

CALL MR. ROBESON: A life, with songs.

**Written and Performed by Tayo Aluko, with Tammy Lynne Hall, Piano
Freight & Salvage Coffee House, Berkeley, California, August 11, 2013.**

Greetings, and Welcome. On the flight over from Europe, I saw a movie in which a black man was defended by a young white lawyer for murdering two white men who brutally raped his daughter, believing they would have escaped justice in the Southern legal system. The movie ended beautifully, with the defendant's acquittal. It was an old film, dated 1996 – suggesting that change had come to America. *Fruitvale Station* – the movie about the killing of Oscar Grant probably won't appear on airline itineraries, for it will give voice to those who say, "Hell, No!" about "Change." People apparently leave the movie with a blind rage, that such clear injustices continue unchallenged, and this, in the context of Trayvon Martin, Troy Davis, Ramarley Graham in New York, and hundreds of unarmed Black men around America being unjustly killed daily, with their murderers escaping justice. Blind rage is certainly justified, but we mustn't let it divert our attention from other matters of great import that demand our vigilance and affect us all. In the transportation system in which Oscar Grant was killed, the workers are "standing their ground" in their struggle for what they feel to be legitimate and fair demands for better pay and conditions. The management however feels that these demands are greedy and excessive for these hard times, and are trying to convince the public of this argument. I understand that the unions were instrumental in organising the protests in the renamed Oscar Grant Square in Oakland for justice for his family, and also in the Occupy Oakland protests, which we saw, even as far away as in England, were brutally suppressed by the police. This smacks more of class war than race war, and some argue that the solidarity that the unions showed for the Grant family and the 99% protesters, should be expected from the general public at this time. The wages and conditions of the BART workers are as nothing compared to those of their bosses, and certainly to those of the bosses of the banks that created much of the mess we are in today. Were Paul Robeson around, he would be urging solidarity for the families of all victims of racial profiling and killing, and also for the BART workers, to prevent what the unions call a "race to the bottom" in workers' pay and conditions. 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 frustrated interest in eco-friendly construction. He has fronted orchestras as baritone soloist in British concert halls, and has also performed lead roles in such operas and musicals as *Nabucco*, *Kiss Me Kate* and *Anything Goes*. CALL MR ROBESON won three awards at the London Ontario Fringe in June 2012 and Best Solo Show at the Stratford UK Fringe this June. He has performed the play around the UK, Canada, Nigeria, Jamaica and the USA (including New York's Carnegie Hall in February 2012). His other piece titled FROM BLACK AFRICA TO THE WHITE HOUSE - a talk about Black Political Resistance, illustrated with Spirituals, has also been performed on 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.

Tammy Lynne Hall, Piano. Tammy began playing piano at age four and she lives her life devoted to the pursuit and expression of love and beauty through music. Music has taken Tammy all over the world, including performances in Japan, Europe and Mexico. Venues of note include the Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, Sala Filharmonica (Trento, Italy), Herbst Theatre, Yoshi's and Kuumbwa Jazz in Santa Cruz, California. She currently performs with Kim Nalley, Houston Person, Mary Wilson, Denise Perriet, Veronica Klaus and Pamela Rose. She has also had the honor of performing with Etta Jones and David "Fathead" Newman.

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, Assistant Director. Phil's Set & Costume Designs have featured in productions by companies as diverse as Ladder to the Moon, Trestle, Ariya, Full House Theatre, London Shakespeare Workout, Rouge28 Theatre and Impetuous Kinship. Recent design credits include: *Peter Pan* (Tickled Pink Productions), *Dance or Die* (contemporary dance performance choreographed by Avant Garde's Tony Adigun), *Cinderella* (Library Theatre, Luton), *Voices in the Alleyway* and *Yes, I Still Exist* for Spread Expression Dance, Faith Drama's *The Fiddler* (Unicorn Theatre) & *Next Door* (Cockpit Theatre), *The Famous Five* (Tabard Theatre), Chalkfoot's acclaimed *The Riddle of the Sands* and *Laurel & Hardy* (Jermyn St Theatre, London & UK tours) as well as tours of *Queen Elizabeth's Elephant* and *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*, *Hansel & Gretel* (UK tour incl. Greenwich Theatre), *Stockholm* (BAC), and open-air tours of *The Merchant of Venice* and *The Railway Children* (Heartbreak Productions). Phil also designed the award-winning UK & international touring production of John Retallack's *Hannah & Hanna* (Time Out Critics' Choice). Other productions in collaboration with Olusola Oyeleye include *The Security Guard*, *Ella* (RichMix), *High Life* (Hampstead Theatre), *Coming Up For Air* (UK tour), *Ma Joyce's Tales from the Parlour* (Oval House Theatre) and *The Playground* (Time Out Critics' Choice, London).

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:

Aug 14, Victoria, BC, Canada: Jazz at Hermann's Club; **August 16, Gabriola, Canada:** Gabriola Festival; **August 18 – 24, Nanaimo, Canada:** Fringetastic; **August 31 – Sept 4, Halifax, Canada:** Atlantic Fringe; **September 12, Southport, UK:** The Atkinson; **September 14, Shrewsbury:** Theatre Severn; **Sept 22, Maidenhead:** Norden Farm Arts Centre. **October 1 – 26, London:** Tristan Bates Theatre, Covent Garden; **November 7, Oxford:** Ruskin College **November 9, Helmsley Arts Centre**

Thanks to: Bonnie Weiss, Jack Heyman and Carol Canter, Pat Jameson-Amwele.

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