

CALL MR. ROBESON: A life, with songs.

Written and Performed by Tayo Aluko,

With Michael Conliffe, Piano

Theatr Felinfach, Thursday 28th April, 2011

Greetings and welcome. I believe there is a wedding happening somewhere in a foreign land tomorrow, and we had to cancel a performance we were due to give in Swansea. I understand the Syrian ambassador has also had to change his plans, as his invitation to the wedding was withdrawn this morning. It's good to see our government has some principles and will not condone violence by a regime on its people. Perhaps they will rethink the continued supply of arms to that and other regimes in the region. Maybe that's what the threatened sanctions are about, and not the restriction of goods of legitimate trade, such as food and medicine, which will actually benefit the ordinary people we are supposed to be helping. Not that I am quite brave enough to accuse our government of hypocrisy or double standards, let alone to go out and face possible serious injury or even death from western-made weaponry, in the fight for freedom and democracy. I suspect that Paul Robeson would have had no hesitation doing just that. Indeed, his words and actions on behalf of his people and folks around the world led to his virtual assassination at the hands of his own government, but his bravery provides inspiration to thousands around the globe to this day. May his example and that of those whom we watch on our screens in Syria and elsewhere inspire us to stand up and defend those things that are our right to have here in Britain. I hope you enjoy the show.