

CALL MR. ROBESON: A life, with songs.

Written and Performed by Tayo Aluko, with Rowland Cotterill, Piano

Rous Lench Village Hall, Saturday, April 1, 2017

Greetings. Terrorism has reached our shores again. On the very day Martin McGuinness, the former IRA commander was being buried, the Westminster Bridge attacker struck, diverting attention away from Londonderry, and the highly divided opinions that had been raging since Mr. McGuinness's death. Many in fact argued that the London atrocity didn't qualify as terrorism, partly because so few died, and partly because there was no definable political agenda. Indeed, the man's troubled past and the suggestion that he was high on cocaine at the time adds some credibility to this argument. Even if a misguided religious belief had anything to do with it (despite the fact that he had allegedly been violent in his previous life as a Christian), the fact remains that he and others like him are reacting to what they see as injustices carried out by Western powers in predominantly Muslim parts of the Middle East. It is interesting that such details are hardly discussed after terrorist acts, and in this case, for a time, a lot of attention was paid to the possibility of the authorities getting even more powers to access our private communications than they already have. Regardless of what one thinks of the two individuals (incomparable as they were to each other) the fact is that terrorism is often a reaction to foreigners meddling in places where they ought not to be. It would therefore not be too out of place for more commentators to be given air time to suggest that part of the solution to terrorism would be a withdrawal of invading foreign troops and administrations from where they are not welcome, and where they have absolutely no legitimacy. Alleged Russian meddling in the recent US elections, devastating as it may be for the Americans and the rest of the world, if true, is arguably a long-overdue dose of the medicine that American administrations have been force-feeding people around the world over the last few centuries, although in this particular case, innocent people haven't been massacred in the hundreds or thousands. When Paul Robeson said 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*" he was dismissed as one of those dangerous people intent on violently overthrowing the American government. One would argue that such thoughts are more valuable at a time like this than what we may or may not be saying over whatsapp. 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.

Rowland Cotterill trained as organist, pianist and song accompanist during his study in Cambridge, and has given recitals in Coventry Cathedral, King's College Cambridge, and at the University of Warwick, where he lectured for many years in English and in the History of Music. He is a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists and an Associate of the Royal Schools of Music. He has directed shows ranging from Shakespeare to Hare, and worked as musical director in productions of Gilbert and Sullivan and of Brecht's *Threepenny Opera*.

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: April 1: Rous Lench Village Hall; **April 2:** Rolleston Club;

April 29: Chelmarsh Village Hall; **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

Tayo Aluko & Friends
24 – 26 Mount Pleasant
Liverpool L3 5RY

info@tayoalukoandfriends.com www.callmrrobeson.com

facebook: Call Mr. Robeson **Twitter:** @CallMrRobeson

