



## PRESS RELEASE

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# Syracuse Stage Partnering with Paul Robeson Performing Arts Company to Celebrate Black History Month

## Actors to Portray George Washington Carver and Zora Neale Hurston

(Syracuse, NY)—Now touring schools throughout New York State, the Carrier *Backstory* and Lockheed Martin *Project Blueprint* programs at Syracuse Stage offer live, interactive, creative history lessons in which professional actors portray historical figures. In honor of Black History Month, two of the historical figures, George Washington Carver and Zora Neale Hurston, will be presented at Paul Robeson Performing Arts Company, 805 East Genesee Street. Free and open to the public, a presentation of George Washington Carver will take place at **12:30 p.m. on Friday, February 13**, and a presentation of Zora Neale Hurston will take place at **4:00 p.m. on Friday, February 27**. About 45 minutes in length, each presentation will include a dramatic performance and brief Q&A.

**CARVER AT TUSKEGEE**, based on the letters of George Washington Carver  
(Lockheed Martin *Project Blueprint*)  
by Kyle Bass

Born into slavery and kidnapped as a child by Confederate raiders, George Washington Carver fought prejudice and poverty in the Reconstruction period to become the first African American to receive a national monument in his honor. Best known for developing three hundred uses for peanuts and hundreds more for other crops, Carver may have single-handedly saved the agricultural industry and botanical environment of the south. As Director of Agriculture at the Tuskegee Institute, he never profited from the patents and discoveries he made: "God gave them to me. How can I sell them to someone else?"

**ZORA NEALE HURSTON IN HOPEFUL HORIZONS** (Carrier *Backstory*)  
By Veanna Black

Zora Neale Hurston is the author, anthropologist, and folklorist considered to be the prototypical authority on black culture during the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920's.

### THE CARRIER *BACKSTORY* PROGRAM

The Carrier *Backstory* Program is an interactive, live, creative history lesson for middle-school students through adults. Actors visit classrooms and other venues to bring historical characters to life. Each performance includes a talkback with the actor(s) and our helpful study guide for further classroom exploration. Pre- or post-show sessions with our talented teaching artists can also be arranged. The *Backstory!* study guide is available on the web at [www.SyracuseStage.org](http://www.SyracuseStage.org).

New this year is the character *Rosie the Riveter*. Returning characters include *Anne*

*Frank, A Shakespeare Actor/Hip Hop Artist, Harriet Tubman, Zora Neale Hurston and Rosalie Randazzo. Backstory* Is appropriate for middle-school students through adults. For booking info, please call 315-443-1150 or 315-442-7755.

#### **LOCKHEED MARTIN PROJECT BLUEPRINT**

Merging scientific discovery and the arts, an actor portraying a scientist/mathematician introduces students to the connections between scientific discovery and the artistic process. The historical figure being offered this year is George Washington Carver in a piece called *Carver at Tuskegee*, based on the letters of Carver and written by Kyle Bass. Each performance includes a talkback with the actor and our helpful study guide for further classroom exploration. Pre- or post-show sessions with our talented teaching artists can also be arranged. For booking info, please call 315-443-1150 or 315-442-7755.

#### **THE PAUL ROBESON PERFORMING ARTS COMPANY**

The primary mission of The Paul Robeson Performing Arts Company, Inc (PRPAC) is to provide the Central New York community with high quality theatre performances coming out of the African American Tradition while at the same time provide minority actors, dancers, singers, writers, directors and technicians with opportunities to develop their skills in the performing arts in ways that amplify the richness and diversity of the African American culture. PRPAC was founded in 1982 and is a non-profit - tax deductible 501c3 corporation and is a community outreach component of the African American Studies Department, in the College of Arts and Sciences at Syracuse University. The Offices and Black Box theater is located in the heart of the cultural corridor at 805 E. Genesee Street, Syracuse, NY 13210. 315-442-2727. PRPAC is funded in part by the new York State council on the Arts. <http://prpac.syr.edu/>

#### **SYRACUSE STAGE**

Syracuse Stage is Central New York's premier professional theatre. Founded as a not-for-profit theatre in 1974 by Arthur Storch, Stage has produced more than 220 plays in 35 seasons including numerous world and American premieres. Each season upwards of 90,000 patrons enjoy an exciting mix of comedies, dramas and musicals featuring the finest professional theatre artists. In addition, Stage maintains a vital educational outreach program that annually serves over 30,000 students from 24 counties. Syracuse Stage is a constituent of the Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the American theatre, and a member of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT). In addition to ticket sales, Syracuse Stage performances are made possible by funds from Syracuse University, the Central New York Community Foundation, the New York State Council on the Arts, The Shubert Foundation, Onondaga County, and corporate, foundation and individual donors.

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Syracuse Stage | Producing Artistic Director: Timothy Bond | Managing Director: Jeffrey Woodward  
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