

JUST AN ORDINARY LAWYER. A play, with songs.

Written and performed by Tayo Aluko, with Colin Hazel, piano

Directed by Amanda Huxtable, Designed by Emma Williams

Theatre Royal, Bury St. Edmunds. Thursday April 20, 2017

Greetings, welcome. “Vote for Labour, and the UK will become a banana republic, like Venezuela!” I predict it won’t be long before that becomes part of the Tories’ rhetoric in the election campaign over the next few weeks. The current leadership in that South American former beacon of socialism argue that their country’s travails can be directly attributed to the USA’s meddling. They also suspect that their former leader, Hugo Chavez, whose death precipitated the dramatic decline of the country was actually slowly assassinated by the Americans. That may not be as far-fetched as many may think, and as this play illustrates, the US, and our beloved country have a long history of that sort of thing. Jeremy Corbyn can therefore be grateful that what he is suffering at the hands of the establishment is nothing more than total media bias, misrepresentation and dismissal as a loser. The tens of thousands who voted him into the leadership of the Labour Party (twice) also are dismissed, even by colleagues in his parliamentary party, as lunatic extremists. So too it was with those who supported liberation struggles in Africa and the Diaspora, a few of whom are remembered in this new play. What I hope to achieve with it is to remind us of the history of this country’s malignant involvement in Africa, and also the bravery of many people in the affected countries (and here) in resisting those evil forces. They can serve as an inspiration in the fight that we face in the few weeks leading up to the next election, because they overcame even larger obstacles than those that are currently stacked against opposition parties here. Few politicians have demonstrated as much as Jeremy Corbyn has, a total commitment to the liberation of oppressed peoples in other countries, or understood and communicated who in these parts it is that orchestrating the mayhem and exploitation, and that is why he is seen as a danger to the establishment, and why so much energy has been devoted to vilifying and denigrating him. This of course is only the opinion of one lowly individual on the fringes of the arts, but there are many more out there who share this view, and I am grateful for this opportunity to state my position unashamedly and without fear, in the hope that all of us who do so provide a strong backing chorus to the man and the party who, in our opinion, represent the best choice for the people of this country, and for the peace and stability of the rest of the world. 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*.

Colin Hazel, Piano

Colin Hazel graduated with a music degree from the University of Nottingham he worked for two years as a multi-instrumentalist in Giffords Circus, a touring company that combines circus, theatre and live music. Since then he has been keyboardist and singer with a variety of bands, cabaret performer, pianist and occasional MD for theatre shows. He is currently editing and arranging a book of keyboard music by historic female composers.

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: April 21: Threlkeld Village Hall; **May 1:** Theatro Technis, London;
May 14: Doncaster United & Free Christian Church; **May 30, 31:** Manchester Central Library;
June 3, 4: Marlborough Theatre, Brighton; **June 11:** The Place, Bedford;
July 12, 14, 16: Buxton Fringe Festival

Call Mr. Robeson: April 29: Chelmarsh Village Hall; **May 1:** Theatro Technis, London;
May 13: Crich Glebe Field Centre; **June 10:** Leominster Festival; **July 6 – 8:** Tara Theatre, London;
July 13,15,16: Buxton Fringe Festival

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