The Orphan of Zhao (Nigerian production)；赵氏孤儿（尼日利亚版）

Production of: The Orphan of Zhao；《赵氏孤儿》

Genre: Drama；戏剧

Production Company: Drama section at Ahmadu Bello University in Nigeria；贝洛大学戏剧部

The Orphan of Zhao (Nigerian production)

Genre: drama (in English)

Produced by the Drama section at Ahmadu Bello University in Nigeria, 1979

Script: Play by Chi Chun-hsiang, translated into English by Liu Jung-en, published in Six Yuan Plays, Penguin Classics 1972

Director: Tony Humphries

Background to the production:

In 1975, the Drama section at Ahmadu Bello University in Nigeria developed a theatre syllabus that sought to engage students critically, exploring the role of theatre in society, focussed particularly within the Nigerian and wider African context. In 1979, two plays were staged, one was a production of On the Road to Soweto written and directed by Salihu Bappa and loosely based on Brecht’s The Measures Taken. The other was The Orphan of Zhao, and the purpose was to provided first year students with their initial experience of taking a scripted play through to production, with rehearsals exploring how text, stylised movement, design and particularly music could combine to deliver a Total Theatre experience in the spirit of the Yuan plays as performed, demonstrating that theatre was far more than just the text.

See images of the production, the Studio Theatre and the Programme.

Below is the account of the production written by Tony Humphries as a response to Staging China project’s request:

THE ORPHAN OF ZHAO – NIGERIA 1979

The Drama section at Ahmadu Bello University in Nigeria developed a theatre syllabus that sought to engage students critically, exploring the role of theatre in society, focussed particularly within the Nigerian and wider African context. The Section had been established in 1975 by Michael Etherton, who had created the Chikwakwa theatre in Zambia between 1968 and 1972. He, together with Dr Brian Crow, formerly of Bristol University, had devised several productions transposing mainly Western texts and, working through improvisation with the students, creating plays that re-defined these texts within a contemporary Nigerian or African context.

Two plays were staged by the first year Drama students in its Studio Theatre on Sunday 20th, Monday 21st and Tuesday 22nd May 1979. One was a production of On the Road to Soweto written and directed by Salihu Bappa and loosely based on Brecht’s The Measures Taken. This production demonstrated the Section’s approach of developing plays through improvisation by the cast and explored, as recorded in the programme note, “what Black South Africans themselves are doing to uproot apartheid, liberate themselves and finally create a new society where all can live in an atmosphere of mutual cooperation, devoid of racial hate and tension and economic exploitation.”

The other play was The Orphan of Zhao, using the text written by Chi Chun-hsiang in the 13th century and translated into English by Liu Jung-en, published in Six Yuan Plays, Penguin Classics 1972. Its programme note, drawing on Liu’s Introduction explained to the audience that “Yuan Drama, considered by scholars as a Golden Age in Chinese Theatre, developed in Peking in the late 13th century, following the invasion of the Mongols. Many of the plays were written in the form of parables to protest at the erosion of Chinese values, particularly those of Confucius, under Mongol rule. The Orphan of Chao (sic) can be considered as an example of this type of play and the text has been taken as a basis of an experiment in stylised acting and Total Theatre.”

The Orphan of Zhao was directed by Tony Humphries, who also taught the Section’s Design course. (A 1973 graduate of Exeter University’s Drama Department, his interest in non-Western forms of theatre began in 1972 when, as part of his course work, he performed in three Noh plays and studied other Asian theatre forms.) His production provided first year students with their initial experience of taking a scripted play through to production, with rehearsals exploring how text, stylised movement, design and particularly music could combine to deliver a Total Theatre experience in the spirit of the Yuan plays as performed, demonstrating that theatre was far more than just the text. This production was not an attempt at historical reconstruction but rather tried to capture the essence of the performance style. An introductory lecture related the Yuan plays to other types of non-Western forms of theatre, including the early 17th century Yoruba Alarinjo court performances.

Rehearsals over a three week period sought to discover appropriate stylised movements as well as an individual musical theme or rhythm for each main character. Instruments used included a gong, cymbals, brass cups and a variety of drums and wood, with key dramatic moments being ‘framed’ in a tableau, capturing visually the core relationship and meaning revealed in the scene. Movements specific to Nigerian body conventions, and so immediately understood by the audience, were incorporated into the actors’ performance.

Design was a major element of this production, with a specially created T shaped playing area, with white screens at the top of the T provided a deliberately neutral backdrop for most of the action. The leg of the T ran through the audience area, providing an additional entry point to the main stage, most notably used for the highly stylised arrival of Tu’an Gu and his soldiers in Act Three at Gongsun Chujiu’s house, signalled by a cacophony of martial drumming. (This generated on the first night a round of applause, “very unusual at the Studio Theatre,” as Tony Humphries recorded in his diary.)

While many costumes were white and influenced by Chinese styles, key characters were differentiated by the tie-dyed colour of their robes’ inner, flowing sleeves e.g. purple for Zhao Dun. And in Act Four, as the seated Cheng Ying revealed to the orphan Cheng Bo his real identity and family history, he unfurled a scroll with bands of colour before him. As each character’s role was recounted, Cheng Ying indicated their colour on the scroll and they entered to hear their part in the tale, accompanied by their individual musical theme. These ‘ghosts’ then remained on stage to observe the finale, as Cheng Bo removed his robe with his adopted father’s colours of red and black, revealing his father’s purple robe beneath – the same actor played both parts - and took revenge on behalf of his family and those who had saved him from the brutalities of feudal tyranny exacted by Tu’an Gu.

Michael Etherton’s diary records that for the 21st May performance “The audience was, on the whole appreciative, though as a double bill, the (plays) really seemed to have no point of contact. Tony’s production has all the polish..... Salihu’s has commitment and content which is almost entirely lacking in the Chinese play.” By the 23rd, he notes that the “performances (were) very good indeed.” A visiting Drama lecturer who watched the dress rehearsal on the 20th considered the production of The Orphan of Zhao “very imaginative.”

Tony Humphries’ diary notes that a run through of The Orphan of Zhao on 17 May demonstrated “a sense of it being a good and worthwhile project for all involved.....and he felt “pleased by the ideas explored by the rehearsal process.” Performances “gained in pace and energy” and “responses were genuinely enthusiastic” to what was for many in the cast and audience their first experience of a very different form of theatre, one that had taken its inspiration from the Chinese Yuan plays.

-Tony Humphries (16 May 2013)

Images and the writing are courtesy of Tony Humphries.

《赵氏孤儿》（尼日利亚版）

剧种：戏剧（英语）

演出单位：贝洛大学戏剧部，1979年

剧本: 纪君祥原作，包括在《元杂剧六种》（Six Yuan Plays）之中，由 Liu Jung-en 翻译，企鹅出版社（Penguin Classics）1972年

导演： Tony Humphries

关于1979年尼日利亚版《赵氏孤儿》：

1975年，尼日利亚的贝洛大学戏剧部成立了，目的是让学生探索戏剧在社会中所扮演的角色，关注点是尼日利亚和非洲地区的社会情况，并希望学生获得一定的评判能力。1979年，戏剧部排演了两部作品，一部是《通往〔南非〕索韦托的之路》，根据布莱希特《措施》改编，由Salihu Bappa导演。另一部是《赵氏孤儿》，目的是让一年级的学生学习从剧本到舞台呈现的全部过程。排练集中于让学生明了、实践如何把文字剧本、带有一定程式性质的形式化的动作、舞台美术与音乐（尤其重要）融合在一起，向观众奉献一部“全戏剧”，同时，传递出中国元朝的精神。整个演出旨在强调：戏剧绝非仅仅是文本。

请参阅在贝洛大学实验剧场演出的照片和节目单。

以下是Tony Humphries应舞台中国项目请求所写的一篇文章：

赵氏孤儿——尼日利亚版1979

尼日利亚贝洛大学戏剧部开发了一个试图训练学生评判能力并积极参与的戏剧教学大纲，挖掘戏剧在现实社会中所扮演的角色，特别是聚焦在尼日利亚及更广泛的非洲环境之中。戏剧部由Michael Etherton 创建于1975年，他曾于1968-1972年间在赞比亚创建了Chikwakwa剧院。他和曾在布里斯托大学工作的Brian Crow博士一起策划了几部作品，主要是以置换方式改编西方剧本，通过学生即兴表演练习，创作了在当代尼日利亚和非洲环境下重新诠释的剧目。

两部剧本由戏剧表演系一年级学生于1979年5月20－22日（周日－周二）在大学的实验剧场上演。一部是Salihu Bappa在布莱希特剧本《措施》的基础上改编并导演的《通往索韦托之路》。这个戏展示了戏剧部训练演员如何通过即兴练习发展出来一个完整的剧目，正如节目单所记录的，该剧探索了“南非黑人自己正在致力于消除种族隔离、解放自己并最终建立一个新社会，在那里大家都可以生活在一个相互合作的氛围里、没有种族仇恨和冲突，也没有经济剥削。”

另一个剧目是《赵氏孤儿》，采用的是1972年企鹅经典出版的《元曲六部》,由13世纪纪君祥创作并由刘君恩翻译成英文的剧本。在刘君恩译本简介的基础上，节目单这样向观众解释：“元杂剧于13世纪末在北京形成，那时正是蒙古人统治的元朝。元杂剧被学者认为是中国戏剧的黄金时代。许多戏剧用寓言的形式对在蒙古人统治下中国价值观尤其是孔子思想被不断弱化进行抗议。 《赵氏孤儿》可以被认为是这类戏剧的典范。剧本被用作训练形式化表演风格和‘全戏剧’实验的基础。”

《赵氏孤儿》由Tony Humphries执导，他同时也承担本部的设计课程。（Humphries 1973年毕业于Exeter大学的戏剧系，他对非西方戏剧形式的兴趣始于1972年，当时作为课程作业的一部分,他在三部日本能剧中担任角色，同时也学习了其他亚洲戏剧形式。） 他的《赵氏孤儿》为一年级学生提供了一个从剧本到舞台成品的过程。排练过程探索如何把文本、带有一定程式性质的形式化动作、舞台设计，尤其是音乐融合在一处，构成“全戏剧”，并传达出元杂剧的精髓，以此证明戏剧的涵义远远超过文本。这部作品不是尝试重构历史，而是试图捕捉表演风格的本质。绪论课在介绍元杂剧的同时，也介绍了其他类型的非西方的戏剧形式，包括17世纪初非洲Yoruba Alarinjo宫廷表演。

三周多的排练试图为每个主要角色探寻恰当的形式化动作以及个体音乐主题或节奏。乐器包括锣、钹、铜杯以及各种鼓和木质乐器。关键的戏剧瞬间被“定格”在某个画面中，栩栩如生地捕捉人物的核心关系以及特定场景所揭示的意义。在演员的表演中，有意融入尼日利亚人的身体与动作习惯，因此观众立刻就会理解舞台上的一切。

舞台设计是这部作品的主要元素，专门设计了一个T形表演区，T形表演区顶端的白色屏风为剧情的大部分行动刻意设置了一个中性的背景。T的支架穿过观众席，提供了通往舞台的又一个上场处，最引人注目的是第三场，以军鼓刺耳的声音为标志，屠岸贾和他的士兵以高度形式化的表演来到公孙杵臼家。(这些构思设计在演出第一晚掌声雷动， “这在实验剧场很不寻常” Tony Humphries在他的日记里写道。)。

虽然很多服装是白色的而且受中式风格影响，但是关键人物长袍的扎染内里、水袖有区别，例如赵盾的服装是紫色。在第四场，落座后程婴给孤儿程勃道出了他的真实身份和家史，并在他面前他展开一幅彩色画卷。在程婴叙述每个人的故事时，程婴指着这个人在画卷上的特定色彩，伴随着属于这个人物的主题音乐，这个人物就登场，并听完有关他们的故事。这些“幽灵”继续呆在舞台上观察结局，在程勃脱下养父红、黑色里子的长袍之时，里面就露出了他的生父的紫袍（同一个演员扮演了这两个角色），程勃终于为家人和那些把他从屠岸贾封建暴政的暴行中拯救出来的人复了仇。

Michael Etherton日志记录道，5月21日的演出“观众总体上是赞赏的，尽管两个戏同场演出，但是两部剧看起来完全没有切合点。Tony的作品打磨一新……Salihu的作品则充满社会性以及那部中国戏几乎完全缺乏的主题。”23日，他记载道，“表演真的很精彩。”一位到访的戏剧讲师20日观看了彩排，他认为《赵氏孤儿》“非常有想象力。”

Tony Humphries的日记指出5月17日《赵氏孤儿》的演出证明大家参与了一个优秀的值得一做的项目的意义。他对“在排练过程中探寻到的理念”感到满意。表演赢得了“速度与能量”，“反响热烈”，对于很多演员和观众来说这是他们初次体验不同的戏剧形式，一次从中国元杂剧中汲取灵感的经验。

——Tony Humphries (2013年5月16日)

诚挚感谢Tony Humphries提供图片和文章。