

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

**Written and Performed by Tayo Aluko,**

**With Michael Conliffe, Piano**

**The Forge at The Anvil, Basingstoke, Saturday 8 October 2011**

## **Greetings and Welcome.**

I can almost feel Paul Robeson turning in his grave. He was optimistic about socialist China in his time. He was also one of the first Americans to campaign openly for freedom for South Africa. Now, a capitalist modern China is apparently dictating to a free South Africa that a man who travels the world promoting peace and understanding should not be allowed to travel to celebrate the birthday of a genuine Nobel Peace Prize winner. And before the British criticise, I believe the Dalai Lama's movements were restricted on a recent visit to Britain, for fear of upsetting the Chinese. Meanwhile, European and IMF leaders are scrambling around the continent trying to give the impression they know what to do to rescue the world economy. We have put our trust in these people, but around the world, those being governed are raising voices in protest. The Middle Eastern uprisings were followed by riots in this country, and now in America, folks have decided to occupy Wall Street ([occupywallst.org](http://occupywallst.org)). They say they are fed up with corporations and the wealthiest in society not paying fair taxes, yet having undue influence on their government. They want their tax dollars diverted from war mongering to providing social services, health and education. They are threatening to stay there until their voices are heard. The movement has spread to cities around America too, but the media are not reporting it. What really is happening is hundreds of people, young and old, all races, all backgrounds, standing up for once to add their voices and bodies to the cause. Paul Robeson would be there were he alive today, and calling for more people to join. Here, trade unions are protesting government cuts, and I am sure Robeson would be standing alongside them too, like he did in his time. The question is whether there are enough of us who are prepared to add our support to their calls for equality, peace and justice. I hope you enjoy the show.