

JUST AN ORDINARY LAWYER. A play, with songs.

Written and performed by Tayo Aluko, with David Dear, piano

Windrush #70 Not Out Festival, ISM Liverpool, Saturday, 20 October, 2018

Greetings, and welcome. The recent death of the Saudi journalist in his country's Istanbul consulate has drawn condemnation from politicians worldwide, although many are urging caution at proposals to stop selling arms to that regime. Groups like the Campaign Against Arms Trade and thousands of individuals (including the Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn) have demanded this for years, but the billions earned from the trade have thus far made Western governments of all shades dismiss them as fantasists. It is interesting that the life of one journalist has illuminated this shady business in a way that the carnage and famine in Yemen didn't manage to do, illustrating the fact that human lives are considered expendable in the onward march of capitalism. Africans and their brothers and sisters in the Diaspora have known this only too well for centuries, and are being reminded of it with the way the Windrush Generation are being treated now. We also know that politicians and business people will be working hard behind the scenes to figure out how to keep the wheels of the arms and oil trade well lubricated while they continue to profess public indignation at the Saudi leadership's actions. We must not be fooled, for the history of British and European political and commercial deception is long indeed, and their media so effective in spreading falsehoods that, as Malcolm X said, *"If you are not careful, the newspapers will have you hating the people who are being oppressed, and loving the people who are doing the oppressing."* As thousands continue to risk their lives crossing the Mediterranean to get to these parts and the United States (again thanks in no small measure to malignant Western foreign policies) we need ways of questioning the information we are fed. A better knowledge of history will help us to do this, and this play sets out to make a modest contribution to that cause. In thanking the brave people who fought for the liberation of our various countries, we also pay tribute to those of the Windrush Generation who helped build the society we currently enjoy and are therefore surely enjoined by them to defend with every fibre of our being, against the shady, murderous forces of capitalism. I hope you enjoy the show.

Tayo Aluko, Writer, Performer. Tayo was born in Nigeria, worked as an architect in Liverpool for many years. 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*. His first play, *CALL MR ROBESON* won numerous awards at festivals in the UK and Canada, as well as highly favourable reviews in the press – most notably *The Guardian* and BBC Radio 4. He has toured it 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*, and another one titled *FROM BLACK AFRICA TO THE WHITE HOUSE*: a talk about Black Political Resistance, illustrated with spirituals. 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*. *JUST AN ORDINARY LAWYER* premiered at the 2016 Edinburgh Fringe, and featured in the National Black Theatre Festival in Winston-Salem, USA in August 2017, and at the Harare International Festival of the Arts, Zimbabwe in May 2018.

David Dear, Piano. David has lived and worked in Liverpool for over 30 years as a piano teacher and accompanist. He started playing piano at the age of seven, attended the Huddersfield School of Music and completed a Music Degree at the University of Liverpool. He taught music at a local Comprehensive school in Liverpool before establishing himself as a private piano teacher, and still enjoys working with schools such as King David High School and Bluecoat School. A skilled accompanist, he regularly works with students from the University of Liverpool and has performed in the University Lunchtime Recitals.

Amanda Huxtable, Director. Amanda studied Recreational Arts in the Community Degree foundation course at Manchester Metropolitan University, and Communications and Cultural Studies at The University of Leeds. She is also currently studying Social Sciences, The Arts Past and Present and Early Modern European History at the Open University. Amanda served as Artistic Director of Yorkshire Women Theatre Company in Leeds from 2004-2009. She is part of a writer-and-director team with Marcia Layne and together they run Hidden Gems Productions, a theatre company committed to telling rarely told Black British Stories: Black British and Bold. Theatre Directing credits for Hidden Gems tours 2010 -2016 include: Bag Lady, Somebody's Son, Lost & Found and The Yellow Doctress - all by Marcia Layne. Freelance Director credits include: Bread and Roses by Ian Kershaw, (Oldham Coliseum). Wonder By Poppy Burton- Morgan (Edinburgh Fringe) Lady of Situations By Vanitas Arts, Shirley Harris and Seni Seneviratne,(Sheffield) She was Associate Director on Wakefield Mysteries,adapted by Nick Lane (Theatre Royal Wakefield) Directed HD100 Chol Theatre, (Lawrence Batley Theatre). Continent Chop Chop, by Virtual Migrants, (National Tour), The Dressmaker's Gift, by Anita Franklin (Liverpool's Write Now International Festival), Totally Over You, by Mark Ravenhill (Lawrence Batley Theatre), The Promise, by Chris Cooper (Belgrade Theatre Tour) Amanda is the Artistic Associate at Hull Truck Theatre, under the Arts Council's Changemakers Programme.

Emma Williams, Designer. Emma trained as a theatre designer at Wimbledon School of Art. Her recent design work includes "Abigail's Party" at Hull Truck Theatre, directed by Amanda Huxtable, with whose company Hidden Gems she also worked on "The Yellow Doctress", "HD100" for Chol at the Lawrence Batley theatre, both directed by Amanda Huxtable. "Iyalode of Eti", Utopia Theatre; "Molly's Marvellous Moustache", Fidget and "You Forgot the Mince" Imagine Theatre. Designs for the West Yorkshire Playhouse between 2003-2015 include: "Immune"; "Nine Lives"; "Refugee Boy"; "You The Player", co-production with Look Left Look Right; "Scuffer"; "Crap Dad"; "Two Tracks and Text Me"; "Runaway Diamonds"; "Broken Angel"; "Sunbeam Terrace"; "Huddersfield"; "The Dutiful Daughter"-co-production with Szechuan People's Theatre, Chengdu, China; "Coming Around Again"; "The Elves and The Shoemakers"; "Pinocchio"; "The Magic Paintbrush" and the original version of "The Yellow Doctress". Other designs include "One Among Millions", co-pro between RJC Youth Dance and Leeds University, 2016; "Brief Encounters @Bradford Interchange, a site-specific piece for Freedom Studios; "Strawberries in January" Traverse, Edinburgh;"The Shoe", Polka Theatre; "The Swing Left" Unlimited Theatre; "Small Objects of Desire"; Soho Poly Theatre. Opera credits include: "Siroe" Royal College of Music; "Partenope"; "Admeto"; "Alceste" all for Cambridge Handel Opera at New Hall Cambridge; "La Cenerentola"; "The Tales of Hoffman" and "Genevieve de Brabant", French Institute, London.

Esther Wilson, Dramaturg. Esther writes for stage, TV & radio. Her first R4 play 'Hiding Leonard Cohen' won a Mental Health in Media award. The Heroic Pursuits of Darleen Fyles is now in its tenth year on R4. Her stage play 'Soulskin' toured nationally with Red Ladder. She was lead writer on the award-winning 'Unprotected'. 'Ten Tiny Toes' was shortlisted for a TMA award. The sequel to the R3 version of Tony Teardrop was commissioned by R4. Esther's TV work includes: Jimmy McGovern's The Street (RTS award for best newcomer), Accused, Moving On, Call the Midwife and The White Princess. Her latest R4 play Me Myself I has just been nominated for the Tinniswood Prize.

Lighting Design: Mark Loudon; **Sound Design:** Noel Inyang and Tayo Aluko

Forthcoming Performances Include

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

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

Call Mr. Robeson: Nov 3: St. James Anglican Church, **Vancouver, BC**, Canada;

Nov 12: Alphabet City, **Pittsburgh, PA, USA;** **Feb 16:** Metro Studio Theatre, **Victoria, BC**, Canada;

March 4 – 9: Smock Alley Theatre, Dublin, Ireland

Tayo Aluko & Friends

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