

CALL MR. ROBESON: A life, with songs.

Written and Performed by Tayo Aluko,

With Michael Conliffe, Piano

Marketplace Theatre, Armagh, Thursday 24th March, 2011

Greetings and welcome. One whole penny has been taken off the cost of petrol by our young Chancellor, to help pump fuel into the economy. Most people won't notice the difference, though there are those who feel that it is right that prices should stay high so as to slow down the rate of climate change. Increased prices are partly being blamed on the conflicts in Egypt and Libya, though one is not convinced that this is nothing other than cynical profiteering on the part of the oil companies, whom the Chancellor so cruelly taxed yesterday. Arms companies are also rubbing their hands with glee at all that expensive military hardware so spectacularly going up in smoke in Libya. Forget the people being killed; the collateral damage. Forget who sold Gaddafi and Mubarak their arms in the first place. Forget how far the money being burned in the Middle East would go here, and how many jobs and livelihoods that would preserve and enhance. Oops, inconvenient, "unpatriotic" talk, of the kind that which Paul Robeson was prone. One expects that kind of talk will be heard from the platforms of the Trade Union marches this weekend in London and Belfast. Those troublesome trade unionists would have had Robeson's full backing, were he here to give it today. One hopes that those of us descendants of his and the many brave fighters from the past will be brave enough to join them on their marches, and in the struggles ahead. I hope you enjoy the show.