

JUST AN ORDINARY LAWYER. A play, with songs.

Written and performed by Tayo Aluko, with David Carlston Williams, piano

Directed by Amanda Huxtable, Designed by Emma Williams

Bolton Socialist Club, Friday 26 October 2016

Greetings, welcome. Dangerous times are in store for our brothers and sisters across the Big Pond. There is not only the unenviable choice they have to make about who will be their next leader, but also the fact that foreigners are once more entering their territory, bringing disease, violence and destruction in their wake. The invaders I refer to are not Mexicans or other nationals seeking safety and opportunity in the so-called Land of the Free, but oil companies who have recently been seen using para-military force against Native Americans and their supporters trying to block the laying of the oil pipeline across their sacred territories in North Dakota. It is impressive how bravely and non-violently these people have conducted themselves in the face of corporate and state violence, and how well they have argued their case (seemingly to no avail) that great environmental, spiritual and physical damage will be the inevitable result of this pipeline. However, despite centuries' worth of history that teaches us that people who live simply and are better connected to the earth are infinitely wiser than the rest of us as they argue that people and water are much more precious than money and oil, the state carries on with its rapacious behaviour. People of African descent should have little difficulty in identifying with the Native Americans, having seen their Mother Continent violated in this way for centuries, and this play is an attempt to help reconstruct the stories firstly of exploitation that has led to all sorts of ills that have befallen Africa and her peoples as they have been scattered around the globe, and secondly to pay tribute to some of the heroic figures that resisted the forces of tyranny. Their stories and those of similar people around the world inspire us to join and support those who continue to resist all forms of exploitation in whatever way we can. It may indeed still be worth praying for the future of a planet where in the most militarily powerful nation, the best democracy money can buy somehow manages to deny its wisest, most peace-loving and caring citizens (not to talk of the most vulnerable) the peace and power they deserve. I hope you enjoy the show.

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 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*. *JUST AN ORDINARY LAWYER* is his second full-length play, and was premiered at this year's Edinburgh Fringe.

David C Williams, Piano. David studied at The Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester. He has been employed as Director of Music of Holy Innocents Church, Fallowfield and as School Organist at Bury Church of England High School. He has also been Director Music at St. Paul's Parish Church, Royton. David has got a teaching degree from Edge Hill University for a P.G.C.E in secondary music teaching.

Amanda Huxtable, Director. Amanda trained at Manchester Metropolitan University, Recreational Arts in the Community course, followed by studying for a BA Degree in Communications and Cultural Studies at The University of Leeds. She continues to strengthen her practice by studying Social Sciences and The Arts Past and Present at the Open University. Amanda served as Artistic Director of Yorkshire Women Theatre Company in Leeds from 2004-2009. She is building her portfolio of freelance directing work across the UK. She also enjoys being part of a writer-and-director team with Marcia Layne, and together they run Hidden Gems Productions, a theatre company committed to telling rarely told Black British Stories: Black British and Bold. Theatre Directing credits for Hidden Gems tours 2010 -2016 include: Bag Lady, Somebody's Son, Lost & Found, The Yellow Doctress - all by Marcia Layne. Freelance Director credits include: The Promise, by Chris Cooper (Belgrade Theatre Tour), The Dressmaker's Gift, by Anita Franklin (Liverpool's Write Now International Festival), Totally Over You, by Mark Ravenhill (Lawrence Batley Theatre), Continent Chop Chop, by Virtual Migrants, HD100 (Chol Theatre). She was recently Associate Director on Wakefield Mysteries, adapted by Nick Lane (Theatre Royal Wakefield), and is an Artistic Associate at Hull Truck.

Emma Williams, Designer. Emma trained as a theatre designer at Wimbledon School of Art and has worked extensively for touring companies, most recently with Hidden Gems on "The Yellow Doctress", "HD100" for Chol at the Lawrence Batley theatre, both directed by Amanda Huxtable: "Iyalode of Eti", Utopia Theatre; "Molly's Marvellous Moustache", Fidget and "You Forgot the Mince" Imagine Theatre. Designs for the West Yorkshire Playhouse between 2003-2015 include: "Immune"; "Nine Lives"; "Refugee Boy"; "You The Player", co-production with Look Left Look Right; "Scuffer"; "Crap Dad"; "Two Tracks and Text Me"; "Runaway Diamonds"; "Broken Angel"; "Sunbeam Terrace"; "Huddersfield"; "The Dutiful Daughter"-co-production with Szechuan People's Theatre, Chengdu, China; "Coming Around Again"; "The Elves and The Shoemakers"; "Pinocchio"; "The Magic Paintbrush" and the original version of "The Yellow Doctress". Other designs include "One Among Millions", co-pro between RJC Youth Dance and Leeds University, 2016; "Brief Encounters @ Bradford Interchange, a site-specific piece for Freedom Studios; "Somebody's Son", Hidden Gems; "Strawberries in January" Traverse, Edinburgh; "The Shoe", Polka Theatre; "The Swing Left" Unlimited Theatre; "Small Objects of Desire"; Soho Poly Theatre. Opera credits include: "Siroe" Royal College of Music; "Partenope"; Admeto"; "Alceste" all for Cambridge Handel Opera at New Hall Cambridge; "La Cenerentola"; "The Tales of Hoffman" and "Genevieve de Brabant", French Institute, London.

Esther Wilson, Dramaturg. Esther writes for stage, TV & radio. Her first R4 play 'Hiding Leonard Cohen' won a Mental Health in Media award. The Heroic Pursuits of Darleen Fyles is an on-going series for Woman's Hour on R4. Her stage play 'Soulskin' toured nationally with Red Ladder. She was lead writer on the award-winning 'Unprotected'. 'Ten Tiny Toes' was shortlisted for a TMA award. In Collaboration with Paula Simms, Esther worked on 'The Quiet Little Englishman', set in a disused cinema, for Liverpool's Capital of Culture. The piece was hugely ambitious and critically acclaimed. The sequel to the R3 version of Tony Teardrop was commissioned by R4. Esther's TV work includes: Jimmy McGovern's The Street (RTS award for best newcomer), Accused, Moving On, Call the Midwife and The White Princess.

Lighting Design: Mark Loudon; **Sound Design:** Noel Inyang and Tayo Aluko

Forthcoming Performances Include

Just An Ordinary Lawyer: Oct 25: Ustionv Studio, Theatre Royal, Bath;

Feb 2: Intrepid Theatre, Victoria, BC, Canada.

Call Mr. Robeson: Nov 13 – 22: Tour of North West Territories, Canada. **Nov 25:** Centre Stage, Surrey, BC; **Dec 2:** Lyman Center, New Haven, CT; **Feb 4:** ACT Arts Centre, Maple Ridge, BC, Canada; **Feb 11:** Union County Performing Arts Centre, Rahway, NJ; **Feb 16 – 18:** Evergreen Cultural Centre, Coquitlam, BC, Canada;

Feb 28: Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY

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