



Presents

# EVERYBODY'S HERO

The Story of Jackie Robinson

Written and directed by  
**JEFF HOOPER**

Co-directed by  
**TOM BYRN and CHARLIE HEWSON**

Original Music by  
**BOB LUCAS**

Choreography by  
**KEITH MCCOY**

## THE PERFORMERS

## ROLES

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| STEVEN RICE .....       | Jackie Robinson                           |
| DESTIN LE'MARR .....    | Mack Robinson, Newt Allen, Clayton Hughes |
| MICHAEL MCINTIRE .....  | Pee Wee Reese, Clyde Sukeforth, Others    |
| SADIE FAIRCLOTH .....   | Loretta, Others                           |
| BOB LUCAS.....          | Branch Rickey, Guitar                     |
| RAIFORD FAIRCLOTH ..... | Dixie Walker, Bass                        |

## SONGS

|                                 |                |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| Overture.....                   | All            |
| Raised Up By the Family.....    | Mack, Jackie   |
| Words Are Alive.....            | Jackie         |
| A Bat, Ball, and A Glove.....   | Branch, Jackie |
| Gentleman Jackie Robinson.....  | Clayton, All   |
| No One is Lonelier Than Me..... | Jackie         |
| Do Right.....                   | All            |

## **Note from the Author**

One of the most significant challenges of creating a play about Jackie Robinson is how to show the terrible abuse Robinson faced as he became the first African-American to play professional sports in the United States and still remain within the bounds of language and behavior that are acceptable today. We live in an era when public racial slurs are not tolerated and discrimination has been outlawed at the state and federal levels. It is hard to believe the level of prejudice faced by minority groups as recently as the 1950's and 1960's. When Jackie Robinson was entering Major League Baseball in the 1940's, institutional racism was even more entrenched.

We have tried to be sensitive in scenes that depict the name-calling and physical attacks received by Robinson. We have avoided many of the well-documented taunts and insults while still trying to give some sense of the hatred that Robinson faced every day. In one particular case, however, we felt it was important to use a word that Robinson heard repeatedly and hurt him deeply.

One of Robinson's first confrontations with authority was his court martial by the United States Army in 1943. Robinson had joined the military in 1942 at the beginning of World War II. The Army was segregated, but Robinson was accepted to Officer Candidate School and became a Second Lieutenant. He served as a morale officer and worked to improve conditions for African-American soldiers. While stationed at Fort Hood, Texas, Robinson was riding on a civilian bus and was told to move to "colored section" at the rear. He refused and was arrested by the Military Police.

Robinson was within his rights. The Army had recently outlawed segregation on buses serving the military. But during his arrest, Robinson was repeatedly called a "nigger" by the arresting officers and it made him very angry. The trial transcript shows that the use of this racial slur was an important factor in his acquittal.

"Nigger" is one of the most highly charged and controversial words in the English language. It is normally a word we would never use on stage, however, it is critical to the story. Composer Bob Lucas wrote a powerful song called "Words Are Alive" to show the wounds Jack received by being called this name. It only appears once, but we hope that the context will make it very clear to students that words can be as hurtful and destructive as a slap in the face.

## **Jackie Robinson**

Jackie Robinson, one of the most significant baseball players in the history of the game, got his professional start in Kansas City. While playing short stop for the war-depleted Monarchs in 1945 he was spotted by Branch Rickey, the general manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers. Two years later he became the first black man to play in the modern major leagues.

Robinson was born in Georgia and raised in Pasadena, California. A superb athlete, he excelled at every sport he attempted. He achieved stardom at UCLA, where he became the first four-letter athlete in that university's history. Following his discharge from the Army in 1944, he accepted a position teaching physical education at Samuel Huston College in Austin, Texas. The following year, Monarchs founder and owner J. L. Wilkinson, acting on a tip from pitcher Hilton Smith, invited him to try out for the team during their spring training in Houston.

During his one season in the Negro Leagues, Robinson proved himself to be an outstanding hitter, a skilled and aggressive base runner, and was one of the best infielders in the league. His spot on the Monarchs' roster proved to be instrumental in securing his part in "baseball's great experiment." During that season Branch Rickey scoured the Negro leagues under the pretext of

finding players for a new all-black league he was starting. Only his closest associates knew that Rickey was actually looking for just the right player to lead an assault on baseball's 60-year-old color barrier.

Robinson signed with the Dodgers after the 1945 season. He played on their top farm team in 1946, entered the major leagues the following year, and put together a spectacularly successful ten-year career in the majors. Among his long list of achievements, in 1962 Robinson became the first black player inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame.

## About the Company

Mad River Theater Works is a professional touring theater company based in West Liberty, Ohio. Our purpose is to craft plays that are both drawn from and produced for the people of the farms and small towns of rural America, and to communicate the concerns and insights of our communities to people everywhere. Since 1978 we have collected stories, molded this material into plays, and performed our work at community centers, schools, colleges, and theaters throughout the United States reaching an annual audience of over 50,000 through over 200 performances.

Mad River Theater Works is one of only a handful of professional theaters in the United States based in rural communities. Our unique mission has attracted the support of the National Endowment for the Arts, as well as foundations, corporations, and individuals.

## The Artists

**Steven Rice** (Jackie Robinson), Steven Isaac Rice is a recent graduate of Samford University in Birmingham, AL, achieving a BFA in Musical Theater. He discovered in high school that he wanted to perform for the rest of his life and has been doing so ever since. He was featured in the Samford musical *Thoroughly Modern Millie* as Bun Foo his freshmen year and was also Cal Farber in the opera one-act *Different Fields*. Other favorite parts include Phil Davis in *White Christmas* and Henrik Egerman in *A Little Night Music*. Steven dedicates every performance to his family, who have always been there supporting him in everything he does. "To love another person is to see the Face of God." –*Les Miserables*.

**Destin Le'Marr** (Newt, Reporter) Destin is a national performer and speaker who has dedicated his life to inspiring people to impact the world around them. Destin studied theater performance at Hampton University (Hampton, Va) as well as Coppin State University (Baltimore, MD). His most notable theatrical credits include, Asagai in *A Raisin in the Sun*, The Tin Man in *The Wiz*, and Agwe in *Once on This Island*. Currently, Destin travels the country spreading the power of positivity, purpose, and progress through performing arts to educational and political groups at various conferences, workshops, and seminars. This is his first tour with Mad River Theater Works.

**Bob Lucas** (Branch Rickey, Ensemble, Composer) is a glory shouting, sweet singing, string bending, banjo picking, guitar thumping, old time dance fiddling, song writing rounder with a desire to share a sense of musical wonder anyway he can. Coming up in the great folk scare of the 60's he was fortunate to be taken under wing by some of the greatest traditional musicians and singers. It is the wonder of that era that still holds keen with him. He was raised in a singing family of boys who all thought they might be God's gift to music. Being musically uppity has for that reason always come natural for him. As the times turned hip in the late 60's he too became a part of that culture. In 1972 he released *The Dancer Inside of You* on BRGQ records a very small label in Bloomington Indiana. That record received a 4 star rating from "Downbeat Magazine". Two songs off *Dancer* were picked up and recorded by the legendary Newgrass Revival. They recorded many of his songs in the years that followed and his songs can still be found on the

current recordings of the Greats Sam Bush and John Cowan. Bob was co-founder of the “culture morphing” band Eclectricity in 1977. Being one of the first ever bands to bring “gypsy” and “klezmer” music to a North American folk music audience. Eclectricity found a fan in and often toured with actor/singer Theodore Bikel. It was at this time Bob learned that the word “macaronic” has nothing to do with pasta. In 1986 he began working for Mad River Theater Works writing songs and making plays for what has become an ever-growing audience. Two of his songs have been recorded by the blissfully talented Alison Krauss, on her 1996 Grammy Award winning album, *So Long So Wrong*. She has since recorded two more of Bob’s songs on her album *New Favorite*. In addition to the vinyl recordings Bob released early in his career he has two CD’s, *Rushsylvania* and *Kin*. He has begun work on a new CD called *Banjo for Lovers*, which he hopes to complete soon.

**Sadie and Raiford Faircloth** (Loretta, Dixie, Musicians) are talented and experienced performers with a passion for music and telling stories. Originally from Memphis, Tennessee, Sadie grew up playing the piano and singing with her family. Raiford’s father was a recording artist for Decca Records and began performing with his father’s band when he was only ten years old in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Sadie and Raiford were married in 1973 and have played in bands together ever since including Bluebird Special, Studillac, the Modulators, and Crosseyed Cat. Well-known to college and coffeehouse audiences across the country, Sadie and Raiford are appearing with Mad River Theater Works for the second time. They bring outstanding musicianship and a keen awareness of the importance of the history of the Civil Rights movement to their roles in *Everybody’s Hero*.

**Michael McIntire** (Pee Wee Reese) is from Cincinnati and has been entertaining audiences since he was six years old. He studied theater and music at the Cincinnati School for Creative and Performing Arts. Working as a musician and songwriter for the last twenty years, he has lead bands and composed for TV, Film, Opera, and Dance. He wishes to bring love and light to every performance he gives. This is his first tour with Mad River Theater Works.

**Jeff Hooper** (Writer, Director) is the founding director of Mad River Theater Works. His writing and direction credits include work at Actors Theatre of Louisville, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Arena Stage in Washington, D.C., Berkeley Stage Company in Berkeley, California and Roadside Theater of Whitesburg, Kentucky. He was also a Founding Director of the Half Moon Theater in London, England. He has written over twenty-five original scripts for Mad River Theater Works including *Captive Heart*, *John Henry*, *Freedom Bound*, *Wings of Courage*, and *The Legend of Casey Jones*. He also collaborated with Native American Poet Lance Henson to create *Cry of the Americas* and *Coyote Road* and directed the premiere of John Olive's *Evelyn and the Polka King* at the Humana Festival of New American Plays at Actors Theatre of Louisville in 1992. *Coyote Road* has been translated into French and was presented in 2001 at the Theatre Montansier in Versailles, France. He was awarded an Ohio Arts Council Playwriting Fellowship in 1989-90 and has served on numerous panels for the National Endowment for the Arts, the Ohio Arts Council, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, and the Florida Arts Commission. He is also a site reporter for the NEA.

**Keith McCoy** (Choreographer) is an original cast member of *Everybody’s Hero*. Keith has had extensive touring experience with Theatre IV, the Lexington Children’s Theatre, and the Omaha Children’s Theatre and has appeared at numerous other regional theaters as well as several theme parks. Some of his favorite roles were Pedro in *Man of La Mancha* and Aladdin in *Genie of the Lamp* at the Mac-Hayden Theatre, Jim in *Big River*, the Mayor in the *Pied Piper* at Theatre IV. Keith graduated from Norfolk State University.

