

Greetings, and Welcome. *"I'm all for diversity, but hasn't this gone a bit far?"* It's not that long ago that the seemingly impossible happened in the United States, and now a Ugandan/Indian - descended family now occupies 10 Downing Street. *"Who would have thunk it?"* The euphoria and hope that greeted Obama (and now accepted by many as having been misplaced) can hardly be said to have been matched in the UK - not after the months of antics that has made the so-called Mother of all Parliaments now look as old, worn out and ready to give up the ghost as the queen did before she was finally seen off by shaking hands with two Tory PMs in a few hours. How she would have reacted to Mr. Sunak is a matter for speculation, but he and his cabinet, however remarkable for its diversity, speak the same language as was spoken centuries ago by some of their white predecessors, who petitioned the authorities for permission to *"take up...Blackamoors here in this Realm and to transport them into Spain and Portugal."* Despite the change of colour of those making such demands today (the current and previous Home Secretaries for example) the racism and cruelty are the same. So are the greed and ambition that makes leading politicians on both sides of the House, who happen to belong to minority racial groups, ignore the injustices faced by their own brethren, and join the baying mobs shouting about manufactured danger to the less threatened, for the sole purpose of silencing and neutralising those who seek to challenge the status quo and its persistent injustices. As it is now, so it was in Paul Robeson's time. He suffered the trauma of "many of his own kind" - from respectable organisations to prominent individuals - criticising him for his stances on peace and brotherhood. A few of them are named in this play, but it is Robeson whose legacy stands the test of time: so much so that sometime next year, a large room in the magnificent Eastbourne Winter Garden is to be named after him. And this is almost a century after he would regularly pack the place out at the drop of a hat. It is thanks to the Encore for Robeson Group here in Eastbourne that we are celebrating the great man here tonight, and they would welcome your support and involvement. I hope you enjoy the show.

**Tayo Aluko. Writer, Performer.** Tayo was born in Nigeria and worked in Liverpool as an architect for many years. He now writes and acts fulltime on stage and screen. As a singer, he has fronted orchestras as baritone soloist in concert halls, and performed lead and solo roles in operas, musicals and oratorios. *CALL MR ROBESON* has won numerous awards at festivals in the UK and Canada, and 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.

**Wendy Hammond, Piano.** Wendy Hammond comes from a well-known musical family in Thailand. Born in the UK, Wendy moved to Thailand at the age of six. In her music education there she achieved distinction through all levels. She taught music in International Schools there while also accompanying the Bangkok Symphony Orchestra and Bangkok Music Societies. Since moving back to the UK in 2012, she has accompanied numerous musicals, plays, choirs, instrumentalists and singers. Wendy is a passionate piano teacher having taught students of all ages for more than 40 years. She continues to teach, direct and accompany.

Call Mr. Robeson was premiered at C-Soco at the Edinburgh Fringe on August 12, 2007, with Michael Conliffe accompanying Tayo Aluko then, and for several years thereafter.

Director and Dramaturge: Olusola Oyeleye.

Set & Costume Designer: Phil Newman.

Sound Design: David Darlington & Liam McDermott.

Sound Engineering: Derek Murray.

Lighting Design: Gareth Starkey.

Recorded Percussion: Oludele Olaseinde

**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

**Tayo Aluko & Friends**  
First Floor, Liver House, 96 Bold Street  
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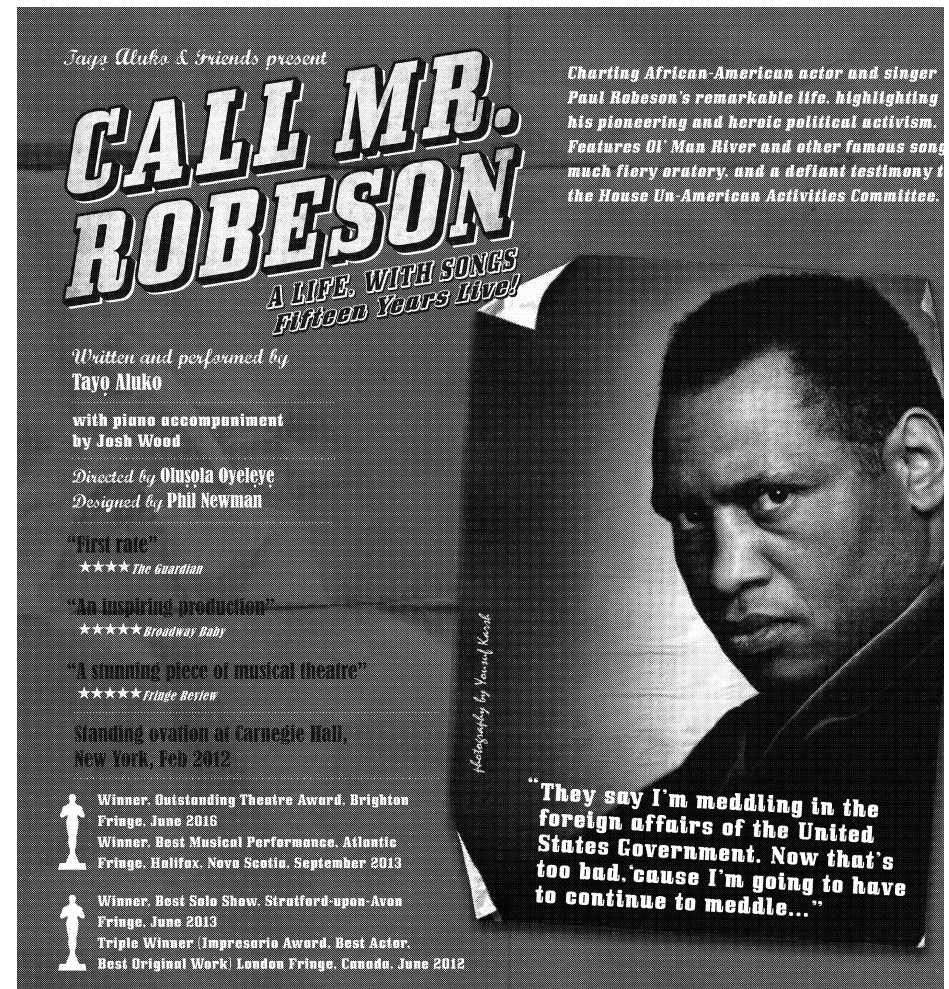
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**Grove Theatre, Eastbourne**  
**Friday, November 4, 2022.**

**Written and performed by Tayo Aluko**  
**Accompanied by Wendy Hammond**