

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

**Written and Performed by Tayo Aluko,**

**With Michael Conliffe, Piano**

**Goosfest, Goostrey Village Hall, Friday 14 October 2011**

**Greetings and Welcome.** I confess to having been a little cynical when we were told that this government would be the greenest ever. We can't expect every single one of them to live up to this, but it is surely environmentally bad PR for a cabinet member to be caught throwing important papers into a bin in a London park, rather than the recycling paper bank! We are assured that the stuff he was disposing of was not of huge importance. I presume that means that any letters from constituents suggesting that the energy companies should be brought back into public ownership would have been included in that lot. After all, things are nationalised these days only in moments of crisis, and only as a last resort. Like the Olympic stadium in London that was to have been sold to a (former) Premier League football club. Like two of the biggest banks in the country, following at the start of the current financial crisis. I remember wondering why, instead of bailing out the banks with billions, money couldn't have been given to community banks, credit unions and the like, so that funds were available to local businesses and local people to spend as they saw fit, but what do I know? Well, it seems that in America at least, people are beginning to ask such questions openly and dramatically, by occupying Wall Street ([occupywallst.org](http://occupywallst.org)) and public spaces in many cities around the country, demanding that the banks and corporations end their virtual ownership of the political processes and cease having undue influence on national and international policy. If this hasn't made the news here recently, I reckon it will very soon, because there are now calls for people to occupy the London Stock Exchange! Public ownership of the means of production and services is now seen as an outdated idea, but if Paul Robeson were around today, I think he might call for a return to something at least resembling that, whereby ordinary people were assured that the people, not the elites were the beneficiaries of the sustainable use of natural resources. I hope you enjoy the show.