

Some Brits have been jailed for their part in the recent riots sparked off by the murders of three children in Southport the other week. It seems justice can be swift when the world has seen some of the worst examples of British violent so-called civilisation play out in real time. The criminals have been named, but they are nonentities who will pass through the bowels of the UK justice system and emerge after their sentences probably no more evolved than they currently are. There are others though, who are currently receiving the attention of the British legal system, though their cases remain somewhat under the radar, and as such the wheels are turning for them much more slowly. I speak of Palestine Action activists who have taken it upon themselves to take direct action against Israeli-owned arms manufacturers operating in the UK and their accomplices. Most prominent among those is a company called Elbit Systems which as of three years ago had nine factories and a head office operating across this nation. Having determined that “more acceptable” forms of protest were futile, they started a campaign of sabotaging, damaging and disrupting the premises of Elbit and its subsidiaries. The result is that four out of ten Elbit sites have been forced to close. What is seen by many as a considerable victory for Pro-Palestinian activists is however being treated by the courts as criminality, including criminal damage and aggravated trespass, the latter referring to when a facility is not entered, but disrupted from outside. Legal terminology can be easily applied to all kinds of people and situations, but it is notable that perpetrators of crimes now internationally recognised as apartheid, genocide, starvation, indiscriminate bombing etc. remain free to travel the world, and even receive standing ovations in the citadels of Western so-called democracy. People around the globe therefore continue to protest in many ways. In my home country of Nigeria, there have been protests recently, against austerity and the cost of living. A few lost lives (as did others in #EndSARS in 2020), but the protestors were undeterred. They were inspired by more successful protests in Kenya some months ago, and no doubt by those that led to the resignation and flight of the Bangladeshi Prime Minister last week. This play ends with an example of a successful women-led protest in Sierra Leone from decades ago: a reminder that it has always been, and will always be, worth fighting collectively for a better world, even when those who hold power do so in the interests of themselves and their sponsors, and not the people.

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. His next project is likely to be 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 Rosetti,

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

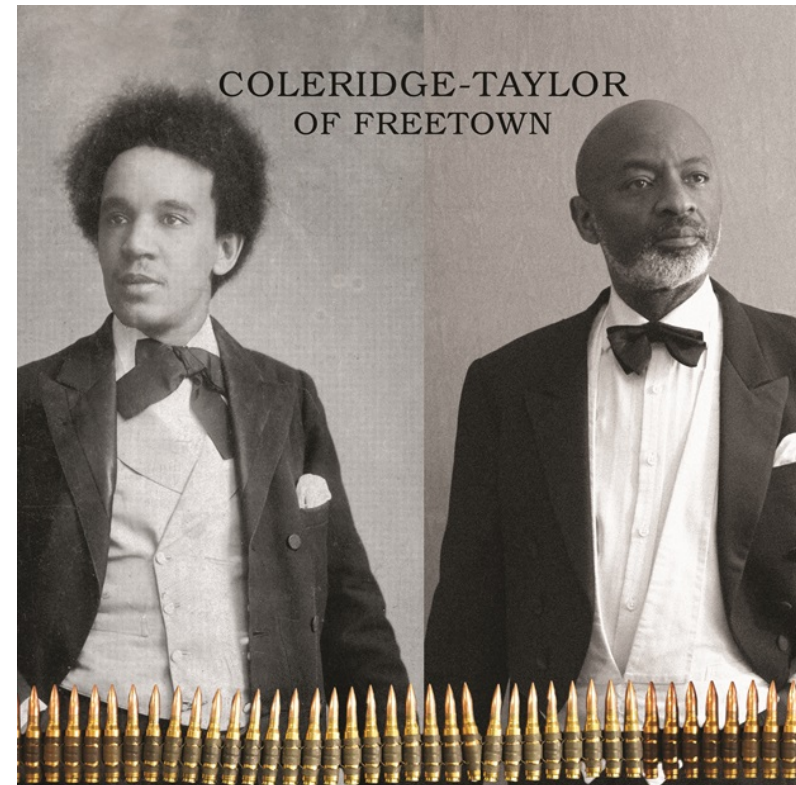
Liverpool L15 3LA

info@tayoalukoandfriends.com www.tayoalukoandfriends.com

facebook: Tayo Aluko & Friends Twitter: @MrTayoAluko

instagram: mrtayoaluko tel: +44 7990 608 074

Tayo Aluko & Friends
and
Utopia Theatre present



Written and Performed by
Tayo Aluko

With Kristin Wong, Piano

C Alto @ Edinburgh Fringe
5-24 August 2024 (Week 2)