

Considerable airtime has been devoted in recent days to a certain male TV presenter, accused of inappropriate sexual behaviour toward female workers, contestants and guests on his popular show, and his claim that the complainants were a few “middle-class women of a certain age.” He has been roundly criticised, and will be off air for a while. Many will be satisfied with such a public display of zero-tolerance of misogynistic behaviour, but some cynics will however consider it performative, and illustrative of “first-world problems.” It is scandalous that as this is going on, the ongoing horror of serious sexual violence being experienced by women, girls (and indeed men) in the theatre of war that is Palestine is being starved of the oxygen of publicity. There are other conflicts going on elsewhere of course, where gender-based violence reaches its apotheosis: Sudan, Congo, Ukraine, and now presumably Lebanon, to give a few examples. So as our state broadcaster leads us in performative, chest-banging defence of “members of the weaker sex” who were disrespected for being female, those who fan the flames of war in other parts of the world continue to escape scrutiny for their responsibility for, and complicity in war crimes and crimes against humanity. Meanwhile, real journalists who attempt to shine a light into the darker, more shadowy corners of government, military and corporate underworlds, as well protestors and activists who decide to take direct action in support of victims of oppression, colonialism and climate racism wherever they see the crimes happening: be it in their own countries or overseas, are quietly suppressed, jailed and/or even murdered. The bravery required to continue to do the work of real, truthful journalism from conflict zones is nothing short of heroic, and particularly so when they are female. As we know from high politics, being female doesn’t stop one from being on the side of the oppressor, and that is the case with journalism. Many of us would be forgiven for example for not knowing that we are a few days into the period internationally marking 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, because this has hardly received a mention in any media – even from prominent female journalists. Be it in war zones or in our homes, these issues surely deserve more attention, important as it is to challenge the behaviour of one high-profile embodiment of misogynistic culture. In addition to him, there are many men (and some women) who really need to be apprehended and punished for the violence they cause on the world at large, to women and girls, and to Mother Earth.

Tayo Aluko. Writer, Performer, Producer. Tayo was born in Nigeria, and worked as an architect in Liverpool for 15 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 17 years. His second, *JUST AN ORDINARY LAWYER* has been performed internationally for 8 years. He delivers a number of lecture/concerts and talks on Black political resistance using art and song. He researched, wrote and narrated on film a piece on West African History before the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, that is 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. Publishers of his writing include *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, is now streaming online. His next project is likely to be a screenplay telling the story of Nigerian, Pastor Daniels Ekarte (d. 1964), known as the African Saint of Liverpool.

Annabel Ohene, Piano. Annabel Ohene is a pianist and singer based in Manchester, UK, with Ghanaian and British heritage. She has been accompanist for the Rose Choir and the Barlow Singers in Sheffield, and played in the pit orchestra for theatre productions at Chesterfield Pomegranate Theatre. By day, she works as an engineer, and by night, expresses herself through music. She is a current member of the Hallé Choir, and is passionate about the healing and uniting power of music.

Marigold Lately was born in late 2022 after a gestation period of more than 50 years. Since her birth she has performed at 200 comedy and spoken-word events throughout the UK. She has been recently featured and interviewed on BBC Uploads with her spoken word piece ‘*Everyday Anxiety*.’ Marigold delivers her eccentric and subversive style through a combination of storytelling, stand-up comedy and performance.

COLERIDGE-TAYLOR OF FREETOWN

The play was premiered at Rotunda Theatre at the Brighton Fringe
on May 10, 2024

With Allison Devenish on piano

Director: Mojisola Kareem

Set & Costume Designer: Phil Newman

Sound Design: Liam McDermott

Lighting Design: Tayo Aluko

Dramaturgs: Esther Wilson and Jennifer Farmer

Dance/Movement Dramaturg: Funmi Adewole

Arrangement of *Rise Up, Mother Africa!*: Deirdre Pascall

(Words and melody by Tayo Aluko)

Recorded Voices: Julius Obende, Dorcas Seb, Tayo Aluko, others.

Opening poem by Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

Song settings to poetry by:

Kathleen Easmon (*Big Lady Moon, When We're Left Alone With Mother*), Paul Laurence Dunbar (*Candle Lightin' Time, Who Knows?*) Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (*Hiawatha's Vision*), Sarojini Naidoo (*A Lovely Little Dream*), Christina Rossetti (*When I am Dead, My Dearest*), Ella Wheeler Wilcox (*O Praise Me Not*), Tayo Aluko (*Rise Up, Mother Africa!*)

Future Performances include:

Dec 7. Coleridge-Taylor of Freetown @ Courtyard Theatre, London

April 3. Coleridge-Taylor of Freetown @ HOPS, Leeds

April 5. Call Mr. Robeson @ Highfield Trinity Church, Sheffield

June 19. Call Mr. Robeson @ New Jersey USA venue tbc

Tayo Aluko & Friends

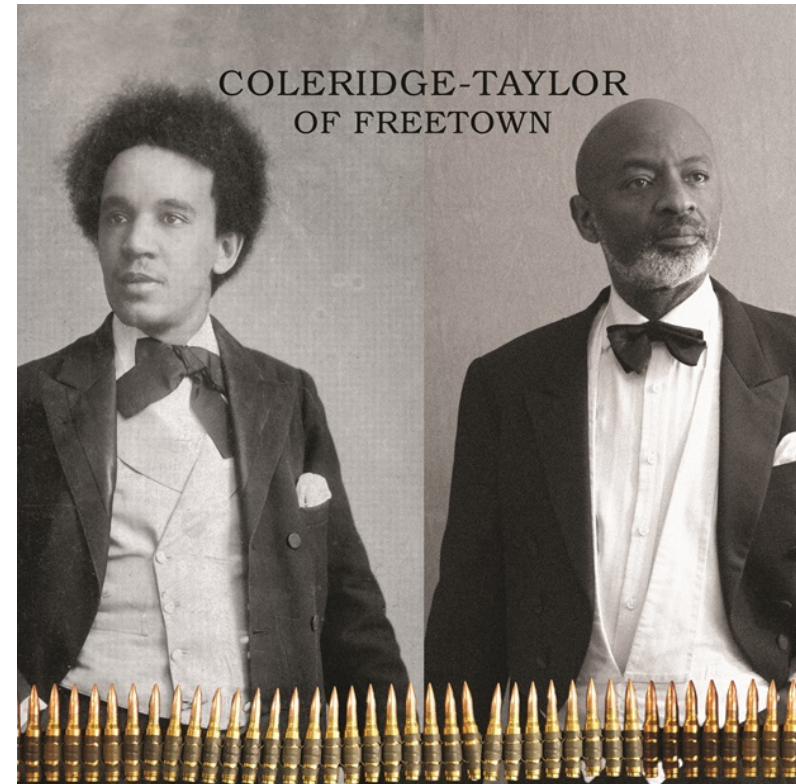
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Tayo Aluko & Friends
Present



Written and Performed by
Tayo Aluko

With Annabel Ohene, Piano

Unity Theatre, Liverpool
Wednesday 4 December 2024

(After-show guest appearance by Marigold Lately)