

CALL MR. ROBESON: A life, with songs.

Written and Performed by Tayo Aluko,

with Michael Conliffe, Piano

Artrix , Bromsgrove, October 7, 2009

Greetings and welcome. First of all, a confession. “Bromsgrove?”, I asked, “Where is Bromsgrove?” For a Nigerian resident in Liverpool, that’s probably not too surprising a question, and I hope I haven’t caused offence with that admission. I am indeed glad to be here tonight however, because I love to take the name and legacy of the great man that was Paul Robeson to the most unlikely corners of the UK and the world, and I won’t be surprised to meet some people tonight who saw Paul Robeson when he was somewhere near here probably sixty years ago. I am constantly amazed what warm memories his name and his story brings wherever I go, whatever the size or make-up of the audience. I am also honoured to be helping launch Bromsgrove’s Black History Month programme, and can think of no better story to share with you all, for Paul Robeson was indeed a world citizen, whose life can provide a good example to us in these turbulent times. I hope that you enjoy the performance, and that it inspires you to continue to do your bit to spread his message of peace, hope, equality and justice.