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## African-American Spirituals to be Performed in Croton

Saturday's recital celebrates Black History Month and includes a performance by Tarrytown resident Yolanda Johnson and remarks by the sole living survivor of the Tulsa Race Riots, Dr. Olivia Hooker.

Posted by [Lisa Buchman](#) (Editor) , February 14, 2013 at 09:44 PM

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... to the African-American experience.

"Personally, for me, to perform the spirituals is extremely important," said the Tarrytown resident, who has a background in vocal performance and arts management. "It's the historic narrative of the slaves in America and tells the story of their struggles, hopes, and feats."

She will be singing several African-American opera classics and new music on Saturday at the Croton Free Library. The performance starts at 2 p.m. and is part of the official Black History Month Celebrations for the Association for the Study of African-American Life and History.

Johnson said the program will explore the emotional, spiritual journey and hidden communication traditional African-American spirituals conveyed for the enslaved Africans in America and the influence of spirituals on music of the Civil Rights Movement on through popular music.

Part-lecture, part-recital, the program also includes a sing-along for audience members to gain a new understanding of these well-known and beloved songs. And it begins with an introduction by the sole living survivor of the Tulsa Race Riots, Dr. Olivia Hooker.

Johnson will also perform works from a new work called Harriet Tubman: When I Crossed that Line to Freedom, by Dr. Nkeiru Okoye, that will be produced by American Opera Projects within the next year.

