X: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF MALCOLM X

MALCOLM LITTLE, DETROIT RED, MALCOLM X, EL-HAJJ MALIK EL-SHABAZZ: His name is legendary, his image iconic, but rarely has the story of his political and spiritual awakening been told with such force as in Pulitzer Prize–winning composer Anthony Davis's groundbreaking 1986 opera. The work evokes the broader history of human rights struggles against white supremacy and racist violence while illuminating the singular circumstances faced by its protagonist—his father's murder; his mother's institutionalization; and his imprisonment, conversion, and eventual death. With a revised and expanded score and libretto (by esteemed writer Thulani Davis, the composer's cousin), the opera looks anew at the life and legacy of one of the 20th century's most controversial leaders.

X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X arrives at the Metropolitan Opera in playwright and Tony-nominated director Robert O'Hara's potent new staging, which reimagines Malcolm as an Everyman whose story transcends time and space. Bringing an Afrofuturist vision to bear on the historical narrative of Malcolm's rise and fall, the production compels audiences to consider the meaning of his message for contemporary human rights movements. An exceptional cast of breakout artists and young Met stars enlivens the operatic retelling of Malcolm's life, including baritone Will Liverman—who triumphed in the Met premiere of Terence Blanchard's *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*—as Malcolm, soprano Leah Hawkins as his mother Louise and wife Betty, mezzo-soprano Raehann Bryce-Davis as his sister Ella, bass-baritone Michael Sumuel as his brother Reginald, and tenor Victor Ryan Robertson as Nation of Islam leader Elijah Muhammad.

This guide approaches *X* as a window on the multiple social, political, and cultural movements that influenced, and were influenced by, Malcolm's leadership. Students will have opportunities to gain a deeper understanding of the history of Black nationalism, the expressive vocabulary of Afrofuturism, the narrative and dramatic structure of the opera, and the historical forces—like the Great Migration and rise of white supremacist violence—that deeply impacted Malcolm's life. These interdisciplinary tools will together prepare students to tackle the musical and philosophical complexities of Anthony Davis's sprawling, meditative work.


LIVERMAN


HAWKINS


BRYCE-DAVIS


SUMUEL


ROBERTSON

THE WORK

An opera in three acts, sung in English

Music by Anthony Davis

Libretto by Thulani Davis

Story by Christopher Davis

First performed September 28, 1986, at New York City Opera

PRODUCTION

Robert O'Hara Production

Clint Ramos Set Designer

Dede Ayite Costume Designer

Alex Jainchill Lighting Designer

Yee Eun Nam Projection Designer

Rickey Tripp Choreographer

PERFORMANCE

The Met: Live in HD
November 18, 2023

Leah Hawkins Louise/Betty

Raehann Bryce-Davis Ella

Victor Ryan Robertson Elijah/Street

Will Liverman Malcolm

Michael Sumuel Reginald

Kazem Abdullah Conductor

A co-production of the Metropolitan Opera, Detroit Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Opera Omaha, and Seattle Opera

Production a gift of The Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, Inc. and The Ford Foundation

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Part of the Neubauer Family Foundation New Works Initiative

The Metropolitan Opera Educator Guides offer a creative, interdisciplinary introduction to opera. Designed to complement existing classroom curricula in music, the humanities, STEM fields, and the arts, these guides will help young viewers confidently engage with opera regardless of their prior experience with the art form.

On the following pages, you'll find an array of materials designed to encourage critical thinking, deepen background knowledge, and empower students to engage with the opera. These materials can be used in classrooms and/or via remote-learning platforms, and they can be mixed and matched to suit your students' individual academic needs.

Above all, this guide is intended to help students explore *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* through their own experiences and ideas. The diverse perspectives that your students bring to opera make the art form infinitely richer, and we hope that they will experience opera as a space where their confidence can grow and their curiosity can flourish.

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To access this guide online, including any audio selections and handouts, visit **metopera.org/xguide**.

WHO'S WHO IN *X*

CHARACTER	VOICE TYPE	THE LOWDOWN
Malcolm Minister and human rights activist	baritone	Raised in a home committed to Black nationalist ideologies championed by activist Marcus Garvey, Malcolm's early life is marked by white supremacist violence—the burning of the Little family home, the murder of his father, the forced institutionalization of his mother, and his admission into the foster-care system. While imprisoned in Massachusetts, Malcolm turns to Islam, a faith that guides his career as a minister and human rights activist for the next two decades.
Elijah Leader of the Nation of Islam and Malcolm's teacher and mentor	tenor	The charismatic leader of the Nation of Islam (NOI), a Black nationalist group, and self-professed messenger of Allah, the Muslim God, Elijah takes Malcolm under his wing. As his mentee becomes increasingly influential and independent, however, Elijah feels deeply betrayed, leading to political turmoil within the NOI movement.
Betty Malcolm's wife	mezzo-soprano	The mother of their six daughters, Betty comforts Malcolm in times of trouble and—perhaps most importantly—encourages him to make the Hajj, or pilgrimage, to Mecca following his split with Elijah.
Ella Malcolm's older half-sister	mezzo-soprano	Ella takes custody of teenage Malcolm after he has been remanded to the foster-care system in the aftermath of his father's death and mother's institutionalization. She lives in the Roxbury neighborhood of Boston, where Malcolm encounters a bustling Black urban community for the first time.
Reginald Malcolm's younger brother	bass-baritone	Perhaps Malcolm's closest friend, Reginald is responsible for introducing him to the Muslim faith and the Nation of Islam while he is imprisoned in Massachusetts.
Louise Malcolm's mother	soprano	Born in Grenada in the West Indies, Louise and her husband Earl were active members of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), a Black nationalist organization. Following Earl's death, which she seems to prophesy, Louise suffers a mental breakdown and is taken to a psychiatric hospital, where she would remain for more than two decades.
Street Malcolm's friend in Boston	tenor	Street encounters Malcolm in a Boston pool hall and recognizes his former self—a naïve country boy unfamiliar with the hustle and bustle of the city. Street introduces Malcolm to "the life," shows him how to improve his personal style, and gets him started in the world of petty crime.

Synopsis

ACT I: *Lansing, Michigan, 1931.* At the home of Reverend Earl Little, his wife Louise, and their four children, followers of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association gather for a meeting. As attendees listen to a recruiter for Garvey's Black Star Line, they express excitement about moving to Africa and hail Garvey as a prophet. Meanwhile, Louise anxiously awaits the return of Earl, who is late to the meeting. She fears that he has been harmed, noting that the Ku Klux Klan burned down their previous home shortly after Malcolm's birth. A policeman enters to announce that Earl has been killed in a streetcar accident. Some at the meeting suggest that white men pushed Earl onto the tracks. Louise collapses as if in a daze, her children unable to reach her. A white social worker arrives, accusing the Little family of neglect. She commands the children to be taken by foster care as Malcolm calls to his mother for help. His older sister Ella arrives and takes Malcolm into her custody.

Boston, Massachusetts, about 1940. Ella comforts Malcolm and introduces him to "the Hill," an upwardly mobile, middle-class Black neighborhood. She lets Malcolm explore the city, and he wanders into a pool room. There, he is spotted by Street, who recognizes

Technical rehearsal on the stage of the Met
AXEL VAUDEY/MET OPERA

Malcolm as an outsider from the country. Having also migrated to the city, Street introduces Malcolm to "the life" by bringing him to a big band ballroom and showing him how to act cool, dress well, work for himself, and toughen up. Malcolm picks up Sweetheart and leads her to the dancefloor, where a blonde woman cruises him. Street convinces Malcolm to pull off a heist. They leave and emerge with silver, furs, and other goods as a crowd gathers to buy items. Police officers enter with clubs, breaking up the crowd and arresting Malcolm, Street, and the blonde.

An interrogation room. Malcolm appears, handcuffed in a chair under a glaring light. He speaks—perhaps to interrogators, perhaps to no one—recalling how white supremacist violence has always followed him. He resolves to bear the power of his truth against evil.

ACT II: *Prison. 1946–48*. Reginald Little comes to visit his older brother in jail, encouraging him to turn to the Muslim faith and the Nation of Islam.

1952. Malcolm begins to accept the idea of conversion as the voice of Elijah Muhammad, the leader of the Nation of Islam, is heard offstage. They meet, and Malcolm changes his last name to "X," signifying his lost African origins and acting as a placeholder for his future God-given name. Elijah shows him how to pray in the manner of the Nation of Islam: standing, palms out, facing East. They embrace.

1954–63. On 125th Street in Harlem, Malcolm encounters a woman street preacher trying to convince passersby to adopt Afrocentric principles. Next, a Garveyite preacher advocates Black Americans returning to Africa. Malcolm stands back and watches, almost derisively, waiting for his turn. He gets up and starts speaking. Soon thereafter he begins traveling the country, leading rallies and founding temples in Boston, Philadelphia, Springfield, Hartford, Atlanta, and New York. Before a large crowd, he lays out his agenda for pan-African Black liberation. Alongside Malcolm, Elijah, Reginald, and Malcolm's wife Betty, Muslims gather at a mosque to espouse Black nationalist ideas. During this period, Malcolm oversees organizing activities for the Nation of Islam. As news swirls of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, reporters swarm Elijah asking for comment, but he rebuffs them. They then turn to Malcolm, who states that President Kennedy's death was the foreseeable consequence of America's violent culture. Elijah disavows Malcolm for having disobeyed his command not to talk about the president or his death, which he fears would make more enemies of the Nation of Islam.

ACT III: *1963*. Malcolm meets with Elijah, who confronts him for having gone against his command by making a statement about JFK's assassination. He suspects that Malcolm has grown too popular for the Nation of Islam, and Malcolm questions if he has been sabotaged, suggesting that perhaps Elijah does not obey his own laws. Elijah commands

Dede Ayite's costume designs for Betty and Elijah

that Malcolm does not speak publicly, to which he agrees and leaves. Malcolm's wife Betty comforts him as he grows weary from increasing media attention and political turmoil within the Nation of Islam. He embraces Betty and their daughters, and she encourages him to make the Hajj, or pilgrimage to Mecca. In Cairo, while on the Hajj, Malcolm abandons Western clothing for the simple white cloth of a pilgrim. A call to prayer is heard, and a group of Muslims begin to pray. Malcolm tries to follow the prayer but does not know the orthodox prayer ritual. As he watches those around him, he begins to emulate their movements. Having received his new name, el-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz, he kneels and prays.

1964–65. In Harlem, a white police officer accuses a young Black man of theft. Onlookers get involved as the boy tries to escape. The police officer shoots the young man, and the crowd turns on him as a riot breaks out. When Malcolm returns from his pilgrimage, flanked by allies in African and Muslim garb, he is mobbed by reporters—still addressing him by his former name—who ask him about the events in Harlem. He corrects them, reiterating that the violence of American culture leads to more violence. Malcolm meets with his allies in a hotel room, detailing his plans and espousing a philosophy of self-defense and solidarity among all people of color around the globe. Though he learns of frequent threats to his life, he remains resolute in his faith that the Black liberation struggle will continue and succeed—even if he is killed. A large crowd assembles at a meeting of Malcolm's newly founded Organization of Afro-American Unity, a secular pan-Africanist group. As Malcolm prepares to give a speech, his close allies try to prevent him from doing so, fearing for his safety. Despite their cautions, he makes his way to the stage and takes his place at the podium. There is a scuffle in the audience as three men appear with guns. They rise and shoot Malcolm.

Original libretto by Thulani Davis, based on a story by Christopher Davis

Thulani Davis and her cousin Anthony Davis

X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X is not based on any single text or other source. Though the libretto was written by Thulani Davis, Anthony Davis's cousin, the story for the opera was crafted by Christopher Davis, the composer's brother. An actor and director, Christopher played the titular role in N. R. Davidson's play *El Hajj Malik: A Play About Malcolm X* in the early 1970s. Davidson wrote the play in the late 1960s, and it premiered in 1969 with the Dashiki Project Theater, a theater group he co-founded in New Orleans. Over the next several years, Davidson toured the work across the United States, including in New Haven, Connecticut, and Jamaica, Queens, where Davis performed in the play. The text of *El Hajj Malik* was largely based on two sources, Alex Haley's *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (1965) and *Malcolm X Speaks: Selected Speeches and Statements* (1965), edited by George Breitman. Like Robert O'Hara's new staging of Davis's opera, Davidson's play approached Malcolm X as an "Everyman." The script of *El Hajj Malik* does not designate separate characters but instead an ensemble of 11 actors who all take turns portraying the protagonist at different points in his life across a single performance. Inspired by his turn in *El Hajj Malik*, Christopher Davis encouraged his brother to set Malcolm's life to music and provided the narrative outline for Thulani Davis's libretto.

FUN FACT

Two key aspects of Anthony Davis's opera—jazz and the Muslim faith—have important historical overlaps. Indeed, Muslim jazz musicians made major contributions to the genre throughout the 20th century, and many jazz players similarly found inspiration in Islam, including Yusuf Lateef, Art Blakey, Kenny Clarke, Max Roach, and John Coltrane. Malcolm X was a lover of jazz and encountered many of the greats while living in New York City and Detroit in the 1940s. These convergences inspired Davis to incorporate a variety of jazz styles in his score for *X*, including big band swing, bebop, and modal harmony, thereby reflecting Malcolm's own musical world.

The Creation of *X*

1948 Thulani Davis is born on May 22 in Hampton, Virginia. Both of her parents are educators at the Hampton Institute (now Hampton University), a historically Black college.

1951 Anthony Davis is born on February 20 in Paterson, New Jersey. His father is Charles T. Davis, a literary scholar and the first Black faculty member to earn tenure at the Pennsylvania State University, where he founded the African American studies program. He would later become the first Black professor to teach at Princeton University and go on to serve as director of Afro-American Studies at Yale University, where he was also the first African American to be granted tenure in the English department.

1970 Thulani Davis graduates from Barnard College with a degree in English. She moves to San Francisco shortly thereafter and joins the Third World Artists Collective, enabling her to collaborate with Ntozake Shange and other writers associated with the Black Arts Movement.

1975 Anthony Davis graduates with a degree in philosophy from Yale University, where he is first exposed to opera through a concert performance of Alban Berg's *Wozzeck*. Due to Yale's curricular focus on European classical music, he travels to Wesleyan University to study South Indian music and Indonesian gamelan.

1979 Thulani Davis begins working at *The Village Voice*, where she serves as proofreader, writer, and editor until 1990.

1981 Anthony Davis forms the free-jazz ensemble Episteme, an outlet for him to explore the role of composition in improvisatory music.

1984 The first workshop for *X, the Life and Times of Malcolm X* takes place at the American Music Theater Festival in Philadelphia. Davis writes the first act for his ten-piece Episteme ensemble.

1985 The first full version of *X* is workshopped at Walnut Street Theater in Philadelphia.

1986 *X, the Life and Times of Malcolm X* premieres at New York City Opera. Anthony Davis's Episteme forms an improvisatory ensemble within the orchestra. The performances sell out despite largely critical reviews, with *The New York Times* writing that "Mr. Davis and his collaborators want to give words and ideology, not vocalism, the center of attention in this work."

1989 Anthony Davis's second opera, *Under the Double Moon*, a work of science fiction with an original libretto by Deborah Atherton, premieres at Opera Theatre of St. Louis.

1992 Anthony Davis's third opera *Tania*, a largely comic work about the kidnapping of Patty Hearst with a libretto by Michael John LaChiusa, premieres at the American Music Theater Festival.

1993 Anthony Davis composes incidental music for the Broadway production of Tony Kushner's Pulitzer Prize–winning play *Angels in America*, directed by George C. Wolfe.

Thulani Davis wins the Grammy Award for Best Album Notes for an Aretha Franklin boxed set, *The Atlantic Recordings*, becoming the first woman to win in this category. She also publishes *Malcolm X: The Great Photographs* and contributes the libretto for Anne LeBaron's electronic opera *The E&O Line*, based on the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice.

The 1992 recording of *X*, now out of print, receives a Grammy nomination for Best Contemporary Composition.

1997 Anthony Davis's fourth opera *Amistad*, about the famous 1839 slave ship rebellion, premieres at Lyric Opera of Chicago with a libretto by Thulani Davis and directed by George C. Wolfe.

1998 Anthony Davis joins the faculty of the University of California San Diego, where he is currently Distinguished Professor and Cecil Lytle Chancellor's Endowed Chair in African and African-American Music.

Thulani Davis contributes the libretto for composer Miya Masaoka's multimedia oratorio *Dark Passages*. The same year she is inducted into the Black Writers Hall of Fame.

2007 Anthony Davis's fifth opera *Wakonda's Dream*, with a libretto by poet Yusef Komunyakaa, premieres at Opera Omaha.

2008 Anthony Davis receives the "Lift Every Voice" Legacy Award from the National Opera Association acknowledging his pioneering work in opera. A heavily revised version of *Amistad* premiers at the Spoleto Festival in Charleston, South Carolina.

2009 Anthony Davis's chamber opera *Lilith*, with a libretto by Allan Havis, premieres at the Conrad Prebys Music Center at UC San Diego.

2013 Anthony Davis's seventh opera *Lear on the 2nd Floor*, an adaptation of Shakespeare's *King Lear* with a libretto by Allan Havis, premieres at the Conrad Prebys Music Center Concert Hall at UC San Diego.

2019 Anthony Davis's eighth opera *The Central Park Five*, about the wrongful conviction of five Black men for the rape of a white woman in New York City, premieres at the Long Beach Opera with a libretto by Richard Wesley.

2020 *The Central Park Five* wins the Pulitzer Prize for music. The committee calls it "a courageous operatic work, marked by powerful vocal writing and sensitive orchestration, that skillfully transforms a notorious example of contemporary injustice into something empathetic and hopeful."

2022 A revised version of *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* premieres at Detroit Opera in a production directed by Robert O'Hara before moving to Opera Omaha.

2023 *X* premieres at the Metropolitan Opera after further expansion and revision, with future performances at Seattle Opera and Lyric Opera of Chicago.

Thulani Davis is currently writing the libretto for a new opera by Bernadette Speech, *The Little Rock Nine*, about the Black students who integrated an Arkansas high school in 1957. She and Anthony Davis are also collaborating on a new opera, *Greenwood, 1921*, about the Tulsa race riots.

The Life and Work of Malcolm X

1925 Malcolm Little is born on May 19 in Omaha, Nebraska. His father Earl Little—from Reynolds, Georgia—and mother Louise Little—from Grenada in the British West Indies—are both organizers for Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA).

1929 The Little family relocates to Lansing, Michigan, after previously living in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and East Chicago, Indiana. Their new home is firebombed by an unidentified group of men with suspected connections to the Black Legion, a white supremacist terrorist organization active in the Midwest.

1931 Earl Little is run over by a streetcar and killed. Though his death is officially ruled an accident, members of the Little family believe Earl was pushed onto the tracks by white supremacists.

1938 Louise Little suffers a nervous breakdown and is committed to Kalamazoo State Hospital, where she would remain until 1963.

1941 After being remanded to foster care, Malcolm is taken in by his half-sister Ella Little-Collins in Boston.

1946 Malcolm is convicted of larceny and breaking and entering and begins serving an eight-to-ten-year sentence at Charlestown State Prison, where he eventually dedicates himself to a program of reform and education.

1947 Malcolm is transferred to Massachusetts Reformatory at Concord, where his brother Reginald visits him and urges him to convert to Islam.

1948 Now held at Norfolk Prison Colony, where he participates in the debating society, Malcolm begins corresponding with Nation of Islam (NOI) leader Elijah Muhammad, also in prison for violating draft laws.

1950 Malcolm begins signing his name "Malcolm X," as other NOI followers, to signify his lost African origins.

1952 Malcolm is released from prison on parole and moves to Detroit, where he lives with his brother Wilfred.

1953 Malcolm is appointed assistant minister of NOI's temple in Detroit (Temple No. 1). Later that year, he is sent by Elijah Muhammad to serve as first minister of the NOI's Temple No. 11 in Boston.

1954 Malcolm is promoted to chief minister of the NOI's temple in Harlem (Temple No. 7).

1958 Malcolm marries Betty Sanders in Lansing, Michigan. The couple meets in Harlem, and Betty converts to the Nation of Islam in 1956. They go on to have six daughters, five of whom are still living.

1960 Malcolm starts *Muhammad Speaks*, the monthly newsletter of the NOI.

1961 Elijah Muhammad appoints Malcolm the NOI's national representative.

1963 Malcolm is censured by the NOI for his statements about the assassination of President John F. Kennedy; Muhammad forbids him from speaking publicly for 90 days.

1964 Malcolm is suspended by the NOI and is removed as national representative and minister of Temple No. 7 in Harlem. He subsequently leaves the NOI and begins a new organization, Muslim Mosque, Inc., whose membership largely comprises former NOI followers. Later that year he makes the pilgrimage, or Hajj, to Mecca and founds the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU), a secular political organization.


DAILY NEWS 10¢

MALCOLM X MURDERED

Gunned Down at Rally

1965 On February 14, Malcolm's home in Queens, New York, is firebombed. A week later, he is assassinated while speaking at the Audubon Ballroom in New York. Three NOI members are convicted in his murder.

PHOTOS: NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Black to the Future

Robert O'Hara's production of *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* begins with a spaceship crashing into the Metropolitan Opera House, where it remains hovering above the stage for the duration of the opera. This scenic design is just one element of *X* that draws on the vocabulary of Afrofuturism: a mode of expression that envisions alternate, liberated futures for people of African descent, often through images and ideas associated with science fiction, technology, space and time travel, and utopia. While projecting a new, imagined horizon of progress beyond the confines of racial hierarchy, Afrofuturism also offers a reevaluation of—and draws inspiration from—historical cultures of the African diaspora.

Not limited to a single cultural or social movement, Afrofuturism continues to be a popular aesthetic whose antecedents can be traced back at least to the 18th century, when Black American polymath Benjamin Banneker published his *Almanack and*

Technical rehearsal on the stage of the Met

AXEL VAUDEY / MET OPERA

Dede Ayite's costume designs for chorus members in *X*

Ephemeris (1792) containing astronomical observations and data. In these almanacs, published annually from 1792 to 1795, the freeborn Banneker also included political and social commentary, abolitionist literature, and direct refutations of contemporary racist thought—most notably promulgated by Thomas Jefferson in his *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1781)—claiming that people of African descent were wholly incapable of reasoned thought, scientific inquiry, or artistic expression. But even centuries before Banneker, African societies stretching from antiquity to early modernity, from the Dogon and Yoruba in West Africa to ancient Egyptians, practiced their own forms of cultural astronomy by looking to the sky to develop novel technologies and spiritual systems.

Afrofuturism also shares important intersections with Black nationalist thought, a key throughline in Anthony Davis's opera. Well before Malcolm X, Elijah Muhammad, and Marcus Garvey, Black intellectuals were advocating for Black self-sufficiency, empowerment, and separatism. The physician, writer, and abolitionist Martin R. Delany, for example, not only published astronomical treatises but also advocated for African Americans to resettle in West Africa. In his serialized novel *Blake; or The Huts of America* (1859–62), Delany's protagonist uses his knowledge of stars, constellations, and other celestial phenomena—along with his own "pocket compass"—to spread word of an imminent slave uprising across the American hemisphere, teaching fellow slaves his techniques of naturalist and astronomical observation as he makes his way from Mississippi to Cuba. In the early 20th century, African American writers showed increased interest in the possibilities and pitfalls of scientific innovation and time travel, producing such varied works as Pauline Hopkins's serialized novel *Of One Blood; Or, The Hidden Self* (1902), W. E. B. Du Bois's short story "The Comet" (1920), and George Schuyler's satire *Black No More* (1931).

Music has played a central role in the development of Afrofuturist aesthetics, particularly in the latter half of the 20th century. With the advent of the postwar Space Race, the dawning of the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements, and the

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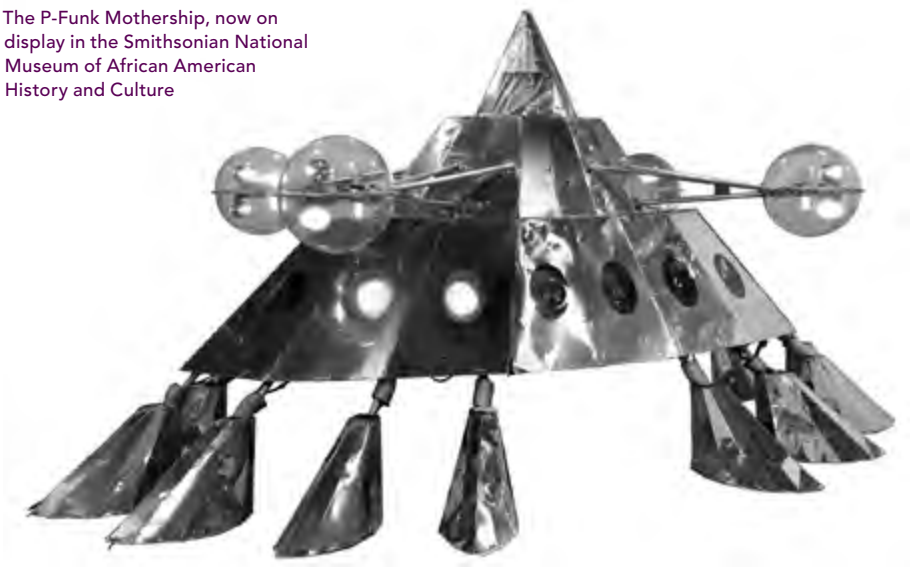
X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X is notable for its incorporation of jazz idioms, including improvisation, in an opera score. Anthony Davis's orchestration includes an entire improvisatory jazz ensemble, a role initially filled by the composer's own jazz group Episteme. When the work was being developed in 1985–86, however, Davis stipulated in contracts with several organizations that "the word 'jazz' should not be used in any connection with this piece," revealing his concern that critics and audiences alike would not take it seriously as an opera.



The P-Funk Mothership, now on display in the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture

growing popularity of both science fiction—think *Star Trek* and *Star Wars*—and musical genres like funk and disco, Black musicians made major Afrofuturist innovations. One prominent example is experimental jazz composer and bandleader Sun Ra, born Herman Poole Blount, who renamed himself after the Egyptian sun god. Claiming to have returned from Saturn on a mission to rid society of oppression, he formed his legendary ensemble the Sun Ra Arkestra, evoking the biblical symbol of Noah's Ark, which seeks refuge from the storm in search of a better world. In their costumes, stage design, and artistic projects—notably the film and accompanying album *Space is the Place* (1974)—Sun Ra and his Arkestra drew on symbols from both ancient Egypt and modern techno-utopianism.

Octavia Butler's 1979 sci-fi novel *Kindred*

Another key contemporary contribution to Afrofuturist music is Parliament-Funkadelic (also known as P-Funk), the legendary funk music collective led by George Clinton. When the group toured in support of their hugely successful album *Mothership Connection* (1975), their elaborate concerts included a full-sized spacecraft called The Mothership, which was lowered onto the stage and accompanied by lights and pyrotechnics. Clinton would then emerge from the vessel—which is now on display at the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C.—as his alter-ego Dr.

Dede Ayite's costume designs for chorus members in *X*

Funkenstein, bringing the power of funk to the crowd and transporting them to another universe. Inspired by the Blaxpoitation craze in contemporary film, this era also witnessed a proliferation of Black superheroes (and villains) in mainstream comic books like Luke Cage, Black Lightning, Black Racer, Bumblebee, Doctor Mist, John Stewart (Green Lantern), Shilo Norman (Mister Miracle), and Nubia.

The influence and popularity of Afrofuturism show no sign of abating. Consider the immense success of Marvel's *Black Panther* films; musician Janelle Monáe's albums *The ArchAndroid* (2010), *Electric Lady* (2013), and *Dirty Computer* (2018); contemporary writers like Nnedi Okorafor and N. K. Jemisin, who won the Hugo Award for Best Novel in science fiction or fantasy three years in a row; and the recent TV adaptation of Octavia Butler's foundational 1979 sci-fi novel *Kindred* (2022). Though it recounts the historical past, O'Hara's staging of *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* suggests how those engaged in struggles for human rights always speak from vantage of the future—conjuring a better, more just world that has already been glimpsed if not yet brought to fruition.

A Nation within a Nation

Spanning over three decades, *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* engages the multiple competing—and sometimes overlapping—social and political movements that shaped the development of its central character. One of the primary bedrocks of Malcolm X's world, and thus one of the central concerns of Anthony Davis's opera, is the political philosophy of Black nationalism. Arguably reaching its apex with the Black Power Movement in the United States, but with roots stretching back to the 19th century, Black nationalism broadly advocates empowerment, self-sufficiency, racial pride, and separatism. It largely rejects assimilation into dominant social, political, and economic structures as a viable path for Black communities, instead championing total independence from white society.

X traverses three distinct yet related Black nationalist movements: the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), the Nation of Islam (NOI), and—albeit briefly—the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU). The UNIA was a formative influence in Malcolm's life; his parents Earl and Louise met working for the organization, which was founded by Jamaican activist Marcus Garvey in 1914. Inspired by his reading of Booker T. Washington's autobiography *Up from Slavery* (1901) and its author's arguments for Black economic self-sufficiency, Garvey initially formed the UNIA as a fraternal organization, or mutual-aid society, but struggled to find footing in Jamaica. After moving to New York City in 1916 and setting up headquarters in Harlem, the UNIA's membership and influence skyrocketed. By the early 1920s, the movement had established 700 branches in 38 states—in addition to divisions across the Caribbean, Latin America, Canada, and Africa—and amassed millions of followers.

At its peak, the UNIA ran several business enterprises in Harlem through its Negro Factories Corporation: grocery stores, restaurants, a laundromat, and a printing press. It launched a newspaper, *The Negro World*, which reached a circulation between 50,000 and 200,000 by 1920. Perhaps Garvey's most ambitious idea was the Black Star Line (later the Black Cross Navigation and Trading Company), the UNIA's steamship company meant to advance commercial exchange—and economic autonomy—between Black communities in the Americas and Africa. Garvey financed the project by selling Black Star Line stock at $5 per share through mailed solicitations, advertisements printed in *The Negro World*, and UNIA meetings. Although the company did ultimately purchase four steamships and carry shipments between the U.S. and Caribbean from 1919 to 1922, the project was a financial disaster, ultimately losing up to $1.25 million. In 1923, Garvey was convicted of mail fraud for brochures advertising the sale of Black Star Line stock. After an unsuccessful appeal, he was imprisoned for two years before his sentence was commuted in 1927 by President Calvin Coolidge, who ordered Garvey to be deported.

Though tyrannical and deceitful, the UNIA's founder was an undoubtedly charismatic leader whose message of collective pride and racial uplift appealed to communities dispossessed by American racism. Always the showman, Garvey named himself Provisional President of Africa, organized massive parades with participants and performers decked in UNIA regalia, led nightly meetings at the organization's Liberty Hall headquarters in Harlem—sometimes before as many as six thousand attendees—and hosted several international conventions. Garvey also created the black, red, and green flag today associated with pan-Africanism globally.

The power of Garvey's message can be seen in the subsequent founding of the Nation of Islam. The NOI was established in 1930 by Wallace D. Fard, a Detroit cloth peddler and former member of the Moorish Science Temple of America led by Noble Drew Ali, who advanced an exceedingly idiosyncratic vision of Islam that incorporated tenets of Black nationalism. Fard himself believed that a Black God had created man in his image trillions of years ago and that the world was run by 24 Black scientists, one of whom created the white race to rule the earth for thousands of years. When Fard vanished around 1934, his assistant Elijah Muhammad—who had been tasked with bringing the NOI to Chicago—took control of the organization.

Muhammad advanced Fard's teachings and expanded the NOI's recruitment, education, self-defense, and employment efforts. Muhammad's theological outlook more closely resembled traditional Islamic practice, though he hailed Fard as Allah incarnate and himself as a "Messenger of Allah," or prophet. He led the NOI until 1975, at which point the movement operated dozens of businesses and schools, controlled a bank, oversaw an expanding real estate portfolio, and owned farmland in Michigan, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi—the latter to provide housing, employment, and staple crops to feed Black communities across the United States. Muhammad began corresponding with Malcolm X in 1948 while both were imprisoned, the former for encouraging NOI followers not to enroll in the World War II draft, the latter for armed robbery. When Malcolm joined the NOI in 1952, he was largely responsible for the dramatic uptick in the movement's nationwide membership and political influence.

After breaking with the NOI and making the Hajj, or Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca, Malcolm founded two organizations of his own: Muslim Mosque, Inc., and the Organization of Afro-American Unity. Whereas the Muslim Mosque largely drew its membership from previous NOI adherents, the OAAU was a secular group, modeled on the Organization of African Unity, that aimed to promote solidarity among Black communities in the United States and Africa. In so doing, he effectively disaggregated the foundational elements of the NOI: Islam and Black nationalism. Malcolm was assassinated within a year of the founding of the OAAU; leadership of the movement then fell to his sister Ella Collins, who led the organization until its dissolution in 1986.

CRITICAL INQUIRY

Ella Collins, Malcolm's half-sister from his father Earl's previous marriage, was integral to her brother's spiritual and political development throughout his life. As portrayed in the opera, Ella took custody of Malcolm after he was remanded to foster care following his father's death and mother's institutionalization. But Ella continued to support Malcolm's endeavors as he gained prominence as an activist. She paid for him to make the Hajj, or Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca, in 1964 and assumed the leadership of his Organization of Afro-American Unity following his death. She also provided the funds for his funeral. How does Ella's central role in Malcolm's life inform how you understand the opera? How do her actions compare to those of other women characters like Louise, Malcolm's mother, and Betty, Malcolm's wife? How can we approach the legacy of Malcolm X from the perspective of these women and others like them?

Philosophical Chairs

MATERIALS

Handout

COMMON CORE

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6–11-12.1
Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.C
Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.D
Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

Philosophical Chairs is an activity designed to foster critical thinking, active inquiry, and respectful dialogue among students. To play, participants agree or disagree with a series of statements, but the game doesn't end there. The most crucial element is what happens next: Participants discuss their point of view and can switch sides if their opinions change during the discussions.

Each topic statement is deliberately open-ended yet ties into a number of the themes present in *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X*—including the pervasive effects of racism, the history of human and civil rights struggles in the U.S. and abroad, the practice of social protest, and the way broader political movements impact personal relationships. Offer students a brief overview of the opera's plot, setting, and context, and remind them how to build a safe space for productive conversation. Some of the topics might be confusing or hard—that's okay! As you and your students explore and learn about *X*, you can return to these statements: What do they have to do with the opera's story? How might these questions help us explore the opera's story, history, and themes?

A NOTE TO FACILITATORS: Between statements, provide some clarity as to why that particular statement was chosen. Explain to students where and how each particular theme shows up in the opera, or invite students to offer their own explanations.

STEP 1. INQUIRE

Distribute the included handout with guidelines and statements, making sure to review the rules of engagement as a group. Next, invite students to read one of the statements—out loud as a class, to themselves, or in small groups. As they read, they should ask themselves:

- Do I understand the statement?
  - If not, what questions might clarify it for me?
- What immediately comes to mind when I read the statement?
  - What is my initial reaction: Do I agree or disagree?
- What led me to that decision?
  - What opinions do I hold about this statement?
  - What life experiences may have led me to think this way?

Baritone Will Liverman on Malcolm X Boulevard in Harlem

ZENITH RICHARDS/MET OPERA

STEP 2. RESPOND

Read the statements again out loud and ask students to commit to one side. They can agree or disagree, but there is no middle ground. (Many will not be completely comfortable committing to one side over the other—that's part of the game. It will help foster conversation and debate.)

STEP 3. DISCUSS

Start a conversation! Use the following questions to guide discussion:

- Does anyone feel very strongly either way? Why or why not?
- Does anyone feel conflicted? Why or why not?
- Give voice to what you thought about in the first step:
  - What led me to make my decision?
  - What opinions do I hold about this statement?
  - What life experience may have led me to think this way?
- What might you have not considered that others are now bringing up in the discussion?
- Did any new questions arise during the discussion?

As the conversation continues, students are free to change their minds or develop more nuanced perspectives.

Repeat steps 1 through 3 for each statement.

The World of X

CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

American history, social studies, English, creative writing

MATERIALS

Handouts
Images
Large chart paper or notepad
Sticky notes
Synopsis
Computer, laptop, tablet, or smartphone (optional)
Pre-curated research packets (optional)
Speaker and playlist (optional)

COMMON CORE

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.7
Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3
Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

CORE ARTS

TH:Cn11.1.5.a
Investigate historical, global and social issues expressed in drama/theatre work.

TH:Cn11.2.6.b
Investigate the time period and place of a drama/theatre work to better understand performance and design choices.

Robert O'Hara's Afrofuturist reimagining of Anthony Davis's *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* is otherworldly—the production begins with a space shuttle crashing into the Metropolitan Opera House—but the plot of the opera remains tied to real historical events and settings. Part of the brilliance and challenge of *X* is to address the transcendence of its themes while acknowledging the specificity of its framing.

In this activity, students will complete a range of exercises to help them gain broader understanding of the social, cultural, and political movements that gave shape to Malcolm X's world. By working in groups to research primary and secondary historical sources and presenting findings to their peers, they will be able to imagine in greater detail the lives and legacies of those who underwent the turbulence of 20th-century America.

STEP 1. EXPLORE

Begin the lesson by having students do a gallery walk. Display the images included with this guide and made available online around the classroom. You may choose a selection from the provided images and/or add your own. You should decide whether these images are appropriate for your students and provide necessary framing to ensure students are well equipped for the exercise.

In the center of the display, place a large notepad or piece of blank chart paper and distribute a small stack of sticky notes to each student. As they walk through the gallery, students should write down one word that comes to mind for each image and then place each of their stickies on the large notepad. (You can also use a blackboard or whiteboard to collect all the sticky notes.) While students study the photographs, feel free to play music from the era, including some of the jazz greats Malcolm X met and admired: Billie Holiday, Jimmy Rushing, Lester "Prez" Young, Don Byas, Ray Nance, Sonny Greer, Sy Oliver, Charles Melvin "Cootie" Williams, Lionel Hampton, Dizzy Gillespie, Dinah Washington, Duke Ellington, Dakota Staton, and Thelonious Monk, among many others.

Once all students have placed their words on the chart/board, distribute the synopsis of *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* included in this guide. Have them read the synopsis silently while the music continues to play. Ask:

- What words, phrases, or concepts are repeated? What might this repetition indicate about important moments and themes in the opera?
- Based on the gallery images, what can we infer about life during the period of American history covered by the opera?
- Do you notice any similarities or differences among the terms placed on the board? Are there any words that surprise you, or any that you disagree with? Why?
- Are there any images you didn't understand or were unfamiliar to you?

STEP 2. INVESTIGATE

Next, divide the class into six small groups. Each group will be tasked with finding six relevant facts about one of the following historical movements:

- The Great Migration (1910–70)
- The Harlem Renaissance (1915–35)
- The Ku Klux Klan (1915–69)
- The Nation of Islam (1930–75)
- The Universal Negro Improvement Association (1914–27)
- The Civil Rights Movement (1954–68)

*Note: These dates are approximate and indicate how particular movements intersected with Malcolm X's trajectory. Some groups, like the Ku Klux Klan and Nation of Islam, are still in operation.

You can allow students to use any Wi-Fi enabled devices or school computers to complete their research. If you are working with younger students or don't have access to enough devices, you can prepare simple, pre-curated research packets with facts and images relating to each of the six topics.

Give students enough time to examine research materials and discuss in their groups. When everyone has finished, return to a large group discussion and have each team share their six facts. This part of the exercise may require additional attention to time management since you should encourage questions and group discussion while giving each team adequate time to present.

STEP 3. INTEGRATE

Now, students are prepared to dive back into *X*. On a large notepad, blank piece of chart paper, or blackboard/whiteboard, write a large "X" and draw a circle around it. Ask students to name the people who most directly or immediately affected (or were affected by) Malcolm X. Which figures or characters in the opera would occupy his closest sphere of influence? Students might mention Malcolm's family, friends, and mentors. Record these responses inside the first circle.

Then, draw another larger circle around the "X" and ask students to name the people who might occupy this second, more distant circle of influence. Students might mention other fellow Muslims, activists, allies, and politicians. Record these responses inside the second circle.

Finally, draw a third circle around the perimeter of the two smaller circles and repeat the exercise. Encourage students to consider characters in the opera as well as everyday people who Malcolm might have known and met that don't appear in the opera (e.g., gangsters, drug addicts, prisoners, police, mailmen, business owners, secretaries, shoe shiners, etc.).

FUN FACT

Throughout *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X*, multiple terms are used to refer to Black Americans across the three decades covered by the opera. Some, like the N-word, are racist slurs that should never be uttered, especially in educational settings. Others may be outdated but have important historical meanings that are not pejorative, even if we don't use the same words today. Consider, for example, the use of the word "Negro" in United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) or "colored" in National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). In earlier historical periods, these terms signified collective empowerment and belonging, although they are no longer in use. By the end of the 1960s, the decade where Davis's opera concludes, they came to be superseded by more familiar descriptors like "Black" and "African American."

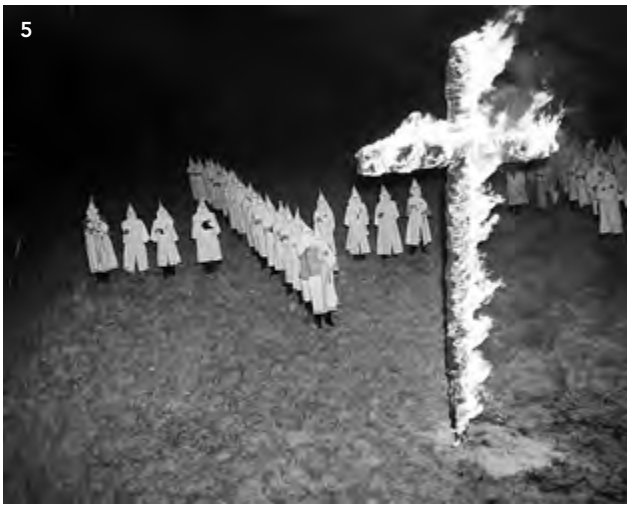
The World of *X*: Photos


1


2


3


4


5

6

1 Cootie Williams plays his trumpet in a crowded Harlem ballroom with Duke Ellington's band, circa 1930.
BETTMANN ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

2 Marcus Garvey
WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

3 Depression-era migrants
JACK DELANO/LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

4 Members of the Fruit of Islam, Elijah Muhammad's body guard
JOHN WHITE/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

5 Members of the Ku Klux Klan set fire to 15-foot cross, Tampa, Florida, 1939.
AP/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

6 The Cotton Club, Harlem, New York City, early 1930s
SCIENCE HISTORY IMAGES/ALAMY

7 The March on Washington, 1963
JAMES H. WALLACE/NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

8 Scott Arthur and his family arrive in Chicago in 1920 shortly after two of his sons had been lynched in Paris, Texas.
WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

9 A sign displayed in a Dallas restaurant
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

10 Women dressed in white at a Nation of Islam meeting in New York City, 1963
GETTY IMAGES

STEP 4. IMAGINE

To conclude the exercise, ask each student to imagine a character based on one of the people listed in the third sphere of influence on the class chart. Multiple students can pick the same person. Have students use the included handout to fill out personal details about their character. Encourage them to consider and incorporate the historical details they learned at the beginning of the lesson. If you have time, you can also ask students to volunteer to share with the class when they have completed the handout.

DIVING DEEPER

As a homework assignment or follow-up activity, ask students use the included template to compose a letter to the editor of the *Amsterdam News*—an influential Black newspaper based in New York City—from the perspective of their character. They may also write a short essay explaining why they were interested in that particular character, which aspects of their life they hoped to emphasize in their letter, and which historical details learned in class were most interesting or informative for completing the exercise.

True (Opera) Detective

Creating an opera is hard enough when it's fiction, but the stakes are even higher when treating the life of an iconic and controversial historical figure. Anthony Davis's *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X*—whose story was provided by his brother Christopher Davis and libretto composed by his cousin Thulani Davis—tackles this challenge by highlighting key moments in its protagonist's trajectory. The libretto thus adds a personal, intimate dimension to events that might otherwise be found in a newspaper or textbook.

In this activity, students will be encouraged to confront their own prior knowledge (and misconceptions) about Malcolm X before diving into the opera proper. Through close analysis of the libretto and individual scene descriptions, they will piece together operatic clues to derive the narrative sequence of *X*—gaining a deeper understanding of its characters and conflicts in the process.

STEP 1. REFLECT

Begin the lesson with a quick warm-up activity. You can do either one or both of the following options. First, select a free word-cloud generator from the list below:

freewordcloudgenerator.com
wordclouds.com
monkeylearn.com/word-cloud

Students may access the generator on their personal devices (phones, laptops, or tablets). Ask students to submit terms that come to mind when they think of Malcolm X. Encourage students to use only one-word responses. Once you have generated the word cloud, have the class consider the result:

- What do they notice about the terms? Are there any notable similarities or differences among them?
- What kind of words are used most frequently, and why?
- Are there any terms that are surprising?
- Are there any terms that students might disagree with? Why?

Next, you can take this exercise a bit further. Using a large piece of chart paper or chalkboard/whiteboard, write the following question for students: "What do you know about Malcolm X, and where did you learn it?" Record the responses, even if they are incorrect or unclear. Take the time to dispel misinformation whenever appropriate; you can also put an asterisk next to items that merit further discussion. Leave this information on the board so that the class can refer to it at the end of the lesson. The objective here is to establish a baseline for students' engagement with *X* and consider the many common myths and misconceptions tied to Malcolm X's legacy.

CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

English/language arts, American history, social studies, drama

MATERIALS

Handouts
Scissors or paper cutter
Envelopes or packets (optional)
Large notepad or board (optional)

COMMON CORE

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.5
Analyze how a drama's or poem's form or structure (e.g., soliloquy, sonnet) contributes to its meaning.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3
Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.3
Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.

CORE ARTS

TH:Re7.1.7.a
Compare recorded personal and peer reactions to artistic choices in a drama/theatre work.

MU:Cn11.1.7.a
Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.

CRITICAL INQUIRY

Malcolm X is often described as a "civil rights" leader or activist, and this appellation is not entirely incorrect. But the term "civil rights" has a specific meaning that arguably belies the political motivations of Malcolm's work. Civil rights are those freedoms and protections guaranteed by governments and secured largely through legislative processes. Broadly speaking, however, the political philosophy of Black nationalism does not seek assimilation or integration into dominant institutions through structural reform or the passage of new laws. It instead argues that Black communities must establish separate institutions for their own protection and uplift. Malcolm was outspoken in his criticisms of civil rights legislation, especially the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964, which he interpreted to mean, "We'll give you more civil rights bills. We won't give you civil rights, but we'll give you civil rights bills." How would you describe Malcolm's life and work beyond the framework of civil rights? How does his criticism of the civil rights movement alter your understanding of his activism and political philosophy? Is there a compromise between assimilation and separatism?

STEP 2. INVESTIGATE

Divide the class into small groups of no more than three to five students. (They can also work in pairs.) Print one copy of each of the two included handouts, "Scene Clues" and "Libretto Clues," for each group or pair. (Character names have been removed from the libretto clues.) Each handout has 12 "clues" that students will be tasked with matching and putting in the correct order. Using scissors or a paper cutter, separate the clues on each handout, shuffle them, and place them together in an envelope or packet. Each group should receive one packet containing the mixed scene and libretto clues together.

For this game, students will have to match excerpts from the libretto with the corresponding scene in the opera. Then, they will have to arrange the scenes in the correct order that they appear in the opera. They can do this in one of two ways: match the libretto and scenes clues before arranging them or arrange the scene clues before matching them to the libretto. Use your knowledge of the class dynamic to determine how much time to give them to complete this task. As your students work through the exercise, encourage them to consider the following:

- How do you determine if a libretto clue matches a scene clue?
- What kind of evidence are you looking for?
- How does the libretto's language indicate who might be speaking and why?
- How do you decide the order of scenes?
- Did you begin by matching the clues or arranging the scenes? Why?

STEP 3. SHARE

Once you have given students enough time to complete the task (or make an attempt), reconvene the class and have groups share their responses to the exercise. Ask:

- What was most challenging?
- What was most surprising?
- How confident are you in your answers?
- Where were there ambiguities, and how did you resolve them?

Then, go over the correct sequence with the entire class. The clues are already in the right order on each handout, but an answer key is also provided on the following pages.

Order	Scene	Libretto
1	At the home of Reverend Earl Little, his wife Louise, and their four children, followers of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association gather for a meeting. Louise anxiously awaits the return of Earl, who is late to the meeting. She fears that he has been harmed, noting that the Ku Klux Klan burned down their previous home shortly after Malcolm's birth.	My strong body quakes with fear He will not return. In these twilight hours Every shadow moves, Every light is a fire. I remember so clearly The terror of night riders, horses coming closer, Riding down our lives.
2	A white social worker arrives, accusing the Little family of neglect. She commands the children to be taken by foster care as Malcolm calls to his mother for help. His older sister Ella arrives and takes Malcolm into her custody. Ella comforts Malcolm and introduces him to "the Hill," an upwardly mobile, middle-class Black neighborhood.	We call the streets By our own names. We Negroes don't leave a place Quite the same. […] Some are bootblacks or doctors, Some are lawyers or cobblers. We're all kind of family, Almost next of kin. We're just tryin' to make it From where we've been.
3	Malcolm's friend Street convinces him to pull off a heist. Police officers enter with clubs and arrest them. Malcolm appears, handcuffed in a chair under a glaring light. He speaks—perhaps to interrogators, perhaps to no one—recalling how white-supremacist violence has always followed him. He resolves to bear the power of his truth against evil.	I would not tell you What I know. You would not Hear my truth. You want the story But you don't want to know. My truth is you've been on me A very long time, Longer than I can say. As long as I've been living You've had your foot on me, Always pressing.
4	Reginald Little comes to visit his older brother in jail, encouraging him to turn to the Muslim faith and the Nation of Islam.	You got my letter? Read what I said? […] I've changed. I've found a new way. I'm clean, Starting out new. I met a man Who showed me the truth. […] Have you ever met a man Who knows all things? […] He knows who you are, Where you've been. He knows your future.

Order	Scene	Libretto
5	Malcolm begins to accept the idea of conversion as the voice of Elijah Muhammad, the founder of the Nation of Islam, is heard offstage. They meet and Malcolm changes his last name to "X," signifying both his lost African origins and a placeholder for his future name to be given by God. Elijah shows him how to pray in the manner of the Nation of Islam.	An "X" you must claim For what was lost— Your African name, An ocean crossed. An "X" will stand Until God returns To speak a name That will be yours. Come, Malcolm X, Let me teach you. Allahu-Akbar Allah is the greatest. Let me teach you.
6	Malcolm begins traveling the country, leading rallies and founding temples in Boston, Philadelphia, Springfield, Hartford, Atlanta, and New York. Before a large crowd, he lays out his agenda for pan-African Black liberation. During this period, Malcolm oversees organizing activities for the Nation of Islam.	If we are going to be free, It will be done by you and me. And we won't turn the other cheek, We won't turn the other cheek To get our freedom. We are ready to die, To get our freedom. We will use any means— Whatever means necessary— To stand for ourselves, To live for ourselves, Or keep catchin' Hell.
7	As news swirls of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, reporters swarm Elijah asking for comment, but he rebuffs them. They then turn to Malcolm, who states that JFK's death was the foreseeable consequence of America's violent culture.	America's clime of hate is coming back on itself. Not only are defenseless blacks killed but now it has struck down the chief of state. That hate struck down Medgar Evers. That hate struck down Patrice Lumumba. In my view, it's a case of chickens coming home to roost.
8	Malcolm meets with Elijah, who confronts him for having gone against his command by making a statement about JFK's assassination. He suspects that Malcolm has grown too popular for the Nation of Islam, and Malcolm questions if he has been sabotaged, suggesting that perhaps Elijah does not obey his own laws.	You speak so freely, You speak to me of law. Do you come to judge Or be judged? They say you have grown too big For the Nation. For our Nation.

Order	Scene	Libretto
9	Malcolm's wife Betty comforts him as he grows weary from increasing media attention and political turmoil within the Nation of Islam. He embraces Betty and their daughters, and she encourages him to make the Hajj, or pilgrimage to Mecca.	When a man is lost Does the sky bleed for him, Or does the sunset Ignore his tears? When a man is lost, Do the stars die For a night, Or does the city Hide them In its glare? Alone in his dreams In a light seldom seen. Soon the henchmen will come Take his sky and stars And leave only blood. When a man is lost, What is left inside? What makes him take one step, Or keep on breathing?
10	While in Cairo on the Hajj, Malcolm abandons Western clothing for the simple white cloth of a pilgrim. A call to prayer is heard, and a group of Muslims begin to pray. As he watches those around him, he begins to emulate their movements. Having received his new name, el-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, he kneels and prays.	My name is Shabazz El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, A name for one reborn. El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, A name for one who has heard The universe make but one sound. It moves as one force, A whirling desert storm. Each of us a cloud of sand Flying round the silent eye.
11	When Malcolm returns from his pilgrimage, flanked by allies in African and Muslim garb, he is mobbed by reporters—still addressing him by his former name—who ask him about the riots in Harlem. He corrects them, reiterating that the violence of American culture leads to more violence.	You always ask What you already know. You wonder why There is revolt— A violent land breeds violent men. The slaver breeds a rebel, Not a slave. Can't you see at all? Do your eyes tell you lies?
12	Malcolm meets with his allies in a hotel room, detailing his plans and espousing a philosophy of self-defense and solidarity among all people of color around the globe. Though he learns of frequent threats to his life, he remains resolute in his faith that the Black liberation struggle will continue and succeed—even if he is killed.	I've learned so much in Africa. We're part of something so big, A movement spanning the globe. We're freedom fighters all From here to Angola, Mozambique, Ghana, Zimbabwe, South Africa. They teach us that freedom Can come from ballots or bullets.

STEP 4. REVISE

Now that students have learned more about Malcolm X's life and Anthony Davis's opera, return to their early responses to the question, "What do you know about Malcolm X and where did you learn it?" Using their newfound knowledge, ask students to revise this collection of facts—adding new terms and ideas and removing those that no longer apply.

DIVING DEEPER

For an additional in-class or take-home writing assignment, you can have students come up with a new sequence of events for their own version of an opera based on Malcolm X's life. Encourage them to consider how rearranging the scenes would affect the narrative or dramatic arc of the opera, or if there are any moments in Malcolm's life that they think should be included (or excluded) in an operatic adaptation.

The Future of the Past

The Met's production of *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* is as much about the historical past as it is about the political future. By chronicling its protagonist's development, Anthony Davis's work asks audiences to consider not just what Malcolm X endured but also what he sought to accomplish before his life was cut tragically short. Indeed, Malcolm's assassination, which concludes the opera, occurred within a year of his founding of two new organizations: Muslim Mosque, Inc., and the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU), a secular group. Drawing on the aesthetic vocabulary of Afrofuturism, director Robert O'Hara's staging conjures imagined futures that never came to pass—both in Malcolm's lifetime and in ours.

In this activity, students will examine textual and visual primary sources to gain deeper understanding of the OAAU at the time of its founding and in the aftermath of Malcolm's murder. Then, they will parse the meanings and methods of Afrofuturism to create their own materials that evoke the history of the OAAU while gesturing toward the mandates of contemporary struggles for social justice, both in the United States and abroad. In so doing, they will be able to reimagine the study of history as one way to answer the question: What version of the future is worth fighting for?

STEP 1. REVIEW

Before students dive into any activities, they should have a baseline knowledge of the OAAU and its place in Malcolm X's trajectory. You are welcome to read and/or distribute the Deep Dive essay "A Nation within a Nation" included in this guide, which outlines the major Black nationalist movements that shaped Malcolm's life, culminating in his founding of the OAAU in 1964. The most important facts to bear in mind are as follows:

- In 1964, Malcolm is suspended by the Nation of Islam (NOI) for his remarks concerning the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.
- Malcolm then leaves the NOI and founds a new organization, Muslim Mosque, Inc., whose membership largely comprises former NOI followers.
- Malcolm makes the Hajj, or Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca.
- Upon his return from Mecca, Malcolm establishes the OAAU as a secular organization.
- The OAAU is modeled on the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the precursor to what is today called the African Union—an intergovernmental group promoting political and economic collaboration among African nations in the wake of decolonization.
- The OAAU intends to bridge the gap between Black communities on the African continent and those in the Western hemisphere, including the United States, Caribbean, and Latin America.

CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

American history, social studies, political science, popular culture, visual arts, design

MATERIALS

Handouts

Paper

Colored pencils or markers (optional)

Computer, laptop, tablet, or smartphone (optional)

"A Nation within a Nation" and "Black to the Future" essays

COMMON CORE

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2
Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1
Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.6
Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

CORE ARTS

VA:Cr2.3.7.a
Apply visual organizational strategies to design and produce a work of art, design, or media that clearly communicates information or ideas.

VA:Cn11.1.8.a
Distinguish different ways art is used to represent, establish, reinforce, and reflect group identity.

- Following Malcolm's murder, the OAAU is taken over by his sister Ella Collins. (Ella is the same sister who took custody of Malcolm when he was a teenager.) Ella leads the OAAU until it is dissolved in 1986.

STEP 2. REFLECT

Next, divide the students into two groups and distribute the included handout containing the outline for the OAAU's "Basic Unity Program," which Malcolm crafted alongside pan-Africanist historian John Henrik Clarke. You can have students read the handout on their own or read it aloud as a class. As they go through the text, students in one group should mark, highlight, or circle any words, phrases, or passages that evoke the past. Students in the second group should do the same with words, phrases, or passages that evoke the future. After finishing the document, open a class discussion:

- Which aspects of the "Basic Unity Program" deal with the past or the future?
- How do the writers envision the role of the historical past or the political future in the OAAU?
- Why is the past or future important to the OAAU, and what does it have to do with unity?
- What is the relationship between the past and the future? How are they connected (or not)?

STEP 3. EXPLORE

Now that students have more familiarity with the goals of the OAAU, introduce the concept of Afrofuturism. You may decide to distribute the Deep Dive essay "Black to the Future" included in this guide and have students read it individually, in groups, or as a class. Or, if students have access to electronic devices (i.e., a computer, laptop, tablet, or smartphone), they can explore this topic further through the digital exhibition "Afrofuturism: A History of Black Futures," produced by the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture (**searchablemuseum.com/afrofuturism**). After

students have had some time to read about Afrofuturism, bring everyone back to a group discussion. Ask:

- What are some historical examples of Afrofuturism?
- What are some contemporary examples of Afrofuturism?
- How does the historical past relate to Afrofuturist expression?
- What does Afrofuturism seek to do? What questions does it ask?

4. EXAMINE

Once students have a grasp of both the history of the OAAU and the aesthetic vocabulary of Afrofuturism, distribute the handout with the OAAU leaflet of "Aims and Objectives." It's important to note that this document dates from 1965, following Malcolm's assassination. It thus should not be considered an expression of his ideas, but instead as a reflection of how the OAAU developed under Ella Collins's leadership in the ensuing years. Ask:

- What do you notice about the imagery of the document? How is it visually formatted?
- How do you think this document would be used? For whom is it intended?
- How are its contents similar to the OAAU's "Basic Unity Program"? How are they different?
- How does the document treat the past? How does it envision the future?

5. CREATE

In this concluding exercise, students will bring together their knowledge of the OAAU and Afrofuturism by creating their own political art projects. They can complete either of two options; feel free to assign whichever works best for your classroom. Using the included template as a guide, students will craft an Afrofuturist "zine" outlining the philosophies of the OAAU. Zines are small magazines or pamphlets, usually self-published or produced noncommercially, that are distributed among enthusiasts or advocates of a particular movement or subculture. Encourage students to include text from either of the OAAU primary sources they have already studied, to use any arts and crafts materials available to them, and to draw on the expressive vocabulary of Afrofuturism in creating their zines.

As a second option, students can use either posterboard or digital tools like Canva or Adobe Spark to create an original Afrofuturist poster for an OAAU rally. They should make sure to draw inspiration from the OAAU texts that they read in class, as well as the images and expressive styles found in the Afrofuturism digital exhibition. For both projects, students should consider the following prompts:

- What aspect of the OAAU is most interesting or important to you?

Malcolm X, 1964

HERMAN HILLER, WORLD TELEGRAM STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER. COURTESY NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM & SUN COLLECTION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

- Are you drawing primarily from the "Basic Unity Program," the leaflet, or both? Why?
- Who is the intended audience of your zine or poster? (If they have a choice between the two options, why did they choose one over the other?)
- How are you choosing to convey the ideas of the OAAU in text and image?
- How does Afrofuturist expression help advance the message of the OAAU?

When students have completed their posters and/or zines, invite them to share their creations with the class or convene a gallery walk.

DIVING DEEPER

For an additional assignment, which can be done as an in-class or take-home exercise, ask students to engage in a speculative, counterfactual experiment. Imagine that, instead of dissolving in 1986, the OAAU remained active all the way up to the present day. Then, have students rewrite the "Basic Unity Program" or the "Aims & Objectives" leaflet for today's version of the OAAU. Have students consider:

- What are the primary concerns of this imagined, contemporary OAAU?
- Which of the OAAU's previous goals are no longer relevant, and which persist?
- How should the current OAAU's approach differ from its historical precedents?
- How do contemporary social justice movements differ from those of the past?
- Who is the OAAU trying to reach, and how are they doing so?

Philosophical Chairs

Active listening, critical thinking, and respectful dialogue (even when we disagree about something) are learned skills. Everyone can learn them, and no one can perfect them without practice. Philosophical Chairs is designed to help us develop these skills while also learning about the opera.

You might find these statements challenging—and you might find it challenging to talk with someone who has a different answer from your own. That's okay! Take your time with each statement, embrace uncertainty, and know that changing your mind when you learn new information is a sign of strength, not weakness. Before you begin your discussion, take some time to review the rules of engagement:

Be sure you understand the statement. If something is unclear, ask!
Face each other. Body language helps show that you're listening carefully and respectfully.
Only one speaker at a time. Everyone will get their turn to speak.
Think before you speak. Be sure that what you're going to say is what you really mean.
Summarize the previous person's comments before adding your own.
Address ideas, not the person. Challenging ideas or statements is good only if we respect the individuality and inherent value of the person who expressed them.
Three before me. To make sure everyone's voice is heard, you may not make another comment until three others have shared their thoughts.

The Statements

- All forms of racism stem from hatred. (FOLLOW UP—consider fear, anxiety, envy, resentment, ignorance, and arrogance; DISCUSS—what are the root causes of racism?)
- Racism is learned (or taught).
- I can recognize racism when I see or hear it.
- Stereotypes and prejudice can be eliminated from our society.
- Racism must be confronted.
- Everyone is born equal.
- Racism is perpetuated by social hierarchies.
- Character matters.
- You are a reflection of the people you surround yourself with.
- Everyone's lot in life is the same.
- If you speak loud enough, people will listen.
- Every human is entitled to the same rights.
- Rights and responsibilities are the same.
- We have a duty to protect the rights of others.
- Human rights are only a problem in nondemocratic countries.
- Our political (or justice) system serves everyone equally.
- All are free to dream without fear.
- Everything will always turn out well in the end.
- Time solves all problems—you just have to wait long enough.
- You must stand up for what you believe in.
- Everything happens for a reason.

The World of *X* | Character Breakdown

Name:	Age:	Gender:
Occupation:		
Values (What is their life philosophy? What do they believe in?):		
Biggest regret:		
Greatest fear:		
Personal goals:		

The World of *X* | Letter Template

Amsterdam News
2340 Frederick Douglass Boulevard
New York, NY 10027

To the Editor:

My name is _____, and I work as a _____. In my daily life, I _____.

My experience has taught me that _____ _____.

As I see it, racial integration is _____ because _____. If it were up to me, _____.

From a concerned citizen,

_____

True (Opera) Detective | Scene Clues

At the home of Reverend Earl Little, his wife Louise, and their four children, followers of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association gather for a meeting. Louise anxiously awaits the return of Earl, who is late to the meeting. She fears that he has been harmed, noting that the Ku Klux Klan burned down their previous home shortly after Malcolm's birth.

A white social worker arrives, accusing the Little family of neglect. She commands the children to be taken by foster care as Malcolm calls to his mother for help. His older sister Ella arrives and takes Malcolm into her custody. Ella comforts Malcolm and introduces him to "the Hill," an upwardly mobile, middle-class Black neighborhood.

Malcolm's friend Street convinces him to pull off a heist. Police officers enter with clubs and arrest them. Malcolm appears, handcuffed in a chair under a glaring light. He speaks—perhaps to interrogators, perhaps to no one—recalling how white supremacist violence has always followed him. He resolves to bear the power of his truth against evil.

Reginald Little comes to visit his older brother in jail, encouraging him to turn to the Muslim faith and the Nation of Islam.

Malcolm begins to accept the idea of conversion as the voice of Elijah Muhammad, the founder of the Nation of Islam, is heard offstage. They meet and Malcolm changes his last name to "X," signifying both his lost African origins and a placeholder for his future name to be given by God. Elijah shows him how to pray in the manner of the Nation of Islam.

Malcolm begins traveling the country, leading rallies and founding temples in Boston, Philadelphia, Springfield, Hartford, Atlanta, and New York. Before a large crowd, he lays out his agenda for pan-African Black liberation. During this period, Malcolm oversees organizing activities for the Nation of Islam.

True (Opera) Detective | Scene Clues (CONTINUED)

As news swirls of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, reporters swarm Elijah asking for comment, but he rebuffs them. They then turn to Malcolm, who states that JFK's death was the foreseeable consequence of America's violent culture.

Malcolm meets with Elijah, who confronts him for having gone against his command by making a statement about JFK's assassination. He suspects that Malcolm has grown too popular for the Nation of Islam, and Malcolm questions if he has been sabotaged, suggesting that perhaps Elijah does not obey his own laws.

Malcolm's wife Betty comforts him as he grows weary from increasing media attention and political turmoil within the Nation of Islam. He embraces Betty and their daughters, and she encourages him to make the Hajj, or pilgrimage to Mecca.

While in Cairo on the Hajj, Malcolm abandons Western clothing for the simple white cloth of a pilgrim. A call to prayer is heard, and a group of Muslims begin to pray. As he watches those around him, he begins to emulate their movements. Having received his new name, el-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, he kneels and prays.

When Malcolm returns from his pilgrimage, flanked by allies in African and Muslim garb, he is mobbed by reporters—still addressing him by his former name—who ask him about the riots in Harlem. He corrects them, reiterating that the violence of American culture leads to more violence.

Malcolm meets with his allies in a hotel room, detailing his plans and espousing a philosophy of self-defense and solidarity among all people of color around the globe. Though he learns of frequent threats to his life, he remains resolute in his faith that the Black liberation struggle will continue and succeed—even if he is killed.

True (Opera) Detective | Libretto Clues

My strong body quakes with fear
He will not return.
In these twilight hours
Every shadow moves,
Every light is a fire.
I remember so clearly
The terror of night riders,
horses coming closer,
Riding down our lives.

We call the streets
By our own names.
We Negroes don't leave a place
Quite the same. […]
Some are bootblacks or doctors,
Some are lawyers or cobblers.
We're all kind of family,
Almost next of kin.
We're just tryin' to make it
From where we've been.

I would not tell you
What I know.
You would not
Hear my truth.
You want the story
But you don't want to know.
My truth is you've been on me
A very long time,
Longer than I can say.
As long as I've been living
You've had your foot on me,
Always pressing.

You got my letter?
Read what I said? […]
I've changed.
I've found a new way.
I'm clean,
Starting out new.
I met a man
Who showed me the truth. […]
Have you ever met a man
Who knows all things? […]
He knows who you are,
Where you've been.
He knows your future.

An "X" you must claim
For what was lost—
Your African name,
An ocean crossed.
An "X" will stand
Until God returns
To speak a name
That will be yours.
Come, Malcolm X,
Let me teach you.
Allahu-Akbar
Allah is the greatest.
Let me teach you.

If we are going to be free,
It will be done by you and me.
And we won't turn the other cheek,
We won't turn the other cheek
To get our freedom.
We are ready to die,
To get our freedom.
We will use any means—
Whatever means necessary—
To stand for ourselves,
To live for ourselves,
Or keep catchin' Hell.

True (Opera) Detective | Libretto Clues (CONTINUED)

America's clime of hate is coming back on itself. Not only are defenseless blacks killed but now it has struck down the chief of state. That hate struck down Medgar Evers. That hate struck down Patrice Lumumba. In my view, it's a case of chickens coming home to roost.

You speak so freely,
You speak to me of law.
Do you come to judge
Or be judged?
They say you have grown too big
For the Nation.
For our Nation.

When a man is lost
Does the sky bleed for him,
Or does the sunset
Ignore his tears?
When a man is lost,
Do the stars die
For a night,
Or does the city
Hide them
In its glare?
Alone in his dreams
In a light seldom seen.
Soon the henchmen will come
Take his sky and stars
And leave only blood.
When a man is lost,
What is left inside?
What makes him take one step,
Or keep on breathing?

My name is Shabazz
El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz,
A name for one reborn.
El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz,
A name for one who has heard
The universe make but one sound.
It moves as one force,
A whirling desert storm.
Each of us a cloud of sand
Flying round the silent eye.

You always ask
What you already know.
You wonder why
There is revolt—
A violent land breeds violent men.
The slaver breeds a rebel,
Not a slave.
Can't you see at all?
Do your eyes tell you lies?

I've learned so much in Africa.
We're part of something so big,
A movement spanning the globe.
We're freedom fighters all
From here to Angola,
Mozambique, Ghana,
Zimbabwe, South Africa.
They teach us that freedom
Can come from ballots or bullets.

The Future of the Past | Basic Unity Program

The program of the Organization of Afro-American Unity shall evolve from five strategic points which are deemed basic and fundamental to our grand alliance. Through our committees we shall proceed in the following general areas.

I. RESTORATION

In order to enslave the African, it was necessary for our enslavers to completely sever our communications with the African continent and the Africans that remained there. In order to free ourselves from the oppression of our enslavers then, it is absolutely necessary for the Afro-American to restore communications with Africa.

The Organization of Afro-American Unity will accomplish this goal by means of independent national and international newspapers, publishing ventures, personal contacts, and other available communications media.

We, Afro-Americans, must also communicate to one another the truths about American slavery and the terrible effects it has upon our people. We must study the modern system of slavery in order to free ourselves from it. We must search out all the bare and ugly facts without shame for we are still victims, still slaves—still oppressed. Our only shame is believing falsehood and not seeking the truth.

We must learn all that we can about ourselves. We will have to know the whole story of how we were kidnapped from Africa; how our ancestors were brutalized, dehumanized, and murdered; and how we are continually kept in a state of slavery for the profit of a system conceived in slavery, built by slaves and dedicated to keeping us enslaved in order to maintain itself.

We must begin to reeducate ourselves and become alert listeners in order to learn as much as we can about the progress of our motherland—Africa. We must correct in our minds the distorted image that our enslaver has portrayed to us of Africa that he might discourage us from reestablishing communications with her and thus obtain freedom from oppression.

II. REORIENTATION

In order to keep the Afro-American enslaved, it was necessary to limit our thinking to the shores of America—to prevent us from identifying our problems with the problems of other peoples of African origin. This made us consider ourselves an isolated minority without allies anywhere.

The Organization of Afro-American Unity will develop in the Afro-American people a keen awareness of our relationship with the world at large and clarify our roles, rights, and responsibilities as human beings. We can accomplish this goal by becoming well-informed concerning world affairs and understanding that our struggle is part of a larger world struggle of oppressed peoples against all forms of oppression. We must change the thinking of the Afro-American by liberating our minds through the study of philosophies and psychologies, cultures and languages that did not come from our racist oppressors.

Provisions are being made for the study of languages such as Swahili, Hausa, and Arabic. These studies will give our people access to ideas and history of mankind at large and thus increase our mental scope.

We can learn much about Africa by reading informative books and by listening to the experiences of those who have traveled there, but many of us can travel to the land of our choice and experience for ourselves. The Organization of Afro-American Unity will encourage the Afro-American to travel to Africa, the Caribbean, and to other places where our culture has not been completely crushed by brutality and ruthlessness.

III. EDUCATION

After enslaving us, the slave masters developed a racist educational system which justified to its posterity the evil deeds that had been committed against the African people and their descendants. Too often the slave himself participates so completely in this system that he justifies having been enslaved and oppressed.

The Organization of Afro-American Unity will devise original educational methods and procedures which will liberate the minds of our children from the vicious lies and distortions that are fed to us from the cradle to keep us mentally enslaved. We encourage Afro-Americans themselves to establish experimental institutes and educational workshops, liberation schools, and child-care centers in the Afro-American communities.

The Future of the Past | Basic Unity Program (CONTINUED)

We will influence the choice of textbooks and equipment used by our children in the public schools while at the same time encouraging qualified Afro-Americans to write and publish the textbooks needed to liberate our minds. Until we completely control our own educational institutions, we must supplement the formal training of our children by educating them at home.

IV. ECONOMIC SECURITY

After the Emancipation Proclamation, when the system of slavery changed from chattel slavery to wage slavery, it was realized that the Afro-American constituted the largest homogeneous ethnic group with a common origin and common group experience in the United States and, if allowed to exercise economic or political freedom, would in a short period of time own this country. Therefore, racists in this government developed techniques that would keep the Afro-American people economically dependent upon the slave masters—economically slaves—twentieth-century slaves.

The Organization of Afro-American Unity will take measures to free our people from economic slavery. One way of accomplishing this will be to maintain a technician pool: that is, a bank of technicians. In the same manner that blood banks have been established to furnish blood to those who need it at the time it is needed, we must establish a technician bank. We must do this so that the newly independent nations of Africa can turn to us who are their Afro-American brothers for the technicians they will need now and in the future. Thereby we will be developing an open market for the many skills we possess and at the same time we will be supplying Africa with the skills she can best use. This project will therefore be one of mutual cooperation and mutual benefit.

V. SELF-DEFENSE

In order to enslave a people and keep them subjugated, their right to self-defense must be denied. They must be constantly terrorized, brutalized, and murdered. These tactics of suppression have been developed to a new high by vicious racists whom the United States government seems unwilling or incapable of dealing with in terms of the law of this land. Before the emancipation it was the Black man who suffered humiliation, torture, castration, and murder. Recently our women and children, more and more, are becoming the victims of savage racists whose appetite for blood increases daily and whose deeds of depravity seem to be openly encouraged by all law enforcement agencies. Over five thousand Afro-Americans have been lynched since the Emancipation Proclamation and not one murderer has been brought to justice!

The Organization of Afro-American Unity, being aware of the increased violence being visited upon the Afro-American and of the open sanction of this violence and murder by the police departments throughout this country and the federal agencies—do affirm our right and obligation to defend ourselves in order to survive as a people.

We encourage the Afro-Americans to defend themselves against the wanton attacks of racist aggressors whose sole aim is to deny us the guarantees of the United Nations Charter of Human Rights and of the Constitution of the United States.

The Organization of Afro-American Unity will take those private steps that are necessary to insure the survival of the Afro-American people in the face of racist aggression and the defense of our women and children. We are within our rights to see to it that the Afro-American people who fulfill their obligations to the United States government (we pay taxes and serve in the armed forces of this country like American citizens do) also exact from this government the obligations that it owes us as a people, or exact these obligations ourselves. Needless to say, among this number we include protection of certain inalienable rights such as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

In areas where the United States government has shown itself unable and/or unwilling to bring to justice the racist oppressors, murderers, who kill innocent children and adults, the Organization of Afro-American Unity advocates that the Afro-American people insure ourselves that justice is done—whatever the price and by any means necessary.

The Future of the Past | OAAU Leaflet

7. Devise Original Educational Methods.

8. Stimulate International Economic and Political Awareness.

9. Act as an Overseas "Voice" for Afro-Americans.

10. To Provide A Means to Defend Ourselves by Any Means Necessary from Racist Oppression where the Government Proves It Is Unwilling and/or Unable To Do So.

O.A.A.U. HEADQUARTERS:
write - HOTEL THERESA
2090 7th AVE.
(Corner of 125th St. & 7th Ave.)
NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK

or call - UN. 6-3300 Extension-128

JOIN THE O.A.A.U.

"BE A BUILDER — NOT A BEGGAR"
WRITE OR CALL TODAY!

"FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT"

OAAU, Inc. Seal

ORGANIZATION OF AFRO-AMERICAN UNITY INC.

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AIMS & OBJECTIVES

ELLA COLLINS
SISTER OF MALCOLM X

MALCOLM X
FOUNDER OF THE O.A.A.U.

ORGANIZATION OF AFRO-AMERICAN UNITY INC.

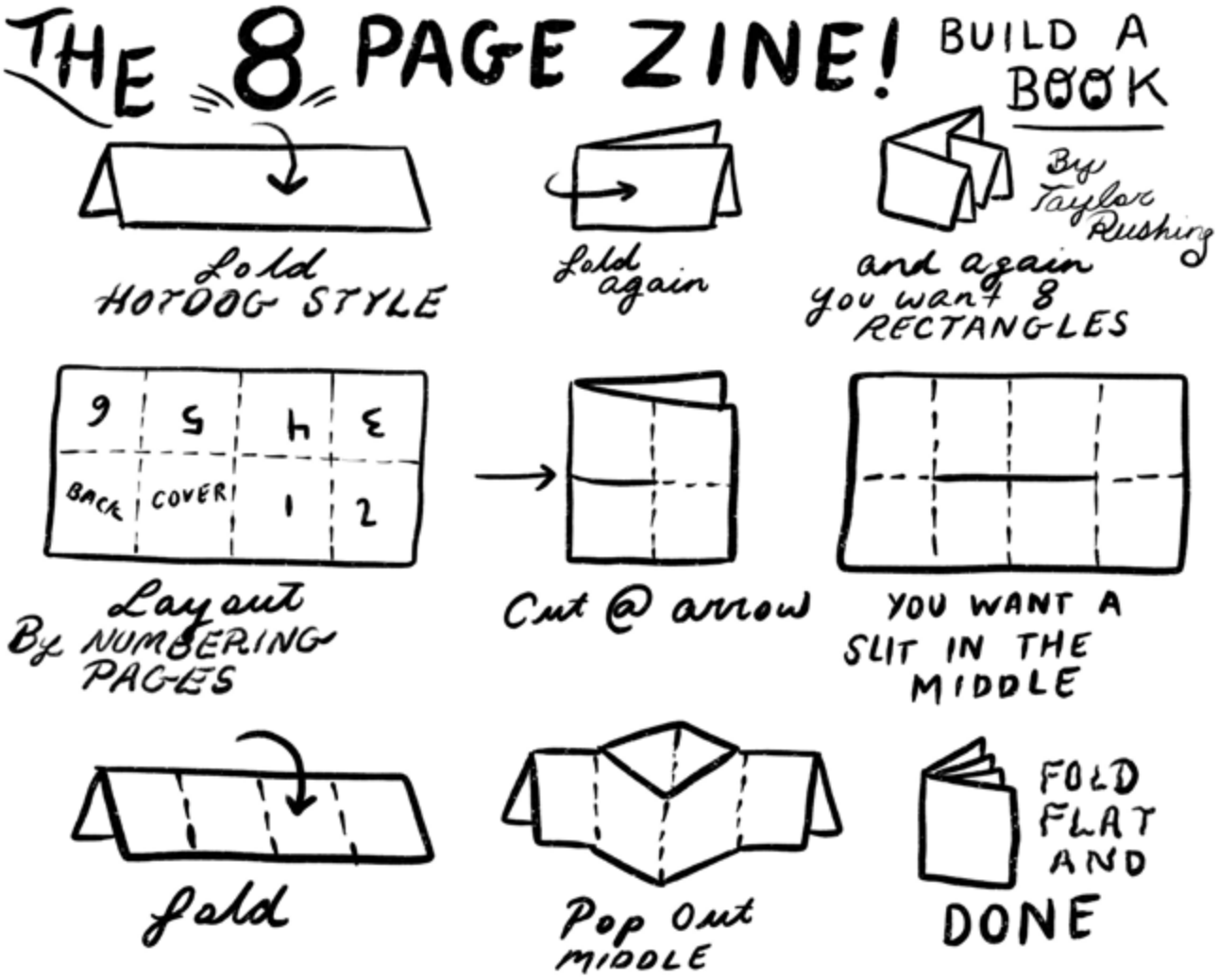
Aims & Objectives

"WE WILL DO FOR OURSELVES — WHAT OTHERS ARE BEGGING FOR"

The Organization of AFRO-AMERICAN UNITY Inc. welcomes all persons of African origin to come together and dedicate their ideas, skills, and lives to free our people from oppression. The following is a concise version of the Aims and Objectives in order for the community to have at its finger tips and see at a glance the ultimate goals of the Organization of AFRO-AMERICAN UNITY Inc. under the leadership of Mrs. Ella Collins. Fully detailed and more explicit Aims and Objectives are available for registered members.

1. Free Black Americans from Economic Oppression.
2. Create Business Opportunities and Jobs.
3. Establish an Environment of Security, Stability, Dignity, and Initiative for Our Youth.
4. Demand Justice Whenever It Becomes Evident that the Laws as Composed and Enforced are Contrary To the Welfare and Well-Being of Our People, by Any Means Necessary.
5. Pledge Unity and Strive for Understanding Among Black Americans.
6. Restore Communication and Trade with Africa.

The Future of the Past | Zine Template



TAYLOR WRIGHT RUSHING

PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY

Opera Review: *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X*

Have you ever wanted to be a music and theater critic? Now's your chance!

As you watch *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X*, use the space below to keep track of your thoughts and opinions. What did you like about the performance? What didn't you like? If you were in charge, what would you have done differently? Think carefully about the action, music, and stage design. Then, after the opera, share your opinions with your friends, classmates, and anyone else who wants to learn more about the opera and this performance at the Met!

THE SHOW, SCENE BY SCENE	ACTION	MUSIC	SET DESIGN / STAGING
At a meeting of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association at the Little family home, Louise anxiously awaits Earl's return. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Louise suffers a breakdown, and a social worker takes her children into foster care. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Ella adopts Malcolm, comforting him and introducing him to "The Hill." MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Malcolm wanders into a pool room and encounters Street. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Street and Malcolm commit a heist. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Malcolm sits alone in an interrogation room. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Malcolm encounters Elijah, who teaches him how to pray. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆

THE SHOW, SCENE BY SCENE	ACTION	MUSIC	SET DESIGN / STAGING
Malcolm gives a soapbox speech on 125th street in Harlem. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Before a large crowd, Malcolm outlines his philosophy of Black liberation. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Malcolm addresses Muslims gathered at a mosque. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
A reporter interviews Malcolm about JFK's assassination. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Elijah censures Malcolm, disallowing him from speaking publicly. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Betty comforts Malcolm and urges him to make the Hajj. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Malcolm makes the pilgrimage to Mecca. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
A riot breaks out in Harlem after a police officer shoots a young man. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Malcolm speaks to reporters upon his return to the United States. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Malcolm meets with allies and prepares to speak at a meeting of the Organization of Afro-American Unity. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆