

# JUST AN ORDINARY LAWYER. A play, with songs.

Written and performed by Tayo Aluko, with Thomas Kell, piano

Directed by Amanda Huxtable, Designed by Emma Williams

Theatro Technis, London, January 28, 2017

**Greetings, welcome.** Alternative Facts are being offered by the office of the new President of the United States for what has been going on recently in his country and around the world. We have all seen how powerful alternative truths can be, for enough of them were told for so long during the campaign that one massive inconvenient truth – that of the candidate’s recorded confession (boasts) about his historical abuse of women was insufficient to prevent enough of his countrymen (and women!) from voting in such huge numbers that he now holds the most powerful and dangerous office in the world. Another inconvenient truth that his people have probably decided to ignore is the millions of women, men and children who went out onto the streets in cities and towns around the world to express their displeasure at the fact that such a man now occupies the White House. Social and other media have recorded that truth for posterity, and it will be difficult to deny or ignore for long. Going back in history, other truths have remained suppressed more successfully, particularly those to do with Trans-Atlantic Slavery, Colonialism and neo-colonialism, and the alternative truths that abound are that Africa and the Diaspora are in the state they are in today because of corruption, incompetence and other reasons. The narrative that the West has always been (or is now) a force for good has been believed by too many people all over the world for too long, and the persistence of that narrative serves only to continue the grief, pain and injustice that far too many people have endured. This play is an attempt to contribute to setting some of the record straight, to pay tribute to the many people who tried to do the same, and/or fought to win the relative freedoms that we enjoy today, and finally to inspire more of us to play our part in the struggles that lie ahead, that have become even more urgent, given the turn of events on the other side of the Atlantic from here. 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*.

**Thomas Kell, Piano.** Thomas Kell is a musician and arts producer, with a particular interest in African theatre. He was the Administrative Director of Tiata Fahodzi, working, successively with Artistic Directors Femi Elufowoju, jr, Lucian Msamati and Natalie Ibu. He was the Chair of Pursued by a Bear Theatre Company for over ten years and is currently the Consultant Producer at Tangle Theatre and Advisor to The Art Machine and Faith Drama. Thomas is Director of Music for the churches of Our Most Holy Redeemer, Exmouth Market and St Mark’s Myddelton Square, both in Clerkenwell. After school Thomas studied music in Görlitz, Germany before taking up the Organ Scholarship at Trinity College, Oxford where he was responsible for supervising the musical celebrations for the tercentenary of the Chapel. Thomas has never been to Nigeria but is deeply grateful to the many artists, such as Tayo Aluko, whose skill and talent make him feel as if he has!

**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 Theatre, under the Arts Council's Changemakers Programme.

**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: Feb 2:** Intrepid Theatre, Victoria, BC, Canada  
**April 20:** Theatre Royal, Bury St. Edmunds; **May 30, 31:** Manchester Central Library;  
**June 3, 4:** Marlborough Theatre, Brighton; **June 8:** CAST in Doncaster

**Call Mr. Robeson: 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

### **Tayo Aluko & Friends**

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