

CALL MR. ROBESON: A life, with songs.

Written and Performed by Tayo Aluko, with Michael Young, Piano

Garter Lane Arts Centre, Cork, Wednesday December 10, 2014

Greetings, Welcome. I understand that four activists flew in all the way from Detroit to join the Right2Water protest in Dublin today. Presumably, your Environment Minister would consider those four the most unreasonable of the tens of thousands who brought the city to a standstill today – because he believes that most reasonable people in Ireland have accepted the idea of paying water charges, over and above taxes. The four came all that way to show solidarity with the Irish and say to them, “Don’t let them do to you what they have done to us,” because back home, the privatised water companies cut off supplies to hundreds of homes who were behind with their bills, regardless of circumstances. They called this is an infringement of their human rights, and I presume this was repeated in Dublin today. That human rights can be so fundamentally violated in the greatest of all Western democracies is something that many of us need to be reminded of from time to time, what with the spin propagated through mainstream media that the defence of human rights of others is worth sending young men and women to kill and be killed in foreign lands. Only this morning we heard that the CIA has been found guilty of torturing hundreds of detainees around the world in pursuit of the war on terror. The fact that it has been so openly admitted is quite remarkable, but it must not be forgotten that there is a long history of this kind of behaviour by those acting on behalf of the world’s self-appointed policeman. Numerous democratically elected leaders around the world whose politics doesn’t sit well with western capitalism have been deposed and assassinated, as have millions of ordinary citizens, even within the USA. Patrice Lumumba, Jean-Bertrand Aristide and Fred Hampton to name but three. As we watch in horror the treatment of Black Americans by their police, and their legal system, one wonders how far we have come since the 1940s when Paul Robeson led a delegation to the UN charging his government of genocide against his people. Malcolm X did the same a few years later. People are charging genocide today, and it is perhaps only a matter of time before the US and other western governments are brought before the UN. In the meantime, “Don’t Let Them Do to You What They are Doing to Us.” And if you don’t protest, they might end up doing just that. 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. His 15-minute play, *HALF MOON*, which also deals with ancient Africa has been performed several times in the UK. He recently developed a piece titled *WHAT HAPPENS?* featuring the writings of African American Langston Hughes, for performance with live jazz accompaniment.

Michael Young, Piano and original incidental music. Michael is a well-known pianist and musical director in the Munster area. In 2013, Michael graduated with a first class honours BMus from the Cork School of Music. He has played for many musicals in the last number of years, including productions with Limerick Musical Society, Barespace, MIDAS and most recently, his own group, New Musical Theatre (*When Midnight Strikes*, 2014).

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: Jan 16, Spokane, Washington, USA: Bing Crosby Theatre; Jan 30, Buxton, Derbyshire: Pavilion Arts Centre Feb 20 - March 1, Wellington: New Zealand Fringe Festival; March 4 - 15, Australia: Adelaide Fringe; March 27, Millom, Cumbria: Beggars Theatre; March 28, Richmond, N. Yorkshire: Georgian Theatre Royal; April 1, Liverpool: unity Theatre

Tayo Aluko & Friends
 24- 26 Mount Pleasant, Liverpool L3 5RY Tel: 0151 707 8187
 info@tayoalukoandfriends.com www.callmrroberson.com
 facebook: Call Mr. Robeson Twitter: @CallMrRobeson

