

CALL MR. ROBESON: A life, with songs.

**Written and Performed by Tayo Aluko, with Tim Mottershead, Piano
Hebden Bridge Trades Club. Sunday 21 October, 2018**

Greetings, and Welcome. When a journalist goes into his nation's consulate in a foreign country, the last thing on his/her mind is the notion that s/he may not emerge alive. That all changed recently, with the fate of Jamal Khashoggi in Istanbul, and it is saying something when British and other Western politicians are effectively sharing a platform with the Turkish leader (not known for his pro-press freedom credentials) in expressing outrage at the Saudi authorities' actions. It is also noteworthy how few politicians are joining the likes of Jeremy Corbyn and the Campaign Against Arms Trade in calling for a ban on arms sales to Saudi Arabia – something that they have been ignored over by governments of all hues for decades. The history of the Middle East is the history of vested interests of the capitalist West and local elites, and any suggestion that things are going to change in light of Khashoggi's demise are folly indeed, but one can at least derive some hope that the new light shed on the dark practices of the arms industry and political intrigue (in a way that the suffering of millions in Yemen, Syria and Africa has been unable to do) may indeed contribute to a weakening of the stranglehold that the Saudi regime has over not only their people, but also the political leaders in the West. One is reminded of Paul Robeson's statement from as far back as 1946 where in a speech he said, *'A day or two ago ... the British Foreign Minister said... "If we don't want ... total war, we must have total peace..." But Mr Bevin must be totally blind if he cannot see 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.'* To describe Paul Robeson as prophetic is clearly no exaggeration, and the least we can do is to recognise him, support those who have taken up his mantle in our time, and recognise political charlatans for what they are. I hope you enjoy the show.

Tayo Aluko. Writer, Performer. Nigerian-born and a former architect, Tayo lives in Liverpool, UK, 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: Nov 3: Heart of the City Festival, Vancouver, BC;

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

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

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

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

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