

## **CALL MR. ROBESON: A life, with songs.**

**Written and Performed by Tayo Aluko, with Scott Flanigan, Piano**

**The Civic Theatre, Tallaght, Dublin 24**

**Greetings, Welcome.** I understand the issue of homelessness is in the news here in Dublin currently, with a homeless man freezing to death in the last few days. Presumably the people of Ireland need no lessons on the dangers of capitalism and how it leaves many innocent people languishing on the margins of society while a tiny minority walk away with untold riches. The people of Greece, Portugal and Spain have also been learning those lessons the hard way over the last few years, but of course in many other parts of the world people are all too used to it, with far too much experience of poverty and inequality for too many decades – even centuries. There have been people who have warned about the dangers posed by the world economic system, and argued for alternatives whereby society is able to take better care of vulnerable people, and for the products of the earth's resources and people's labours to be more justly and evenly shared among the people. For workers to be defended against the greed of those with their hands on the levers of power. Such people are said to get in the way of profit, of progress, of development, of growth, by those who feel that these issues are more important than the welfare of the vulnerable. For them, people like Paul Robeson were their worst nightmare – a fearless campaigner for the oppressed, and one whose art, brilliance and eloquence brought an alternative message to far too many people. That is when the message and the messenger are seen as dangerous, because possible societal change becomes possible, and those that hold and abuse power are threatened. The death of one homeless man in Dublin brings to the fore once more the need for change. So does the death of thousands of people in far off regions of the world such as West Africa, where Ebola is wreaking havoc. The fact that this deadly disease has also spread to other parts of the world illustrates very well what Robeson argued for years – that we let our fellow human suffer at our own peril. Outrage at what is going on here and elsewhere is leading different solutions being offered. It is perhaps time to seek out those among us who echo Robeson's words, and take them much more seriously than we have to date. I hope you enjoy the show.

**Tayo Aluko. Writer, Performer, Producer.** Tayo was born in Nigeria, and now lives in Liverpool. He worked previously as an architect and property developer, with a special but as yet frustrated interest in eco-friendly construction. 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*. *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 the play around the UK, the USA, Canada, Jamaica and Nigeria, and at New York's Carnegie Hall in February 2012 on his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. He also 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 has been performed in 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. He recently developed a piece titled *WHAT HAPPENS?* featuring the writings of African American Langston Hughes, for performance with live jazz accompaniment.

**Scott Flanigan, Piano and original incidental music.** Scott is one of the most in-demand keyboard players in the province as a jazz performer, composer and educator. Having started with the Ulster Youth Jazz Orchestra, Scott studied music at Queens University and has performed with Van Morrison, Linley Hamilton and Jean Toussaint. He is currently pursuing a Masters degree in jazz performance at Dublin Institute of Technology.

**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.** Phil's Set & Costume Design credits include: *Spring Awakening - The Musical* (Chelsea Theatre), *The Tempest & Pinocchio* (UK & UAE tours for Shakespeare4Kidz), *A Christmas Carol & Peter Pan* (Tickled Pink), an open-air *Romeo & Juliet* (Cornucopia Theatre), *The Liar* (South Hill Park), *Dance or Die* (Hoxton Hall), *Voices in the Alleyway & Yes, I Still Exist* (Spread Expression Dance), *The Fiddler* (Unicorn Theatre) and film short *The Judge* for Faith Drama, *The Riddle of the Sands & Laurel and Hardy* (Jermyn St Theatre), *The Famous Five* (Tabard Theatre), *Hansel & Gretel* (UK tour), *Stockholm* (BAC), open-air tours of *The Merchant of Venice & The Railway Children* (Heartbreak) and the award-winning UK/international touring production of *Hannah & Hanna*. Set Design credits include *Houdini* (UK tour), *Our House* (Elgiva Theatre), *Cinderella* (Library Theatre, Luton) and *Next Door* (Cockpit Theatre). Others with Olusola Oyeleye include *A Wing, A Prey, A Song* (Guest Projects Africa), *High Life* (Hampstead Theatre), *The Security Guard* (Merton AbbeyFest 2012), *Ella* (RichMix), *Coming Up for Air* (UK tour), *The Playground* (Polka Theatre) and *Ma Joyce's Tales from the Parlour* (Oval House/Edinburgh). He has just completed Set Design work on Rouge28Theatre's new puppet show *Kwaidan*.

**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:** **Dec 5, Kilkenny:** Watergate Arts Centre; **Dec 6, Limerick:** 69 O'Connell Street; **Dec 10, Waterford:** Garter Lane Arts Centre; **Jan 16, Spokane, Washington, USA:** Bing Crosby Theatre; **Jan 30, Buxton, Derbyshire:** Pavilion Arts Centre **Feb 20 - March 1, Wellington:** New Zealand Fringe Festival; **March 4 - 15, Australia:** Adelaide Fringe; **March 27, Millom, Cumbria:** Beggars Theatre; **March 28, Richmond, N. Yorkshire:** Georgian Theatre Royal; **April 1, Liverpool:** unity Theatre

### **Tayo Aluko & Friends**

**24- 26 Mount Pleasant, Liverpool L3 5RY Tel: 0151 707 8187**

**info@tayoalukoandfriends.com www.callmrroberson.com**

**facebook:** Call Mr. Robeson **Twitter:** @CallMrRobeson

