

CALL MR. ROBESON: A life, with songs.

Written and Performed by Tayo Aluko,

With Michael Conliffe, Piano

Lincoln Performing Arts Centre, Saturday 11 December 2010

Greetings. “That man should be tried for treason and executed.” That’s what some Loyal Americans are saying about Julian Assange, the WikiLeaks guy. Funny, they said that over sixty years ago, about Paul Robeson, when he repeatedly campaigned for peace, justice and equality, so I am minded to give Mr. Assange the benefit of the doubt. Inclined to assume that the release of documents that the powers-that-be don’t want us to see might in fact be good for democracy and national security rather than otherwise. We have been shown only too vividly in recent days how deals done behind closed doors can prove not to be accepted as being in all our interests, and as some of the demonstrators showed recently, even those at the very top of the Establishment are not totally safe from a disgruntled public. The security services were found wanting too, and these are the people who represent “the best police force, the best army in the world”. We are told that it is the necessity for them to train those needy Iraqis and Afghans that prolongs the occupation of their countries. Like good, loyal subjects, we should dutifully accept this. Unless WikiLeaks has something different to show us, but of course, that’s counter to national security interests, so I am glad that Mr. Tony Blair is soon to divulge a few more “facts” at the Chilcott enquiry. Sir, the empty chair awaits you.