

On June 24, 1937, Paul Robeson made a speech at the Royal Albert Hall, a part of which forms the epitaph on his grave in New York State: *"The artist must take sides. He must elect to fight for Freedom, or Slavery. I have made my choice. I had no alternative."* Here was an African American man, speaking in England on behalf of Spaniards enduring and fighting Fascism, which Robeson described as *"the greatest cause that faces the world today."* He had surprised the organisers and the crowd by appearing there in person, flying in for the evening from a concert tour in Russia (from where he had sent a recorded message), on his own dime. Twenty years later, the greatest cause, to the mind of a South Carolina senator, was segregation, and in a bid to maintain it, he held the Senate floor in a record 24-hour filibuster. That record was broken the other day by an eloquent Black senator from Robeson's state, Cory Booker. The cause that compelled him to extend the record to beyond 25 hours was the abuse of power by the present administration. Booker referenced his inspiring mentor, Georgia senator John Lewis, many times. Lewis had, at 25 had his skull fractured by a mounted officer on the Edmund Pettus Bridge at the peak of the civil rights movement, in March 1965. The following month, Lewis was asked to represent Dr. King and SNCC at Paul Robeson's 67th birthday celebration in New York. "Who is Paul Robeson?," Lewis is reported to have asked. Well, he soon found out, and was inspired anew. Many would argue that the greatest cause that faces the world today, in 2025, is the ongoing genocide in Palestine, but according to those who listened to Senator Booker's record-breaking speech, it's not exactly that he forgot that fact, but that like Robeson, he decided to take sides: in Booker's case, not for Freedom, but Genocide, repeating the assertion that Israel has a right to defend itself. It may be purely coincidence that Mr. Booker appears pretty high up in the list of politicians who have received funding from the Zionist lobby group AIPAC. Speaking up on behalf of ordinary people fighting the powerful is fine, as long as "the powerful" is not Israel. Words are cheap, when someone else's dollar determines which side one takes. In Robeson's case, the record is literally set in stone.

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. *CALL MR ROBESON* has won numerous awards at festivals in the UK and Canada, and continues to be in demand 16 years since its premiere. His second play, *JUST AN ORDINARY LAWYER* is itself 8 years old, and has been performed on three continents. 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 audio play, *PAUL ROBESON'S LOVE SONG*, recorded during lockdown with actors from the USA and Canada, and now streaming online. His third one-man musical play, *COLERIDGE-TAYLOR OF FREETOWN*, inspired by the life and music of the Black British Composer, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, premiered in Brighton in May 2024.

Chris Noble, Piano. Chris is a jazz pianist, accompanist, composer, arranger and music educator. Since completing music studies in composition in Sheffield, he has worked in many different musical fields and with many different musical and artistic names, including internationally-renowned jazz trombonist Dennis Rollins, at the Royal Albert Hall. Other career highlights include symphonic commissions for Sheffield-based orchestras, and performing with and directing the chorus of Opera North for a special screening of *Breakfast At Tiffany's* in Leeds. He is currently writing a piece for leading orchestral brass ensemble Harlequin Brass."

Call Mr. Robeson was premiered at C-Soco at the Edinburgh Fringe on August 12, 2007, with Michael Conliffe on piano

Director and Dramaturge: Oluşola Oyeleye.

Set & Costume Designer: Phil Newman.

Sound Design: David Darlington & Liam McDermott.

Sound Engineering: Derek Murray.

Lighting Design: Gareth Starkey.

Recorded Percussion: Oludele Olaşeinde

Voices: Shamus Maxwell, Paul O'Neill. Felix Pring, Kat Bishop, Suzanne Goldberg, Harry Arkwright.

Some voices in the HUAC scene used from

Are You Now or Have You Ever Been?

by Eric Bentley, recorded by L A Theatre Works.

Male Voice Choir: Liverpool Male Voice Choir

Future Performances include:

June 19. Call Mr. Robeson @

Raritan Valley Community College, Branchburg NJ USA

June 24. Coleridge-Taylor of Freetown @

The Bus Stop Theatre, Halifax NS, Canada

October 11. Coleridge-Taylor of Freetown @

The Capstone Theatre, Hope University, Liverpool

**Tayo Aluko & Friends
Liverpool L15 3LA**

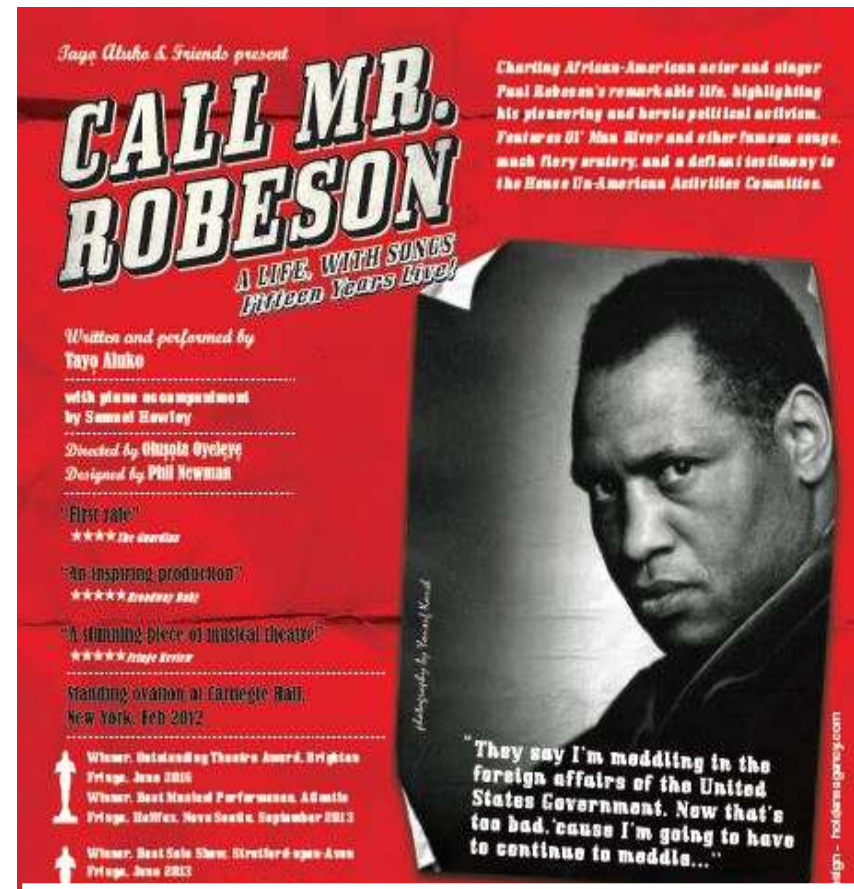
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**Tayo Aluko & Friends
and
Three Acres and a Cow
Present**



**Written and performed by Tayo Aluko
Accompanied by
Chris Noble**

**Highfield Trinity Methodist Church, Sheffield
Saturday, 5 April, 2025**