

ANTHONY DAVIS / LIBRETTO BY THULANI DAVIS / STORY BY CHRISTOPHER DAVIS

# X: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF MALCOLM X

CONDUCTOR  
Kazem Abdullah

PRODUCTION  
Robert O'Hara

SET DESIGNER  
Clint Ramos

COSTUME DESIGNER  
Dede Ayite

LIGHTING DESIGNER  
Alex Jainchill

PROJECTION DESIGNER  
Yee Eun Nam

WIG DESIGNER  
Mia Neal

CHOREOGRAPHER  
Rickey Tripp

MARIA MANETTI SHREM  
GENERAL MANAGER  
Peter Gelb

JEANETTE LERMAN-NEUBAUER  
MUSIC DIRECTOR  
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Opera in three acts by Anthony Davis

Libretto by Thulani Davis

Story by Christopher Davis

Saturday, November 18, 2023

1:00–4:30PM

**New Production**

The production of *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* was made possible by a generous gift from **The Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, Inc.** and **The Ford Foundation**

Additional support was received from the Francis Goelet Endowment Fund and the National Endowment for the Arts

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

*X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* is part of the **Neubauer Family Foundation New Works Initiative**

Throughout the 2023–24 season, the Met continues to honor Ukraine and its brave citizens as they fight to defend their country and its cultural heritage.

The Metropolitan Opera  
2023-24 SEASON

The fifth Metropolitan Opera performance of  
ANTHONY DAVIS'S

**X: THE LIFE  
AND TIMES OF  
MALCOLM X**

CONDUCTOR  
Kazem Abdullah

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE  
GARVEY PREACHER  
Edwin Jhamaal Davis

NEIGHBOR  
Jasmine Muhammad

POSTMAN  
Elliott Paige

LOUISE  
Leah Hawkins\*

FRIEND  
Adam Richardson

SOCIAL WORKER  
Tracy Cox

YOUNG MALCOLM  
Bryce Christian Thompson

ELLA  
Raehann Bryce-Davis

STREET  
Victor Ryan Robertson

Saturday, November 18, 2023, 1:00-4:30PM

POLICEMEN

Gregory Warren  
Marco Jordão  
Ross Benoiel

MALCOLM

Will Liverman

REGINALD

Michael Sumuel

ELIJAH

Victor Ryan Robertson

QUEEN MOTHER

Raehann Bryce-Davis

BETTY

Leah Hawkins\*

MUEZZIN

Tshombe Selby

REPORTERS

Tyler Simpson  
Tracy Cox  
Gregory Warren  
Daniel Clark Smith  
Ross Benoiel

ALLY

David Morgans

BLONDE/GIRLFRIEND

Maddie Parrish

EPISTEME

ALTO AND SOPRANO SAXOPHONE / FLUTE

Marty Ehrlich

TENOR AND SOPRANO SAXOPHONE / BASS CLARINET

Isaiah Richardson Jr

CLARINET / CONTRA-ALTO CLARINET

J D Parran

TRUMPET

Amir ElSaffar

TROMBONE

Michael Fahie

PIANO

Alexis Marcelo

BASS

Mark Helias

DRUMS

Jeff "Tain" Watts

\* Graduate of the  
Lindemann Young Artist  
Development Program

Saturday, November 18, 2023, 1:00–4:30PM



The Metropolitan  
Opera

2023-24 SEASON

A scene from Anthony Davis's  
*X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X*

The Metropolitan Opera is pleased to salute  
Bank of America in recognition of its generous  
support during the 2023-24 season.

**BANK OF AMERICA** 

PHOTO: MARTY SOHL / MET OPERA

This afternoon's performance is being transmitted live  
in high definition to movie theaters worldwide.

*The Met: Live in HD* series is made possible by a generous grant from  
its founding sponsor, the **Neubauer Family Foundation**.

Digital support of *The Met: Live in HD*  
is provided by **Bloomberg Philanthropies**.

*The Met: Live in HD* series is supported by **Rolex**.

C. Graham Berwind, III Chorus Master **Donald Palumbo**

Musical Preparation **Caren Levine,\* Bryan Wagorn,\* Katelan Trần Terrell,\***

**Lynn Baker, Timothy Long, and Kevin J. Miller**

Associate Director **Nicholas Polonio**

Assistant Stage Directors **Melanie Bacaling, Dylan Evans, Christina Franklin, and  
Alison Pogorelc**

Associate Set Designer **Diggle**

Assistant Costume Designers **Bee Gable and Amanda Whidden**

Assistant Projection Designer **Elizabeth Barrett**

Associate Choreographer **Arianne Meneses**

Assistant Choreographer **Voltaire Wade-Greene**

English Diction Coach **Lynn Baker**

Prompter **Caren Levine\***

Met Titles **Michael Panayos**

Additional Casting **Tara Rubin, CSA, and Spencer Gualdoni, CSA**

Scenery, properties, and electrical props constructed and painted by **Adirondack  
Studios and Metropolitan Opera Shops**

Costumes executed by **Metropolitan Opera Costume Department; Eric Winterling,**  
New York; **Sarah Timberlake,** New York; **Anthony Giliberto,** New York; **John  
Kristiansen,** New York; **Jennifer Love,** New York; **Gary Frankie,** New York; **Arel Studio,**  
New York; **Heather Coiner,** Delaware; **Jimmy McBride,** Brooklyn; **Seams Unlimited,**  
Racine, Wisconsin; **Crystal Thompson,** New York; **Alexander Zeek,** Massachusetts;  
**Daniel Weger,** New York; and **Fabio Toblini,** Brooklyn

Wigs and makeup constructed and executed by **Metropolitan Opera Wig and Makeup  
Department**

**This production uses strobe-light and haze effects.**

X: *The Life and Times of Malcolm X* is performed by arrangement with G. Schirmer, Inc.

Zapruder Film © 1967 (Renewed 1995) The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza

Projected image of Glenn Ligon's 1619–2023 (X) used with permission of the artist

This performance is made possible in part by public funds from the New York State  
Council on the Arts.

Before the performance begins, please switch off cell phones and other electronic devices.

The Met will be recording and simulcasting audio/video footage in the opera house  
today. If you do not want us to use your image, please tell a Met staff member.

\* Graduate of the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program

# Synopsis

## Act I

1931, *Lansing, Michigan*. At the home of Reverend Earl Little and his wife, Louise, a meeting is taking place of the local chapter of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association, and Rev. Little is late. Louise has been tense all day, and members of the meeting are concerned about active white supremacist groups terrorizing local people. Louise remembers past attacks that haunt her. A policeman arrives to say that Rev. Little was killed in a streetcar accident. The neighbors ponder what may have really happened, and Louise becomes distraught, sings to herself, and soon becomes unreachable. A social worker comes to the home sometime later and declares the Little children to be wards of the state. Malcolm tries to reach his mother, who does not react to him. She is hospitalized. His older half-sister appears to take him to her home in Boston.

About 1940, *Boston*. Still very much a country boy, Malcolm is introduced to Ella's middle-class Black Boston and, through his discovery of the music there, finds himself in the local after-hours life, with his guide, Street. But as a young adult, he gets involved with some people who rob a wealthy home, and he is arrested.

In an interrogation room, Malcolm reveals the anger over the troubles that have long plagued people like him.

## *Intermission* (AT APPROXIMATELY 2:10PM)

## Act II

1946–48. Malcolm broods in jail when his brother Reginald comes to visit. Reginald tells him about Elijah Muhammad, leader of the Nation of Islam, whose teachings he thinks will help his brother. Malcolm begins to study the Nation's teachings and read many books. He becomes a serious and more hopeful man. Malcolm X is born.

1952. The jail recedes as Malcolm hears and then sees Elijah. They come face to face. Elijah embraces Malcolm like a son. He tells him that he has much to learn to spread Allah's word and sends him out to start temples. He is an electrifying speaker.

1954–63. Malcolm begins his ministry, helping to found temples in Boston, Philadelphia, Springfield, Hartford, Atlanta, and New York. This scene spans several years in telescopic fashion. The period includes some of the heights of

the civil rights era and closes with the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Malcolm is seen speaking on various Harlem street corners as time passes. Malcolm warms to his task when speaking before more and more exuberant crowds and decries some of the peaceful protests in the South as he defines his own political position.

He leads an anthem declaring “We are a nation.” At the end, a reporter asks him about Kennedy’s death, and Malcolm makes a remark lacking in sensitivity to the nation’s mourning. Elijah is enraged.

Malcolm and Betty briefly discuss his upcoming meeting with Elijah. They express the hope that their children will be free to dream without fear.

### *Intermission* (AT APPROXIMATELY 3:20PM)

## **Act III**

1963. Malcolm is called to see Elijah, who is both disturbed that this spokesman for the Nation may have put the organization in jeopardy and that he may have become too powerful. Other Muslims disparage him as he comes to the meeting. The Nation is splintering into vying factions. Elijah silences Malcolm for three months, and Malcolm consents to the will of his leader.

He visits with his family, disheartened by the turmoil dividing his community and reporters hounding his every step. Betty hands him a ticket and tells him to go to Mecca to spend time alone and find his way. He decides to simply trust in Allah and ask for His help.

Malcolm is in Mecca, dressed in the simple cloths of a hajji and awaiting word as to whether he will be permitted in as a convert and not a man born in Islam. The call to morning prayer sounds, and people there begin to go through the traditional motions of prayer, which are new to him. He watches, imitates the others, and tries to learn the orthodox ritual. He has a larger vision of people across the world united together in faith, rather than by a single ideology.

1964–65. Just before he returns to Harlem, a riot breaks out there. He returns, now a changed man but outwardly the same. He is greeted by reporters, who question him about the rioting.

Later, he delivers a speech before his own newly formed group, the Organization of Afro-American Unity. He tells his supporters what he has learned in Africa—that they are a part of a larger movement against colonialism and racism. He is warned of death threats. He is not concerned with the fear so evident around him.

He arrives to give a speech at the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem. After greeting his audience, he is gunned down.

*Synopsis reprinted courtesy of Detroit Opera*



### Modern Masterpieces on Demand

Looking for more operas by contemporary American composers? Check out **Met Opera on Demand**, our online streaming service, to enjoy outstanding performances from past Met seasons—including *Live in HD* transmissions of Terence Blanchard's *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*, Kevin Puts's *The Hours*, Philip Glass's *Akhmaten* and *Satyagraha*, and more. Start your seven-day free trial and explore the full catalog of nearly 850 complete performances at [metoperaondemand.org](http://metoperaondemand.org).

Support for Met Opera on Demand is provided by the Ting Tsung and Wei Fong Chao Foundation and Dorothy and Charles H. Jenkins, Jr.



*Anthony Davis*

# X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X

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*Premiere: New York City Opera, 1986*

Anthony Davis's first opera, *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* dramatizes 12 episodes from the life of the civil rights icon and explores their historical and socio-political contexts. But rather than explain, let alone beatify, its subject, the work is primarily focused on his personal transformation. Each act follows a different era in the protagonist's reimagining of himself: from Malcolm Little to Detroit Red to Malcolm X to el-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz. It is also the journey of his audience and how they have perceived him, from victim of poverty to leader-agitator to martyr. The lack of easy answers and explanations about and for this man's life and work is key to his subversiveness and continuing fascination. It is also central to the opera: Neither the music nor the libretto seeks to console nor superficially inspire, but always to engage and intrigue.

## *The Creators*

Anthony Davis (b. 1951) is an acclaimed improvisational jazz pianist, composer, and educator whose work draws upon several global musical traditions. He has composed for solo instruments, orchestras, and the stage (for instance, incidental music for *Angels in America* in 1993) but is best known for his operas, including *Amistad* (1997, revised in 2008), *Wakonda's Dream* (2007), and *The Central Park Five* (2019), which earned him the Pulitzer Prize in Music. The composer's brother Christopher Davis (b. 1953) crafted the story for the opera, while their cousin, the poet, author, and journalist Thulani Davis (b. 1949), wrote the libretto. In addition to *X*, she also collaborated with the composer on *Amistad* and was the first woman to earn a Grammy Award for liner notes, winning in 1993 for her work on Aretha Franklin's *Queen of Soul: The Atlantic Recordings*.

## *The Setting*

The opera presents 12 vignettes from the life of Malcolm X, from youth to his death: abject poverty in Depression-era Lansing to adolescence in Boston to Mecca (the site of his pivotal hajj, the traditional Muslim pilgrimage), as well as a number of places in New York City, including a mosque, the streets of Harlem, and, finally, the site of his assassination in 1965, the Audubon Ballroom at Broadway and West 165th Street.

### *The Music*

The score for this biographical drama is not unlike its central figure: complex, challenging, and undeniably compelling. Davis cites a vast range of inspirations, prominent among which are Wagner, Berg, Indonesian gamelan, South Indian drums, African dance rhythms, Black dance music, and music that Malcolm X cited as integral to his life and vision. These influences function both as structural models (for example, the dialogue between the material and spiritual worlds in the arc of Wagner's *Parsifal*, and the blazingly revolutionary spirit of avant-garde jazz of the 1950s and 1960s) and as sources of more literal allusion (Duke Ellington, Charles Mingus, and Cab Calloway in nightlife scenes, for example, and, somewhat more abstractly, John Coltrane's *A Love Supreme* in the "Allaho Akbar" chorus in Act II). In addition to traditionally composed scoring, there is also room for improvisation (conceived for Davis's octet, *Episteme*) as well as music written to sound improvised. Louise's grand Act I aria was conceived in Wagnerian structural terms, with rich orchestral underpinning that suggests a well of humanity even beyond the broad and stentorian vocal line, while Betty, sung by the same soprano who sings Louise, likewise has music that conveys subtextual nuance. The poetic, rhythmically conscious words of the libretto are always the departure point for the music, whether the savvy near-raps of Street, the edifying speech patterns of the idealistic Ella, or the insistent intonations of the religious Reginald. The real-life Malcolm X's speech patterns (often staccato in their sound) are very much at the center of his character's music, whether in transformed patterns for internal monologue or in public declamation, such as the rallies in Act II. The blur of distinction between internal and external becomes patent in the structure of the hajj scene in Mecca, with a vocal solo, a notable instrumental interlude, and a prominent choral element simultaneously depicting Malcolm's isolation and communion with his surroundings.

### *Met History*

*X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* has its Met premiere this season, with Kazem Abdullah conducting a new production by director Robert O'Hara. Will Liverman sings Malcolm, leading a cast that also features Leah Hawkins, Raehann Bryce-Davis, Victor Ryan Robertson, and Michael Sumuel in the principal roles.

## A Note from the Composer

I am deeply thankful for the commitment of Peter Gelb and the Metropolitan Opera toward the presentation of *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* in this new incarnation as a musical work and in this astonishing production led by Robert O'Hara.

Over 35 years ago, *X* premiered at New York City Opera to a world that is very different from today, yet shockingly the same. Technology has changed how we present and create opera, yet the racial tensions and inequities still haunt us. Thulani wrote "You have your foot on me, always pressing!" in 1984, and yet the memory of George Floyd a mere three years ago reminds us what has not changed. With this in mind, we present a new vision of the opera for a new audience, a new generation who may not have a living memory of Malcolm X, yet his memory lives in us through music from jazz to hip hop, through our understanding of Black manhood, through the ongoing struggle.

When I created the music of *X*, I felt a sense of musical freedom that liberated me from the confines of genre or the musical boundaries that segregated music into oppressive categories. I tried to imagine a musical world where those categories and genres did not exist—in other words, where I could create a musical space that could draw on all of my musical resources. This does not mean ignoring the past or disengaging from the historical continuity of Black expression but to realize that music engages and references the past as means to envision the "new."

I had many guides in composing the music for the opera. From tenth grade in Italy reading Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* and Kierkegaard's *Either/Or*, I was introduced to the idea of opera, what opera could be. When Nietzsche described the binary of the Apollonian and Dionysian in Greek tragedy, I imagined an American opera that drew equally from the African diaspora and the European, where the immediacy of the improvised and subversive spirit of the blues met the form and structure of a post-tonal harmonic language of Berg and Stravinsky. In creating the musical world of Boston, I could draw on what Malcolm would hear in the 1940s, from the Lionel Hampton Orchestra with a young Charles Mingus on bass and Louis Jordan and his Tympany Five, to Billie Holiday, Fats Waller, Duke Ellington, and Billy Strayhorn. Later, when he joins the Nation of Islam, his conversion invokes the modal world of John Coltrane, Miles Davis, and McCoy Tyner. In setting words to music, I studied Billie Holiday to understand the elasticity of time, the polyrhythmic play that allows the voice to rise and swing to assert its independence. Lastly, it was my goal to create a "rhythmic drama" that compels you toward the inevitable. The rhythm of voices, the interplay of polyrhythms conveys the unsettling reality that we are always on that train that doesn't stop, that there are forces beyond us we can't control, yet we can find light in the heroic defiance of Malcolm X.

—Anthony Davis

ALSO ON STAGE



EVAN ZIMMERMAN/MET OPERA

GIACOMO PUCCINI

# LA BOHÈME

Two stunning casts alternate in Puccini's perennial heartbreaker. Sopranos Anita Hartig and Elena Stikhina trade off as Mimi, starring opposite tenors Stephen Costello and Joseph Calleja as Rodolfo. Carlo Rizzi and Marco Armiliato take the podium to lead Franco Zeffirelli's ever-popular production.

**NOV** 5 mat, 10, 13, 17, 21, 25 mat **DEC** 1

**JAN** 4, 8, 13 mat

Tickets from \$25 | [metopera.org](https://www.metopera.org)

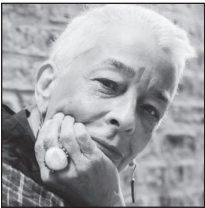
# The Cast and Creative Team



## Anthony Davis

COMPOSER (PATERSON, NEW JERSEY)

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** American composer Anthony Davis is best known for his operas, beginning with *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X*, which premiered at New York City Opera in 1986 and was recorded in 1992. That album was nominated for a Grammy Award. His oeuvre also includes the operas *Under the Double Moon*, *Tania*, *Amistad*, *Wakonda's Dream*, *Lilith*, *Lear on the 2nd Floor*, and *The Central Park Five*, the last earning him the 2020 Pulitzer Prize in Music, as well as the piano concerto *Wayang V*, the violin concerto *Maps*, the clarinet concerto *You Have the Right to Remain Silent*, and the *Amistad Symphony*. Also a celebrated free-jazz pianist, he has performed on more than three dozen albums as both an ensemble leader and a sideman. He has been a professor of music at the University of California, San Diego, since 1996 and currently serves as the Cecil Lytle Chancellor's Endowed Chair in African and African American Music. In 2008, he received the Lift Every Voice Legacy Award from the National Opera Association, and in 2006, he was awarded a fellowship from the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation. In 2020, he was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Letters.



## Thulani Davis

LIBRETTIST (HAMPTON, VIRGINIA)

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Thulani Davis is an interdisciplinary scholar and artist who has written poetry, novels, plays, screenplays, and opera libretti. In 2006, she released her memoir, *My Confederate Kinfolk: A Twenty-First Century Freedwoman Discovers Her Roots*, and her work has also appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Nation*, *BOMB*, *QBR: The Black Book Review*, and *Ms.* She was on the staff of *The Village Voice* for more than a decade and was the first female recipient of a Grammy Award for liner notes, receiving the award for her work on Aretha Franklin's *Queen of Soul: The Atlantic Recordings*. Additional accolades include a Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Writers Award, a PEW Foundation National Theatre Artist Residency, a Charles H. Revson Fellowship on the Future of New York City, the First Annual Legacies Award for Achieving Unparalleled Excellence in the Arts from the New York Coalition of One Hundred Black Women, and an induction into the Black Writers Hall of Fame. She serves on the faculty of the African American Studies Department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and previously taught in the Department of Dramatic Writing at New York University.

ALSO ON STAGE



PAOLA KUDACKI/MET OPERA

DANIEL CATÁN / LIBRETTO BY MARCELA FUENTES-BERAIN

# FLORENCIA EN EL AMAZONAS

METROPOLITAN OPERA PREMIERE

Daniel Catán's evocative, Spanish-language masterpiece has its company premiere, starring soprano Ailyn Pérez as an opera diva in search of her lost lover. Met Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin conducts a bewitching new production by Mary Zimmerman that brings the mysterious and magical realm of the Amazon rainforest to the Met stage.

**NOV** 16, 19 mat, 25, 27 **DEC** 2 mat, 5, 9 mat, 14

Tickets from \$25 | [metopera.org](https://www.metopera.org)



## Christopher Davis

STORY (PATERSON, NEW JERSEY)

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** After studying acting at the American Conservatory Theater (ACT) in San Francisco, actor, director, and writer Christopher Davis performed the role of Malcolm X in NR Davidson's *El Hajj Malik: A Play About Malcolm X* for theater companies in both New Haven, Connecticut, and Jamaica, Queens, and created the role of Nat Turner in Ihsan Bracy's *Against the Sun*. He also directed a production of *Waiting for Godot* for the Tribe Theater Ensemble and was the assistant director for a production of *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide / When the Rainbow Is Enuf* for the Black Actor's Workshop at ACT. Since 1990, he worked in market research for Ipsos NA, where he was director of insights for the Ipsos Affluent Intelligence Group and co-chair of the Bridge Research Assessment Group, until his retirement in September 2023. He has also served for the past ten years as chair of Replications, an educational non-profit supporting underserved students, schools, and communities in New York City, and is a founding member of the Swarthmore College Black Alumni Network.



## Kazem Abdullah

CONDUCTOR (INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA)

**THIS SEASON** *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* at the Met and Seattle Opera, and concerts with the Naples Philharmonic, Kansas City Symphony, North Carolina Symphony, and Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra.

**MET APPEARANCES** Terence Blanchard's *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* and *Orfeo ed Euridice* (debut, 2009).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** He was a member of the Met's music staff from 2005 to 2010, and between 2012 and 2017, he served as music and artistic director of the City of Aachen, Germany, where he conducted *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Il Trittico*, *Macbeth*, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, *Tannhäuser*, *Tosca*, *Jenůfa*, *Wuorinen's Brokeback Mountain*, and *Luisa Miller*, among many others. In recent seasons, he has led the world premiere of *Proximity* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Rhiannon Giddens's *Omar* at LA Opera, the world premiere of Gregory Spears's *Castor and Patience* at Cincinnati Opera, *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* at Detroit Opera, and Anthony Davis's *The Central Park Five* at Portland Opera. He has also led performances at Cape Town Opera, New York City Opera, Atlanta Opera, and Paris's Théâtre du Châtelet, as well as with leading American and international orchestras.

ALSO ON STAGE



MARTY SOHL/MET OPERA

RICHARD WAGNER

# TANNHÄUSER

Following his triumphant Met debut in the *Ring* cycle in 2019, tenor Andreas Schager stars as the heroic title character of Wagner's medieval epic. Donald Runnicles conducts Otto Schenk's classic staging, which also features soprano Elza van den Heever as Elisabeth, mezzo-soprano Ekaterina Gubanova as Venus, baritone Christian Gerhaher as Wolfram, and bass Georg Zeppenfeld as Landgraf Hermann.

**NOV 30 DEC 3** mat, 6, 9, 12, 16, 19, 23 mat

Tickets from \$25 | [metopera.org](https://metopera.org)



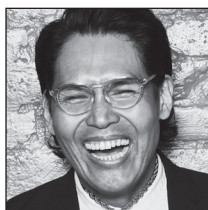


**Robert O'Hara**

DIRECTOR (CINCINNATI, OHIO)

**THIS SEASON** *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* at the Met for his debut and at Seattle Opera, and *Jelly's Last Jam* as part of New York City Center's Encores! series.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** He made his Broadway debut in 2019 with *Slave Play*, for which he was nominated for a Tony Award for Best Direction of a Play. He has also directed productions around the country, including at New York Theatre Workshop, Playwrights Horizons, Geffen Theater, Williamstown Theater Festival, La Jolla Playhouse, Arena Stage, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, the Alley Theatre, Primary Stages, Yale Repertory Theatre, and Oregon Shakespeare Festival, among many others. He has been artist-in-residence at the American Conservatory Theater and New York Shakespeare Festival. Among his numerous accolades are the 2018 Herb Alpert Award, a NAACP Best Director Award, a NAACP Best Play Award, a Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding New Play, and two OBIE Awards, among many others. He has several film and television projects in current development.



**Clint Ramos**

SET DESIGNER (CEBU, PHILIPPINES)

**THIS SEASON** Set designs for *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* at the Met for his debut and at Seattle Opera and *Jelly's Last Jam* as part of New York City Center's Encores! series. Lead producer and costume designs for *Here Lies Love* on Broadway.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** He is the producing creative director for Encores! at New York City Center. Since his 2014 Broadway debut with *Violet*, he has contributed to more than a dozen productions as a set and costume designer, earning a Tony Award for *Eclipsed* and nominations for *Once on This Island*, *Torch Song*, *Slave Play*, *The Rose Tattoo*, and *KPOP*. He has won two Obie Awards, three Lucille Lortel Awards, a Drama Desk Award, an Outer Critics Circle Award, and the Philippines's Aning Dangal Presidential Medal, among others. His work on more than 200 theater, opera, and dance productions has also appeared on stages Off Broadway, in the West End, at many of the United States' leading regional companies, and in Dublin, St. Petersburg, Stockholm, Bucharest, and Manila. His work in film includes production design for Isabel Sandoval's *Lingua Franca* and costume design for *Respect*, starring Jennifer Hudson.

# ARIA CODE

*Aria Code*, the Met's popular podcast collaboration with WQXR, is back for Season Four, once again hosted by Grammy and Pulitzer Prize-winning composer and musician Rhiannon Giddens. Hailed by *The New Yorker* as "elegantly constructed and effortlessly listenable," *Aria Code* explores the human experience at the heart of opera's greatest arias and their powerful relevance to contemporary issues. The extraordinary lineup of guest artists for Season Four includes Diana Damrau, Ailyn Pérez, Joyce DiDonato, Matthew Polenzani, Will Liverman, Clémentine Margaine, and more.

Subscribe now wherever you get your podcasts or listen online at [metopera.org/ariacode](https://metopera.org/ariacode).

## The Cast and Creative Team CONTINUED



### Dede Ayite

COSTUME DESIGNER (ACCRA, GHANA)

**THIS SEASON X:** *The Life and Times of Malcolm X* at the Met for her debut and at Seattle Opera; *Hell's Kitchen*, *Jaja's African Hair Braiding*, and *Days of Wines and Roses* on Broadway; and *Jelly's Last Jam* as part of New York City Center's Encores! series.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Her designs for Broadway include *Ohio State Murders*, *Topdog/Underdog*, *How I Learned to Drive*, *American Buffalo*, *Slave Play*, *Chicken & Biscuits*, *A Soldier's Play*, *American Son*, and *Children of a Lesser God*. She has been nominated for two Tony Awards and three Drama Desk Awards, also earning a special Drama Desk Award in 2022, the TDF / Kitty Leech Young Master Award, and Obie, Lucille Lortel, Helen Hayes, Theatre Bay Area, Henry Hewes, Audelco, and Jeff Awards. Her work has appeared Off Broadway at the Atlantic Theater Company, Signature Theatre, MCC Theater, New York Theatre Workshop, Playwrights Horizons, Lincoln Center Theater, and Roundabout Theatre Company, as well as regionally at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Steppenwolf, American Repertory Theater, La Jolla Playhouse, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, and Arena Stage, among others. Her work in television has appeared on Netflix, Comedy Central, and FOX Shortcoms.



### Alex Jainchill

LIGHTING DESIGNER (AVON, CONNECTICUT)

**THIS SEASON X:** *The Life and Times of Malcolm X* at the Met for his debut and at Seattle Opera.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** He frequently collaborates with Robert O'Hara, designing last season's *Richard III* with the Public Theater's Shakespeare in the Park, featured on PBS *Great Performances*. Highlight productions include *A Raisin in the Sun* (Lortel Award for Best Revival) at the Public Theater, the world premiere of *Gun and Powder* at Signature Theatre, *Mankind* at Playwrights Horizons, *BLKS* at MCC Theater, *Black Super Hero Magic Mama* at Geffen Playhouse, *Macbeth* at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts, *Unison* at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and *The Wiz* at Theatre Under the Stars. He is a longtime collaborator with Berkshire Opera Festival and has created installations with the Lyndhurst Mansion in Tarrytown, New York, and Museum of Future Experiences in Brooklyn. He served as associate lighting designer for *Significant Other* and *Old Times* on Broadway, as well as for the world premiere of *Dear Evan Hansen* at Arena Stage. He is a faculty member at Syracuse University, where he teaches lighting design, and is a proud member of Local USA 829.



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## The Cast and Creative Team CONTINUED



**Yee Eun Nam**

PROJECTION DESIGNER (SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA)

**THIS SEASON** X: *The Life and Times of Malcolm X* at the Met for her debut and at Seattle Opera.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** She has created designs for Detroit Opera, Opera Omaha, LA Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, the Kennedy Center, the San Francisco Symphony, REDCAT, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, the New World Center, and the Soraya. Her work in theater includes projects for Audible Theater, Ma-Yi Theater Company, the Mark Taper Forum, American Conservatory Theater, South Coast Repertory, Pasadena Playhouse, Geffen Playhouse, the Movement Theatre Company, Kansas City Repertory Theatre, the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, the Getty Villa, and Latino Theater Company, among others. She was nominated for Lucille Lortel Awards for her work on *Long Day's Journey into Night* at the Minetta Lane Theatre and *Once Upon a (korean) Time* with Ma-Yi Theater Company, and she won a Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award for Theatrical Excellence for her work on *Mother of Henry* at the Los Angeles Theatre Center. In 2022, she founded the experimental visual-design studio Pigment Design Lab.



**Mia Neal**

WIG DESIGNER (GARY, INDIANA)

**THIS SEASON** X: *The Life and Times of Malcolm X* for her debut at the Met and *The Notebook* on Broadway.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** In 2021, she won an Academy Award for Best Makeup and Hairstyling for her work on *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, for which she also received a BAFTA Film Award. Among her other accolades are an Emmy Award for *Annie Live!*, an Emmy Award nomination for *Pose*, and Drama Desk Awards for *Shuffle Along, or the Making of the Musical Sensation of 1921 and All That Followed* and *Ain't No Mo'*. Her Broadway credits also include *Shucked*, *KPOP*, *1776*, *West Side Story*, *The Iceman Cometh*, and *A Raisin in the Sun*. Her extensive filmography includes work on *White Noise*, *Hustle*, *The Humans*, *Uncut Gems*, *Ghostbusters*, *Younger*, *The Carrie Diaries*, and *The Amazing Spider-Man*, among others.

## The Cast and Creative Team CONTINUED

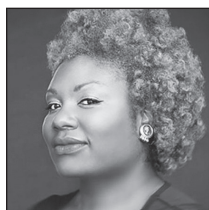


### Rickey Tripp

CHOREOGRAPHER (PINE BLUFF, ARKANSAS)

**THIS SEASON** *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* at the Met for his debut and at Seattle Opera.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** As a performer, he made his Broadway debut in 2008 in *In the Heights* and returned in *Motown: The Musical* and *Hamilton*. He also served as associate choreographer for *Choir Boy* and the revival of *Once on This Island* on Broadway. As a choreographer, his recent credits include the Broadway-bound musical *A Wonderful World; A Raisin in the Sun* at the Public Theater; *Dreamgirls*, *Hairspray*, and *In the Heights* at Dallas Theater Center; and *Rent* at Virginia's Signature Theatre and Boston's Berklee College of Music, the latter which he also directed. His work in film includes *Eileen* and *A Thousand and One* for Universal Pictures and *Encore!* for Disney+. As an associate choreographer, he contributed to the Met premieres of Terence Blanchard's *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* and *Champion*, as well as productions at the Public Theater, American Conservatory Theater, Roundabout Theatre Company, New York City Center, and for NBC's *Jesus Christ Superstar Live in Concert* and Amazon Prime's *Harlem*.



### Raehann Bryce-Davis

MEZZO-SOPRANO (KEENE, TEXAS)

**THIS SEASON** Ella / Queen Mother in *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* at the Met, Lizzie in the world premiere of Rene Orth's *10 Days in a Madhouse* at Opera Philadelphia, Fricka in *Das Rheingold* in concert with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Frugola in *Il Tabarro* and the Princess in *Suor Angelica* at Dutch National Opera, Mahler's Symphony No. 3 with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* at the Philharmonie Luxembourg, and recitals with Washington D.C.'s Vocal Arts Society, San Francisco Performances, Music at Amherst, and California's St. Matthew's Music Guild.

**MET APPEARANCES** Baba the Turk in *The Rake's Progress* (debut, 2022).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Ježibaba in *Rusalka* at the Santa Fe Opera; Amneris in *Aida* at the Royal Danish Opera; Azucena in *Il Trovatore* at Washington National Opera, LA Opera, the Glimmerglass Festival, and in Nurnberg; the Princess in Brussels; the Composer in *Ariadne auf Naxos* in Ghent; Preziosilla in *La Forza del Destino* in Toulouse; Sara in *Roberto Devereux* and the Big Stone in the world premiere of Matthew Aucoin's *Eurydice* at LA Opera; and Eboli in *Don Carlos* in Nurnberg, Ghent, and Antwerp.



## Leah Hawkins

SOPRANO (PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA)

**THIS SEASON** Louise/Betty in *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* and Verdi's *Requiem* at the Met, Louise/Betty at Seattle Opera, Giorgetta in *Il Tabarro* at Dutch National Opera, and a concert at Opera Roanoke.

**MET APPEARANCES** Musetta in *La Bohème*, Strawberry Woman in *Porgy and Bess*, Masha in *The Queen of Spades*, the Priestess in *Aida*, and an Alms Collector in *Suor Angelica* (debut, 2018).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include the title role of *Tosca* at the Santa Fe Opera and Opera Memphis, the title role of *Ariadne auf Naxos* at Arizona Opera, the Foreign Princess in *Rusalka* at Pittsburgh Opera, Serena in *Porgy and Bess* at Des Moines Metro Opera, and Desdemona in the world premiere of Marina Abramović's *7 Death of Maria Callas* at the Bavarian State Opera and at the Paris Opera. She has also sung Mrs. Johannes Zegner in the world premiere of Missy Mazzoli's *Proving Up*, the I-Will-Sell-My-Children Mom in the world premiere of Mohammed Fairouz's *The Dictator's Wife*, and Cousin Blanche / Sadie Donastorg Griffith in Terence Blanchard's *Champion* at Washington National Opera. She is a graduate of the Met's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program.



## Will Liverman

BARITONE (VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA)

**THIS SEASON** Malcolm in *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* and Mercutio in *Roméo et Juliette* at the Met, Josiah Blackwell in the world premiere of Rene Orth's *10 Days in a Madhouse* at Opera Philadelphia, the world premiere of Shawn E. Okpebholo's *Two Black Churches* with the Lexington Philharmonic, Orff's *Carmina Burana* with the Houston Symphony, Brahms's *Ein Deutsches Requiem* with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, *Elijah Reimagined* with the Washington Chorus, and recitals at Dayton Opera, Caramoor, and Cincinnati Song Initiative. He also serves as artistic advisor for Renée Fleming's SongStudio at Carnegie Hall.

**MET APPEARANCES** Horemhab in Philip Glass's *Akhnaten*, Papageno in *The Magic Flute*, Charles in Terence Blanchard's *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*, and Malcolm Fleet in Nico Muhly's *Marnie* (debut, 2018).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** He has appeared at LA Opera, Dutch National Opera, the Dallas Opera, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Seattle Opera, Opera Colorado, and the Santa Fe Opera, among many others. Last season, his opera *The Factotum*, composed with DJ King Rico, premiered at Lyric Opera of Chicago. He was the 2022 recipient of the Met's Beverly Sills Artist Award, established by Agnes Varis and Karl Leichtman.

## The Cast and Creative Team CONTINUED



### Victor Ryan Robertson

TENOR (ATLANTA, GEORGIA)

**THIS SEASON** Elijah/Street in *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X*, Delbert Grady / Stuart Ullman in Paul Moravec's *The Shining* at the Atlanta Opera, and Tony in *Master Class* at Arizona Theatre Company.

**MET APPEARANCES** Raoul de Saint-Briche in *The Merry Widow* (debut, 2017).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Sportin' Life in *Porgy and Bess* at North Carolina Opera and Opera Carolina, the title role of *Candide* at the Atlanta Opera, Elijah/Street at Opera Omaha and Detroit Opera, Nestor in the world premiere of Gregory Spears's *Castor and Patience* and Le Remendado in *Carmen* at Cincinnati Opera, Raymond Santana in Anthony Davis's *The Central Park Five* at Portland Opera, Alfredo in *La Traviata* at Opera Orlando, and Hosea in Douglas Tappin's *I Dream* at Opera Carolina. He originated the role of Benny "Kid" Paret in the world premiere of Terence Blanchard's *Champion* at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, reprising his portrayal at Washington National Opera and in Montreal. He made his Broadway debut in 2017 as Ubaldo Piangi in *The Phantom of the Opera* and also appeared Off Broadway in *Three Mo' Tenors* at the Little Shubert Theatre.



### Michael Sumuel

BASS-BARITONE (ODESSA, TEXAS)

**THIS SEASON** Reginald in *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* at the Met, Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* at Houston Grand Opera, the Forester in *The Cunning Little Vixen* at Detroit Opera, Mozart's Requiem with the New York Philharmonic, Handel's *Messiah* with the San Francisco Symphony, Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* with Les Violons du Roy, Mozart's Requiem and Bach's *Magnificat* with Music of the Baroque, Bach's *St. John Passion* with the Seattle Symphony, Fauré's Requiem with the National Symphony Orchestra, and Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* at the Washington National Cathedral.

**MET APPEARANCES** Sgt. Belcore in *L'Elisir d'Amore* and the King in *Cinderella* (debut, 2021).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at Pittsburgh Opera and Seattle Opera, Elviro in Handel's *Serse* at Detroit Opera, Escamillo in *Carmen* at the Santa Fe Opera and in concert at Chicago Opera Theater, Leporello in *Don Giovanni* at Opera San Antonio and Seattle Opera, and Angelotti in *Tosca* at Cincinnati Opera. He has also sung Alidoro in *La Cenerentola* and Escamillo at the Norwegian National Opera, Figaro at San Francisco Opera, Marcello in *La Bohème* at Houston Grand Opera, and Sharpless at the Glyndebourne Festival.