

## **CALL MR. ROBESON: A life, with songs.**

**Written and Performed by Tayo Aluko, with Horacio López Redondo, Piano**

**The Dugdale Theatre, Enfield, London. Saturday October 28, 2017**

**Greetings, Welcome.** Direct Rule is with us in Europe again, with the sacking earlier of the entire Catalan regime by Madrid. The long-term consequences of this on Spain, and indeed the European Union remain to be seen, but the EU's (and this government's) silence on the recent treatment of Catalan citizens by the Spanish police suggests that their priorities may be more the preservation of the Union at all costs, over the exercise of democratic choice. We are of course more familiar with the idea of direct rule happening in former European colonies, and the way international trade and political relationships are structured today can be described as one step removed from Direct Rule. Military relationships are just as worrying, if not more so; and if one tracks arms exports from this part of the world to developing countries, one would find that they dwarf the spending on the things that one might expect to represent fair trade or even aid – in medical, social, education or cultural programmes. Of particular concern is the US Africa Command (AFRICOM) which was exposed recently partly by No. 45's telephone conversation with the widow of an American soldier who fell in Niger (alongside Nigerian soldiers, it must be stated). The president, as with his intervention in the NFL "Taking A Knee" protest started by Colin Kaepernick last year, has once again unwittingly shone light on an area of American foreign policy that many around him would rather have remained hidden, and for people to continue believing that American forces are fanning out over Africa on humanitarian and advisory duties only. It requires some bravery to criticise and publicly question such policies, and Kaepernick is following in the giant steps of Paul Robeson, who directly addressed his then president thus, in a telegram protesting some lynchings in Georgia, "... *only when our government has taken [such] action toward protecting its own citizens can its own role in aiding the progress of people in other countries be viewed with trust and hope.*" May it not take too many more military losses in Africa to drive this point home. I hope you enjoy the show.

**Tayo Aluko. Writer, Performer.** Tayo was born in Nigeria, and now lives in Liverpool, where he worked previously as an architect. 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, and 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 other play *JUST AN ORDINARY LAWYER* has been performed on three continents, including at the National Black Theatre Festival in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

**Horacio López Redondo** began his musical education in Conservatories in his native Spain before joining the MA Piano Accompaniment program at the Royal Academy of Music, and graduating with Distinction in 2013. He was highly commended in the "Christian Carpentier Prize" in the Best Piano Accompaniment Exam and was awarded the Accompanist Second Prize at the "Ludmilla Andrew Russian Song Prize." Horacio has accompanied performers at some of the most prestigious London venues, including St Martin-in-the-Fields, Blackheath Halls, St. James' Piccadilly, King's Head Theatre, and Southwark Cathedral, and in other parts of the country such as Canterbury Cathedral, Bristol Cathedral and "TheVenue" at Leeds College of Music. Horacio performs regularly in the London Spanish Song and Zarzuela Festival and in the popular series Song in the City at St. Botolph's-without-Bishopsgate. His show "A night in Seville," mixing operatic numbers and songs set in the Spanish city, was recently performed in St. Martin-in –the Fields.

**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: Nov 24:** Stanley Halls, South Norwood, London;

**Nov 25:** Market Theatre, Ledbury; **February 2018:** USA Canada tour.

**April 5:** European and British Association for American Studies' Conference, London

**April 28:** Swanland Village Hall, E Yorkshire; **April 29:** Barton Assembly Rooms, N. Lincolnshire

**Just An Ordinary Lawyer: March 17:** Riverhouse Barn, Walton-on-Thames;

**March 29:** The Lowry, Salford; **April 18:** Alnwick Playhouse; **April 19:** Queen's Hall, Hexham;

**April 20:** The Maltings, Berwick-upon-Tweed; **April 26:** Cast in Doncaster;

**April 27:** The Heron Theatre, Milnthorpe

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