

CALL MR. ROBESON: A life, with songs.

Written and Performed by Tayo Aluko, with Dorian Ford, Piano

The Dugdale Centre, Saturday October 25, 2014.

Greetings, Welcome. I heard an interesting programme the other day about the very impressive logistical process of withdrawing military personnel and equipment out of Afghanistan, now that the Afghani troupes have been well trained by their British and American overlords and they can fend for themselves, now the vast threat to global security that resided in that area has finally been conquered. Global threats remain though, and there is one which arguably needs just as large a global response - with all things thrown at it, and money no object. I speak of course of Ebola – a threat which is much more easily recognised than the terrorist menace that lurked in the so-called axis of evil. It is strange that the response to Ebola is nothing like that against the people of the Middle East and right now, we are beginning to see it manifest itself outside of the West African region in which it started. It seemed that only when the disease started popping up in the West did people in power start to take it seriously, and respond to calls for urgent action from the governments in West Africa, and international medical charities, although the response seems to be woefully inadequate. Not only does the crisis need to be checked urgently, but moves need to be made to ensure that the medical and other facilities in West Africa and elsewhere should surely rival those that exist here, otherwise Ebola and other threats can re-emerge and threaten the global community. If that is not a crisis worthy of an international response costing billions, I don't know what is, and we will all deserve what is coming to us. Such are the kinds of warnings that Paul Robeson issued to his government and to all who would care to listen, but he was vilified and persecuted for his efforts. There are people around today who like him shout out for a restructuring of society, but they are also marginalised and ridiculed. The least that we can do is to listen out for those voices, amplify them and respond to them in whatever way we can – from those who seek higher wages for keeping the health service going, crying out to keep it public and away from the private sector, to those asking for social services to be given higher priority than militarism. Let us join with them in the fight for a safer, more just, more peaceful society. 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 50th 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. He recently developed a piece titled *WHAT HAPPENS?* featuring the writings of African American Langston Hughes, for performance with live jazz accompaniment. He is currently a Writer On Attachment with the Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse Theatres.

Dorian Ford, Piano

Dorian Ford is a pianist, composer and improviser based in London. Recent performances include his trio at Ronnie Scott's, The Wigmore Hall late series, his duo at St. James Theater and his quartet at The Manchester Jazz Festival 2014 and, closer to us right now, The Mill Hill Jazz Club to critical and public acclaim.

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: Oct 29, Nelson: ACE Centre; **Oct 30, Oxford:** Old Fire Station; **Dec 3, Tallaght, Dublin:** Civic Theatre; **Dec 5, Kilkenny:** Watergate Arts Centre; **Dec 6, Limerick:** 69 O'Connell Street; **Dec 10, Waterford:** Garter Lane Arts Centre. **Jan 15 2015, Spokane, Washington, USA:** Bing Crosby Theatre; **Feb 20 – March 1: New Zealand Fringe Festival;** **March 4 – 15: Adelaide Fringe Festival, Australia;** **March 28, Richmond, Yorks:** Georgian Theatre Royal; **April 1, Liverpool:** Unity Theatre; **April 22, Aberystwyth:** Arts Centre; **April 23, Abertillery:** The Metropole; **April 24 & 25: Newport:** Riverfront Arts Centre.

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