

MY ENCOUNTER WITH MAJEK FASHEK

How time flies and how people forget the dead so easily too. Yesterday marked the first anniversary of the death of this great reggae icon and it is amazing to note how people appear to have forgotten him so soon. I combed social media and not a single remembrance in the memory of The Rain Maker as he was fondly called. The reason for this may not be farfetched, and understandably not unconnected with the state of our troubled nation, even though many still pretend that all is fine. The peace in our land is a fragile one like the eerie calm before the storm. To fill this void, I decided to pen down these indelible thoughts of mine in memory of the maverick gentleman entitled: My personal encounter with Majek Fashek.

Elopee Entertainment Company, the organisation I worked for then, had a strong hold on the idols and stars of those days, and in the field of entertainment throughout the country, our only rivals were Cowrie Bond and Silverbird. We had a music label. We promoted fashion, entertainers, artistes, games and sportsmen. We organised dance championships in Nigeria and West Africa and even produced Bimbo Gomero, the first and only Nigerian to win a world dance championship, in Ibiza, Spain. We were on the cusp of delving into Beauty pageant too with Miss Wonderland before the endeavours fell.

My office therefore was a beehive of stars, and we were so used to them that Majek, in spite of his fame, never made any much impression to me the first night he breezed into our No 8, Folawiyo Bankole, Surulere office. All I realised then was that he was never the boisterous and vainglorious type like many in his class. Some of those so called stars are nothing but animals, I must say. But Majek was strangely modest and very soft spoken. He was very patient with us unlike others. He understood our challenges easily. Most of

our recordings were done late night as the office wasn't soundproofed. We sometimes had to reshoot or restart a whole episode over again because of honking vehicles and other unusual noise even at nights. It was usually nightmarish for our editor, Mr. Fanu of Cinecraft. We had no issue at all with that gentleman called Majek. Calm like still water, he played along with us, unperturbed.

The first real issues that drew my attention however was at Sony Music, Ikeja under the aegis of Chief Mrs. Keji Okunowo. We met Majek there seated at the lounge. Pleasantries were exchanged and our crew sat down too. And as fate had it, an ex-Miss Nigeria (name under wrap) that I secretly admired was with us and had the privilege of sitting beside Majek. Need I emphasise again that my affection was a covert one, like that of a student admiring his teacher and daring not to express

until she had them buried permanently under the chair. Majek innocently killed my secret admiration as it became an object of fun for us afterwards. Even Rasta fine pass our Queen! , Funky Mallam would say.

Majek Fashek wasn't just charming on the outside, he was beautiful on the inside too. This other encounter was also at Ikeja, some few months apart, and Nightshift Coliseum was the venue. Majek had a play that night and was on stage. A blind man had an appointment with him but was not allowed in. All his entreaties fell on the deaf ears of the security and management who turned him down. At last, one humane fellow spotted and called my attention to the plight of the man. He must have noticed that I had access to the stage so he begged that I should help talk to Majek else he would r

absolute certainty that with that he could never forget me again. I went through the back stage to tell the Rainmaker