

About 800 young West Indian women and men disembarked from the HMV Empire Windrush 75 years ago today at Tilbury Docks. Many successful voyages followed, bringing a whole generation of people who would make their homes in this country, rebuilding it from the ravages of WWII. Imagine how different and how much poorer Britain would be today if the Windrush had sunk, and those vibrant souls lost at sea. The recent loss of a migrant ship near Greece, where similar numbers as there were on a single Windrush voyage were crammed onto a much smaller vessel, ought to be fresh in our memory in this country, but unlike in Greece, where thousands are out on the streets over the affair, we are preoccupied with other losses at sea. Here in Liverpool, we should also be remembering and honouring the 130 captured Africans thrown overboard alive from the Liverpool slave ship *The Zong* on a slaving voyage in 1781 (not to talk of the thousands of dead people similarly disposed of en route), and we ought to remember the murder by drowning at Queen's Dock in 1919, of the Bermudian, Charles Wotten, during a race riot. He has only recently been awarded a fitting memorial at Anfield Cemetery, thanks to the efforts of the Liverpool Black History Research Group. There are also the hundreds lost by drowning in the shark-infested waters of a racist, unequal, greedy society, and those who continue to suffer as a result of the Windrush scandal, whereby hundreds who arrived here as children on the famous vessel have been subjected to untold misery by hostile immigration policies. A spiritual, *Wade in de Water*, refers to the secret code, or instruction, to escaping slaves to evade capture by wading through rivers or ponds, to throw chasing dogs off their scent. It has the refrain, "*God's a goin' to trouble de water,*" which sounds like a warning. If thousands are prepared to risk their lives crossing the Mediterranean to get away from their troubled lives on land, we ought to do what we can to fix the problems at source, which all-too-often are generated from these shores, and are a result of the history that the tides can never wash away. It is fitting that on this day, Mia Mottley, the Barbadian Prime Minister is trying to knock heads of rich and powerful white (mostly) men together, warning that if they don't do what is right and just about capitalism and the climate crisis, the whole of humanity will drown. Though racism and misogyny may deafen them to her entreaties, we still celebrate her, as a descendant of slaves, who like those of the Windrush generation, continue to survive against immeasurable odds.

**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* has won numerous awards at festivals in the UK and Canada, and continues to be performed after 16 years. He delivers a number of lecture/concerts and talks on Black Political Resistance using art and song. 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 writer 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*. 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. He has recently 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. His third one-man musical play (a work in progress), is *COLERIDGE-TAYLOR OF FREETOWN*, inspired by the life and music of the Black British Composer, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor. He is also working on a screenplay telling the story of Pastor Daniels Ekarte (d. 1964), known as the African Saint of Liverpool.

**Tom Sykes, Piano.** Tom studied at Leeds College of Music on the jazz degree, majoring on the violin. During his many years as a Lecturer in Music at the City of Liverpool College, he pursued part-time studies to complete both an MA and a PhD in Music, and since 2020 Tom has had a full-time academic post at Liverpool Hope University. He regularly performs a wide range of music with string quartets, orchestras, jazz groups and Liverpool-based African musicians such as Mamadou Diaw and Felix Ngindu Kasanganayi. Tom has known Tayo for many years but this is their first theatre performance together!

**Just An Ordinary Lawyer** was premiered at the Edinburgh Fringe on 4<sup>th</sup> August, 2016 by Tayo Aluko, with Angus Carmichael on piano

Directed by **Amanda Huxtable**  
Designed by **Emma Williams**  
Dramaturgy: **Esther Wilson**  
Lighting Design: **Mark Loudon**  
Sound Design: **Noel Inyang & Tayo Aluko**

**Future Performances Include:**

**30 July: Just An Ordinary Lawyer @ EBFringe, Eastbourne**  
**5-19 August** (odd dates only) **Call Mr. Robeson**  
**@ Edinburgh Fringe**  
**6-20 August** (even dates only) **Just An Ordinary Lawyer @ Edinburgh Fringe**  
**12 October Just An Ordinary Lawyer.**  
For Law Society of Scotland, EICC, **Edinburgh**  
**14 October. Just An Ordinary Lawyer**  
Tullynessle Hall, Aberdeenshire  
**20 October. Just An Ordinary Lawyer**  
St. George's Hall, Liverpool

**Tayo Aluko & Friends**  
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**AFRICAN CARIBBEAN CENTRE LIVERPOOL**

**AND**

**TAYO ALUKO & FRIENDS**  
present

**JUST AN  
ORDINARY  
LAWYER**

— (?) —

**A PLAY, WITH SONGS**

Written and performed by **Tayo Aluko**,  
with **Tom Sykes**, piano

**Liverpool African Caribbean Centre**  
**Windrush Day**

**22 June, 2023**