

CALL MR. ROBESON: A life, with songs.

Written and Performed by Tayo Aluko, with Jonathan Jarvis, Piano

St. Helens Parish Church, Stapleford. Thursday, March 10, 2016

Greetings, Welcome. It's good to hear that the authorities are looking to protect the public from the energy suppliers by applying caps to the amounts we can be charged. It seems they agree that such vital services should not be left to the free market after all. I am convinced that this runs contrary to the arguments made all those years ago when the utilities were privatised. The excesses of the free market have been accepted as being dangerous to the vulnerable after all, but even this latest move is being viewed with scepticism by some observers. If that's the case, they argue, why is there such an assault on other vital necessities like social housing? What exactly is it that makes this government want to undermine the ability of social landlords to provide decent, comfortable homes for those who cannot afford, or want to buy? And why is there a war between junior doctors (the latest in the list of caring professionals that all of us need from time to time) and the government? Why do many warn that the NHS is being prepared for – guess what – privatisation (by the back door)? At times like this when public sector workers are out on strike, we hear about the greed or unreasonableness of the strikers, and not that of the employers. Americans would give an arm and a leg to be having such an argument, because what we have here is seen as “socialised medicine” there - definitely something to be shunned at all costs. Someone on that side of the pond who persists in calling for *all* Americans to have access to good healthcare regardless of income (and who unashamedly calls himself a socialist) is being either ignored, undermined or totally ignored. Bernie Sanders, however, is giving Hillary Clinton a good run for her money. Part of his attraction is his insistence that their country is being run by big corporations, and that even Clinton is in their pockets. If the corporate media are to be believed, this man hasn't a hope in hell, and they have tried to keep him out of the picture. This is the fate that Robeson has suffered for decades, because his socialism was seen as dangerous and unwelcome by the authorities. One of the things he warned about in his time was the approach of fascism into American society. We see it raising its very ugly head there now, and, we have to admit, in Europe. So, when people ask us to stand with workers like Robeson did, maybe we should heed their call. 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 as yet frustrated interest in eco-friendly construction. He has fronted orchestras as baritone soloist in concert halls, and has also performed lead roles in such operas and musicals as *Nabucco*, *Kiss Me Kate* and *Anything Goes*. *CALL MR ROBESON* has won numerous awards at festivals in the UK and Canada, as well as highly favourable reviews in the press – most notably in the Guardian and on BBC Radio 4. He has toured the play around the UK, the USA, Canada, Jamaica and Nigeria, and at New York's Carnegie Hall in February 2012 on his 50th birthday. He also delivers a lecture/concert called *PAUL ROBESON – THE GIANT, IN A NUTSHELL*, and another one titled *FROM BLACK AFRICA TO THE WHITE HOUSE*: a talk about Black Political Resistance, illustrated with spirituals has been performed in 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. He recently developed a piece titled *WHAT HAPPENS?* featuring the writings of African American Langston Hughes, for performance with live jazz accompaniment. He has been published in *The Guardian*, *The Morning Star*, *NERVE Magazine*, *Modern Ghana* and *Searchlight Magazine*. He is currently working on a new play.

Jonathan Jarvis, Piano. Jonathan read Music at the University of Huddersfield, majoring in solo performance. In 2014, he toured to Rotterdam with the University Big Band, and also played with the University Symphonic Wind Orchestra, who performed one of his own arrangements as part of their concert series. Jonathan repertoured for several established amateur musical societies including the Huddersfield Gilbert and Sullivan Society and the Halifax All Souls Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society. He has been heavily involved with the Music for Youth Festival, appearing at the Royal Albert Hall on three occasions with award-winning big band, *Jazz Vehicle*.

OlusolaOyeleye, 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: *Saint/Jeanne* and *Spring Awakening - The Musical* (Chelsea Theatre), *Hairspray*, *Cabaret* & *Attempts on her Life* (Amersham & Wycombe College), *Lord of the Flies* & *Grimm Tales* (Colet Court School), *The Tempest* & *Pinocchio* (UK/UAE tours for Shakespeare4Kidz), *Beauty & the Beast*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *A Christmas Carol* & *Peter Pan* (Tickled Pink), an open-air *Romeo & Juliet* (Cornucopia Theatre), *The Liar* (South Hill Park), *Dance or Die* (Hoxton Hall), *Voices in the Alleyway* & *Yes, I Still Exist* (Spread Expression Dance), *The Fiddler* (Unicorn Theatre) and film short *The Judge* for Faith Drama, *The Riddle of the Sands* & *Laurel and Hardy* (Jermyn St Theatre), *The Famous Five* (Tabard Theatre), *Hansel & Gretel* (UK tour), *Stockholm* (BAC), open-air tours of *The Merchant of Venice* & *The Railway Children* (Heartbreak) and the award-winning UK/international touring production of *Hannah & Hanna*. His Set Design credits include *Our House* (Elgiva Theatre), *Cinderella* (Library Theatre, Luton), *Next Door* (Cockpit Theatre) and, most recently, Rouge28 Theatre's new tour of *Kwaidan*, a Japanese ghost story with puppets. Other collaborations with director OlusolaOyeleye include *High Life* (Hampstead Theatre), *A Wing, A Prey, A Song* (Guest Projects Africa), *The Security Guard* (Merton AbbeyFest 2012), *Ella* (RichMix), *Coming Up for Air* (UK tour), *The Playground* (Polka Theatre) and *Ma Joyce's Tales from the Parlour* (Oval House/Edinburgh). He has just started design work on musicals *Carousel* and *Fame* for Amersham & Wycombe College.

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:

March 11, Upper Broughton Village Hall; **March 12, Averham, Notts:** Robin Hood Theatre Club; **March 17, Wolverhampton:** Arena Theatre; **March 18, Coalville, Leics:** Century Theatre; **March 19, Hoton:** Hoton, Cotes & Prestwold Village Hall; **March 20, Radcliffe-on-Trent:** Grange Hall; **March 24: Doncaster** Unitarian & Free Xtian Church; **March 26: Derby** Theatre; **April 14, Preston:** Symposium at IBAR, University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN)

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