

Many of you can be forgiven for having missed the fact that Wednesday was the 6th anniversary of the Grenfell Tower disaster, in which 72 innocent people lost their lives. The anniversary was marked by the local people, and by small groups around the country, but it wasn't considered newsworthy by our national media. We are instead bombarded with daily coverage of the report into Boris Johnson's repeated lying to the British people in Parliament, as if it should be a surprise to anyone. This is another example of the Establishment using non-stories to divert attention away from how bad our government and politicians are, suppressing such as the junior doctors' strike, or that the Labour Party leadership didn't support them or any other strikers. Indeed, what it does do is criminalise people (like all here tonight) who show support for the Palestinian cause. Such is the calibre of political leadership we have, and the judiciary and police are doing their bidding by criminalising dissent. Consequently, the only person due in court in relation to Grenfell so far is a Palestine Action Activist who on last year's anniversary climbed onto the roof of Arconic, the maker of the insulation panelling responsible for the fire spread, and causing a lot of damage to the building before being arrested the next day. According to Palestine Action, Arconic manufactures components and materials for Israeli military aircraft which are routinely deployed in aerial assaults on Gaza. That actionist may get jailed, and will certainly get a criminal conviction, like a growing number of citizens protesting imperialism, war-mongering and environmental terrorism as perpetrated by the rich and powerful. The most famous such person currently is Julian Assange, but at the other end of the scale, there is me, your performer tonight, with a recent conviction for protesting outside another death factory: a Leicester premises owned by the Israeli arms manufacturer Elbit Systems, which has many factories in Britain. To date, two of their sites have been forced to close by Palestine Action's activities, and since May 1, there has been a siege outside the same Leicester factory. Support is required from anybody willing and able to get involved (they can't jail us all). What would Paul Robeson make of all this? His love for Jewish people was unquestioned, and he actually supported the cause of the formation of Israel, recognising that they required a place of safety, like his own people had. He did however eventually come to question the treatment of Palestinians, and it is my firm belief that he would be standing in solidarity with them today, and giving generously to the Saddleworth Palestinian Women's Scholarship Fund.

Tayo Aluko, Singer, Educator. Born in Nigeria, Tayo worked in Liverpool as an architect for many years and now writes and acts fulltime on stage and screen. He has fronted orchestras as baritone soloist in concert halls, and performed lead and solo roles in operas, musicals and oratorios. His one-man play, *CALL MR ROBESON* has taken him as far afield as the North West Territories of Canada and Australia and New Zealand, including New York's Carnegie Hall. 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 created a piece titled *WHAT HAPPENS?* featuring the writings of African American Langston Hughes, performed with live jazz accompaniment. He has been published in *The Guardian*, *The Morning Star*, *NERVE Magazine*, *Modern Ghana*, *Searchlight Magazine*, *Counterfire* and *Counterpunch*. His play *JUST AN ORDINARY LAWYER* has been performed on three continents, and deals with Black liberation struggles around the world. He was one of a group of ten "outstanding writers of colour" invited to write and perform responses to artefacts held in Oxford's Pitt Rivers Museum in September 2019. His radio play, *PAUL ROBESON'S LOVE SONG*, recorded during lockdown with actors from the USA and Canada, now streams online. He has also developed a number of illustrated talks on Black history and the culture of resistance. He is working on a third one-man musical historical play, inspired by the life of the composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, and titled *COLERIDGE-TAYLOR OF FREETOWN*.

Tim studied music at Liverpool Community College and Aberdeen University. He has written a biography on the composer Alan Rawsthorne, and has contributed to scholarly publications, including *Tempo*, *Piano Professional*, and *Musical Opinion*. He has learned most from a long association with composer-pianist Ronald Stevenson (1928-2015) who was a pioneer of 'World Music'. As a consequence, Tim is conversant with many genres, particularly Indian classical music, performing with the group Raga Jyoti from 2000 to 2012. He currently teaches at Bhavan Indian music school. Besides performing with Tayo, he is accompanist to Let's Sing Community Choirs, and works regularly with vocalist Bill Holmes in a wide variety of repertoire. In the autumn they undertake their biggest project to date, when they will perform Marvin Gaye's protest album 'What's Going On' in its entirety.

**All proceeds go to:
Saddleworth Palestinian Women's Scholarship Fund
saddleworth.pwsf@gmail.com**

Future Performances by Tayo Aluko include:

**22 June: Just An Ordinary Lawyer @ Liverpool African
Caribbean Centre**

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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**Saddleworth Palestinian Women's
Scholarship Fund and
Steve Roman
Present:**

TAYO ALUKO in

**PAUL ROBESON, THE GIANT
– IN A NUTSHELL**



With Tim Mottershead, piano

**Birch Community Centre, Manchester
Saturday 17 June, 2023**