

JUST AN ORDINARY LAWYER. A play, with songs.

Written and performed by Tayo Aluko, with Angus Carmichael, piano

The Swallow Theatre, Whithorn, Scotland. Sunday 24 Sept 2017

Greetings, and Welcome. The Prime Minister is not known, as one of her recent predecessors famously was, for her love for cricket, or indeed of any other sports. She certainly seems to have too much on her mind right now to pay attention to the England West Indies series, with all the games being played in her cabinet and on the political scene here and in Europe. Someone who does seem able to take time out from trading insults with the leader of North Korea, and do exactly the same with sports stars in his own country is none other than ironically-termed leader of the free world, who has recently stated his belief that anybody who uses the sporting arena to make political statements should be fired. As this play shows, sportspeople can be extremely effective in riling leaders of nations where injustices abound, and none more so than in present-day America, where the potential for political protest is huge, given the state of affairs there. People here may or may not be familiar with Colin Kaepernick, the Black American footballer who for most of a season has been unemployed since he knelt down during the playing of the Stars and Stripes in protest at police brutality against Blacks. His protest has been given a boost recently when the new president started directing his offensive ejaculations at those imitating Kaepernick a few days ago, and it seems that one of the unexpected effects is the actual spreading of the protest to other sports, including that most American of them all, baseball. The prospect of this escalating into something of incredibly high political consequence should not be discounted, as demonstrated by the stories recounted in this play. Back on the cricket fields in England, it is interesting, and indeed heart-warming to note that the star of the England side in this last One Day International is the Muslim son of a noted cricketer from a former British colony, in an interesting repost to those whose motives for voting recently for the UK to leave the EU, were “to control our borders,” or “get our country back;” a reminder for them that this United Kingdom is only at its best when people of all hues, faiths and persuasions are given their chance to shine, to reach their potential, on all fields of play. 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 featured in the National Black Theatre Festival in Winston-Salem, USA, in August.

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.

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: Oct 5: Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton; **Oct 6,7:** Unity Theatre, Liverpool; **Oct 11:** Waterside Arts Centre, Sale; **Oct 14:** Beggar's Theatre, Millom, Cumbria; Waterside Arts Centre, Sale; **Oct 19:** Lakeside Theatre, Colchester; **Oct 20:** Wellingborough Afro-Caribbean Association; **Oct 23:** The Y, Leicester; **Oct 27:** Dugdale Arts Centre, Enfield

Call Mr. Robeson: Sept. 29: Bedwas Workmen's Hall, Caerphilly; **Sept. 30:** Memorial Hall, Pembrokeshire; **Oct 7:** Unity Theatre, Liverpool; **Oct 21:** Nottingham Contemporary; **Oct 28:** Dugdale Arts Centre, Enfield; **Nov 24:** Stanley Halls, South Norwood, London; **Nov 25:** Market Theatre, Ledbury.

Tayo Aluko & Friends

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