

JUST AN ORDINARY LAWYER. A play, with songs.

Written and performed by Tayo Aluko, with Horacio López Redondo, piano

Greenwich Theatre, London. Sunday, 13 June, 2021

The G7 is in full swing in Cornwall, in what looks like another media circus as leaders of some of the world's richest and most polluting countries discuss climate change. The British PM's choice to travel that distance by plane didn't go unnoticed, and for some, this was just one more reason not to trust anything he says on the permanent campaign trail. It is also interesting to be reminded that Russia was expelled from what was the G8, in protest at its annexation of Crimea, although impartial students of geopolitics may feel that there may be some merit to Russia's claims. China's recent statement that the days when a small group of countries decided the fate of the world were long gone must also have made uncomfortable hearing. Others whose absence is noteworthy include the Netherlands, Spain and Portugal –whose slavery and colonial history earned them huge wealth and influence, since diminished to the extent that they no longer earn their place at the top table. The Presidents of the European Union and European Commission are both in attendance too, indicating that Europe as a whole still exerts huge international global influence, and fully intends for that to continue for as long as possible. Where the challenges to this status quo will come from is difficult to see right now, but it is at least instructive, and indeed inspiring to revisit earlier times when struggles against the seemingly invincible colonial powers were in full swing, and would ultimately be successful. What was not clear at the time is now better understood – that many of those who sought the power they wrested from their former oppressors would eventually join the international class of oppressors. Stories such as the ones being shared in this play today will therefore remind us of the need to continue earlier struggles, not least by arming ourselves with the basic education with which to see through the charade that our leaders engage in, and remind ourselves where the power to achieve real change really lies, especially when we act in solidarity. 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 opera, musicals and oratorio. 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*, *Searchlight Magazine*, *Counterfire* and *Counterpunch*. He was one of a group of "outstanding writers of colour" invited to write and perform responses to artefacts held in Oxford's Pitt Rivers Museum in September 2019. His latest production is a radio play, *PAUL ROBESON'S LOVE SONG*, recorded during lockdown with actors from the USA and Canada, and now streaming online through *African Theatre To Your Home*. He is working on another one-man musical play, *COLERIDGE-TAYLOR OF FREETOWN*, inspired by the life and music of the Black British Composer, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor. Discovering a new talent as a poet during lockdown, he has had two poems published, and developed one of them – "*GREATNESS*" *IN A TIME OF COVID* – into an online international performance and mapping project and a workshop examining colonial history.

Horacio López Redondo, Piano. Horacio began his musical education in Spain at the age of 5. He was on the MA Piano Accompaniment program at the Royal Academy of Music with teachers Mr Malcolm Martineau and Mr James Baillieu, where he graduated in 2013 with Distinction, and was Highly Commended in the "Christian Carpentier Prize" for Piano Accompaniment Exam. In 2012 he won the Accompanist Competition at the "Canolfan Gerdd William Mathias" Festival in Caernarfon, Wales, and also won the Second Prize at the "Ludmilla Andrew Russian Song Prize" competition, at the Royal Academy of Music. Since his arrival in London in 2010, Horacio has performed as an accompanist at some of the most prestigious London venues, including the Wigmore Hall, Blackheath Halls, St. James' Piccadilly, The Forge, King's Head Theatre and Southwark Cathedral, and in other parts of the country such as Canterbury Cathedral, Bristol Cathedral or "The Venue" at Leeds College of Music.

Amanda Huxtable, Director. Amanda has over 25 years of Creative practice experience in theatre and screen development. She is Co- Director at Vanitas Arts, working in development the executive team are leading research and practice into immersive digital storytelling from a diverse range of lived life experiences. **Theatre Credits Pending:** *Everything I own* by Daniel Ward, Hull Truck Theatre, *I leave you love* by Anita Franklin (In development with Vanitas Arts. **Recent Theatre Credits:** *Unknown* by Leanna Benjamin, Leeds Playhouse, *Hilda and the Northern Powerhouse* (Kate Hainsworth & Camille Hainsworth – Staples,), *Abigail's Party* (Hull Truck Theatre), *Bread and Roses* by Ian Kershaw (Oldham Coliseum), *Wondr* by Poppy Burton-Morgan (Metta Theatre, Edinburgh Festival), *Just an Ordinary Lawyer?* (Tayo Aluko), *Ladies of Situations*, (Seni Seneviratne and Vanitas Arts), *Bag Lady* by Marcia Layne (Hidden Gems). **Television:** Casting consultant for ITV Studios Coronation Streets – The Bailey's. Shadow Trainee Director on Emmerdale.

Emma Williams, Designer. Emma's recent design work includes "Jackie and the Beanstalk" Curly Tales, Leeds Playhouse, "Bad Blood Blues" Theatre Deli; "Shivers" Greenwich Theatre, national tour "The Netherlands" Two Tonne, Camden People's Theatre and touring ; "Shadows in Different Shades" Sheffield Crucible and Utopia;"Jack Frost" Barnsley Civic and "Birds Nest Billy" Fidget Theatre, national tour, "Abigail's Party" Hull Truck, "The Yellow Doctress," Hidden Gems, "HD100" for Chol at the Lawrence Batley Theatre, Terrace"; "Huddersfield"; "The Dutiful Daughter"-co-production with Szechuan People's Theatre, both directed by Amanda Huxtable. "Iyalode of Eti", Utopia Theatre; "Molly's Marvellous Moustache", Fidget and "You Forgot the Mince" Imagine If. Designs for Leeds Playhouse between 2003-2015 include:"Immune";"Nine Lives"; "Refugee Boy"; "You The Player" site specific co-production with Look Left Look Right; "Scurfer"; "Crap Dad"; "Two Tracks and Text Me";"Runaway Diamonds"; "Broken Angel"; "Sunbeam 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 Theatre. Opera credits include: "The Soldier's Tale" Skipton Camerata, "Siroe" Royal College of Music; "Partenope"; "Admeto"; "Alceste" New Hall Cambridge. She also designs immersive sets for escape rooms and teaches and mentors young artists entering the industry, most recently as part of Northern Ballet's Cultural Runway collaboration with Burberry.

Dramaturgy: Esther Wilson; **Lighting Design:** Mark Loudon; **Sound Design:** Noel Inyang & Tayo Aluko

Tayo Aluko & Friends

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