

One wonders how historians a few centuries hence will portray the narrative of how Palestinians eventually regained their freedom, and at what cost. The myriad innocent lives lost in the last quarter of 2023 alone will of course remain subsumed into the numbers buried alive or dead under tons of rubble, created by showers of bombs falling from cruel skies at a time when the Supreme Being was seemingly asleep or absent. It is likely however that this present moment will be seen as a turning point on the journey to freedom – the time when the world finally awoke to the reality of the situation, whereby one people's humanity was finally revealed and acknowledged, and the cruelty and barbarity of oppressors who had portrayed themselves as innocent victims, exposed: a reality finally becoming clearer to all who have eyes to see, and hearts made of flesh, not stone. Several examples from Black history remind us of such pivotal moments when a people's suffering was finally felt: King Leopold III of Belgium's atrocities were revealed when the world saw pictures of severed hands and feet, belonging to Congolese children, women and men whose faces reflected the utter disbelief that other human beings were capable of such cruelty. The sight of Emmett Till's savagely brutalised body, bravely displayed by his grieving mother, was a turning point in the American civil rights movement. And in South Africa, the photograph of a lifeless Black child's body – just one of the many victims of the Soweto Massacre – in the arms of a desperate young man, was another image that changed the world's view of that particular struggle. There are so many images and so much footage coming out of Palestine now that only the deluded can fail to see this as a premeditated genocide unfolding in real time. We see that there are many enabling the horror to unfold, but this Black History Month, one can be singled out as a symbol of everything that is wrong in British politics. David Lammy, descendant of survivors of the African Holocaust, schooled in activism at the feet of one Bernie Grant, and once showing signs of being a worthy recipient of his radical baton, joined those who see anti-Jewish racism as being so much more important than all other forms (including against his/my own people), that it should be weaponised to keep power in the hands of criminals and warmongers. Thankfully, there are enough examples of true freedom fighters, like those recalled in this play - as well as Jewish and Palestinian ones - to keep us inspired to join the fight for Palestinian and others' freedom, while the Judases of our time will be lost to history.

Tayo Aluko, Writer, Performer. Tayo was born in Nigeria, and 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. Talks he gives include *ART AS A WEAPON – SOME PAN-AFRICANIST EXAMPLES*, a survey of artists in the African Diaspora. 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.

Thomas Kell, Piano. Thomas studied music in Görlitz, Germany and was an Organ Scholar at Trinity College, Oxford. He is Director of Music for the churches of Our Most Holy Redeemer, Exmouth Market and St Mark's Myddelton Square, Clerkenwell. He is an arts producer with a particular interest in African theatre, was Administrative Director of Tiata Fahodzi, is currently a director of the Elufowoju jr Ensemble, overseeing its hit inaugural production, *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives*. Other producing credits include Tangle's tours of *Volpone*, *Richard the Second* and *Pursued by a Bear's Nothing on Earth*.

Just An Ordinary Lawyer was premiered at the Edinburgh Fringe on 4th 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:

7 November, Cambridgeshire: Call Mr. Robeson. St. Ives Library
8 November, Cambridgeshire: Call Mr. Robeson. St. Neots Library
10 November, online: Art As a Weapon – Some Pan-Africanist Examples. Yorkshire Festival of Story

Tayo Aluko & Friends
www.tayoalukoandfriends.com e: info@tayoalukoandfriends.com
facebook: Tayo Aluko and Friends
Twitter: @MrTayoAluko **instagram:** mrtayoaluko
Tel: +44 7990 608 074

TAYO ALUKO & FRIENDS
present

JUST AN ORDINARY LAWYER

————— (?) —————

A PLAY, WITH SONGS

**Written and performed by Tayo Aluko,
with Thomas Kell, piano**

**The Courtyard Theatre, London
Tuesday, 31 October, 2023**