

CALL MR. ROBESON: A life, with songs.

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

Chelmarsh Parish Hall, Saturday April 29, 2017

Greetings. Jeremy Corbyn is a threat to national security. Since none other than the esteemed foreign secretary declared him thus, it must be true. After all, anybody who is not brave enough to state categorically that he would not hesitate to press the red button that would nuke some city somewhere far away clearly is not fit to be the leader of this country. Even Hillary Clinton has more b**ls than him, because she talked of nuking Iran when she ran against that famous pussyfooter Obama all those years ago. Which makes one think of his successor. Now, there's a REAL MAN – one who can boast about grabbing assorted parts of female anatomy one day, become president the next, drop the mother of all bombs the day after, and then send a nuclear armada to the Korean Peninsula before ending the week on a golf course. *That* is the kind of “strong, stable leadership” that we need, which Mr. Corbyn is clearly incapable of providing, and which the prime minister quite demonstrates in spades. All that flowery, sensitive, effeminate talk of providing health care for all, and free at the point of use; of increasing minimum wages; of building council homes; of re-nationalising the railways and utilities; of creating a people's bank, and worst of all, of talking and negotiating with groups who have grievances – all that is a clear and present danger to not just national, but international security, and should therefore be laughed out of all consideration at every given opportunity. People didn't so much laugh at Paul Robeson in his time – he was seen as an even more dangerous threat to national security, for daring to suggest, for example, that “*the absence of peace in the world today is due precisely to the efforts of the British, American and other imperialist powers to retain their control over the peoples of Asia, the Middle East, Europe and Africa.*” This was way back in 1946, as the world was emerging from another devastating war that claimed millions of lives. The difference between then and now is that most of the lives being lost in today's conflicts are foreign, so we here don't need to worry so much, as long as we continue to enjoy the kind of “strong, stable leadership” that we clearly need now, as we prepare to do battle against those who would allow all those foreigners to come into our country to take advantage of our housing, social services and the NHS. So, be patriotic, be strong, be wise. Vote on June 8, but for anybody but Jeremy Corbyn. Your country's security depends on you. 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, 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* premiered at the Edinburgh Fringe in August 2016.

Jonathan Ellis, Piano and original incidental music. Jonathan studied music at RNCM and Manchester University. He achieved 1st class degrees from both institutions and has since attained postgraduate-level diplomas in accompaniment and chamber music. At college, he won many prizes as accompanist and solo pianist. He currently performs regularly as a soloist, as chamber musician, as vocal and instrumental accompanist, choral/operatic répétiteur. He is a regular accompanist for City of Manchester Opera, Bury Choral Society and the Pennine Spring Music Festival.

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), and *Twelfth Night* (British Council Tour, Zimbabwe). 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, *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, Rouge 28 Theatre's new tour of *Kwaidan*, a Japanese ghost story with puppets. Other collaborations with director Olusola Oyeleye include *High Life* (Hampstead Theatre), *A Wing*, *A Prey*, *A Song* (Guest Projects Africa), *The Security Guard* (Merton Abbey Fest 2012), *Ella* (Rich Mix), *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

Call Mr. Robeson: May 1: Teatro Technis, London;

May 13: Crich Glebe Field Centre; **June 10:** Leominster Festival; **July 6 – 8:** Tara Theatre, London;
July 13,15,16: Buxton Fringe Festival

Just An Ordinary Lawyer: April 20: Theatre Royal, Bury St. Edmunds;

April 21: Threlkeld Village Hall; **May 1:** Teatro Technis, London;

May 14: Doncaster United & Free Christian Church; **May 30, 31:** Manchester Central Library;

June 3, 4: Marlborough Theatre, Brighton; **June 11:** The Place, Bedford;

July 12, 14, 16: Buxton Fringe Festival

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