

For reasons best known to them, the photograph chosen by the media of the teenager who carried the Southport attacks was one of him aged 12. Born in Cardiff to Rwandan refugee parents, he is himself legally as British as anyone else, and whether he was 17 or 12, there is something in him and his circumstances, his parents' journey and more, that requires more enquiry and understanding than the cynical, opportunistic, violent thuggery that the tragedy has unleashed. Putting aside comparisons between the reaction to the murders of three British children and that of the tens of thousands in Palestine, Sudan or the Democratic Republic of Congo, one cannot help but wonder what will become of the children and the younger siblings of the far-right hoodlums laying waste to cities around England and Northern Ireland. However fearful we might be of what becomes of them, it is surely (and hopefully) not as bad as what became of the thousands of children (a small handful of whom are represented in this play) who were turned by adults into child soldiers, and made to do unspeakable, unbelievable things, under the influence of those adults, and narcotics. It was a conscious decision to give the boys names of colonisers of Africa, for it is my firm belief that practically (if not entirely) everything wrong in the Continent can be traced back to the invasion, colonisation and ongoing exploitation of the Continent by Europe, now others, and even African accomplices - historic and contemporary. Whilst knowledge of all these systems and forces is much more available to us today, so too is the seemingly unstoppable, insurmountable phenomenon of "fake news." It was always there, as exemplified for instance by the successful campaign of convincing the world that Africans "needed" to be enslaved, then colonised, because they were less than human, and it was for their own good. Such media manipulation reached one of its most awful extremes perhaps (in the African context) with King Leopold II of Belgium for decades persuading the world of the "good" he was doing in Congo, while carrying out unspeakable terror. Here in Great Britain (thankfully not so far in Edinburgh or the rest of Scotland at the time of writing), it is misinformation that has led to the far-right riots, but this is nothing new. The kinds of leaders we have today (not just here but practically worldwide) are in place thanks in large part to corporate control of the media by powerful, literally evil interests. It behoves us all to resist this phenomenon however we can. This play is a modest contribution, which I hope meets with your approval and inspires you.

Tayo Aluko. Writer, Performer, Producer. Tayo was born in Nigeria, and worked as an architect in Liverpool for 15 years. He has fronted orchestras as baritone soloist in concert halls, and has also performed lead roles in opera, musicals and oratorio. His first play, *CALL MR ROBESON* has won numerous awards at festivals in the UK and Canada, and continues to be performed after 17 years. His second, *JUST AN ORDINARY LAWYER* has been performed internationally for 8 years. He delivers a number of lecture/concerts and talks on Black political resistance using art and song. He researched, wrote and narrated on film a piece on West African History before the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, that is part of the permanent exhibit at Liverpool's International Slavery Museum. His 15-minute play, *HALF MOON*, which also deals with ancient Africa, has been performed several times in the UK. He has developed a piece titled *WHAT HAPPENS?* featuring the writings of African American writer Langston Hughes, for performance with live jazz accompaniment. Publishers of his writing include *The Guardian*, *The Morning Star*, *NERVE Magazine*, *Modern Ghana*, *Searchlight Magazine*, *Counterfire* and *Counterpunch*. His audio play, *PAUL ROBESON'S LOVE SONG*, recorded during lockdown with actors from the USA and Canada, is now streaming online. He is working on a screenplay telling the story of Nigerian, Pastor Daniels Ekarte (d. 1964), known as the African Saint of Liverpool.

Kristin Weichen Wong, Piano. Kristin is a Taiwanese performer/artist based in Edinburgh. Her works span across multiple disciplines, including music, dance, and theatre. Kristin recently performed her new solo show, *Born This WEI* (2024), and appeared in *Gypsy* (2023), *Brief Encounter* (2023), and *A Streetcar Named Desire* (2023) at Pitlochry Festival Theatre. Kristin also devised new works and site-specific performance, e.g., *All Gone!* (2024), *Weaving Webs in Motion* (2023), *Oblique, Open, Filtered, Framed* (2022). As a creative, she believes in the power of story-telling, which connects us and binds us to each other. This year, Kristin is thrilled to be part of Tayo's new play, *Coleridge-Taylor of Freetown* and to be helping to bring this beautiful story to life.

COLERIDGE-TAYLOR OF FREETOWN

Writer, performer: Tayo Aluko

Pianist: Allyson Devenish

Director: Mojisola Kareem.

Set & Costume Designer: Phil Newman

Sound Design: Liam McDermott

Lighting Design: Tayo Aluko

Dramaturgs: Esther Wilson and Jennifer Farmer

Dance/Movement Dramaturg: Funmi Adewole

Arrangement of Rise Up, Mother Africa!: Deirdre Pascal

(Words and melody by Tayo Aluko)

Recorded Voices: Julius Obende, Dorcas Seb, Tayo Aluko, others.

Opening poem by Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

Song settings to poetry by:

Kathleen Easmon, Paul Laurence Dunbar,

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Sarojini Naidoo, Christina Rossetti,

Ella Wheeler Wilcox, Tayo Aluko

Future Performances include:

Till Aug 24 (not Sundays, not 19). **Coleridge-Taylor of Freetown**
C Alto @ **Edinburgh Fringe**

August 28 Call Mr. Robeson @ North America Festival of Wales,
Pittsburgh, PA, USA

August 31. Call Mr. Robeson @ Atlanta Black Theatre Festival

October 19. Coleridge-Taylor of Freetown @ Wellingborough
African Caribbean Association, Northamptonshire

October 20. Call Mr. Robeson @ Narth Village Hall, Wales

Tayo Aluko & Friends

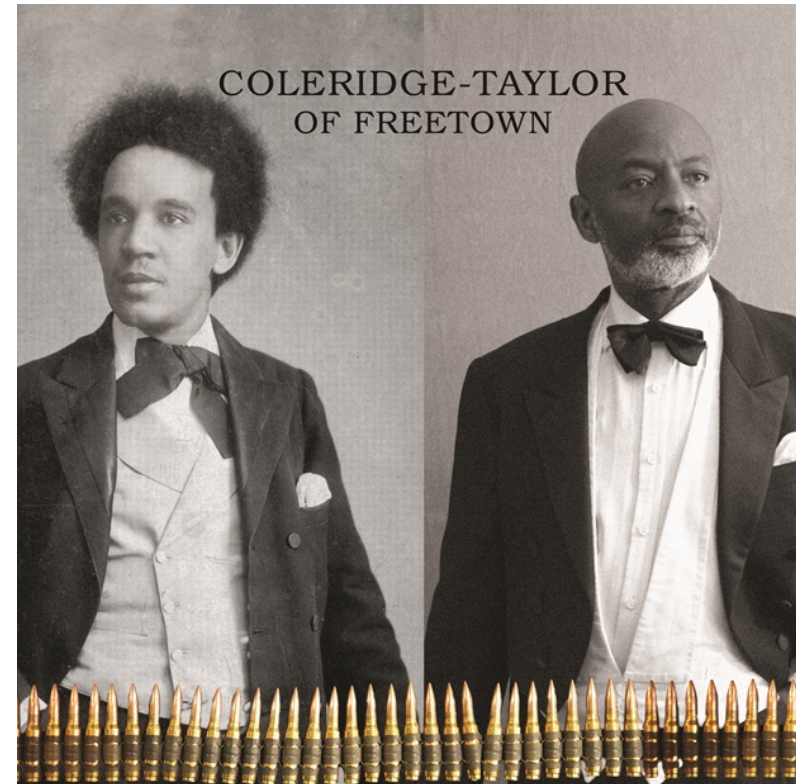
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**Tayo Aluko & Friends
and
Utopia Theatre present**



**Written and Performed by
Tayo Aluko**

With Kristin Wong, Piano

**C Alto @ Edinburgh Fringe
4-24 August 2024 (Week 1)**