

CALL MR. ROBESON: A life, with songs.

Written and Performed by Tayo Aluko,

With Michael Conliffe, Piano

Hull Truck Theatre Studio, Friday, Saturday 28, 29 October 2011

Greetings and Welcome. We hear today that the pay of the bosses of the top 100 listed UK companies has gone up over 50% in the last year, in these times of austerity. At the same time, those people camping outside St. Paul's Cathedral in London, protesting against corporate greed and political corruption are being seen as a nuisance, and may be forcibly removed in the fullness of time. It should be remembered that the reason they are outside St. Paul's in the first place is that the police have been engaged by the private owners of the space outside the London Stock Exchange (their original target) to prevent them from occupying that space. This occupation is part of a worldwide movement which started on Wall Street in New York (www.occupywallst.org), and has spread across America and the world. The police have already been called in to confront protesters in many of those cities, being particularly brutal in Oakland, California for example, with at least one protester being seriously injured already. The world has the ability to watch, thanks to youtube, twitter and other non-mainstream media, and people are beginning to think that this might help bring about the change that protesters are hoping for, in the same way as the shocking images of police brutality against civil rights protesters beamed around the world in the sixties shocked America and the world into waking up to see the gross injustices and inequalities in their society, and how the establishment would go out of their way to crush any resistance. Decades before that, Paul Robeson shouted out loud to bring world attention to those issues, and calling for peace among nations. Decades after that, more people are shouting just as loudly, just as bravely - in London and other parts of the country – perhaps soon or already in Hull too! Rather than being seen as a nuisance, these people need more bodies, more voices to join them, so that more of us can claim to have been agents of change too. I hope you enjoy the show.