

ABSTRACT

Title: Emergence of Professional Theatre in Jamaica

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This dissertation explores the viability and development of a professional theatre culture in Jamaica by examining the models and aspects of professionalism already existing in Jamaican theatre. The study looks at the development routes to the modern Jamaican theatre, within the conceptual framework of 'creole theory.' It further explores the roles, functions and responsibility of the Jamaican/Caribbean creative artist, highlighting specific roles for the artists while underlining the functions of the artist in social development as well as cultural awareness, appreciation and identity.

Following on the roles and functions of the artist, the study delves into the historical and socio-cultural context of Jamaica. This investigation leads to exploration of the performing arts and performing arts practitioners as products. The study then examines what emerges as professionalism in the face of the seemingly contrasting values of economic viability/commercialism and artistic

integrity/cultural aesthetics. What emerges is an understanding that grappling with the issues of quality, standards, competencies and training in Jamaican theatre, along with focusing on the development of the social infrastructure that supports artistic endeavor, is integral to this professionalism. The study then explores models of semi-professionalism in Jamaican theatre, examining different theatre companies for their experience on the theme of professionalism. Finally, the study proposes that a model institution based in the Jamaican and Caribbean cultural experience facilitate the development of professional theatre practice. In the absence of comprehensive literature on this topic, a series of interviews with theatre practitioners is used to refine the understanding of professionalism in theatre and elaborate on the Jamaican theatre experience.