

CALL MR. ROBESON: A life, with songs.

Written and Performed by Tayo Aluko,

With Michael Conliffe, Piano

The Old Town Hall Theatre, Hemel Hempstead

Saturday, 25 September 2010

Greetings and Welcome. The British Labour Party now has a new leader. Great! However, I'm sure the party would be totally unrecognizable to the party that existed when Paul Robeson first came across Labour activists in England and Wales in the 1920s and 30s. Then, those leaders came up through the ranks of their fellow workers, and represented those workers against the rich bosses – like the mine owners, and, dare I say it, the bankers. Well, times are different, and assuming young Mr. Milliband is going to grow into the role and show increasing charisma and principles, he will go a long way to match the likes of Paul Robeson, who I expect I am introducing to a few people for the first time today. With any luck, we these new friends of Mr. Robeson will be inspired to know how far one can go to fight for the rights of common people, to stick to one's principles, and stand up for peace and for justice, even if one has to take a few knocks along the way.