

JUST AN ORDINARY LAWYER. A play, with songs.

Written and performed by Tayo Aluko, with Gus Carmichael, piano
Spotlites @ Edinburgh Fringe. Thursday 4 August 2016 (World Première)

"The world seemed to be disintegrating around us," is one of the first lines delivered by Tunji Şowande, looking back at 1968 from the 1980s. It is sobering that those words and the stories he tells resonate so strongly with today's situation. As one watches the horrors going on round the world, one is struck by how the reporting and analysis leave out (often deliberately) the history behind the conflicts. It is my intention to make a modest contribution to the fight against this ignorance, both by highlighting why nationals of former imperialist powers need to shed their continuing arrogance, and by presenting stories of those who heroically fought against occupation, injustice, intolerance and racism, particularly in the context of Africa and the Diaspora. However, as I hope the play demonstrates, we make little progress if we don't recognise the humanity in all others, recognising that *their* struggles are *our* struggles too, whoever *they* or *we* are. One may be horrified by the prospect of who may end up leading the most militarily powerful country in the world in the coming years, but as the play reminds us, the world has seen pretty awful situations before, and people have triumphed, not least through art and love – truly the most precious, effective, natural and enduring weapons and gifts we possess, which we really need more of.

Tayo Aluko. Writer, Performer. Tayo was born in Nigeria, and now lives in Liverpool. He worked previously as an architect and property developer, with a special but as yet frustrated interest in eco-friendly construction. He has fronted orchestras as baritone soloist in concert halls, and has also performed lead roles in operas and musicals. His first play, *CALL MR ROBESON* has won numerous awards at festivals in the UK and Canada, as well as highly favourable reviews in the press – most notably in the Guardian and on BBC Radio 4. He has toured the play around the UK, the USA, Canada, Jamaica and Nigeria. He also delivers a lecture/concert called *PAUL ROBESON – THE GIANT, IN A NUTSHELL*, and another one titled *FROM BLACK AFRICA TO THE WHITE HOUSE*: a talk about Black Political Resistance, illustrated with spirituals. He researched, wrote and narrated to camera a piece on West African History before the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, which forms 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 been published in *The Guardian*, *The Morning Star*, *NERVE Magazine*, *Modern Ghana* and *Searchlight Magazine*. *LAWYER* is his second full-length play.

Amanda Huxtable, Director. Amanda Huxtable Theatre Director/Producer trained at the Manchester Metropolitan University and Leeds University respectfully. This led to her lifelong commitment to both the Social Sciences and the Performing Arts. Together with Marcia Layne she runs Hidden Gems Productions a Theatre Company, Black British and Bold. Amanda also continues to build her portfolio of freelance directing work across the UK.

Angus Carmichael, Piano. Edinburgh born pianist/accompanist, Gus Carmichael B.Mus/P.G.C.E, studied piano with Audrey Innes from St Mary's Music School and David Parkhouse from London. His musical interests and styles are very broad. He was accompanist for the folk singer Mary Sandeman, worked as session keyboard player with the late Billy Mackenzie and has accompanied Rowan Atkinson. He performs concerts for Music in Hospitals, works with performing arts students at Edinburgh College, accompanies singers/instrumentalists, plays in a jazz quartet and teaches piano.

Dramaturgy: Esther Wilson; **Set Design:** Emma Williams; **Lighting Design:** Mark Loudon;
Sound Design: Noel Inyang and Tayo Aluko; **Sound and Lighting Technician:** Anaïs Mauriet

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