

NOLLYWOOD STARS OUT IN FORCE AT SKY'S ROK TV LAUNCH

Free-to-view channel will be available to all subscribers

THE LAUNCH of a new Sky channel broadcasting thousands of Nigerian films and TV shows was attended by top Nollywood and British film stars.

ROK TV, an award-winning Nollywood film studio, headed up by actress and producer Mary Njoku, will broadcast 24 hours a day, seven days a week and will be available to all Sky subscribers on channel 344.

The launch of the new channel saw names including Mercy Aigbe Gentry, Yvonne Jegede, Chief Patience Ozokwor, Desmond Elliot, Alexx Ekubo, John Dumelo and Jackie Appiah descend upon central London's Northumberland Ave.

On the red carpet, the Nollywood stars mingled with their UK-based colleagues and influential Nigerians, as well as many ROK fans.

Also in attendance were

DJ Cuppy, DJ Abass, Shope Olajide, Femi Oyeniran, Alex Amosu, Grace Ajilore, Victoria Inyama, Theodora Ibekwe Oyeade, A Dot Comedian and more.

The free-to-view channel will be fully programmed, produced and developed in-house, by ROK teams in Lagos and London. The channel launches with blockbuster original titles such as *Husbands of Lagos*, *Desperate Housegirls*, *Losing Control* and *Cougars*, and going forward, ROK viewers will be the first to watch new and exclusive homegrown ROK content, before it goes anywhere else.

Speaking ahead of the launch, ROK CEO Mary Njoku, who has spent over 12 years at the heart of Nigerian film-making, said: "Nollywood's appeal is truly global; it is not just for Africans, but for film fans in general. As a production house, we have been



SPOTLIGHT: Award-winning actress Jackie Appiah; (above) Nollywood stars mingle with their UK-based colleagues and influential Nigerians; (inset) actress Mercy Aigbe Gentry

grace, and we are here today to start a new journey."

Guests were treated to a three-course sit down dinner while casting their eyes on exclusive upcoming footage yet to premiere on the channel.

The night was hailed a success by all those in attendance, including one Iroko subscriber who secured herself a ticket for the exclusive event.

Ronke Ajayi, 30, said: "I've been a subscriber to Iroko since it launched and to see ROK come to Sky really is a testament to the amazing work they are doing. I love the quality, the originality, just everything about it shows that we as African's can do something and do it well."

• ROK media partners include Bella Naija, Battabox, Pulse.ng, The Voice, New African Woman, The Beat London 103.6 and Voxafrica.

obsessed with curating amazing African content and telling African stories our way, and with the launch of ROK on Sky, we can bring our stories to millions more.

"This channel is an unashamed celebration of all things Nollywood, but more than that, a celebration of African stories

– in our own words, with our own characters, with our own drama."

Recalling an unsavoury encounter with an unnamed veteran actor early in her career, the proud CEO told the audience of how she was nearly derailed from pursuing her dreams.

"For me, the launch of ROK

on Sky is just the beginning. That actor in question is not here today, but I will say – their words gave me the push that I needed. I told myself that day that I had to make it, that I wouldn't accept anything less.

"Since then, I've been working really hard, with the help of everybody here and God's

Community award for Lambeth Borough commander

LAMBETH BOROUGH Commander Chief Superintendent Richard Wood was the man of the hour at a community event put together by PR expert Paul Harrison of PK Media.

Wood was presented with an award recognising his outstanding contribution to the south London area at an intimate event which took place in Brixton at Rum Kitchen.

The event, initiated by Harrison and his media agency,

brought together a number of church heads and community staff who were united in their admiration of Wood.

Apostle Alfred Williams of Christ Faith Tabernacle in Woolwich led the event with prayer and a small word on the night's honouree, recalling his early encounters with the commander who previously worked in the Woolwich area. Wood was presented with his accolade by Aaron McNeil,

director of Ariston Developments, a social enterprise that assists in getting young people back into employment.

Also present was the Worshipful Mayor Salent Jaffer and former Mayor of Lambeth Lloyd Leon MBE, who both gave addresses highlighting the dramatic shifts in the borough and efforts of figures like Wood to improve community relations between police and ethnic minority residents.



HONOURED: Paul Harrison, Lloyd Leon MBE, Portia Harrison, Worshipful Mayor Salent Jaffer of Lambeth, Richard Wood and Jane Warwick MBE