

Jing liu

Sharron Greaves

Public Speaking 108

02/16/2023

### **PAUL ROBESON**

Hello everyone, my name is Liu Jing. Today I want to introduce a famous black singer and actor. Paul Robertson (April 9, 1898 - January 23, 1976), born in Princeton on April 9, 1898, is a famous American bass singer, actor and social activist. During his study at Muville High School, he participated in the performance of Shakespeare's plays. Graduated from the law department of Columbia University in 1923, he has been engaged in drama performance and film shooting since then. In 1925, the first black soul song recital was held at Harun Theatre in New York, which was a great success. In 1927, he sang the song "Old Man River" in the famous American musical "Sightseeing Boat", which made him famous.

#### **Personal experience**

On April 9, 1898, Paul Robertson was born in a black priest's family in Princeton, USA. Robertson entered Somerville Middle School at the age of 12 and became one of the only two black students in the school. During his study, he participated in the school choir and showed extraordinary musical talent. However, his musical talent did not free him from the dilemma faced by a black student. He recalled many years later: "Because I am a black man, I can't do this, I can't do that, and I can't fight back when I fight..." It is precisely because of this experience and feeling in his youth that Robertson became a fighter for the black people to fight for social status in the future. In 1915, Robertson was admitted to Rutgers University. Although his singing talent was well known, he never participated in the activities of the university chorus

because he could not stand the discrimination of white students. Five years later, he entered Columbia University to study law. Here, he began to sing in the chorus. An accidental opportunity made him an actor. The YMCA Ham Branch asked him to play the leading role in a play called "Simon - a Clani believer". His performance was successful, and he entered the professional performance world with a generous and detached attitude. This detached attitude later became a symbol of his open style. In 1925, Laurence Brown, the composer and collector of black hymns, invited Robertson to cooperate with him. The Greenwich Theater decided to hold a concert for their cooperation on April 19. In 1928, Robertson premiered the American musical "Sightseeing Boat" at the Trulli Road Royal Theater in London. Although he only played a supporting role in the play, he had a very effective song "Old Man River", which was a spiritual song telling the pain and sadness of black people, and an ode to the free flowing Mississippi River. The song "Old Man River" made Robertson famous all over the world and became a well-known singer.

### **Paul's contribution to the influence of China's national anthem in the world**

During the anti-fascist war, he loved the song "March of the Volunteer Army" very much. He not only sang it everywhere in English, but also recorded it in Chinese, named "Get up!". He sent a part of the fee for this record to the family of Tian Han and Nie Er in China, leaving a good story. As a black American singer, he sang China's "March of the Volunteers" in Chinese and English all over the world; He has never been to China, but he has comradeship with many Chinese artists and democratic fighters. In 1937, Japanese militarism launched the war of aggression against China. Paul Robertson, who was far away from the other side of the ocean, watched China and publicly denounced Japan's war of aggression against China at different gatherings. A few months later, Robertson held a music party in New York. At the end of the

party, Robertson announced to the audience: "I will sing a Chinese song to the fighting Chinese people tonight. This song is called 'Rise!'" Then he sang the "March of the Volunteers" in Chinese and English. Upon hearing the news of the founding of the People's Republic of China, Robertson immediately called Mao Zedong, then Chairman of China, to express his heartfelt congratulations. The message is: "We congratulate the birth of the People's Republic of China because it is a great force for world peace and human freedom." This year, he met Chinese representative Qian Junrui in Prague, Czech Republic. Qian Junrui invited him to China. But the next year, the United States government revoked Robertson's passport. Although he has never been to China in his life, he has deep feelings for the Chinese people. He knows the Chinese people, has studied Chinese carefully, can sing many Chinese songs, and can read Chinese books and newspapers.

### **Character evaluation**

Paul Robertson is a world-famous black singer and one of the greatest bass singers in the 20th century [1]. He knows many languages and can sing in more than 20 languages, including English, French, Russian and Chinese. His voice is thick and deep, with the unique charm of black singers. It is said that when he sings indoors, his powerful bass can shake the window glass to rumble, which shows his skill. He also wrote works such as "I Stand Here" and "Song of the Black People". Although he is not an orthodox opera singer, he has reached an excellent level in the singing of black folk songs and spiritual songs. Many black songs have become popular around the world because of his singing. More importantly, he has become an outstanding figure with political influence because of his expression of opposing racial discrimination and calling for freedom and justice through these songs.

### References

- 1. [Boyle & Bunie 2005](#), pp. 45–49; cf. [Duberman 1989](#), pp. 19, 24, [Brown 1997](#), pp. 60, 65.
- 2. Liu, Liangmo Translated by Ellen Yeung. (2006). "[Paul Robeson: The People's Singer \(1950\)](#)". In Yung, Judy; Chang, Gordon H.; Lai, H. Mark (eds.). *Chinese American Voices: From the Gold Rush to the Present*. University of California Press. ISBN 978-0520243095.
- 3. Liang Luo. "[International Avant-garde and the Chinese National Anthem: Tian Han, Joris Ivens, and Paul Robeson](#)" in *The Ivens Magazine, No. 16 Archived* March 6, 2019, at the [Wayback Machine](#). European Foundation Joris Ivens (Nijmegen), October 2010. Retrieved 2015-01-22.
- 4. [Duberman 1989](#), p. 549.