

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

Written and Performed by Tayo Aluko, with Tim Mottershead, Piano  
Bolton Socialist Club. Friday 7 December, 2018

**Greetings, and Welcome.** It was interesting to hear an MP severely reprimanded the other day for suggesting that the honourable Prime Minister may have misled Parliament, "probably inadvertently" (not). How scandalous to suggest such thing! We will overlook the fact that she insisted for months that there would be no general election before trying to pull off what she must have thought was a masterstroke of politicking. Okay, it didn't quite work out last time, but all indication is that she must have something equally spectacular up her sleeve this time that will finally earn her a place alongside the American #45 as one of the cleverest politicians of all time. Funny how the sobriquet "Honourable" is given to politicians worldwide, regardless of merit, like those who defend and support the dreadful actions of their murderous counterparts far away. Contrast too for instance, Paul Robeson's interrogation by the "honourable" members of the House UnAmerican Activities Committee. They were interested in proving his disloyalty to his country by referring to many forthright pronouncements he had made instead of sticking to his profession as an entertainer. One such was this from 1947: "*A day or two ago, the British Foreign Minister said, and I quote, 'If we do not want total war, we must have total peace.' For once, I agree with him. But Mr. Bevin must be totally blind if he cannot see that the absence of peace in the world is due precisely to the efforts of the British, American and other imperialist powers to maintain their control over the peoples of the Middle East, Europe and Africa.*" Too much honesty from a singer, perhaps, it was totally in character, consistent with his views and legitimate for him to point his the finger disrespectfully and dishonourably at them and boom, "YOU are the UnAmericans ...". Whether we remain Europeans or not by this time next year, may we get better at recognising true honour wherever we find it, within or outside the House. I hope you enjoy the show.

**Tayo Aluko. Writer, Performer.** Nigerian-born and a former architect, Tayo lives in Liverpool. He has fronted orchestras as baritone soloist in concert halls, and 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 has taken him around the UK, the USA, Canada, Jamaica and Nigeria, including New York's Carnegie Hall in 2012. He delivers a lecture/concert titled *FROM BLACK AFRICA TO THE WHITE HOUSE*: a talk about Black Political Resistance, illustrated with spirituals. His audiovisual piece on West African History before the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade is part of the permanent exhibit at Liverpool's International Slavery Museum. His 15-minute play, *HALF MOON*, which deals with ancient Africa has been performed several times in the UK. He originated a piece titled *WHAT HAPPENS?* featuring the writings of African American Langston Hughes, is performed with live jazz accompaniment. He has been published in *The Guardian*, *The Morning Star*, *NERVE Magazine*, *Modern Ghana* and *Searchlight Magazine*. His play *JUST AN ORDINARY LAWYER* has been performed on three continents, including at the National Black Theatre Festival in Winston-Salem, North Carolina in August 2017 and at the Harare International Festival of the Arts in May 2018.

**Tim Mottershead, Piano.** Tim Mottershead studied music at Liverpool Community College and at Aberdeen University. He is regarded as an authority on the English composers Edmund Rubbra and Alan Rawsthorne (1905-1971), on whom he has published a biography. He has contributed to scholarly publications, including *Piano Professional*, *Musical Opinion*, and most notably *TEMPO*, with articles in nearly every issue from 2005-14. As a composer of more than 150 works, he now writes mainly for specific performance projects. In 2004, he undertook a short tour of universities with a recital to celebrate the centenary of Luigi Dallapiccola. Tim is a keen advocate of world music, having performed or written in every conceivable genre from Iraqi Oud music, to Gamelan, to music for Maypole dancing. He played in the Indian classical music group Raga Jyoti from 2000 to 2012. However, he feels he has learned most from studying with the Scottish composer-pianist Ronald Stevenson.

**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: Arawa (Mboka Festival); Sidney's Last Shift (York Theatre, Royal); A Raisin in the Sun (Farnham Maltings); Tin (The Lowry), Ti-Jean and his Brothers (National Theatre, Cottesloe), Resident director to Trevor Nunn, Porgy and Bess (Savoy Theatre), Staff Producer, English National Opera; Spirit of Okin and Sankofa, Adzido Pan African Dance Ensemble (UK & International tours), Zhe (Collective Artistes, Soho Theatre), The Shelter (RSC Barbican Theatre), Medea (Ariya, 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, Zimbabwe). Opera includes: The Pied Piper of Chibok (Grimeborn Festival); 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 (St. Louis African Chorus), Dido and Aeneas (Tricycle/BAC). Olusola has worked in The Gambia, Ghana, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Hungary and the Czech Republic. She is a lecturer at UCA and St Mary's Universities, and was Head of Acting at Morley College. Her poetry has been set to music by Akin Euba and performed at Harvard and Cambridge Universities. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society for the Arts.

**Phil Newman, Designer, Assistant Director.** Phil's recent Design credits include: *The Little Mermaid & The Wonderful World of Oz* (UAE tours, S4K International), *Pinocchio & A Christmas Carol* (Voice of the Show, Chesham), *The Mikado* (Network Theatre), *Jungle Book* (Elgiva Theatre), *Bernarda Alba, Strange Land, Saint/Jeanne & Spring Awakening* (Chelsea Theatre), *The Tempest & Pinocchio* (UK/UAE tours, Shakespeare4Kidz), Japanese ghost story *Kwaidan* (UK/International tour), *Carousel, Hairspray & Cabaret* (Amersham College) and a huge walk-through Xmas Grotto at Wyevale Garden Centre, Aylesbury in 2017. For *Call Mr Robeson* director Olusola Oyeleye he has also designed *The Security Guard* (Colour House), *High Life* (Hampstead Theatre), *Coming Up for Air* (UK tour), *The Playground* (Polka Theatre) and *Ma Joyce's Tales from the Parlour* (Oval House/Edinburgh). Further credits include: *Lord of the Flies* (Colet Court), *Dance or Die* for Avant Garde Dance's Tony Adigun, *Voices in the Alleyway & Yes, I Still Exist* (Spread Expression Dance), *The Riddle of the Sands & Laurel and Hardy* (Jermyn St Theatre), *The Famous Five* (Tabard Theatre), open-air tours of *The Merchant of Venice & The Railway Children* (Heartbreak) and the original multi-award-winning touring production of John Retallack's *Hannah & Hanna*. Phil is proud to be an Associate Artist with director Gbemisola Ikumelo's Faith Drama Productions, for whom he has designed *Custody* (Oval House), *The Fiddler* (Unicorn Theatre) and *Next Door* (Cockpit Theatre). Since 2016, he has been the Resident Creative Designer at Colour House Children's Theatre near Wimbledon.

**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:***

**March 4 – 9:** Smock Alley Theatre, **Dublin**, Ireland; **March 27:** Histon Library, Cambridgeshire:

**April 5:** Kent State University, OH, USA

***Just An Ordinary Lawyer:* Feb 16:** Metro Studio Theatre, **Victoria, BC**, Canada;

**March 11 – 16:** Smock Alley Theatre, **Dublin**, Ireland

***What Happens?:* April 9:** Theatr Clwyd, Mold, Wales; **April 10:** Liverpool Philharmonic Music Room

#### **Tayo Aluko & Friends**

**First Floor, Liver House, 96 Bold Street, Liverpool L1 4HY**

info@tayoalukoandfriends.com www.tayoalukoandfriends.com

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