

CALL MR. ROBESON: A life, with songs.

Written and Performed by Tayo Aluko,

with Michael Conliffe, Piano

Library Theatre, Sheffield, October 24, 2009

Greetings and welcome. Sheffield is a welcome stop on my Black History Month tour, because I have family here. A white family with Eastern European Jewish blood, some of it running in my own daughter! Nick Griffin wouldn't understand, and I'm glad I am not competing with Question Time tonight, because I might not have had an audience! It is reassuring to know that there is such strength of feeling out there about racists like the BNP, whose grasp of history is slippery at best, if not downright pernicious. On this the final leg of my Black History Month tour, I hope you'll agree that stories like that of Robeson's and the inspiration he gave need to be shared and told all year round so that mistakes like Griffin's election to the European Parliament can be prevented, and we can all get on with the urgent and important work of building the better society that Robeson and others like him dreamed of.