

CALL MR. ROBESON: A life, with songs.

Written and Performed by Tayo Aluko,

With Michael Conliffe, Piano

Theatro Technis, 4 – 23 January 2010, Week 3

Greetings. Baby Doc Duvalier had the nerve to return to Haiti some days ago. He wasn't exactly met by a big crowd of adoring fans, having been such a brutal dictator in his time. Indeed, there is talk of him being arrested before he returns to exile in France. And quite right too. If anybody is to make a welcome return to Haiti and be mobbed by adoring crowds of grateful and loving people, it would be Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who won two popular elections in the 1990s but was forced out of power by (allegedly) U.S. backed military coups. He is now exiled in South Africa while the U.N, the U.S and the rest of the West give the impression of "helping the poor people of Haiti". Nothing could be further from the truth, and were he around today, Paul Robeson would be saying that loud and clear, and pointing at similarities with Haiti of Toussant L'Ouverture's time, or with contemporary Palestine, Afghanistan and other places where the West is interfering with democracy. He is one person who was swamped by adoring crowds wherever he went (except in his native U.S for a while!) because he was genuinely a man of the people whose sincerity was without question. Tony Blair is making his return to London this week, but he will be surrounded by bodyguards, not adoring fans. One senses that chickens are coming home to roost from all corners of the earth. Interesting dramas are being played out around the world, and we each have a role to play. Enjoy the show.