

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

**Written and performed by Tayo Aluko, with Timothy Thornton, piano**

**Marlborough Theatre, Brighton. Sat, Sun, 3, 4 June, 2017**

**Greetings, welcome.** Any responsible parent hopes that their offspring will achieve success and do good things. It is an even greater blessing when one knows that one's children and grandchildren are proud of one's achievements and legacy. So it must be for the grandson of Basil D'Oliveira, who happens to be in Brighton playing for Worcestershire against Sussex, and whom I had the pleasure of meeting for the first time on Friday. Worcestershire fans are still proud to have had such an illustrious player in the history of the club, notwithstanding the fact that his historic contribution to the game and to the world was made so quietly. Contrast that with the legacy to be inherited by the offspring of the 45<sup>th</sup> president of the USA, and one thinks particularly of the youngest son. Not only is he already aware of the fact that his father is known as "Embarrassment-in-Chief," but his recent action on climate change has meant that the boy's generation will have even harder, more dangerous life conditions to tackle as in adulthood. Several generations of Africans are similarly burdened with the legacy of many embarrassments we have had as leaders in the past, many of them installed with the connivance and meddling of politicians and business people from the West. If anybody had any doubts that that kind of thing happened, this play will hopefully dispel those, and cause them to examine the conflicts going on in Africa and other parts of the world today with a little more scepticism, and with the understanding that what passes for democracy in many parts of the world is often anything but. Look too at the processes that led to us having the leader we have here at present. Who actually *elected* her to this office? Thankfully, we have the chance of making major changes in this country right now, and choosing between one installed leader who appears to have an embarrassingly compliant relationship with the world's least popular politician, and one whose popularity among literally millions of all generations is down to the fact that he is a rare thing in politics – if he is saying something, chances are he actually believes it, and that it is true. The fact that he is unafraid of making the historical links between interventionist actions of Western governments in other parts of the world and what happened on the streets of Manchester the other day make him the man for me, as does the photo of him being arrested protesting against Apartheid in the 1980s. I wouldn't presume to suggest how you should vote in Brighton, but you can judge politicians on their record. 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 such operas and musicals as *Nabucco*, *Kiss Me Kate* and *Anything Goes*. 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, including New York's Carnegie Hall in 2012. He 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 developed a piece titled *WHAT HAPPENS?* featuring the writings of African American Langston Hughes, for performance with live jazz accompaniment. He has been published in *The Guardian*, *The Morning Star*, *NERVE Magazine*, *Modern Ghana* and *Searchlight Magazine*. *JUST AN ORDINARY LAWYER* premiered at the Edinburgh Fringe in August 2016, and will feature in the National Black Theatre Festival in Winston-Salem, USA, later this year.

**Timothy Thornton, Piano.** Timothy is a composer, pianist, and writer, based in Brighton. He is interested in queer writing about water, cities, petrol, and ghosts, and in live music, done through collaboration, signalling, and gesture. His poetry recently appeared in *Controlled Explosions*, the second volume of the resurrected *Penguin Modern Poets* series. For the last decade he has been a member of various chamber ensembles (with special study of contemporary and baroque performance), a piano teacher, a choral director, an accompanist, and occasionally a solo recitalist. Play-in music is by composers from the African Diaspora.

**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, including 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: June 7:** Muson Centre, Lagos, Nigeria;  
**June 11:** The Place, Bedford; **July 12, 14, 16:** Buxton Fringe Festival;  
**July 3 – 5:** National Black Theatre Festival, Winston-Salem, USA; **August 21 – 26:** Edinburgh Fringe;  
**Sept 24, 25:** Swallow Theatre, Whithorn, Dumfries & Galloway

**Call Mr. Robeson: June 10:** Leominster Festival; **July 6 – 8:** Tara Theatre, London;  
**July 13, 15, 16:** Buxton Fringe Festival; **August 21 – 26:** Edinburgh Fringe

#### **Tayo Aluko & Friends**

24 – 26 Mount Pleasant, Liverpool L3 5RY Tel: 0151 707 8187  
www.tayoalukoandfriends.com  
info@tayoalukoandfriends.com www.justanordinarylawyer.com  
**facebook:** Just An Ordinary Lawyer. **Twitter:** @1OrdinaryLawver

