

Vancouver Moving Theatre / 15th Annual Downtown Eastside

HEART OF THE CITY FESTIVAL present

CALL MR. ROBESON A LIFE, WITH SONGS

Written and Performed by Tayo Aluko
With piano accompaniment by Elaine Joe
Directed by Olusola Oyeleye. Designed by Phil Newman

It was very distressing to receive news from my home country, Nigeria, that the military had aired a video of a speech by America's #45 in an attempt to justify their shooting dead dozens of unarmed Muslim protesters last weekend. This deserves as much attention and condemnation as the Pittsburgh slaughter last week, notwithstanding any encouragement presidential hate speech may have given the perpetrators. The possession and use of lethal weaponry on innocent victims by citizens or employees of the state is reprehensible, and their manufacture and sale equally so. The Coalition to Oppose the Arms Trade is a little-known Canadian organisation that sheds light on your government's and financiers' involvement and complicity in this horrible phenomenon, that can be traced back to the violent colonisation of this country. COAT would be well worth researching and learning from, as would Paul Robeson, about whom too little is known, and whose story has so much to offer, as we desperately seek examples of how much better things could be.

Tayo Aluko - Writer, Performer, Producer. Tayo Aluko is an actor, singer and playwright, based in Liverpool, UK, where he worked previously as an architect. CALL MR. ROBESON has been performed as far North as within the Arctic Circle and as far South as New Zealand, with a performance at New York's Carnegie Hall in February 2012. His newer play, JUST AN ORDINARY LAWYER was premiered in August 2016 and has already been performed in five countries. His art is dedicated to encouraging and inspiring progressive activism by showing how Black History is everybody's history.

Elaine Joe, Piano: Elaine studied with the Royal Conservatory. She works as a performer, teacher, composer and accompanist. She plays for four choirs in a wide range of styles. In her spare time, she performs with an accordion squeezebox circle, dances and plays djembe on the beach and is learning cello. Away from the music, she can be found on the mountain snowboarding, x-country skiing or rollerblading in the summer. She has a passion for treehouses and sometimes practices in the trees.