

PROGRAM NOTE

"HOLDING TALKS"

THE PLAY

Described by the author himself as a "crazy member of my family of 'normal' plays", Holding Talks had its U.S. premiere in 1986 at U.C.L.A. and was recently produced at Wesleyan University, Connecticut.

THE GENRE...

Absurdist drama may be comic in its depiction of man out of harmony with his world. But it oversteps comedy by its preference for depiction of the incoherence, the magicalism, or the dreamlike, in projecting its impressions of reality unchecked by logic or common sense. It is a play with no intent on making sense out of existence, on controlling the situation, but ending up confused, helpless, and even resigned to just drifting along. It is a play with no changes. It goes on. It is a play with equally desperate encounters with equally desperate obstacles.

In this play, much is said, but nothing really because there is always one rule, one procedure, or other, to cite as reason why what needs to really does not get really done. The situation is that of bondage to the ceremonialism of talk, procedure, of legalism, legalism, et cetera, even where the path towards solving a given problem may be clear to a

Centuries ago, perhaps feeling stifled by mankind for set modalities, someone had cried out: "Sabbath for man, not man for the Sabbath." (Mark 2.27). In today's language, that translates into: "Rules were made for man for the rules." Much hasn't changed, Really

THE AUTHOR/DIRECTOR

One of Africa's leading playwrights and directors received his first degree at Boston University (where he was a classmate of now Hollywood actress Faye Dunaway) and his graduate degree in playwriting at Yale. He has seven published plays, including an international award-winning tragedy, The God Blame, which was staged in London, last year. Head of the Theatre Department of his home University of Nigeria, Ola has served as Visiting Professor at several universities in Africa, West Germany, Italy, and was Fulbright Professor of African Literature for a semester, and holds the same position in Wabas

DIRECTOR'S FEELINGS OF "PRESSURE" OF CAST AND CREW

To lead actor - MAN..... Immerse yourself in the business of talk. No emotions, it's business. You're "man", the obstacle. Where you're "man", it should be to help you resist any distraction to your self-fulfillment in talking.

To BARBER & BEGGARS..... You're "man", the resigned. You've long adjusted to just "drifting along" - coping with problems, if you can, as they come. Today, again you mean to simply carry on with your routines for survival. If you make it, fine; if you don't, well...

To APPRENTICE BARBER..... You're "man", the victim - forever trying to understand, to act on something you don't understand. The more you try, the more you may get confused. But, not to worry, keep on trying.

To POLICEWOMAN & PRESSMEN.... Feel nothing, sense nothing. Simply plunge into routine, professional business.

To SET DESIGNER..... For set, give us claustrophobia - reflect a world choking from too much talk and less positive action.

To COSTUMER..... I can 'hear' the colors and textures of your costumes "arguing" with among the wearers. That's it - let them argue.

Generally, to all the ACTORS. Looks like you'd need to be serious.

APPRECIATION

Might I, here, express gratitude for the spirit of comradeship in the students of the Department of Theatre Arts: Jim Fisher, Dwight Watson, Marge (the patient one), Laura Connors, Rob Hartz ("Iwin" - the demon).

"Too bad I lack both the vision and confidence to say to you all: 'Ngo pada wa! My name language return!'"

R.
Theatre Colleague)

Ola
(a Visiting TH