

JUST AN ORDINARY LAWYER. A play, with songs.

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

Queen's Hall, Hexham. Thursday 19 April, 2018

Greetings, and welcome. There is talk of compensating the scores of people from the Windrush Generation, as they are called, who have suffered financially, emotionally and physically as a result of the scandal that has recently been brought to light, and which has caused great embarrassment for the Home Secretary and the Prime Minister. It does show that the Home Office succeeded in creating a "hostile atmosphere" for them, even if they might have not been the intended targets. And what a Pandora's Box may have been opened with talk of compensating people from the Caribbean, whose parents after all were invited here to help rebuild the country after WWII, and started encountering hostility from the time they landed at Tilbury Docks. Some of them, and folks at home had fought for the Allies in the war, as had millions around the empire. Their very existence in the Caribbean in the first place was due to their forebears having been shipped there against their will and made to work for nothing, enriching the Mother Country in the process. At the end of the slave trade, their former owners, and not the enslaved, received compensation. And when the British and other European powers colonised the African continent, they seized land, without compensation. They made the people produce goods not for themselves, but for Europe, with little pay, and they taxed them as well, sending the money to Europe. The state of most of those countries now leaves a lot to be desired because the economies are still geared toward extraction for the benefit of Europe. People are still part of the currency – legally as with consultants in the NHS for example, or illegally as with those fleeing conflicts at home: conflicts sparked off as a result of borders drawn indiscriminately several decades ago, and of the continuing sale of arms from here to very questionable regimes there. It is therefore right to discuss Compensation, or Reparations, but what is due to the Windrush Generation is small beer compared to what is due to the Continent. But before people get scared about monetary amounts, the least that should be done is to become educated, become acquainted with the histories that have shaped the world the way it is today, and to see the similarities for example between Africa and the Middle East and elsewhere. This play seeks to make a contribution to that effort, in the hope that in trading in knowledge, culture and self-evaluation, those most expensive and precious of commodities – truth and reconciliation - may become part of the compensation package. 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 it 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 2016 Edinburgh Fringe, and featured in the National Black Theatre Festival in Winston-Salem, USA last August.

Angus Carmichael, Piano. Gus was born in Edinburgh and 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 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 20:The Maltings, **Berwick-upon-Tweed; April 26:** CAST in **Doncaster; April 27:** Heron Theatre, **Beetham; May 3:** Theatre by the Lake, **Keswick; May 5, 6:** **Harare** International Festival of the Arts, Zimbabwe;
May 19: Belgrade Theatre, **Coventry; May 21:** The Inner Temple, **London; May 26:** Merlin Theatre, **Frome.**

Call Mr. Robeson: 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

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:** @1OrdinaryLawyer

