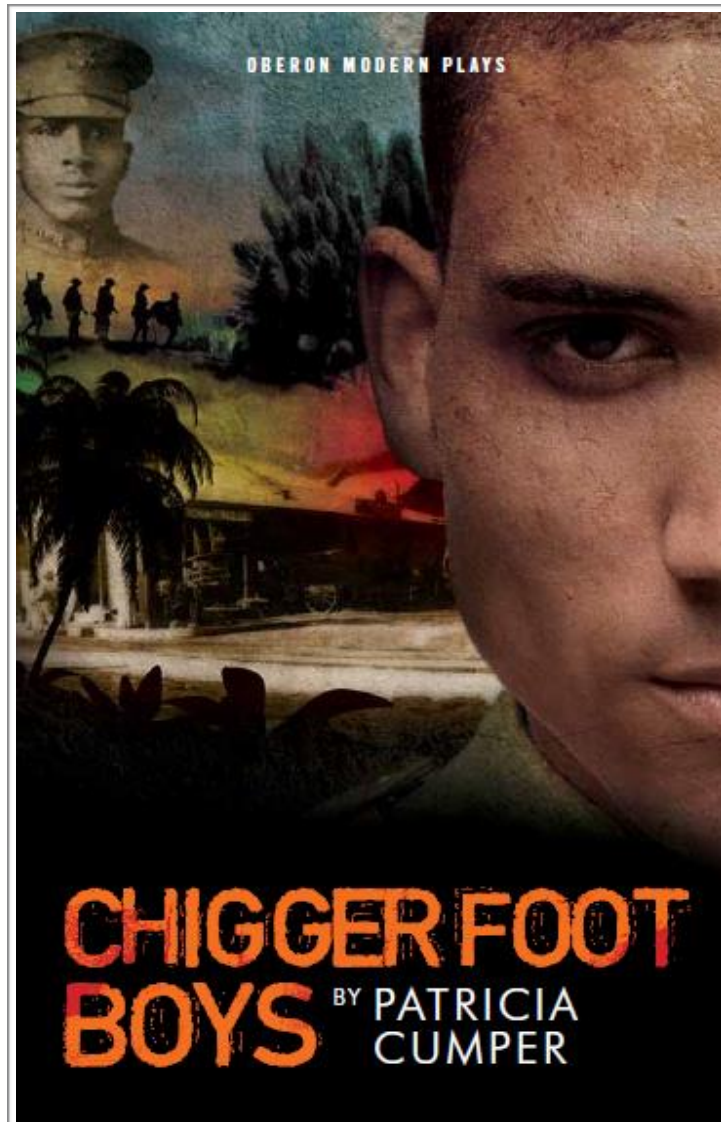


# Chigger Foot Boys

## Education Resource Pack



**StrongBack Productions with Tara Arts present  
the world premiere  
Tara Theatre 22 February - 11 March**



Supported using public funding by  
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Sylvia Waddilove Foundation UK

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# Introduction

*Chigger Foot Boys* is a new ensemble play by Patricia Cumper which marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of World War One, opening at Tara Theatre in February 2017.

Based on true events in the lives of Jamaicans who fought in World War One and set amid the banter of a rum bar near Kingston Harbour, four young men tell their stories of death and glory as the end of the British Empire looms.

An intoxicating cocktail of love, duty, death and dominoes.

This Education Resource Pack enables teachers and students to explore further the world of the play, providing imaginative exercises and activities that connect historical context across the **National Curriculum at Key Stages 3 and 4**.

It is aimed at **students of Drama, Theatre Studies, Performing Arts and English Literature**. *Chigger Foot Boys* is also an ideal text for exploring cross-curricular links, especially **History and Citizenship at Key Stages 3 and 4**.

*Chigger Foot Boys* is co-production between **StrongBack Productions**, a Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) company developing and creating new work for diverse audiences, and **Tara Arts**, a gorgeous award-winning new theatre dedicated to connecting worlds through multicultural arts.

For more information on StrongBack, please visit: [www.strongbackproductions.com](http://www.strongbackproductions.com)

For more information on Tara Arts, please visit: [www.tara-arts.com](http://www.tara-arts.com)

**There are Classroom Activities marked throughout this resource pack.**

# Synopsis

*Chigger Foot Boys* is set in Kingston, Jamaica 1914.

A group of young men come together in Medora's bar to play a game of Dominoes late into the night. In a series of flash forwards, we see how their lives are changed by the onset of World War One. Fighting for the Colonial troops, King and Country, they face brutal hardships, fraught relationships, casual racism and death.

The play is funny and poignant and there are many fun, playful and heart-warming moments as audiences get to know the group of young Jamaican men and their feisty hostess Medora.

*Chigger Foot Boys* marks the bravery of Caribbean soldiers in World War One, whilst remembering the brutality of a war that killed over 7 million people. The play explores how the war was a catalyst for change, enabling the powerless 'cannon fodder' Jamaican soldiers to find ways in which to empower themselves. In the trenches on the Western Front men from different races, classes and cultures fought alongside each other. The pre-war status quo of the Colonies and Empire was changed irrevocably. It is this world a century on which has shaped our present day.



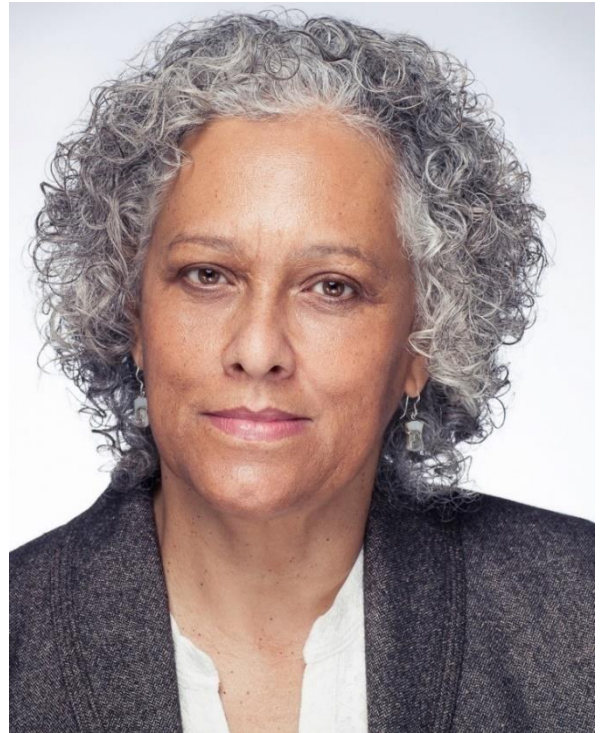
© National Archives and Records Administration

# The Playwright

Patricia Cumper has been commissioned by Talawa Theatre Company, Carib Theatre Company, The Royal Court and Blue Mountain Theatre. *The Key Game*, commissioned and produced by Talawa at the Riverside in 2004, won four star reviews and was included in Time Out's Critic's Choice.

She was artistic director of Talawa Theatre Company from 2006 to 2012 and produced among other plays George C. Wolfe's *The Colored Museum* in the V&A Museum, and Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, the first all-Black production in the UK.

She is currently co-artistic director of StrongBack Productions, a company that brings the Caribbean practice of forging one culture from many histories to British theatre.



© Michael Wharley

Patricia was a member of the team of writers on *Westway*, the BBC World Service drama serial, and wrote a five-part radio drama series *One Bright Child* that won the CRE radio drama award.

Adaptations to radio include Rita Dove's *Darkest Face of the Earth* and a fifteen-part series for Woman's Hour of Andrea Levy's *Small Island*, a ten-part series for Woman's Hour of Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (that won a silver Sony Award); a one hour play based on Zora Neil Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, a ten-part adaptation of Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and a two hour adaptation of Marie Ndiaye's *Trois Femmes Puissantes* (that was nominated for the BBC Radio contribution to Diversity award 2016).

Her original play based on the life of Anthony Trollope *Mr. Trollope and the Labours of Hercules* was broadcast in May 2016. She has been commissioned to write a new 45 minute play about five South London women for broadcast in 2017. Patricia attended The Queen's School in Jamaica and won the Jamaica Scholarship to attend Girton College, Cambridge University where she studied Archaeology and Anthropology. She won college exhibitions for scholarship and earned her Full Blue and was made Ladies Captain of the university's swimming team.

<http://www.strongbackproductions.com/team/> [www.patriciacumper.com](http://www.patriciacumper.com)

**Classroom Activities** you can order the script online from Tara Arts or the publishers Oberon Modern Plays <https://www.oberonbooks.com/chigger-foot-boys.html>

# Patricia Cumper

## on researching & writing *Chigger Foot Boys*

*“When in 2013 I began researching the events I eventually included in Chigger Foot Boys, I knew I wanted to write a play about the participation of African and Caribbean soldiers in World War One so that their lives would not be excluded from the centennial commemorations. What I found made me more determined to bring the complexity and humanity of their stories to the stage, most particularly the British stage. Great events of world history have always reverberated around the Caribbean and World War One was no exception. Men and women who would shape the destiny of the region for the next forty years were galvanized by this world war and the next.*

*I came back to live in the United Kingdom in 1993 and it wasn't long after that I became aware how pervasive the myths and legacies of empire continued to be in modern Britain. Not only that the people of the former empire had come to live in Britain in their numbers but also that those who benefited most from the largesse of Empire were deeply unwilling - even afraid - to face the actions and events that created their wealth and privilege. To my mind, this fear must be faced. Those events are history and a nation can only be strengthened by acknowledging and making peace with that history.*

*There is a rule when writing drama that helps a writer avoid exposition: any inclusion of backstory can only be justified by its importance to the action on stage. I like to think that the obverse applies in our day to day lives. We don't understand why we do what we do until we understand what went before. Only when we understand the backstory, can we truly take action in the present day.*

*Chigger Foot Boys tells the story of unremarkable lives caught up in truly remarkable events. It looks at these events through the eyes not of the powerful, but of the powerless, and points to the moment at which these ordinary people realize that they must create change for themselves. We are in just such a moment now.”*

**Classroom Activities:** Patricia undertook lots of research to help write the play. At the end of this pack we have a bibliography and details of museums and archives on World War One. Go online or even make a visit to the museum. What stories of Black and Jamaican soldiers can you find in the archives. What do they tell us about the importance of the West Indian soldiers in WW1? And who tells their stories?

# About StrongBack



Formed in 2013 StrongBack Productions is a performing arts charity that draws on the Caribbean tradition of forging one culture from many histories.

StrongBack is most interested where the personal stories, histories and traditions of BAME and other minority communities meet, contribute to, confront and blend with the mainstream: many histories creating one culture.

With more than fifty years' experience creating theatre between them, the artistic leadership of StrongBack Productions Patricia Cumper MBE FRSA and Dominique Le Gendre FRS, along with producer Pauline Walker, draw not only on their own backgrounds but also look to work with outstanding diverse and mainstream artists from across the country and from a range of backgrounds to create their work.

Rather than seeing the organisation as representing minorities, we see it as responding to the diverse and eclectic nature of modern Britain and its citizens.

You can find out more about StrongBack Productions on our website [www.strongbackproductions.com](http://www.strongbackproductions.com)

@StrongBackProd

**Classroom Activities:** classroom discussion. Why do you think it's important a company such as StrongBack tells the stories of the West Indian soldiers? What do you think motivated the company to tell this story?

# About Tara Arts



Tara's Theatre is the country's first dedicated small-scale multicultural theatre, housing a 100-seat auditorium and a separate development Studio, along with an outdoor patio garden space. Architecturally, it is a fusion of Edwardian brick and Indian wood, including doors and architraves from India, all held together within a 21st century steel cube. The architectural multiculturalism of the building is echoed in the artistic programme on offer.

Tara Theatre's award winning new theatre opened in summer 2016 and aims to connect worlds by producing and hosting world classics, new plays, and plays for children.

Tara Arts is a registered charity no: 295547

Artistic Director Jatinder Verma  
Executive Producer Jonathan Kennedy  
Associate Director Claudia Mayer  
Head of Finance Julia Brundell  
Development Associate Frances Mayhew  
General Manager Alexandra Wyatt  
Technical & Operations Manager Tom Kingdom  
Finance Officer Xiao Hong (Sharon) Zhang

Tara Theatre, 356 Garratt Lane, London, SW18 4ES  
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W: [www.tara-arts.com](http://www.tara-arts.com)

TaraArts @Tara\_Arts



# The Cast & Creative Team

## Cast

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Ike Bennett       | Mortie                                      |
| Stanley J. Brown  | Linton                                      |
| Jonathan Chambers | Norman                                      |
| John Leader       | Roy   |
| Suzette Llewellyn | Medora                                      |
| Matthew Truesmith | Officer/ Recruiter/ Friend/ Soldier/ Porter |



## Creative Team

|                     |                        |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| Irina Brown         | Director               |
| Dominique Le Gendre | Music and Sound Design |
| Louis Price         | Costume and Set Design |
| Kevin Treacy        | Set Design             |

# Biographies

| from left to right |



## CAST

### Ike Bennett

Ike Bennett is currently a student at The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama where he has featured in *Three Sisters*, *Twelfth Night*, *Blues For Mr Charlie*, *The Country Wife*, *The Orestia*, *Richard III* and *After The Dance* With current production director Irina Brown.

### Stanley J. Browne

With his origins from Hackney, East London, Stanley J. Browne began his career at the renowned Anna Scher Theatre in London in his early teens. In his later years, he went on to further his craft in acting and graduated from Mountview Acting Academy in classical Theatre after being awarded the sole scholarship for men.

After graduation from Mountview, Stanley performed as 'Othello' in Shakespeare's *Othello*, touring Ireland for three months, where he was praised by audiences and critics alike for his portrayal of one of theatres most challenging roles. He went on to receive rave reviews, of which Irish Theatre Magazine described his performance as: "This absorbing revival soundly delivers a new Othello for our times, raising the plays' profile to long overdue recognition".

At the 2013 Edinburgh Fringe festival, Stanley contributed to the success of the production of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* for his performance of "Aaron the Moor", that received a rare 6-star review. As a result, the production transferred to the Arcola Theatre in London, where it went on to become a sell-out hit.

Some of his most recent Film, TV, and Theatre credits include; playing the lead role as 'Walker Vessels' in the stage production of *The Slave*, playing 'Joe' in Channel 4 new comedy pilot series *Twisted Tales*, playing the lead role as 'Tracy Burleson' for Sky Vision CBS drama series, playing 'Marcus' in the independent film *Revolution*, playing 'Simon' in the independent film comedy, *Love, Hate, Date* playing 'Jerome Parks' with an all-star British cast in *Meet Pursuit Delange*.

With a variety of roles behind him reflected in his CV, choosing to challenge himself by playing a multitude of different types of characters, Stanley J. Browne continues to excel in the industry, as he fast becomes recognised as one of the UK's future leading Black British Actors.

### Jonathan Chambers

Jonathan was born in Kingston, Jamaica and trained at the Arts Educational Schools and The Royal Academy of Music.

Theatre Includes: *Jeremy Corbyn*, *The Motorcycle Diaries* (Waterloo East); *Going UP* (Dublin LGBT Theatre Festival); *Make and Model* (Bush Theatre); *Macbeth* (Shakespeare's Globe); *The Lightning Child* (Shakespeare's Globe); *The Atheist* (St James Theatre Studio & The Lion and Unicorn Theatre); *Danny and the Deep Blue Sea* (Southwark Playhouse); *The Ballad of Benny Junior* (Riverside Studios); *The Legend of Bella Rosa* (Tristan Bates Theatre); *Living Under One Roof* (Nottingham Concert Hall); *Incendiary* (Oval House). Film Includes: *Throw of a Dice* (CVS Films).

### John Leader

John trained at East 15 Acting School. Theatre includes: *Peter Pan*, *War Horse* (National Theatre); *Running Wild* (Regents Park Open Air Theatre); *Romeo and Juliet* (Orange Tree); *Beasty Baby* (Theatre Rites/Polka Theatre); *Alice's Adventures Underground* (Les Enfants Terribles); *Clown* (Pohang Bada International Festival, South Korea).

### Suzette Llewellyn

Theatre work includes: *The Multiple Myrtle Mysteries* (Endless Horizons Ltd), *Hellscreen* (Firehouse Productions, Urban Afro Saxons (Talawa Theatre) *Marisol* (Traverse Theatre Edinburgh), *Trinidad Sisters* (Tricycle Theatre) *Whale* (Royal National Theatre), *Belle of Belfast City* (Lyric Theatre Belfast), *Garden Girls* (Bush Theatre), *Golden Girls*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Comedy Of Errors*, *Love's Labour's Lost* (Wolsey Theatre)

Television work includes: *The Coroner*, *Hollyoaks*, *Scott & Bailey*, *Catastrophe*, *Thirteen*, *Lucky Man*, *Rockets Island*, *W10*, *Holby City*, *Hope & Glory*, *Brookside*, *Surgical Spirit*, *Doctors*, *Casualty*, *Night & Day*, *Oscar Charlie*, *Black Silk*.

Films: *Molly Moon and the Incredible Book of Hypnotism*, *Bucky*, *Manderlay*, *Baby Mother*, *Playing Away*, *Sammie & Rosie Get Laid*.

In the 1990's Suzette co-founded the innovative theatre troupe The BiBi Crew. The company is dedicated to producing new writing from an African-Caribbean perspective incorporating, music, dance, comedy and drama.

The BiBi Crew toured the UK with 'On A Level' and 'But Stop! We Have Work To Do' and were invited to perform in New York.

The BiBi Crew currently perform pop up shows and are working on a stage play to be performed in 2017.

## Matthew Truesmith

Matthew started his career as a street performer in Cornwall and then trained on the 3-year acting course at L.A.M.D.A. After some years working as an actor he moved to directing - cutting his teeth as an assistant at the RSC.

Over the years he's worked with acclaimed Russian director Karma Ginkas, spent time with William Esper in New York, took classes at The Moscow Arts Theatre and performed alongside the actor Brian Cox in Orson Welles *Heart of Darkness* for Fiona Banner. He was Head of Acting at GSA and Head of Postgraduate Acting at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts. More recently he has returned to freelance work and also makes regular appearances on the stand-up comedy circuit in London - where his unique act continues to enthral audiences and fellow comics alike.

## CREATIVE TEAM

### Irina Brown Director

Irina Brown, born and educated in St Petersburg, has lived and worked in Britain for over thirty years, establishing a versatile career as opera and theatre director, teacher, writer and dramaturge. Irina directed at the Royal National Theatre, Royal Opera House, and the London West End. She was Artistic Director of the Tron Theatre, Glasgow and Natural Perspective Theatre Company.

Her theatre credits include Racine's *Britannicus* (Wilton's Music Hall); *The Importance of Being Ernest* (Open Air Theatre, Regents Park); Tolstoy's *War & Peace at the Circus* (Adaptor/ Director, Giffords Circus); *Jenufa, the play* (Natural Perspective); *Edward Albee's Three Tall Women* (Oxford Playhouse, Guildford, Cambridge); *The Vagina Monologues* (West End and National Tour) and *Further than the Furthest Thing* by Zinnie Harris (RNT; Edinburgh Festival; Tron; Tricycle; British Council Tour of South Africa).

Her opera credits include Andrei Tarkovski's *Boris Godunov* (ROH, Mariinsky, Monte Carlo); Dominique Le Gendre's *Bird of Night* (ROH); Prokofiev's *War & Peace* (Scottish Opera/ RSAMD); and for the Philharmonia Orchestra Shostakovich's *Orango*, Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges* and *Stravinsky: TALES* (RFH and the Proms, RAH) as well as *Gamblers* (LPO). Her future work includes Donizetti's *Anna Bolena* (Badisches Staatstheater, Karlsruhe).  
<http://www.performing-arts.co.uk/clients/directors/irina-brown/>

## Louis Price Designer

Louis graduated from Central St Martin's School of Art. He is a video designer, and scenographer.

Recent designs include *Mkultra* (UK Tour); *What Shadows* (Birmingham Rep); *The Emperor* (Young Vic); *The Rotters Club* (Birmingham Rep); *Mavra/Renard/Les Noces* (Royal Festival Hall); *The Etienne Sisters* (Theatre Royal Stratford East); *The Funfair* (Home, Manchester); *L'Enfant Et Les Sortileges* (Royal Festival Hall/ Philharmonia); *Bright Phoenix* (Liverpool Everyman); *Orango* (Royal Festival Hall/ Helsinki Festival/Baltic Sea Festival Stockholm); *Unleashed* (Barbican Theatre); *Sluts of Possession* (Edinburgh Festival/Film Fabriek Belgium); *There Is Hope* (UK Tour); *Amphytrion* (Schauspielhaus Graz); *Wings of Desire* (Circa/International Dance Festival Birmingham); *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* (Liverpool Playhouse); and *Beside the Sea* (WOW Festival, Purcell Room, Southbank Centre).

He directed the documentary *Im Beyond Biba - A Portrait of Barbara Hulanicki* (SkyArts/ Sundance Channel); and is developing *Exegesis - A Very British Cult* (BBC Wonderland/November Films); and *Black Country* (November Films/ Arts Council). He edited *Best* (Sundance Film Festival) and *In Mid Wickedness* (Tbilisi Film Festival). As Director of Photography *5 Soldiers* Installation (Herbert Gallery, Coventry/Stadtmuseum, Dresden).  
[http: //louisprice. co. uk/](http://louisprice.co.uk/)

## Dominique Le Gendre Music/ Sound Designer

London-based, Paris educated and Trinidad born and bred, composer Dominique Le Gendre has written music extensively for theatre, art installations, dance, film, television and radio drama for BBC Radio 3 and 4. She composed and produced music for all 38 Shakespeare plays recorded for the audio collection *The Complete Arkangel Shakespeare* directed by Clive Brill.

In 2004 she was invited to become an Associate Artist of the Royal Opera House, (ROH2) Covent Garden, who commissioned her full-length opera *Bird Of Night* directed by Irina Brown and premiered in October 2006 at the ROH Linbury Theatre.

Her chamber works and operas have been commissioned and performed by the Royal Opera House Soloists, Philharmonia Orchestra, Manning Camerata, Lontano Orchestra, Tete-a-tete Opera, The Ibis Ensemble, Ensemble du Monde, Picoplatt foundation and Calabash Foundation for the Arts amongst others. She has been Associate Artist to Manning Camerata led by Peter Manning who commissioned her musical setting of Seamus Heaney's *The Burial at Thebes* which was directed by St. Lucian poet and Nobel Lauréat Derek Walcott.

In 2012, with Melanie Abrahams, she co-curated and co-produced the festival "London Is The Place For Me" at The Tricycle Theatre in London celebrating Trinidad and Tobago's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Independence. Since

2013 she has been co-artistic director of StrongBack Productions. <http://www.strongbackproductions.com/team/> <http://www.dominiquelegendre.com/>

### **Kevin Treacy    Lighting Designer**

Theatre designs include *Romeo and Juliet*, *Arabian Nights*, *The Lion, the Witch the Wardrobe*, *A Doll's House* - nominated for Best Lighting Design - Wales Theatre Awards (Sherman Theatre, Cardiff); *Unfaithful* (Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh); *The Weir* (Tobacco Factory, Bristol); *Bird* (Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester); *The Government Inspector* and *Arrah-na-Pogue* (Abbey Theatre, Dublin); *Twelfth Night* (Nottingham Playhouse); *Beside the Sea* (Southbank Centre); *The Seafarer* (Perth Theatre and Lyric Theatre, Belfast); *Macbeth* (Perth Theatre and Tron Theatre, Glasgow); *Blithe Spirit* (Perth Theatre) and *The Nose* (The Performance Corporation) *Irish Times* award for Best Lighting Design. Opera designs include *The Turn of the Screw* (Buxton Opera and Kolobov Novaya, Moscow); *Faramondo* (Handel Festspiele, Göttingen); *La Bohème*, *L'Elisir d' Amore*, *Carmen*, *The Magic Flute* (Nevill Holt Opera); *Imeneo*, *Rodelinda* and *Die Fledermaus* (Royal College of Music); *Macbeth* (Welsh National Opera); *The Flying Dutchman*, *Salome* and *Agrippina* - winner of Best Design - Dublin Fringe Festival (Northern Ireland Opera); *Stravinsky's Tales* and *Orango* - directed by Irina Brown (Philharmonia Orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall).

Future engagements include *Killology* at The Sherman Theatre, Cardiff and at the Royal Court, London, *Tosca* at Nevill Holt Opera and *Radamisto* for NI Opera. <http://www.kevintreacy.com/>

### **Shaz McGee    Production Manager**

Shaz McGee is a Freelance Production Manager with extensive experience worldwide.

Her Production Management credits include *Red Velvet* (Tricycle & New York); *Handbagged*, *Broken Glass*, *The Price* (All West End); *The Colour of Justice* (West End and National Tour); *The Dwarfs*, *Kat and the Kings*, *The Father* (Tricycle Theatre); *Gandini Juggling* (National Tour); *Stones in his Pockets* (Grand Opera House, Belfast); *Momentary Fusion* (International Tour) and *Ra Ra Zoo* (International Tour). Shaz is delighted to be working with StrongBack Productions for the first time and working with Irina Brown again, having worked with her on *Further than the Furthest Thing* (South African Tour) and *Britannicus* at Wiltons Music Hall.

### **Davey Williams    Stage Manager**

Davey is excited to be working on his first show with StrongBack Productions. A Graduate of Goldsmiths College, he began his Theatre career as part of the LX team on Sonia Freidman Productions' Musical *Bend It Like Beckham*. Whilst continuing to focus on creating his own work after performing with his own Theatre company Omnifolk, at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2016.

He began his Stage Management Career on the Tricycle's political thriller *The Invisible Hand*, and has since built up a range of experience at reputable venues such as Iford Arts' Garden Opera Festival, to Sadler's Wells and Southwark Playhouse, as well as touring the UK with The Garnett Foundation.

### **Pauline Walker    Producer**

Pauline is a freelance theatre producer, creative producer and writer. Credits include *The Den* (Swan Wharf); *The Altab Ali Story* (Brady Arts Centre); *Show Me Edgware Road* (Rich Mix); *Custody* (Talawa Studio). Pauline is the Administrator and Creative Producer for The Alfred Fagon Award and was the Producer for The London Hub of Sustained Theatre producing a variety of theatre, arts events and symposia. She is currently writing a novel and has a short story published in 2016 anthology *Shortest Day, Longest Night* (Arachne Press).

<http://www.strongbackproductions.com/team/>

**Classroom Activities:** All the biographies of the Cast and Creative Team tell us it takes many people to create a piece of theatre. Theatre is a collaborative artform.

In small groups think about which roles you would like to play in making the show. Create your own production team.

Write down what skills you think you need to be an Actor, Director, Designer or Stage Manager? What different skills does each job need for example a Stage Manager compared with an Actor? Feedback your groups' thoughts to the rest of the class.

## Q & A with the cast

### Stanley

Q: To what extent do you think Linton is really in love with Medora? Is it all just smooth talk? Or are there real feelings there?

A: Yes, Linton is very much in love with Medora, to the extent he doesn't even realize it himself. He has finally met his match! Like he says "*But she know me. She know me inside out and don't pardon none of mi foolishness at all!*"

### Suzette

Q: To what extent would you describe Medora as a powerful woman?

A: Medora has an independent spirit and has a clear view of what she wants in life, she is aware of her own power. She came from the country and has made a life for herself in Kingston, a busy city. She is a woman alone running her a business although she has a benefactor in the background she deals with the running of the rum bar. The day-in day-out business of making it profitable is her responsibility. She relies on the bar to survive. Medora is not afraid to step away from convention, she decides to stop going to church for instance when she disagrees with the congregation.

### Ike

Q: This is your first play out of drama school. Congratulations! How has it been different to rehearsing plays at RCCSD?

A: I worked with Irina, the director of *Chigger Foot Boys*, when we did *After the Dance* at Central. That had a cast of thirteen, so it's quite different working in cast of only six people. I also love being able to play a Jamaican, it feels a lot freer in the body and there's a lot more opportunity for rhythm and movement than there is in classical texts.

**Classroom Activities:** here you can see the actors' impressions and ideas about their characters and relationships in the play. See the section at the end of this resource pack to explore Power & Status through drama games.



# What does ‘Chigger Foot’ mean?

A chigger is a blood-sucking flea, red or reddish brown, about 1mm long, with a relatively large head and deep belly. ‘Chigger foot’ describes a foot that is infested with chiggers, which burrow into the skin.

*NORMAN: “...His feet. Looked terrible. Trench foot. He wouldn’t take off his boots when it rained as a boy. Afraid of getting chiggers in his feet from the mud. The skin had come off with the socks, the nurse said. They were the first thing they covered when they wrapped his body. Those poor martyred feet.”*

In the play, Norman recalls Roy’s physical state just before he dies. Comparing a foot disease of the Western front to a foot disease from Roy’s childhood in Jamaica makes for a deeply poignant moment, reminding the audience of the youth and innocence of so many soldiers, whose lives were so brutally taken during World War One.



Men of the 10th Brigade who had been in the front line trenches for several days have a foot inspection at Dragon Farm. © IWM.

**Classroom Activities:** Thinking about what Chigger Foot means. Research online photographs of other soldiers in World War One and soldiers at war now. What are the main differences between fighting in the wet, muddy and cold trenches and modern-day war? What were the conditions like for soldiers 100 years ago and now? Present the photographs as a digital scrapbook comparing them (100 years ago) and now (present-day war).

# Historical Context - The Empire

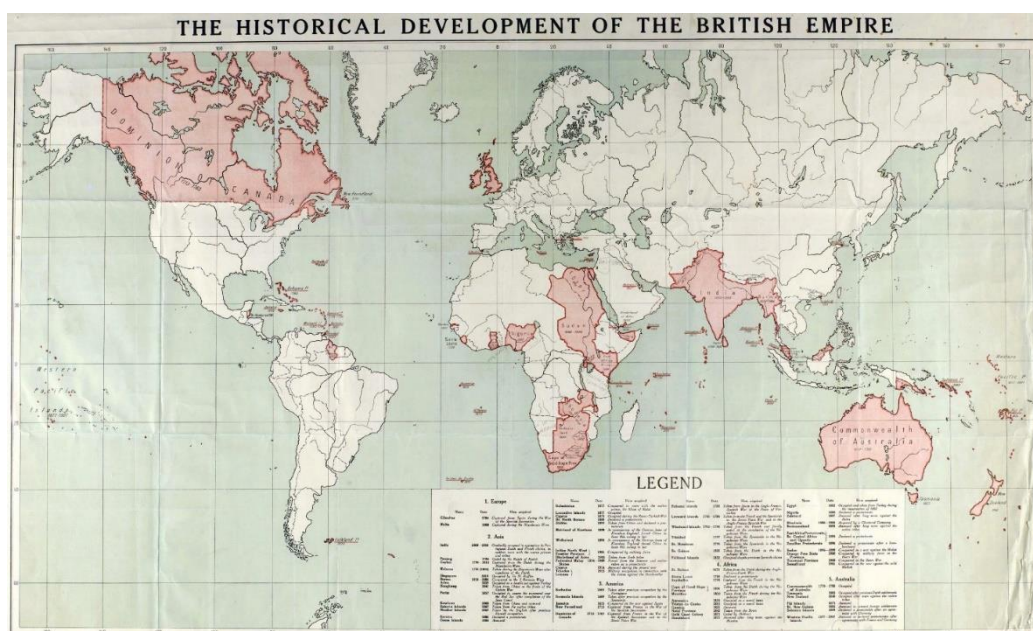
An Empire is a group of countries ruled over by a single monarch or ruling power.

In the 19th Century, Great Britain - often referred to in the play as 'The Mother Country' - had colonies in India, Africa, Canada, Australia and the Caribbean.

Traditionally, the British Empire was seen as a deserved result of Britain's technological, and moral, superiority. However, most people now recognise that Britain's '*cultural imperialism*' was in many ways aggressive and nationalist - lacking respect for cultural differences.

At the time, British people thought that they making a positive impact by bringing Christianity, democracy and British values to the rest of the world. Although there was some benefit to this, many people now view this to be imposing and patronizing, and the change was certainly not welcomed by everyone in the colonies.

After the First World War, it became increasingly difficult for Britain to hold onto her Empire.



**Classroom Activities:** In your class print out a large map or use a google-map and pin-marks. Mark on the map where you, your parents and your grandparents were born. What does the map tell you about modern Britain and how do you think is different from the time of the British Empire?

The war weakened Britain considerably in terms of wealth and military strength. As well as this, attitudes towards the Empire shifted and people began to recognise that Britain had no right to rule over people who wished for independence.

In the 1920s, a strong independence movement, led by Gandhi, started in India, and across the globe there were protests and rebellions against the state.

In 1926, The British Empire was replaced by a voluntary organisation of colonies called The Commonwealth and, by the 1960s, most African and Caribbean colonies had achieved independence.



Map of Jamaica from 1901. mappery.com

**Classroom Activities:** Looking at this map of the island of Jamaica in the Caribbean Sea and thinking about conditions for the soldiers fighting in the trenches on the Western Front, imagine you are one of the soldiers from Jamaica and write a letter home to your Mum or Dad. Use your imagination to describe what it's like in the trenches and how different it is in Europe from the Caribbean. Girls in your class can do this too, even though there are very few records of girls fighting in the trenches.

# Historical Context - WW1

World War One (1914 - 1918) was the first world war to involve nations (28 to be exact) from across the world.



It started when a Serbian nationalist called Gavrilo Princip assassinated Franz Ferdinand - the Archduke of Austria. Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia one month later, which divided Europe into two camps.

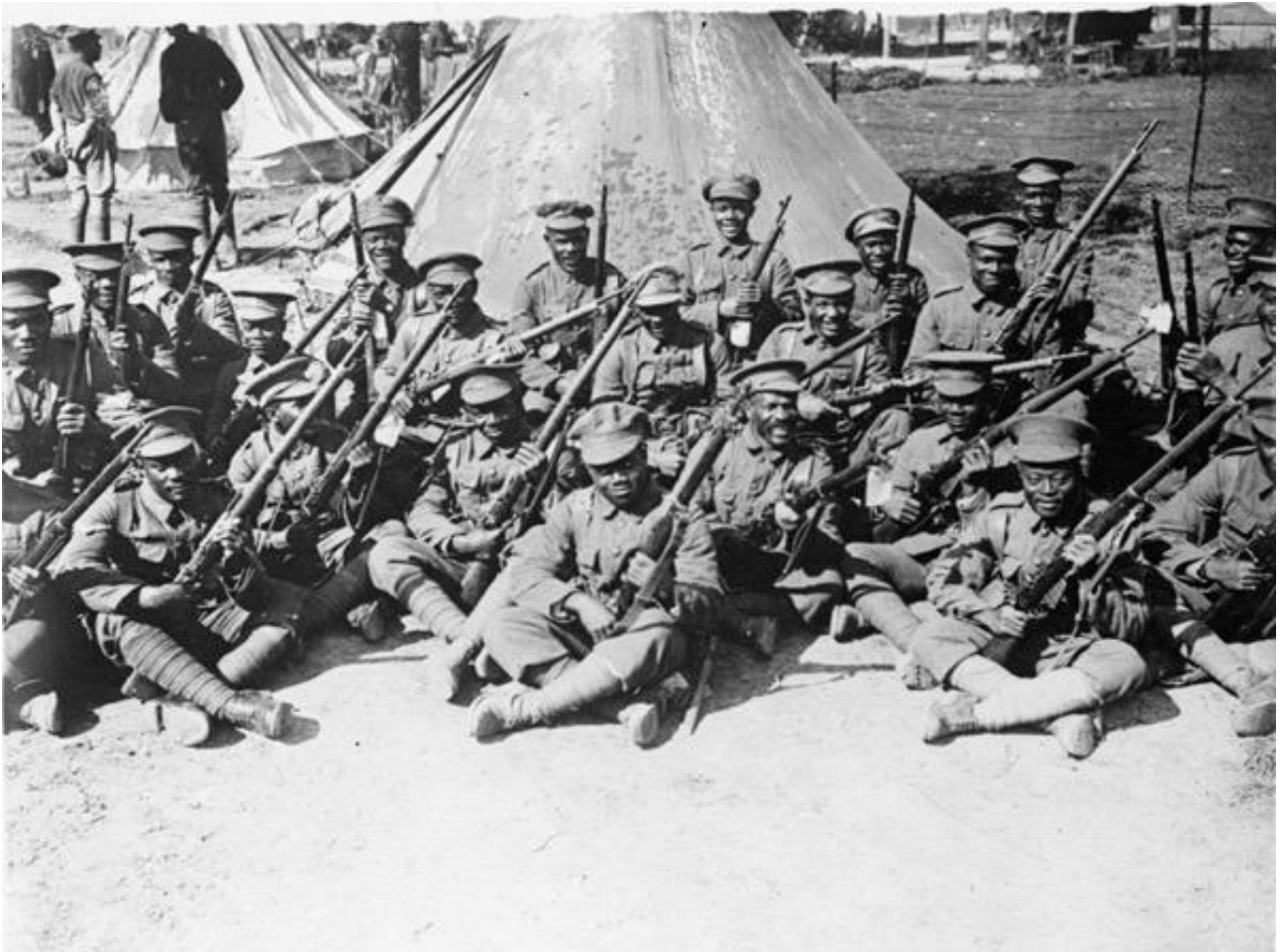
On one side was the Triple Alliance made up of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy and on the other was the Triple Entente of France, Russia and Great Britain. As other countries began to join sides, The Triple Alliance became known as the Central Powers and the Triple Entente became the Allied Forces.

Most of the military action took place in the trenches. These were long, narrow ditches dug into the ground where soldiers would live all day and night. There were Allied trenches on one side and German trenches on the other, with an area of land in the middle called 'No Man's Land.' During times of battle each side would go 'over the top' and fight each other on this big stretch of muddy land. The death toll was extremely high (7 million died during the 4 years of war) and living in the trenches was cold, uncomfortable, dirty and exhausting. Toilets overflowed, rats grew to the size of cats and food rations were basic and scarce.

Many soldiers suffered from 'Trench Foot' as a result of standing in water for so long. The feet would numb, become blue and swell in size. Eventually, blisters and sores would appear, which led to fungal infections, and, if left untreated, this could lead to gangrene, which often required amputation.

15,600 men of the British West Indies Regiment served with the Allied Forces. Jamaica contributed two-thirds of these volunteers.

81 medals for bravery were won by West Indian soldiers.



# Life for Jamaican soldiers on the Western Front

West Indian soldiers were rarely given the chance to fight as equals alongside British and Allied soldiers. Their work largely consisted of manual labour - building roads, digging trenches, cleaning latrines, guarding ammunition dumps - and was strenuous and dangerous in nature; often being carried out within range of German artillery and snipers.

Conditions were hard - the cold and wet climate that was so alien to them not being helped by the lack of appropriate uniforms and equipment. Thrown into a foreign land, thousands of miles away from home, West Indian soldiers not only had to suffer the hardships of the Allied troops - lice, lack of sleep, lack of shelter, diseases and more - but were also subject to racism, ostracization and complete lack of recognition for their services.

In recent years, an effort has been made to remember the forgotten soldiers of the Caribbean and plays like *Chigger Foot Boys* play a vital role in giving a voice to these heroic men of World War One, whose story has so often been left out of the history books.



West Indian Troops stacking shells at Ypres, October 1917. © IWM

# Norman Manley

Norman Manley was born in Jamaica in 1893, as the mixed-race son of a former slave. He was a fiercely intelligent man, winning a prestigious Rhodes Scholarship to the University of Oxford and going on to become one of Jamaica's leading attorneys in the 1920s. He also fought for the Royal Field Artillery in World War One and was one of the leading voices in the fight for Jamaica's universal suffrage and independence.



In 1938, Manley founded the People's National Party (PNP), whose politics supported the trade union movement and championed democratic socialism. He served as Jamaica's first Chief Minister during the 1950s, and it's first Prime Minister from 1959 - 1962.

Both as lawyer and politician, Norman Manley was a fearless advocate of the disempowered and is remembered by many today as a national hero.

Norman Manley helps us to see how much the social and political climate in the West Indies changed after World War One. Jamaican men such as those we meet in *Chigger Foot Boys* began to take steps to empower themselves and create change, resulting in a total upheaval of social structures by the 1940s.

**Classroom Activities:** Norman Manley appears as a character in the play *Chigger Foot Boys*. He is an important and powerful leader and role model for all cultures and races. Look at the newspapers for this week. Who do you think are the important roles models for today? And what makes them special?

# Dominoes

Dominoes have long been an integral part of Caribbean culture and, much like poker in the US, it is possible to win or lose a great deal of money in a Dominoes tournament. It is not always played for money, however, and is a popular pastime throughout Caribbean communities, being played at a wide variety of social occasions - from parties to religious meetings.



Dating as far back as 1120, it is believed that dominoes are derived from dice games. The earliest forms of dominoes were found in China, being introduced to Europe in the 18th century. By the end of the 19th century, dominoes were being boxed and shipped to America, where they quickly spread to Caribbean shores. The nature of the game had changed considerably from the 12th to 19th centuries and there are two main types of dominoes that are now played.

1. Partner dominoes - played by four people in two pairs.
2. Cut throat - each player plays for himself.

In *Chigger Foot Boys* they play partner dominoes, which is the most popular variation of the game.

As we see in the play, domino games are frequently accompanied by the drinking of rum, which often leads to an animated, passionate and loud response from players.

Rum, and the bars serving it, are - like Dominoes - a focal point of Caribbean social life, and Cumper's decision to put a dominoes game in a rum bar at the centre of the *Chigger Foot Boys* narrative is greatly effective in evoking the spirit of pre-war Jamaica. The vibrancy of Medora's bar is a stark contrast to the atmosphere of the Western Front, which helps us to understand just how much of a shock the change from Jamaican civilian to soldier on the Western Front must have been.

**Classroom Activities:** If you have a set of dominoes, pair up and try the game for yourself.



# The Set Design

This is a photograph of a model box set for *Chigger Foot Boys*,

Set design by @ Louis Price.



It is non naturalistic, enabling it to act both as Jamaican rum bar and Western Front.

The map on the wall shows the British Empire in pieces and at the back of the stage are a number of sandbags.

Overhead, naked bulbs hang down, creating a smoky, night-time atmosphere that is highly effective in transporting the audience to the world of the rum bar.

**INDIVIDUAL WORK:** Imagine you are the Set or Costume Designer for the production. Make a mood board which suggests your ideas for the design - think about the period, location and different scenes in the play. Importantly imagine the mood you wish to suggest in the production. You may wish to refer to archival photographs for ideas and inspiration.

**CLASSROOM ACTIVITY:** The image of the model box set is from the Designer of *Chigger Foot Boys*, Louis Price. Classroom activity **GROUP WORK:** What does Louis' design suggest to you? Think particularly of location and time-period?

# Activities

## Reflecting on the Production 1

| Drama, Theatre Studies and English Literature |

Theatre Critics write about plays they have seen at the theatre, to help their readers understand the work. These are “reviews”. Reviews appear in newspapers - such as The Guardian, The Times and The Independent - as well as online through a variety of bloggers.

**WRITING ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE** You will need to justify the following: Why does a director make certain choices? How does the lighting, costume and set help to tell the story? Watch carefully and write notes after the play. These questions will help you:

### THE STAGE

Q: What can you see on the stage?

### COSTUME

Q: What colours and styles are being used?

Q: What else do the costumes tell us about the characters?

Q: What colours and shades of colour are being used?

Q: What levels of brightness are being used and why?

Q: When do the lights change?

### THE PERFORMERS

Q: Which actors do you think were well-cast and why?

Q: Did main characters have a good on-stage relationship? How did their performance help you to understand the play?

Q: How do the actors use the set?

Q: How do the actors relate to the audience?

### THE MUSIC

Q: What did music make you think and feel?

### AND LASTLY BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY

Q: What does the play make you think, feel, want to talk about?

### CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES:

1. Write a short article on the production for a newspaper or an online Blog. When writing, comment on how the actors support the themes of the piece, and how the set design, costumes, and lighting create atmosphere.

2. Create a dramatic TV or radio news report on Chigger Foot Boys.

# Reflecting on the Production 2

| Drama, Theatre Studies and English Literature |

Use this activity to encourage your students to respond to what they have seen onstage and what effect it had on them.

- Divide a flip chart or the whiteboard vertically into two sections.
- On one side write 'Theatrical Devise' and on the other write 'Effect'.
- Start them off with an example.

E.g. **Theatrical Devise:** 'The open bulbs hanging down from the ceiling'

**Effect:** 'It created a smoky, jazzy quality that beautifully evoked the atmosphere of a downtown rum bar in Jamaica'

- Ask the students to put up their hands and talk about their own ideas and responses.
- If they're struggling, ask them what moments in the play they liked best and why.

Areas to look at:

Set

Costume

Lighting

Acting

Direction

Music

Lines from the text

# Power

| Drama and Theatre Studies |

*“Chigger Foot Boys tells the story of unremarkable lives caught up in truly remarkable events. It looks at these events through the eyes not of the powerful, but of the powerless, and points to the moment at which these ordinary people realise that they must create change for themselves. We are in just such a moment now.”* Patricia Cumper.

## Status Game:

Shuffle a deck of cards. Without allowing the reciprocates to see which card they are being given, attach a playing card to each student's forehead - like in the popular name game. Explain that ace is the lowest status and King the highest status. The numbers in between denote a gradual increase in societal status and power.

Ask the students to imagine that they are in a particular shared location. It could be Jamaica, 1914. It could be a shopping centre in the modern day. It could be a match.com meet and greet evening. Or the Western Front during World War 1.

The students can then walk around and interact with each other in a big group improvisation. There could perhaps be an imagined bar area or cafe. You may wish to assign different jobs or activities to different people. Allow them to live in the world of the improvisation for some time. Relationships, tensions and stories may start to arise, which will be informed by how people react to each other based on their playing cards. Other people's reactions will enable the students to get a sense of their own status and their behaviour may change because of this.

After about 15-20 minutes, ask the students to, without looking at their own cards, arrange themselves in a line, from lowest status to highest. They may then look at their cards and see how well they've done.

## Main Activity:

*'LINTON: I found that Garvey leaflet in my kit bag. Mash up right at the bottom. Read it. Read it again. And again on the ship home. Old Marcus Mosiah Garvey had a few things to say. The world changing. Black man have to start think for himself.'*

1. Discuss the following questions with the class and write down key words that come up on a whiteboard or flip chart. These can be used for inspiration during the next phase of the activity.

Questions to consider:

- In what ways can power be used for the greater good?
- In what ways is power used to oppress or cause harm to others?
- In what ways might oppressed or disempowered people empower themselves without using violence?
- Are there any moments in your own life where you have created a positive change for yourself?

2. Ask the students to get into groups of 3 or 4.

Using the key words from the previous activity, and Patricia's quote above, ask each group to create a scene in which one or more of the characters empower themselves in a positive way.

You may wish to bring an additional focus to the work.

Examples of this include:

- Not using words or using a restricted number of words.
- Using moments of freeze frame or slow motion.
- Using different physical levels.
- Using rhythm or percussion instruments to create drama.
- Assigning each student a playing card as in the first activity

Share these scenes with the class and discuss how each of them uniquely brought to life the ability we all have to create change for ourselves.

# Creative Writing Worksheet

| English Literature |

*“There is a rule when writing drama that helps a writer avoid exposition: any inclusion of backstory can only be justified by its importance to the action on stage. I like to think that the obverse applies in our day to day lives. We don’t understand why we do what we do until we understand what went before. Only when we understand the backstory, can we truly take action in the present day.”*

Patricia Cumper

- Choose a character in the play and imagine that they are going to sleep on the night of the Dominoes game. It’s 4am, they’re tired and hazy but they can’t get to sleep. Lying in bed, they start to look back on the events of that day. Then what’s been happening that week, that month, that year, until eventually they start to reflect on moments in their own life from years gone by. Alternatively, you could choose to set this task on the Western Front, in which case the character would be settling down on the cold, damp trench floor to sleep - most likely during the afternoon.
- Write a short story or monologue about their thoughts at this point. How have events from the past informed their characters in the present? Were there any big changes or events that had a lasting effect on the way they see the world?
- Do they have happy memories? Regrets? Do they remember things clearly or struggle to make sense of the past?
- When writing about memories, try to include details of colour, smell, sound, taste and temperature.
- How does your story end? Have they learned something from these reflections? Do they eventually manage to fall asleep? Think about the journey of the piece and how you can best structure it to evoke mood or feeling.

# Research & Bibliography

Further research, online archives and museums you and your students may wish to refer to help gain a deeper understanding of *Chigger Foot Boys*.

**Black Poppies** is a remarkable book which charts the Jamaican and West Indian soldiers in the first World War.

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Black-Poppies-Britains-Community-Great/dp/075249760X>

**The Imperial War Museum Archives**

<http://www.iwm.org.uk/history/the-story-of-the-british-west-indies-regiment-in-the-first-world-war>

**National Army Museum**

<http://www.nam.ac.uk/>

**National Geographic**

<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2014/08/ww1-underground/hadingham-text>

**Black Cultural Archives**

<http://bcaheritage.tumblr.com>

**The Guardian**

<https://www.theguardian.com/law/2010/oct/20/blackhistorymonth-jamaica>

**Britannica**

<https://www.britannica.com/event/World-War-I>

**Black Plays Archive**

<http://www.blackplaysarchive.org.uk/>

**Black Theatre Live**

<http://blacktheatrelive.co.uk/home>

**The West India Committee**

<http://westindiacommittee.org/>

**Barbara Walker**

<http://www.barbarawalker.co.uk/index.php/works/shock-and-awe/>