

CALL MR. ROBESON: A life, with songs.

Written and Performed by Tayo Aluko,

With Linda Blondel, Piano

V. Earl Dickinson Building, Piedmont Virginia Community College,

Charlottesville, VA

Sunday March 7, 2010

Greetings and Welcome. I last performed here almost two years ago, and will confess to having had some uneasy feelings on the drive down then: there was something in the air, in the landscape of rural Virginia that spoke to me as a black man, of a troubled history in the region. Driving back this time round, those feelings were not there. Perhaps the coincidence of another black man recently making history might have had something to do with that, I don't know. However, there are millions of other black men, and women whose lives deserve a place in history, but have been ignored, or written out. Paul Robeson is one of the best examples of this, and I am sure there are people to whom he is being introduced for the first time today. For you, and for those who knew about him before, I hope this day remains in your memory for a long time, and that his story inspires, or re-energizes in you the desire to do whatever possible – however small - to make the world a better place, and to make your own little bit of history.