CALL MR. ROBESON: A life, with songs. Written and Performed by Tayo Aluko, with Karel Roessingh, Piano Cowichan Performing Arts Centre, Duncan BC. Friday, May 13, 2016

Greetings, Welcome. Some of you may have heard of the British Prime Minister being caught recently at a function at Buckingham Palace saying that he considered Nigeria and Afghanistan to be two of the most corrupt nations in the world. As a proud Nigerian, I am unable to use the excuse of an ill-thought-out military invasion of my country as being partly responsible for the ongoing chaos there, as many Afghans might. Nonetheless, as our President said, an apology is a lot less important or meaningful than the return of the assets stolen by Nigerians and their accomplices and deposited in Western banks and tax havens. He could have gone further and demanded reparations for all manner of things dating much further back than the decades since Nigerian independence from the theft of her natural resources to her very people, their skills, culture and religions, philosophy etc., not to talk of the millions of lives lost in wars facilitated by imperialism - but as they say, "let's not go there." Paul Robeson did "go there," - not just on behalf of his people, but on behalf of people from all over Africa and the world. That included the indigenous people of Australia and New Zealand, and of course here in Canada, where the peoples who had occupied these lands for millennia were subjected to genocide and slavery, and their land and natural resources exploited for the benefit of those they call the invaders – a situation that continues to this day. When easy criticisms are jokingly levelled at people of other nations and faiths therefore, one should be grateful for those like Robeson and the Nigerian President who caution us not to be so smug and complacent, and remind us of some of the roots of their current problems. Reparations can take many forms, one of which is making sure that the record is set (and kept) straight. Robeson used his voice and his art to this end, and paid dearly for it. Those of us that are here to benefit from the efforts of people like him owe it to them to make sure their work and their names are not forgotten. and also that we do what we can, individually and collectively, to make sure that important histories are not buried, and that we hold our politicians, bankers and others to account, and stop them causing so much havoc in other parts of the world, as well as at home. I hope you enjoy the show.

Tayo Aluko. Writer, Performer. Tayo was born in Nigeria, and now lives in Liverpool, UK. 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, including New York's Carnegie Hall in 2012. He delivers a lecture/concert called PAUL ROBESON -THE GIANT, IN A NUTSHELL. 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 has 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. His new play JUST AN ORDINARY LAWYER premieres in August 2016.

Karel Roessingh, Piano. Dutch-born Karel was raised in Calgary, and began his professional musical career in 1970. He studied jazz arranging and composition at Berklee College of Music in Boston, and completed a degree in secondary music and mathematics education at University of Victoria. He is frequently a featured specialist at jazz workshops, and writes jazz tunes for his own and other groups, and has composed extensively for film, television and video productions, many of which been broadcast world-wide. He has several recordings to his credit, from solo piano to orchestral compositions, andwrote a series of music for interactive toys made by Fisher Price. Karel is a councillor and former Mayor of the District of the Highlands.

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. 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, TheRiddle 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, Rouge28Theatre'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:

May 17, 18, Brighton Fringe: Marlborough Theatre; July 1: Penally Village Hall, Pembrokeshire; July 2: Solva Memorial Hall, Pembrokeshire; July 3, Frome: Westway Cinema; July 3: Wesley Methodist Church, Frome (Frome Festival); Aug 4 – 28: Call Mr. Robeson & Just an Ordinary Lawyer: Details tbc.; Sept 1: Llandinam Village Hall; Sept 8 – 11: Ashland Community Centre, Ashland, OR; Oct 13: Edge Hill Arts Centre, Ormskirk; Oct 21: Nottingham Playhouse Nov 13 – 22: Tour of North West Territories, BC.

Thanks to Randy and Judy Caravagio

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