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

## Written and Performed by Tayo Aluko, With Michael Conliffe, Piano Eastgate Theatre & Arts Centre, Peebles, 4 February 2011

Greetings. Some might be forgiven for wondering why the American government are so concerned about what is happening in Egypt right now. For a while, they put on a good show of appearing to stay at arms length from the proceedings, but that charade seems to have been blown out of the window, thanks to the intransigence of the folks on the streets. Despite the billions spent by the Americans on the Egyptian army to further their international interests, ordinary folk have spoken more eloquently than the politicians, saying that they want freedom, jobs, education, and above all, peace. One person whose eloquence caused American politicians much discomfort was Paul Robeson, whose fame and crowd-pulling ability meant that his continuously speaking truth to power forced them to find several nefarious ways of silencing him. His personal sacrifice reminds me of the two now-almost-forgotten individuals who set the whole thing in motion by bravely setting themselves alight in Tunisia and Egypt. If we listen hard enough, we will hear Robeson's voice almost as clearly as those on the Mediterranean streets, calling on us all to find the bravery within ourselves and add our voices and our efforts to those seeking truth and justice here and elsewhere. I hope you enjoy the show.