



## **CHIGGER FOOT BOYS MARKETING PACK**

### **Chigger Foot Boys**

by Patricia Cumper

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# COMPANY CONTACT DETAILS

## **STRONGBACK PRODUCTIONS**

### **ARTISTIC DIRECTORS**

Patricia Cumper

Dominique Le Gendre

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### **PRODUCER**

Pauline Walker

[pauline@strongbackproductions.com](mailto:pauline@strongbackproductions.com)

Tel: 07896 413 575

# SELLING POINTS

Previous production:

- World premiere presented at Tara Theatre, London in 2017 (3-week run).
- Play text published by Oberon Books.
- Leading female actor Suzette Llewellyn nominated for Best Female, The Offies 2017.

The creative team for the production at Tara Theatre:

- Jamaican-born writer Patricia Cumper was Artistic Director of black-led touring company Talawa Theatre (2006-2012). She was awarded an MBE in 2013 for services to the arts. Her work includes plays and novels, and her recent radio dramas for BBC Radio 4 include *Trollope and the Labours of Hercules* and a 10-part adaptation of Toni Morrison's Nobel Prize-winning novel *Beloved*.
- Director Irina Brown is a former Artistic Director of the Tron Theatre, Glasgow (1996-1999). She has directed many theatre and opera productions, that include her work at the National Theatre (multiple award-winning play *Further Than the Furthest Thing* by Zinnie Harris), the Royal Opera House (*Bird of Night* by Dominique Le Gendre), the West End (*Vagina Monologues*), and the Royal Albert Hall (*Orango* at the Proms, 2015). As Artistic Director of the Natural Perspective TC she directed Racine's *Britannicus* (Wilton's Music Hall) and *Jenufa* (Arcola).
- Louis Price, set /costume designer and filmmaker, has worked with such companies as Boy Blue Entertainment at the Barbican (*Unleashed*), The Young Vic (*The Emperor*), Home Manchester (*The Funfair*), BBC Proms (*Orango*), Birmingham Rep (*What Shadows*), Liverpool Playhouse (*Bright Phoenix*) and Schauspielhaus Graz in Austria (*Amphytrion*)
- Trinidadian-born Dominique Le Gendre is a composer and musician. She has written music extensively for theatre, art installations, dance, film, television and radio drama for BBC Radio 3 and 4 and is a former Associate Artist of the Royal Opera House.
- Award-winning lighting designer Kevin Treacy has designed for numerous theatre and opera productions, including Opera Northern Ireland and Sherman Theatre and the Royal Court's upcoming co-production *Killology*.

The Production

- Part of the UK's centennial commemorations of World War One.
- A moving and poignant play about the participation of Caribbean soldiers in WWI based on meticulous research and featuring the story of the Norman Manley who went on to write the constitution of Jamaica.
- This production features authentic folk songs and original compositions and evocative sound design from Dominique Le Gendre.

# TARGET AUDIENCES

This authentic period play will appeal to audiences young and old, from those studying English, Drama and History at school, to those introduced recently to the contribution of Caribbean and Commonwealth soldiers' participation in WWI through television documentaries commemorating the centennial of the war.

- Period drama audiences
- Students studying drama, history and literature – schools, universities and drama schools
- Black, African & Caribbean audiences and groups
- Young people aged 14+
- Audiences of NT Live and other theatrical streamings (e.g. War Horse)
- World War One film audiences (e.g. Steven Spielberg – War Horse; Anthony Hemingway – Red Tails)
- Audiences for Black Theatre Live tours
- Local cinema groups
- Literature groups
- Groups marketing – an accessible,
- Families with older children
- Societies - WWI groups, history fans (blogs, websites)
- Local drama groups
- Dominoes groups
- Rum societies

The production is supported by an Education Resource Pack for National Curriculum KS3 & K4.

# TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

- A show for small to mid-scale theatres/venues.
- Six performers.
- Portable, using a variety of props.
- Requires good LX and sound.

# SUGGESTED PRESS ANGLES AND PROMOTIONS

## Press Angles

- Part of national centennial celebrations
- Female-led theatre company
- Connections with local WWI societies

## Competition ideas

- Set up a local display and ticket competition with local bookshops
- Social Media competition to win a signed poster – do contact us prior to the tour and we can arrange this for you.

## ARTICLES OF INTEREST

“They fought together and they fell together, and together they defended the freedoms we enjoy today.” Former Prime Minister David Cameron

<http://www.ww1commonwealthcontribution.org/>

Soldiers from different nations

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01p33cp>

Experiences of colonial troops

<https://www.bl.uk/world-war-one/articles/colonial-troops>

## MARKETING RESOURCES AVAILABLE

**Chigger Foot Boys** [web page](#).

### **Available Now:**

- Poster image in jpg and psd
- Educational pack for schools
- Production photos
- Short film with excerpts from the play with contributions from the writer, director and audience feedback
- Play text published by Oberon Books

# BOX OFFICE BRIEFING NOTES

**Who is presenting it?**

StrongBack Productions

**Who wrote and directed it?**

by Patricia Cumper

Directed by Irina Brown

**What is it about?**

Set in a rum bar by the docks in Kingston, Jamaica 1914. Oblivious of the impact that the distant war in Europe will have on them, their island and the future of the British Empire, a soldier, a hunter, a scholar and a lover are playing a game of dominoes whilst trapped by a thunderstorm. Amongst them is a young Norman Manley, future statesman and National Hero of Jamaica. In a series of flash forwards, *Chigger Foot Boys* delves into the fate that awaits them and many other Jamaicans who volunteered and fought on the fronts of World War One.

**What is the running time?**

1 Hour, 25 Minutes (approx.)

**Who might like it?**

Suitable for 14+. Suited particularly to lovers of WWI stories, period plays, lovers of drama, English and history and Black, African & Caribbean audiences.

**Is the show suitable for children/young people?**

14+

# SHOW COPY

StrongBack Productions presents

## **Chigger Foot Boys**

by Patricia Cumper

Directed by Irina Brown

Chigger Foot Boys is an intoxicating cocktail of love, duty, death and dominoes.

Inspired by true events in the lives of Jamaicans who fought in World War One, the action takes place in a rum bar in Kingston, Jamaica on the Western Front, Egypt, Italy and Oxford.

#ChiggerFootBoys @StrongBackProd

Age guidance 14+



# SAMPLE DIRECT MAIL LETTER

Dear,

**The (name of theatre) hosts *Chigger Foot Boys* as part of the centennial commemorations of WWI.**

We don't think you'll want to miss this poignant and moving drama coming to (name of theatre) from (dates).

Chigger Foot Boys is an intoxicating cocktail of love, duty, death and dominoes.

Inspired by true events in the lives of Jamaicans who fought in World War One, the action takes place in a rum bar in Kingston, Jamaica on the Western Front, Egypt, Italy and Oxford.

**"Richly textured play delivered with clarity and touchingly performed"**

**The Stage ★★★★★**

Directed by Irina Brown, (Artistic Director of the Tron Theatre, Glasgow, 1996-1999; multiple award-winning play *Further Than the Furthest Thing* by Zinnie Harris, National Theatre; *Bird of Night* by Dominique Le Gendre, the Royal Opera House; *Vagina Monologues*, the West End) this engaging play delves into the fate that awaits Jamaicans and many others who volunteered and fought on the fronts of World War One.

**"A worthwhile reminder that as we commemorate the First World War, it was indeed a *world* war and that it was by coming together that victory was achieved. We're a better nation...when we remember, and recognise, the spirit of collaboration."**

**Britishtheatre.com ★★★★★**

We are thrilled to welcome StrongBack Productions seminal play as part of the centennial commemorations of WWI.

**Tickets for *Chigger Foot Boys* are £price - £price and available from the Box Office on (phone number) or online at (website) #ChiggerFootBoys.**

I do hope you are able to join us.

Yours sincerely,

# SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

**StrongBack Productions** present the untold stories of young Jamaican soldiers as the world continues to reflect upon the four years of the First World War centenary

**Written by Patricia Cumper | Directed by Irina Brown**

**Patricia Cumper, renowned playwright and former Artistic Director of Talawa Theatre, draws inspiration from personal and historical stories in her latest play**, set in a rum bar by the docks in Kingston, Jamaica 1914. Oblivious of the impact that the distant war in Europe will have on them, their island and the future of the British Empire, a soldier, a hunter, a scholar and a lover are playing a game of dominoes whilst trapped by a thunderstorm. Amongst them is a young Norman Manley, future statesman and National Hero of Jamaica. In a series of flash forwards, *Chigger Foot Boys* delves into the fate that awaits them and many other Jamaicans who volunteered and fought on the fronts of World War One.

**Director Irina Brown, is a former Artistic Director of the Tron Theatre, Glasgow (1996-1999).** She has directed many theatre and opera productions, that include her work at the National Theatre (multiple award winning play *Further Than the Furthest Thing* by Zinnie Harris), the Royal Opera House (*Bird of Night* by Dominique Le Gendre), the West End (*Vagina Monologues*), and the Royal Albert Hall (*Orango* at the Proms, 2015). As Artistic Director of the Natural Perspective TC, she directed Racine's *Britannicus* (Wilton's Music Hall) and *Jenufa* (Arcola).

The cast includes John Leader who is currently performing in the National Theatre's critically acclaimed *Peter Pan* and has previously toured with *War Horse*, and Suzette Llewellyn, who was one of the founding members of innovative theatre troupe BiBi Crew, dedicated to producing new writing from an African-Caribbean perspective. They are joined by TV and theatre veteran Stanley J Browne, Jamaican born emerging actor Jonathan Chambers, actor and director Matthew Truesmith, and Ike Bennett, who makes his professional debut before graduating this year from The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama

**StrongBack Productions infuse Caribbean synergies into British Theatre and the performing Arts, developing and creating new work and adaptations for a wide range of audiences.** Artistic directors Patricia Cumper and Dominique Le Gendre with Producer Pauline Walker channel their shared passion for telling stories towards creating work that entertains and educates audiences while celebrating Britain's rich diversity. Their work, together and separately, has won critical acclaim both in the UK and the Caribbean. Rooted in Caribbean culture and music and with a strong understanding of the role of culture in postcolonial societies, they embrace the complex and vibrant reality of diverse Britain, and draw inspiration from the communities from around the world that contribute to the day to day life of the nation, creating partnerships and performances within communities that are overlooked. *Berwick Sound Waite and Sea 2015*, engaged over 200 musicians of all ages to tell stories through music, of Berwick-upon-Tweed as the town celebrated their 900<sup>th</sup> anniversary. *Chigger Foot Boys* follows StrongBack Productions' storytelling evenings at Brixton East and Rich Mix, *Rude Gyals* and *Strong Back Tales*, which

featured stories from Black and Bangladeshi women, with performers including Martina Laird and Leeza Gazi of Komala Collective.

Jamaican-born **Patricia Cumper** was Artistic Director of black-led touring company Talawa Theatre (2006-2012), and was awarded an MBE in 2013 for services to the arts. Her work includes plays and novels, and her recent radio dramas for BBC Radio 4 include *Trollope and the Labours of Hercules* and a 10 part adaptation of Toni Morrison's Nobel Prize-winning novel *Beloved*. *Chigger Foot Boys* is produced by **Pauline Walker**, who has brought shows to Rich Mix, Talawa Studio and Swan Wharf, and is Creative Producer of The Alfred Fagon Award. Music and sound design is by StrongBack Productions co-founder and composer **Dominique Le Gendre**, who has written music extensively for theatre, art installations, dance, film, television and radio drama for BBC Radio 3 and 4 and is a former Associate Artist of the Royal Opera House.

The creative team includes Louis Price, set /costume designer and filmmaker, who has worked with such companies as Boy Blue Entertainment at the Barbican (Unleashed), The Young Vic (The Emperor), Home Manchester (The Funfair), BBC Proms (Orango), Birmingham Rep (What Shadows), Liverpool Playhouse (Bright Phoenix), and Schauspielhaus Graz in Austria (Amphytrion) as well as an award-winning lighting designer Kevin Treacy who has designed for numerous theatre and opera productions, including Opera Northern Ireland and Sherman Theatre and the Royal Court's upcoming co-production *Killology*.

@StrongBackProd | #ChiggerFootBoys | [strongbackproductions.com](http://strongbackproductions.com)

**Running Time: 120 minutes | Suitable for ages 14+**

Company Information

**Directed by** Irina Brown

**Written by** Patricia Cumper

**Designed by** Louis Price

**Music and Sound Design by** Dominique Le Gendre

**Lighting Design by** Kevin Treacy

**Production Management by** Shaz McGee

**Produced by** Pauline Walker

PATRICIA CUMPER  
Playwrights note published in play text by  
Oberon Books

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 galvanised 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.

Patricia Cumper  
January 2016

# CHIGGER FOOT BOYS PRESS QUOTES

★★★★

"Cumper's narrative slides through time and space to reveal the fates of each character, but her trump card is the language. The poetry of colloquialism and rhythm of dialect combine to establish an evocative sense of place and time."

"A [sic] richly textured play delivered with clarity and touchingly performed"

**The Stage**



★★★★

"Cumper's poetic script is a narrative woven from true events. It also serves to remind us that the Great War was a world event, one we Brits too often want to distil into Journey's End, War Horse, Sassoon and Blackadder. Chigger Foot Boys is of such cultural significance because it places people of colour firmly in a period context as opposed to the all too frequent gritty, urban dramas."

**Britishtheatre.com**



★★★★

"The past may be another country, but to understand the present you need to understand that country as it was and not as the myth would have it."

**Reviews Gate**





“The little known tale of the Jamaican contribution to First World War victory, its tragedies and consequences, is a story that deserves exploration. Turning Chigger Foot Boy from an insult into a term of honour, the Chigger Foot Boys is a dramatically satisfying and thought-provoking green light play.”

**Traffic Light Theatre Goer**

“The show is powerful, layered and tinged with sadness.”

**A Younger Theatre**

“A worthwhile reminder that as we commemorate the First World War, it was indeed a *world* war and that it was by coming together that victory was achieved. We're a better nation...when we remember, and recognise, the spirit of collaboration.”

**There Ought To Be Clowns**

“The suppression of diverse voices is creating a ‘bold theatre’; a theatre that is at the forefront of challenging stereotypes, uncovering hidden narratives and refusing to compromise in its dramatic content.”

**CooknCurry Blog**



Suzette Llewellyn

**Hot Picks Press and Radio**

Lyn Gardener, [The Guardian](#)

[Time Out](#)

[Loose Ends](#), BBC Radio 4, 18 February 2017

Patricia Cumper on [BBC Radio London](#), 27 February 2017



## ABOUT STRONGBACK PRODUCTIONS

StrongBack Productions infuse Caribbean synergies into British Theatre and the performing Arts, developing and creating new work and adaptations for a wide range of audiences. Artistic directors Patricia Cumper and Dominique Le Gendre with Producer Pauline Walker channel their shared passion for telling stories towards creating work that entertains and educates audiences while celebrating Britain's rich diversity. Their work, together and separately, has won critical acclaim both in the UK and the Caribbean.

Rooted in Caribbean culture and music and with a strong understanding of the role of culture in postcolonial societies, they embrace the complex and vibrant reality of diverse Britain, and draw inspiration from the communities from around the world that contribute to the day to day life of the nation, creating partnerships and performances within communities that are overlooked. *Berwick Sound Waite and Sea 2015*, engaged over 200 musicians of all ages to tell stories through music, of Berwick-upon-Tweed as the town celebrated their 900<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

*Chigger Foot Boys* follows StrongBack Productions' storytelling evenings at Brixton East and Rich Mix, *Rude Gyals* and *Strong Back Tales*, which featured stories from Black and Bangladeshi women, with performers including Martina Laird and Leeza Gazi of Komala Collective.