

CALL MR. ROBESON: A life, with songs.

Written and Performed by Tayo Aluko, with Paul Simons, Piano

Atlantic Fringe, Bus Stop Theatre, Halifax. August 31 – September 4, 2013.

Greetings, and Welcome. It is said that had Mahalia Jackson, who had earlier sung "*I been 'buked, an' I been scorned*" not called out, "Tell 'em about the dream, Martin!" we might not have been commemorating the August 1963 March on Washington in the last few weeks. She is not the only one to thank for transforming a remarkable event into a historic one - there were hundreds who had organised the event behind the scenes, and there were the thousands who had made long journeys across the land to create and inspire that great moment. There were also the many who had gone before, including hundreds of thousands who had made the even longer, more dangerous and arduous journeys north to places like Halifax in the days of slavery, as well as the many often nameless ones who either sheltered them or guided them along the way. Many continue to exhibit such bravery around the world today, even in Dr. King's country, such as those who are prepared to sacrifice their liberty by exposing truths that their government would prefer to keep hidden from the people. These people join a long line of political prisoners (which includes many forgotten, ageing - and sometimes dying - Black Panthers and other freedom fighters) who are prepared to pay a high price for standing up and shouting out against injustices and abuses of power. In his time, Paul Robeson did just that, and if ever there was someone who was "'buked and scorned," it was he. It is surely beholden upon the rest of us to continue the work of these great, brave people, for we know that even though we have climbed a few rungs up that metaphorical ladder to the promised land that King and his ancestors and forerunners had dreamed of, we seem to be constantly climbing a few rungs back down into the abyss of inhumanity, and if we don't keep pushing together from behind, we do a disservice to those who paved the way for us to have the freedoms and privileges we enjoy today. 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 frustrated interest in eco-friendly construction. He has fronted orchestras as baritone soloist in British concert halls, and has also performed lead roles in such operas and musicals as *Nabucco*, *Kiss Me Kate* and *Anything Goes*. CALL MR ROBESON won three awards at the London Ontario Fringe in June 2012 and Best Solo Show at the Stratford UK Fringe this June. He has performed the play around the UK, Canada, Nigeria, Jamaica and the USA (including New York's Carnegie Hall in February 2012). His other piece titled FROM BLACK AFRICA TO THE WHITE HOUSE - a talk about Black Political Resistance, illustrated with Spirituals, has also been performed on three continents. 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.

Paul Simons, Piano. Paul Simons, a longtime resident of Halifax is an accomplished jazz pianist, as well as one of the region's finest accompanists, arrangers, music directors and teachers. Paul has played a variety of venues - from pubs in London's east end to festivals, concerts, and theatre shows throughout central Canada and the Maritime Provinces. He has also played on recordings, commercials, radio, television, and for symphony orchestra. Paul has performed in Halifax with visiting musicians over the years - such as Mitch Miller, Moe Koffman, The Shirelles, Jackie Richardson, and Shirley Eikhard. His arrangements and compositions have been heard on radio, television, and in theatres and nightclubs across the country. For many years Paul performed on the local music scene in a piano/sax duo with long time musical partner Don Palmer. He was also the founder, arranger and music director of the Halifax vocal quartet The Novelty Salesmen, and currently Paul is the Director, Arranger and Accompanist for The Coastal Chorus in Halifax.

Olusola Oyeleye, Director and Dramaturge. Olusola is an award winning writer, director and producer working in opera, music theatre, visual arts and dance. Theatre includes: Tin (The Lowry), Ti-Jean and his Brothers (Collective Artistes & Sustained Theatre, Cottesloe), Resident director on Trevor Nunn's West End production of Porgy and Bess (Savoy Theatre), staff producer at English National Opera, Spirit of Okin and Sankofa for Adzido Pan African Dance Ensemble, (National & International tours), Coming Up For Air (The Drum & UK tour), The Resurrection of Roscoe Powell (Soho Theatre), The Shelter (RSC Barbican Theatre), Medea (Ariya, Royal National Theatre Studio), The Playground (Polka Theatre, Time Out Critics' Choice Pick of the Year), High Life, (Hampstead Theatre), Maybe Father, (Talawa, Young Vic), Twelfth Night (British Council Tour, Zimbabwe) and Ella, a monodrama about Ella Fitzgerald (Rich Mix). Opera includes: Akin Euba's Orunmila's Voices: Songs from the Beginning of Time (Jefferson's Arts Centre, New Orleans) and Chaka: An Opera in Two Chants with the St. Louis African Chorus, Dido and Aeneas (Tricycle/BAC), God's Trombones (Fairfield Halls) and the second cast revival of Jonathan Miller's production of The Mikado (English National Opera). Olusola has also worked in Ghana, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Hungary and the Czech Republic. She has been a visiting lecturer and Artist at Universities in South Africa and London, and was Head of the Acting Studio at Morley College. Her poetry has been set to music by Akin Euba and performed at both Harvard and Cambridge Universities. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society for the Arts.

Phil Newman, Designer, Assistant Director. Phil's Set & Costume Designs have featured in productions by companies as diverse as Ladder to the Moon, Trestle, Ariya, Full House Theatre, London Shakespeare Workout, Rouge28 Theatre and Impetuous Kinship. Recent design credits include: *Peter Pan* (Tickled Pink Productions), *Dance or Die* (contemporary dance performance choreographed by Avant Garde's Tony Adigun), *Cinderella* (Library Theatre, Luton), *Voices in the Alleyway* and *Yes, I Still Exist* for Spread Expression Dance, Faith Drama's *The Fiddler* (Unicorn Theatre) & *Next Door* (Cockpit Theatre), *The Famous Five* (Tabard Theatre), Chalkfoot's acclaimed *The Riddle of the Sands* and *Laurel & Hardy* (Jermyn St Theatre, London & UK tours) as well as tours of *Queen Elizabeth's Elephant* and *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*, *Hansel & Gretel* (UK tour incl. Greenwich Theatre), *Stockholm* (BAC), and open-air tours of *The Merchant of Venice* and *The Railway Children* (Heartbreak Productions). Phil also designed the award-winning UK & international touring production of John Retallack's *Hannah & Hanna* (Time Out Critics' Choice). Other productions in collaboration with Olusola Oyeleye include *The Security Guard*, *Ella* (RichMix), *High Life* (Hampstead Theatre), *Coming Up For Air* (UK tour), *Ma Joyce's Tales from the Parlour* (Oval House Theatre) and *The Playground* (Time Out Critics' Choice, London).

Sound Design: David Darlington & Liam McDermott. **Sound Engineering:** Derek Murray. **Lighting Design:** Gareth Starkey. **Recorded Percussion:** Oludele Olaseinde **Voices:** Shamus Maxwell, Paul O'Neill. Felix Pring, Kat Bishop, Suzanne Goldberg, Harry Arkwright, and from the original HUAC hearing of June 12 1956, "Honorable" Senators Walter, Arens and Scherer. **Male Voice Choir:** Liverpool Male Voice Choir

Forthcoming Performances include: September 12, Southport, UK: The Atkinson; **September 14, Shrewsbury:** Theatre Severn; **Sept 22, Maidenhead:** Norden Farm Arts Centre. **October 1 – 26, London:** Tristan Bates Theatre, Covent Garden (part of Tayo Aluko & Friends's Paul Robeson Art Is A Weapon Festival); **November 7, Oxford:** Ruskin College; **November 9, Helmsley Arts Centre.**

Thanks to: Patricia Kipping, Linda Rosborough, Keelin Jack, Lisa Rose Snow, Paul Simons and to Halifax Backpackers for the loan of books..

Tayo Aluko & Friends
24- 26 Mount Pleasant, Liverpool L3 5RY
Tel: +44 151 707 8187

info@tayoalukoandfriends.com www.callmrrobeson.com
facebook: Call Mr. Robeson **Twitter:** @CallMrRobeson

