

CALL MR. ROBESON: A life, with songs.

Written and Performed by Tayo Aluko,

With Michael Conliffe, Piano

Rosehill Theatre, Whitehaven, Saturday 19th March, 2011

Greetings. We've seen some incredible bravery coming out of Japan recently. Not just how the ordinary people are picking themselves up, helping each other to battle against unspeakable adversity, but particularly those brave workers trying to pump water onto the Fukushima nuclear reactors to keep them cool. These men (and probably women) are knowingly putting themselves in considerable danger, exposing themselves to possibly extreme radiation or almost fatal explosion. We are not too far from Sellafield here, and one wonders how many of us would be prepared to knowingly put ourselves in danger like those brave Fukushima workers, As Paul Robeson's story tells us, he was one such person – ready to confront the American Establishment knowing full well that his stance could ruin his career. Muhammed Ali did the same, and in this generation we have people standing up to power in the Middle East, risking their very lives. Here in the UK, our battles seem easier by comparison, but no less important. I am pretty sure that Robeson, were he here today, would stand alongside trade unionists, students and other ordinary people who choose to speak out against the growing inequalities and injustices in our society and around the world, refusing to accept the suggestion that there is no alternative. May he inspire us to do the same. Enjoy the show.