

CALL MR. ROBESON: A life, with songs.

**Written and Performed by Tayo Aluko, with Michael Conliffe, Piano
Mill Studio, Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, Guildford,
Thursday 24 – Saturday 26 November 2011**

Greetings and Welcome. The difference between the protests happening here in the UK and those happening in Egypt is quite striking. In Cairo, thousands of all ages and from all walks of life have filled Tahrir Square for the second time in about a year, demanding a change to their government. They return day after day, despite the very real threat of serious injury or even death at the hands of their army. In London, those occupying the square outside St. Paul's Cathedral have dwindled down to a few hundred, and are fading out of the headlines, and being described by the tabloids as jobless drunks, drug addicts and the like, getting in the way of the smooth running of business in the City. The tabloids seem to have forgotten, as they return their hypocritical attention to the phone hacking scandal, what it is that occupy London (occupylsx.org) is all about. Taking their cue from Occupy Wall Street and those in cities all over America who, like in many places all over the world were inspired by the bravery of the people in the Middle East and North Africa, decided to express their anger at seemingly uncontrolled gross inequalities and injustices in their societies; the way their governments allow the richest individuals and corporations to avoid paying billions in taxes, and spend criminal amounts on war while withdrawing resources need to care for the vulnerable, like the elderly, who worry increasingly about what their pensions can do for them. That is the issue among many that trade unions have chosen to focus on in the forthcoming day-long strike and the government (and many members of the public) are calling them unreasonable. Paul Robeson believed passionately in the good that trade unions can do for working people, and encouraged people to join and support them.. He would be with the occupiers at St. Paul's, the strikers on the 30th, and in the squares and streets of those cities around the world, where people are demanding change. May his story inspire us all to play our part, however small or large. I hope you enjoy show.