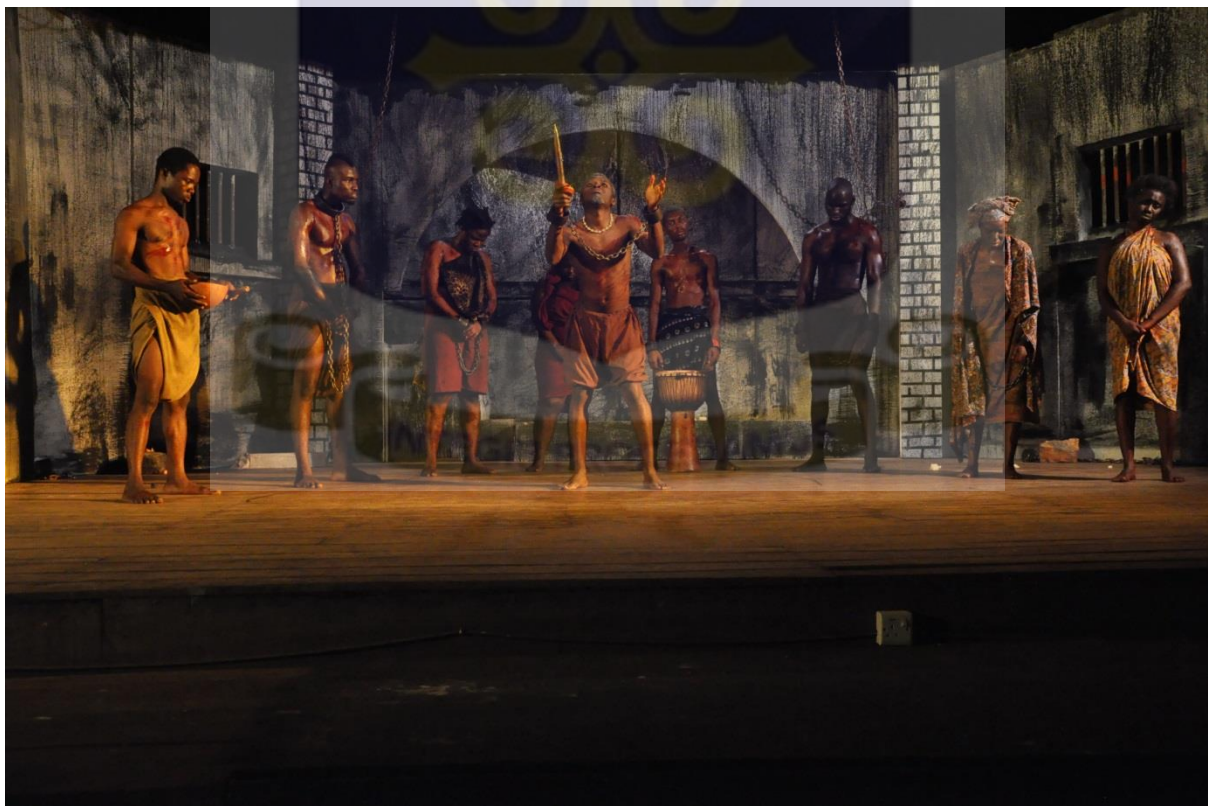


Fig 34: Scenes from *The Slaves Revisited* in the arena and proscenium at the Drama Studio respectively.

Source (Fig 1-17 & 19-33): Picture taken by researcher



Fig 34: A musical show at the National Theatres proscenium stage. Source: ghanabot.blogspot.com



Fig 35: Scenes from *Song OF The Pharaoh* at the National Theatres Proscenium stage. Source: www.printexghana.com