

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

**Written and performed by Tayo Aluko, with Tim Mottershead, piano**

**The Lowry, Salford Quays. Thursday, March 29, 2018**

**Greetings, and welcome.** With remarkable timing, the day after last weekend's *March for Our Lives* in Washington DC and elsewhere, a woman called Linda Brown died. As a 7-year-old in 1954, she was at the centre of a case (*Brown v. Board of Education*) that would change American history by bringing about the desegregation of American schools. Then in 1963, four little Black girls were blown up by a white supremacist in Alabama. That heinous act would draw international condemnation and give a boost to the Civil Rights Movement. Five years later in South Africa, the Soweto massacre claimed seventy seven young lives at a protest against forced education in the colonizer's language of Afrikaans. Worldwide disgust at that action again added fuel to the Anti-Apartheid movement. In more recent times in America, the killing has become indiscriminate, thanks to an epidemic of civilian gun violence involving easily available semi-automatic rifles. The latest mass shooting however has brought us to another profound historic moment. The march was impressive enough, but confirmation that we are at a significant crossroads came through some of the day's speeches in which young white boys and young white girls said that young Black boys and girls, and men and women have been dying needlessly without recourse to justice for far too long. Those kids demonstrated a better understanding of "White privilege" than most politicians, and a realisation that it is in everybody's interest for that to stop. They sent a loud and clear message to politicians in the pay of the NRA that their days are numbered, for the youngsters are rapidly approaching voting age. Change is once more coming to America, thanks to the youth. Over here, pundits and politicians who turn their collective ammunition on the Labour Party leader and cry wolf over manufactured anti-Semitism once more forget, underestimate and ignore the power and wisdom of the youth, who are likely to know a witch hunt when they see one, especially when the target has historically been on the side of victims of racism and state terrorism. Change is coming here too, and the desperation in those with much to fear is becoming clearer and more pitiful by the day. I hope you enjoy the show.

**Tayo Aluko. Writer, Performer.** Tayo was born in Nigeria, and now lives in Liverpool, where he worked previously as an architect. 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 last August.

**Tim Mottershead, Piano.** Tim Mottershead studied music at Liverpool Community College and at Aberdeen University. He is regarded as an authority on the English composers Edmund Rubbra and Lancashire-born Alan Rawsthorne (1905-1971), on whom he has published a biography. He has contributed to scholarly publications, including *Piano Professional*, *Musical Opinion*, and most notably *TEMPO*, with articles in nearly every issue from 2005-14. As a composer of more than a 150 works, he now writes mainly for specific performance projects. In 2004, he undertook a short tour of universities with a recital to celebrate the centenary of Luigi Dallapiccola. Tim is a keen advocate of world music, having performed or written in every conceivable genre from Iraqi Oud music, to Gamelan, to music for Maypole dancing. He played in the Indian classical music group Raga Jyoti from 2000 to 2012. However, he feels he has learned most from studying with the Scottish composer-pianist Ronald Stevenson.

**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 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 18: Alnwick Playhouse; April 19: Queen's Hall, Hexham; April 20: The Maltings, Berwick-upon-Tweed; April 26: CAST in Doncaster; April 27: Heron Theatre, Beetham; May 3: Theatre by the Lake, Keswick; May 19: Belgrade Theatre, Coventry; May 26: Merlin Theatre, Frome.**

**Call Mr. Robeson: April 12: Tullynessle & Forbes Hall; April 13: Phoenix Centre, Newton Dee; April 14: New Deer Pulic Hall; April 28: Swanland Village Hall; April 29: Barton Assembly Rooms; May 2: Theatre by the Lake, Keswick; May 11, 12: Castillo Theatre, New York; May 20: North Dalton Village Hall; May 24: Dorchester Arts Centre; May 25: Bridport Arts Centre. [www.callmrrobeson.com](http://www.callmrrobeson.com)**

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

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