

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

Written and Performed by Tayo Aluko, with Paul Simons, Piano  
The Bus Stop Theatre, Halifax, Nova Scotia. Friday, Nov 20, 2015

**Greetings, Welcome.** Now terrorists have struck in Mali, West Africa. In a hotel full of foreigners, as the Herald reported. It would be nice to know that they would still have reported it if all the victims were African. Another report states that there were a few Canadians in the hotel, and that there was a “supplier-consultant” of a Canadian gold mining company active in Mali. I recently heard of Canadian mining companies being involved in remote parts of Australia where Aboriginals are being forcibly removed from their ancestral lands – but that is another story. Actually, no: it is not another story – it is part of the same story that people refuse to hear, and understand as the cause of many a terrorist act – a story that has been going on for centuries. The mere fact that the original inhabitants of this country are practically invisible speaks to nothing less than terrorism and genocide on a large scale from centuries ago. Such genocide accompanied “The White Man” wherever he went in the world – a fact that should make the media, politicians and the general public report on foreign terrorism with a little more humility than they routinely do. The fact that Canadian companies may be involved in questionable practices in Australia today suggests that their presence in Mali may not be examples of best Fair Trade practice. Mali, like much of Africa is a source of great wealth for Canadian companies, so there will be many a family member (not to talk of investor) who is extremely worried about the present situation there and elsewhere in Africa. One way to combat global terrorism is the seemingly infinite expansion of warfare to other parts of the world, which clearly causes and exacerbates the situation. Another is to come clean with the public about what the real causes are, historically and currently, and also to end the business practices and the economic system that causes such untold misery to the vast majority of people of the world. What we have instead is yet another smokescreen whereby we are told that surveillance of all citizens everywhere must be increased, and that we should fear our neighbours, here and across national borders. Way back in 1946, Paul Robeson stated that “*The absence of peace in the world today is due precisely to the efforts of the British, American and other imperialist powers to retain their control over the peoples of Asia, the Middle East, Europe and Africa.*” Nobody listened then. Perhaps, as the song goes, they’ll listen now. I hope you enjoy the show.

**Tayo Aluko. Writer, Performer.** 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 operas and musicals including *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 50<sup>th</sup> 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. He has been published in *The Guardian*, *The Morning Star*, *NERVE Magazine*, *Modern Ghana* and *Searchlight Magazine*. He is currently working on a new play.

**Paul Simons, Piano.** Paul’s professional journey has included jazz performance, radio and television, musical theatre, recording, accompanying, arranging and teaching. He is currently the director the North Street Singers. His web address is [playit88.com](http://playit88.com)

**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 Design credits include: *Saint/Jeanne* and *Spring Awakening - The Musical* (Chelsea Theatre), *Hairspray*, *Cabaret & Attempts on her Life* (Amersham & Wycombe College), *Lord of the Flies & Grimm Tales* (Colet Court School), *The Tempest & Pinocchio* (UK/UAE tours for Shakespeare4Kidz), *The Wizard of Oz*, *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*. His Set Design credits include *Our House* (Elgiva Theatre), *Cinderella* (Library Theatre, Luton) and *Next Door* (Cockpit Theatre). Other collaborations with director 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 tour of *Kwaidan*, a Japanese ghost story with puppets.

**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:**

**Until Nov 21:** Bus Stop Theatre, Halifax, Nova Scotia;

**January 9:** The Ustinov Studio, Theatre Royal, Bath; **January 29:** Bolton Socialist Club;

**February 25 - 28:** Anvil Theatre, New Westminster, BC, Canada;

**March 17:** Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton; **March 26:** Derby Theatre

**Tayo Aluko & Friends**  
24 – 24 Mount Pleasant  
Liverpool L3 5RY  
info@tayoalukoandfriends.com  
www.callmrrobeson.com  
**facebook:** Call Mr. Robeson  
**Twitter:** @CallMrRobeson

