



DIGGERS

By Donna-Michelle St. Bernard

A co-production with Black Theatre Workshop

Student Matinee

Wednesday,

February 29, 11 am

The perfect theatrical experience for Black History Month

There are those who stand apart by the merit of the work they do – whether they want to or not. Abdul and Solomon introduce newbie Bai to the intricacies and dignity of gravedigging for the town down the hill. But when illness hits the town in Sierra Leone, the three must make the best of a bad situation as their workload increases and their supports from the community diminish. Full of song, laughter, tears and beautiful humanity, *Diggers* is a tribute to essential workers.

A message from the playwright:

Sierra Leone (“Lion Mountains”) is located on the West Coast of Africa, open to the sea via the natural harbour in the capital city, Freetown. It is a nation rich in culture and minerals, home to 18 indigenous peoples admixed with Portuguese settlers and formerly enslaved freedmen from England, Jamaica and Nova Scotia.

In Sierra Leone, as elsewhere, gravediggers’ work persists through pandemic, through seasonal flooding, Ebola outbreak and the casualties of political upheaval. Like all essential workers, they don’t do it because they are made for it, or because it is easy, but because it needs to be done and they are willing. Most of us will eventually require their labour. We must be willing to look at their lives.

Despite the rhetoric about our collective experience, the people who bear the weight of our worst times are often given platitudes without platforms. Teachers, nurses, sanitation engineers, soldiers... Contrary to popular belief, there is not a “type” of person made capable of this. Of deprivation, isolation, wartime living, yucky work. There isn’t a type of person incapable of it. There is only us: what we choose to do, what we must do, what we can make possible for each other.

Co-commissioned by BTW and PTE, *Diggers* is a part of the **54ology**, a project in which a new performance work is inspired by a story from each of Africa’s 54 nation states. These stories originate in Africa, but they come to life here, on Turtle Island by the collective effort of many minds. I hope that this story speaks to you, here, now.

In addition to providing a memorable theatre experience, *Diggers* will open the door to a multitude of discussion topics in your classroom.

Suitable for Grade 9 +

Study Guide provided, compiled by Black Theatre Workshop

Advisory - Discussion of death and illness, some strong language

Tickets: \$11 per student

Teachers with a group of 25+ attend free

To book: Email haanita@pte.mb.ca

OR call Haanita Seval
Director of Marketing
(204) 298-6658



This is a live performance in
PTE’s Mainstage Theatre
3rd Floor, Portage Place