CALL MR. ROBESON: A life, with songs.

Written and Performed by Tayo Aluko, with Roland Perrin, Piano Tristan Bates Theatre, Covent Garden, London, Saturday, Sunday 19, 20 October, 2013.

Greetings, and Welcome. It was reported earlier today that the First Minister of Scotland announced his party's intention to re-nationalise the Scottish parts of the recently-privatised Royal Mail. He also claimed success in preventing the privatisation of cleaning services in the National Health Services. and how that had reduced infection rates. He vowed to keep health services free at the point of need, and the same for education. He further announced their intention to abolish what has been called the bedroom tax. It really looks as though Scotland may be a different country - if the leadership is anything to go by at least, and allowing for good, old fashioned "politicking". That the re-nationalisation of Royal Mail should be the thing that hit the headlines might be scare-mongering on the part of the reactionary parts of the media, warning the public about the encroachment of Marxism back into Britain by the back door, with consequences even more dire than the looming winter and the suffering that that will bring to all but the wealthy in society as the privatised energy companies raise their prices one by one. The Labour Party in Scotland (and here too) are likely to find themselves with a bit of a problem because many of their activists would presumably like their leadership to be able to make similar (and maybe even more radical) pronouncements, but they are likely to have to wait a while as the party slowly tries to change gear and execute some delicate manoeuvres to reconnect themselves with their roots as socialists and representatives of the working masses. Perhaps the first of those was the announcement that they would cap gas prices if they came to power. No talk of re-nationalisation – yet. No sign either of their getting behind the workers who have been staging industrial action recently (no Labour Party official attended the teachers' strike rally the other day) nor have they publicly backed the postal workers or fire fighters, their mantra being that the workers and the government should keep negotiating. One of the chants heard as the teachers marched the other day was "2, 4, 6, 8, Michael Gove, Negotiate; 7, 8, 9, 10. Talk to us or we'll do it again!" It seems that strike action may become a feature of life here in the coming months and years, since the workers, the people and the government are so far apart. There is little doubt which side Paul Robeson would be on. I hope you enjoy the show.

Tayo Aluko. Writer, Performer. Tayo was born in Nigeria, and now lives in Liverpool. He worked previously as an architect and property developer, with a special, but frustrated, interest in eco-friendly construction. He has fronted orchestras as baritone soloist in British concert halls and has also performed lead roles in such operas and musicals as *Nabucco, Kiss Me Kate* and *Anything Goes*. CALL MR ROBESON won three awards at the London Ontario Fringe in June 2012 and Best Solo Show at the Stratford UK Fringe this June. He has performed the play around the UK, Canada, Nigeria, Jamaica and the USA (including New York's Carnegie Hall in February 2012). His other piece titled FROM BLACK AFRICA TO THE WHITE HOUSE - a talk about Black Political Resistance, illustrated with Spirituals, has also been performed on three continents. He researched, wrote and narrated to camera a piece on West African History before the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, which forms part of the permanent exhibit at Liverpool's International Slavery Museum. His 15-minute play, HALF MOON, which also deals with ancient Africa, has been performed several times in the UK.

Roland Perrin, Piano

Born in New York, pianist Roland Perrin spent his childhood roaming the planet with his itinerant family. Eventually settling in London, Roland has established himself as one of the foremost musicians working in the jazz and world music areas. He has toured and recorded with Dudu Pukwana, Najma Aktar, Moses Fan-Fan, Aster Aweke, and his own band, *Limited Edition*. He is also currently working on an animated musical film he has conceived, titled *Echoes of the Shtetl* based on the story of his grand parents' emmigration from Russia to New York at the turn of the 20th Century.

Olusola Oyeleye, Director and Dramaturge. Olusola is an award winning writer, director and producer working in opera, music theatre, visual arts and dance. Theatre includes: Tin (The Lowry), Ti-Jean and his Brothers (Collective Artistes & Sustained Theatre, Cottesloe), Resident director on Trevor Nunn's West End production of Porgy and Bess (Savoy Theatre), staff producer at English National Opera, Spirit of Okin and Sankofa for Adzido Pan African Dance Ensemble, (National & International tours), Coming Up For Air (The Drum & UK tour), The Resurrection of Roscoe Powell (Soho Theatre), The Shelter (RSC Barbican Theatre), Medea (Ariya, Royal National Theatre Studio), The Playground (Polka Theatre, Time Out Critics' Choice Pick of the Year), High Life, (Hampstead Theatre), Maybe Father, (Talawa, Young Vic), Twelfth Night (British Council Tour, Zimbabwe) and Ella, a monodrama about Ella Fitzgerald (Rich Mix). Opera includes: Akin Euba's Orunmila's Voices: Songs from the Beginning of Time (Jefferson's Arts Centre, New Orleans) and Chaka: An Opera in Two Chants with the St. Louis African Chorus, Dido and Aeneas (Tricycle/BAC), God's Trombones (Fairfield Halls) and the second cast revival of Jonathan Miller's production of The Mikado (English National Opera). Olusola has also worked in Ghana, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Hungary and the Czech Republic. She has been a visiting lecturer and Artist at Universities in South Africa and London, and was Head of the Acting Studio at Morley College. Her poetry has been set to music by Akin Euba and performed at both Harvard and Cambridge Universities. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society for the Arts.

Phil Newman, Designer, Assistant Director. Phil's Set & Costume Design credits include: The Tempest (UK/UAE tour for Shakespeare4Kidz), A Christmas Carol & Peter Pan (Tickled Pink), an open-air Romeo & Juliet (Cornucopia Theatre), Dance or Die (contemporary dance choreographed by Avant Garde's Tony Adigun), Cinderella (Library Theatre, Luton), Voices in the Alleyway & Yes, I Still Exist (Spread Expression Dance), The Fiddler (Unicorn Theatre), Next Door (Cockpit Theatre) & film short The Judge for Faith Drama, The Riddle of the Sands and Laurel & Hardy (Jermyn St Theatre), The Famous Five (Tabard Theatre), Hansel & Gretel (UK tour incl. Greenwich Theatre), Stockholm (BAC), open-air tours of The Merchant of Venice & The Railway Children (Heartbreak Productions) and the award-winning UK/International touring production of John Retallack's Hannah & Hanna (Time Out Critics' Choice). Call Mr Robeson is one of several shows Phil has designed for director Olusola Oyeleye. Others include The Security Guard, Ella, High Life (Hampstead Theatre), Coming Up For Air (UK tour), Ma Joyce's Tales from the Parlour (Edinburgh 2010/Oval House) and The Playground (Time Out Critics' Choice/Polka Theatre). Most recently, Phil designed the settings for Houdini (UK tour) and he will be designing Shakespeare 4 Kidz' forthcoming UK/UAE tours of Pinocchio and Macbeth.

Sound Design: David Darlington & Liam McDermott. **Sound Engineering:** Derek Murray. **Lighting Design:** Gareth Starkey. **Recorded Percussion:** Oludele Olaseinde **Voices:** Shamus Maxwell, Paul O'Neill. Felix Pring, Kat Bishop, Suzanne Goldberg, Harry Arkwright, and from the original HUAC hearing of June 12 1956, "Honorable" Senators Walter, Arens and Scherer. **Male Voice Choir:** Liverpool Male Voice Choir

Forthcoming Performances include: Until October 26, London: Tristan Bates Theatre, Covent Garden November 7, Oxford: Ruskin College; November 8: Oxford Spires Academy. November 9, Helmsley Arts Centre. January 17, Corby: The Core.

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