



**ANTHONY DAVIS** b. 1951

X: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF MALCOLM X

**LIBRETTO BY THULANI DAVIS**  
**STORY BY CHRISTOPHER DAVIS**

**DAVÓNÉ TINES** bass-baritone

**WHITNEY MORRISON** soprano

**RONNITA MILLER** mezzo-soprano

**VICTOR ROBERTSON** tenor

**JOSHUA CONYERS** baritone

**JONATHAN HARRIS** treble

**AMBER GARRETT** soprano

**MIGUEL ÁNGEL VÁSQUEZ** baritone

**BOSTON MODERN ORCHESTRA PROJECT | ODYSSEY OPERA**

Gil Rose, conductor



**AS TOLD BY: History, Race, and Justice on the Opera Stage**

is an extensive, expansive, and ambitious presentation of operas by Black composers and librettists from across the 20th and 21st centuries, illuminating vital figures of Black liberation and thought.

**DISC 1** (77:59)

[1] Overture 1:38

**ACT I**

[2] sc. 1 "Africa for Africans" 5:26

[3] Louise's Aria, "I remember..." 8:39

[4] "Reverend Little is dead." 2:45

[5] "What is going on here?" 3:07

[6] "Momma, help me." 2:35

[7] sc. 2 Boston, "Come with me, child." 6:52

[8] Pool Hall, "Shoot your shot!" 8:54

[9] Dance Hall, "Just stand real still" 4:53

[10] "I see..." 2:16

[11] Malcolm's Aria, "You want the story, but you don't want to know" 7:48

**ACT II**

[12] sc. 1 Prison, "In the devil's grip" 12:04

[13] "You are not empty" 10:58

**DISC 2** (70:56)

**ACT II** (CONT'D)

[1] sc. 2 125th Street, Harlem, "We are an African people" 3:25

[2] "When I was little" 3:23

[3] sc. 3 "If we are going to be free" 1:29

[4] "Jones is not your name" 3:04

[5] "We're not askin' Massa to sit at a lunch counter." 1:26

[6] sc. 4 "We are a nation" 6:39

[7] "The chickens come home to roost." 3:28

[8] sc. 5 Malcolm and Betty, "Are you sure?" 2:13

**ACT III**

[9] sc. 1 "Betrayal is on his lips." 9:46

[10] sc. 2 Betty's Aria, "When a man is lost" 4:02

[11] Mecca, "Bismillah hirrahman-irrahim" 12:04

[12] sc. 3 Riot 2:49

[13] "The name is Shabazz" 4:50

[14] sc. 4 "I have learned so much in Africa." 8:46

[15] sc. 5 Audubon Ballroom 3:29

## By Anthony Davis

I am deeply thankful for the commitment of Gil Rose, Wayne Brown, and Yuval Sharon toward the revival of *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* in this new incarnation as a musical work and in its new live productions. 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 two 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 from the Spirit of Music* 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



VICTOR ROBERTSON AS STREET AND DAVONE TINES AS MALCOLM X. PHOTO BY KATH WITTMAN. BALL SQUARE FILMS.

improvised and subversive spirit of the blues meet 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 1940's from the Lionel Hampton Orchestra with a young Charles Mingus on bass to Louis Jordan and His Tympany Five to Billie Holiday, Fats Waller, Ellington, and 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 poly-rhythmic 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. As Malcolm said, "Violence is as American as apple pie." 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.

X: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF MALCOLM X *is an opera in three acts with libretto by Thulani Davis and story by Christopher Davis. Scored for vocal soloists, choir, full orchestra, and jazz improviser ensemble, it was premiered on September 28, 1986, conducted by Christopher Keene, at the New York State Theater in New York, NY.*

### By Thulani Davis

X had its first performances in Philadelphia in 1985 in the American Music Theater Festival, and its world premiere was September 28, 1986, at the New York City Opera, where it sold out its performances. This year marks the 36th anniversary of the premiere and over 40 years since we started work on it. It appears now in a much changed landscape, given the proliferation of new operas by people of color and, notably, the production last year of Terrance Blanchard's *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* at the Metropolitan Opera—the first by an African American composer and an African American librettist in its history. When we auditioned singers in the early 1980s, black singers commonly told us they made their living performing *Porgy and Bess*, the 1935 work by George and Ira Gershwin and DuBose Heyward, and *Showboat*, the 1927 musical by Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II. Thomas Young had been in thirteen *Porgy* productions when we hired him. These shows, of course, brought to prominence a long list of great African American singers. I saw the second generation of those stars in 1960s productions starring Leontyne Price, Grace Bumbry, William Warfield, Shirley Verrett, and Simon Estes and later, Kathleen Battle. But what stunned me in the '80s was how many singers we saw coming in multiple times to get a spot in an untested work; hundreds came to audition for X. The desire to perform parts created by black artists, and even better, to originate roles, continues to be a driving force

in the concert work of singers. Today there is another, larger, generation of talent—not just singers, of which there is a glorious profusion, but also of orchestra performers, conductors, designers, and, ever so slowly, black directors—hired in opera. The composers and librettists continue to emerge from various streams of American music, bringing musical and narrative innovations that enrich the sounds and stories of this most complex form of musical theater. I, for one, no longer feel odd as a black woman who cannot sing, walking into the stage door of an opera house.<sup>1</sup>

Another change in the intervening years is that we know much more about the life of Malcolm X today than decades ago. Among others, two Pulitzer Prize-winning books have come out in recent years. In keeping with earlier decades, and earlier books, the contents of these works continues to be debated, and he is still news.<sup>2</sup> What happened to him still matters and not just because he was a fascinating and charismatic human being—who, like others in our history, took what he knew to be a dangerous journey to speak for those who could not be heard—but because there are still so many living with similar realities and without a powerful voice articulating the needed change.

What is most important then is what has not changed: the relevance of the journey taken by Malcolm Little to Malcolm X to El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz. The story of this man born in Nebraska, raised in Michigan, incarcerated and converted in Massachusetts, reborn in Africa, and killed in New York still resonates in each of its phases with the stark realities of the present moment. There were people born long before Malcolm with whom the story would resonate and so many younger generations now across the world for whom the story continues to ring with familiarity. The performances of the opera today were imagined before the COVID pandemic, and before George Floyd's murder shocked a nation sitting at home with their families as the country shut down. It was being discussed as the biggest and most widespread demonstrations took place across the country despite the pandemic and the political divide that sharpened in 2020—protests in most places arising out of community and without famous leaders. We meet as protests have continued to emerge

over the murder of innocent individuals in their homes or cars or sleeping on someone else's couch, and as young people invoke earlier activism. It is a gift for artists to be able to reconsider how an older work can resonate with "the changing same" of human rights struggle along with the more usual fare that connects us to the trials of love, death, the loss of possible futures, war, and the myths of human life, all of which are still playing out around us. It has been a privilege to be challenged to make opera with masks on, in digital conferences, and by email with people we have never seen in person, or at the very least, not in years. It has never been just a revival.

## THE OPERA'S HISTORY

I first started research for the libretto in the summer of 1981 and that fall began meetings with Anthony Davis and Christopher "Kip" Davis, later joined by director Rhoda Levine. We first presented some of the music at Merkin Hall in New York in 1983 after a workshop at the Kitchen, then on Broome Street in New York. In 1984 we were fortunate to work on Act I and part of Act II with 24 singers, eight figurants, and the ten-member musical ensemble Episteme in Philadelphia, co-sponsored by the American Music Theater Festival (AMTF) and the Kitchen. In 1985 we worked on the second and third acts in a month-long workshop at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. In 1985 we presented Act I and part of Act II in a concert with the Springfield Massachusetts Symphony, with the assistance of Wayne Brown and conductor Paul Freeman. That year the American Music Theater Festival presented the opera in the newly opened Walnut Street Theater (now the Prince) in Philadelphia with a 35-piece orchestra joining Episteme and the Concerto Soloists of Philadelphia. Prior to opening in New York we did showcases at the Guggenheim and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. The four-week run in New York engaged 28 singers and the City Opera orchestra with ten improvisers. It opened and closed with bus rides to festivities at the Schomburg.

The concert version known as *Xcerpts* was performed in 1987 at Aaron Davis Hall in New York, Michigan State University in East Lansing, the San Francisco Arts Festival, the New England Conservatory of Music, and at the University of Texas, Austin. In 1990–91, it was performed in Wilmington, Delaware, and at Swarthmore College and Penn State University. The 1992 Gramavision recording of the work was nominated for a Grammy that year. In 1997, the opera was produced in concert by Sir Georg Solti at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, with Michael Morgan conducting, for an audience of 2,500 public school students. This was a deeply affecting experience for me as the schools had distributed copies of the text to students ahead of the concerts and, thanks to the rise of hip hop, some in the audience already knew the rhymes and rhythms of the opera text. *X* was produced by the Oakland Opera Theater in California, in the 2006–07 season, having to extend its run due to much acclaim in the Bay Area press. I am thrilled to see and hear it again, having not done so myself since 1997.

When we came into the process of building the production at City Opera we became aware that Anthony was not in fact going to be the first African American composer to have work performed there. We were told that the “dean of black composers,” William Grant Still, at age 54, had a production of *Troubled Island* there in 1949, with a libretto by Langston Hughes and Verna Arvey. The story we heard was that Still had won a contest and City Opera was at first unaware that the winner was black. This was a myth. (Apparently Still startled several *other* music institutions by winning contests.) The story is, as might be expected, more complex—way more. Still’s efforts to get the work done in New York spanned thirteen years, beginning in 1936. He submitted it to the Met in 1939 but the Met’s letter was not specific as to why they did not opt to present it. City Opera (then City Center) stalled it for some years citing financing issues. After two false starts prior to 1949, City Opera premiered the work with choreography by George Balanchine and two white leads in blackface makeup.<sup>3</sup>

## WHAT DID CHANGE SOUND LIKE?

Anthony and I, who were born not long after that event, were certain to bring more change. We were in our 30s when we started working on *X* and had no long-term expectations. Initially, we aimed only to get it on its feet once. Blackface was gone but most companies still did not have numbers of people of color singing for them. (Sadly works with Asian characters continued to lack Asian artists.) During that time I had even written about the inauthentic vernacular created in *Porgy*, totally accepted in the Gershwins’ day, like blackface (though the Gershwins prevented use of the latter in their opera to ensure work for black performers).<sup>4</sup> So our use of mid-century vernaculars, jive talk, and racialized comments from blacks and whites—especially the rhetoric of black movements—was, at the very least, a departure. The voicing of authentic late-twentieth century jazz tones, rhythms, and blues bars with echoes from composers like Charles Mingus, was also new. Most notable, in the case of the character Street, were solos rich with improvisation. Some writers thought the overt use of political ideas was unbecoming for opera. Others thought political ideas were embedded in earlier operas. Some said Malcolm was too divisive a figure to be appropriate, though that usually obscured a conviction that he never accepted all in the human family. But this debate was to be expected for any opera candidly reflecting race in this country.

US race realities were rarely portrayed in popular culture in the first half of the twentieth century. Slavery has been and is still only rarely depicted in American popular culture. *Birth of a Nation* (1915) was notoriously the foundational work (after Harriet Beecher Stowe’s much loved *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, a runaway hit in print and theater), but thereafter in film the slave system was just backdrop, such as in: *Jezebel* (1938); *The Little Colonel* (1935) with Bill “Bojangles” Robinson as a highly talented dancing enslaved butler; *Gone with the Wind* (1939); and *Band of Angels* (1957), featuring Sidney Poitier as an angry but forgiving enslaved man. In mid-century, years after a number of excellent plays for TV began to focus on modern issues, working-class people, and immigrant groups, a couple of less cutting-edge movies appeared—Poitier was in all of those that I remember: *No Way Out*

(1950), *The Defiant Ones* (1958), *A Raisin in the Sun* (1961), *Lilies of the Field* (1963), *A Patch of Blue* (1965), *In the Heat of the Night* (1967), and *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (1967). In the age of James Baldwin's ascendancy, these films portrayed racism as a shallow ignorance easily overcome by a patient victim such as those Poitier portrayed. The outstanding exception to musical theater shying away from the American ethnic divide was Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim's *West Side Story*, and the superb 1961 film made of it by Robert Wise and Jerome Robbins. Only the work to implement what was called "non-traditional casting" in the late 1950s and early 1960s began to solve the failure of projects like *West Side Story* to fully embrace the idea of people of color playing their own ethnicities as well as others.

For all these reasons, *X*, as a work of music theatre that dealt with race in America during a time fresh in the minds of most audiences, was ground-breaking, and overdue. We assumed at the time that the work had an audience. However, as a result of representing change, it was anticipated with controversy, and in some cases, greeted with derision about not "belonging" in an American canon. Others considered it a balm in a context in which the evergreens with black characters were *Porgy* and *Showboat*. *The New York Times* ran several articles over two days; a preview by Tim Page on the Guggenheim program deemed the work "one of power and originality." *The New York Times* ran a virulent review by Donal Henahan calling the work "agitprop." Opera-goers took issue with Henahan in weekly letters into November, with the critic responding each week. John Rockwell took on the controversy in an article describing the divided views on Malcolm X, as well as noting then—City Opera General Director Beverly Sills's meeting with leaders in the black community to gain support. He connected the work to contemporary "vernacular music theater pieces" by Leonard Bernstein, Stephen Sondheim, and Philip Glass, and the production of Duke Ellington's *Queenie Pie*, directed by George C. Wolfe, then running at the AMTF. Most significantly he included an interview with Sills explaining that she thought the work was good and why it was important to stage. C. Gerald Fraser interviewed blacks who attended the premiere. Samuel G. Freedman followed the next week with an account of independent filmmakers

and well known writers, black and white, having trouble making films on Malcolm, and of critically acclaimed plays on him produced at theaters like New Federal Theater and New Heritage Theatre in New York City and Crossroads Theater in New Jersey—which served black communities—that enjoyed few other productions or play publication.<sup>5</sup>

These issues of defining audiences, redefining vernacular, and arguing for what stories "belong" actually obscured some of the change made by the music in *X*. Most important perhaps was the inclusion of improvisers in the orchestra. We know early twentieth century black composers were accustomed to working with improvisers in various contexts, from the first through-written works like the 1907 *Shoo-Fly Regiment* by Bob Cole, J. Rosamond Johnson, and James Weldon Johnson, which had an all-star lineup of players, to classic musicals such as 1921's *Shuffle Along* by Noble Sissle, Eubie Blake, Flournoy Miller, and Aubrey Lyles, another work full of music legends. Notably, pioneering jazz pianist James P. Johnson's 1940 opera *De Organizer*, about sharecropper mobilization, had "specifications of a 45-piece orchestra," that was "essentially a jazz band within an orchestra."<sup>6</sup> Still, it seemed in 1986 to be quite an innovation for Anthony to include at least ten improvisers in the orchestra pit for each performance. This change brought, in the short term, real discomfort within the orchestra. Still, looking back, it seems the very newness of the context of black creators, and a militant black American subject, led audiences to just roll with the original solos without astonishment or indignation. Anthony tells me that orchestras are now replete with musicians whose training includes improvisation. Even so, I am proud to list for audiences today the awesome roster of those who enriched the performances and the recording (in alphabetical order): Pheeroan akLaff, Ray Anderson, Dwight Andrews, Art Baron, Anthony Brown, Clyde Criner, Marilyn Crispell, Mark Dresser, Marty Ehrlich, Mark Helias, Gerry Hemingway, Jay Hoggard, J. D. Parran, John Purcell, Herb Robertson, Warren Smith, and Abdul Wadud. And I must add a bow to the improvising of Avery Brooks, our first Malcolm, and Thomas Young, who originated the role of Street. The young person in that production who played Malcolm as a child with a heart-rending voice would turn out

to be an important innovator and improviser in the dance world—Savion Glover. Malcolm's sister was played by the now well-known playwright Zakiyyah Alexander.

We were fortunate in the work of the journalists cited above and still appreciate the esteemed critics who did take a close look at the music. The late Edward Said, the influential Palestinian scholar who wrote eloquently about music, gave us a wonderfully thoughtful piece in *The Nation*. He found the work "spellbinding," taking very seriously the success and shortcomings he found in the blending of musical elements, "twelve-tone and jazz." At the time I took notes on tightening the discursive text in Act II, which we have now done. The late Andrew Porter's review in the *New Yorker* found it "not just a stirring and well-fashioned opera—that already is much—but one whose music adds a new, individual voice to those previously heard in our opera houses." He heard "as a current" in the work Malcolm's memories of hearing Lionel Hampton and Billie Holiday. And of the use of improvisation, he said, "[Davis] here makes virtuosity serve specific dramatic ends," and found "impressive" the composer's "metric, rhythmic, and harmonic control of structures and pacing." Porter praised as well the vocal lines and choruses. He found the libretto well done, "in language direct enough for the stage yet poetically charged, in strong lines that move surely between narrative, reflection and rhetoric."

It took more than a digital search to find any black music critics who wrote about X. I had to call critics who know Anthony's music and ask if they were there and if they wrote about it, and one or two did me the favor of calling others. Don Palmer said the obvious right away—none of them could get assignments from anyone to write about it. I turned to searches for archives of the black press to locate papers no longer in print. Thanks to Don, Martin Johnson told me he wrote about it for *The City Sun*, a prominent Brooklyn paper, and we hope to find a copy. Anthony tells me that Bill C. Rhoden, who had been a music critic at the *Baltimore Sun*, did an interview while officially on duty at the *New York Times* as a sports writer. I am still looking for that. Sad to say, some of the leading papers today

have a solid record of having never had a black music critic on staff, so such wide searches will continue to be necessary for many of us.<sup>7</sup>

A few other forms of change came through the women producers who launched us on this journey: Mary Griffin McArthur of the Kitchen, Marjorie Samoff, co-founder of AMTF, and Beverly Sills. I can't overstate their help. The few people I had asked to read or check the libretto for me told me they didn't know if it was okay or not because they'd never seen one before. It is neither a play nor a collection of poems though it is also both. As a woman entering this seemingly cloistered world inside of opera palaces, doing a job no one expected me to be doing, it was really important that these three producers acted as if this huge undertaking—33 singers, whole floors of costumes, massive stage, stage management teams—was just what we do on any Tuesday. McArthur suggested we switch from writing a hybrid music theater piece to opera and that we apply for opera funding because opera was then usually so large. As this was an era of truly lavish spending on the classical forms, I basically re-imagined the settings with more big movable parts than Rhoda Levine would ever choose to use. (The funding all went to singers one year and the next to the expensive, now digitized, skills of a score copyist.) In Philadelphia I spent the day before dress rehearsal in an empty dressing room with Samoff because our lead had turned up sick, and she asked me to sit while she made a couple of calls. Her theater's investment was at stake and she was clearly worried. She said we had to talk to a certain TV network executive who could release Avery Brooks, by then a TV star and the only other singer who knew the music. We finally got someone to agree to get him on the phone. She talked. We waited. "Do you need a sandwich, some coffee?" she asked. I had quit smoking, but asked for a pack of cigarettes, and hours later she got a yes to putting our new star on a plane. Sills on a given day would say something like, "today we have to meet with the heads of the thirteen unions in the building and then we'll move on." She assured us about things we thought were problems and she took me along sometimes when she went to solve unexplained things that she regarded as problems. "We'll catch a cab." We went to a union hall, or a bank president's barbecue. At City Opera, director Rhoda Levine explained audition



rituals, which were less user-friendly than in downtown theater. Screening the libretto was new then and a nondigital slide projection that involved a woman technician sitting with me at a table in the audience, asking for several hours if I was okay with breaking a word with a hyphen for the next slide or if it was okay to only squeeze five words on a line. She explained the timing of moving the slides to stay with the music. I suddenly discovered I had opinions about hyphens and timing. By the time I had a producer who sent me a warning prior to our first meeting that I need not say anything because they weren't there to talk to me, the others had pointed my feet in the direction of *go*.

One important facet of our presence then was that Anthony, Kip, and I had lived through the time period we were invoking. It turned out to be useful to have seen some of the characters and communities in action on the streets of Harlem, or in interviews at certain moments of crisis. And we met many people who had been involved in different eras of Malcolm's life. As people born in the mid-twentieth century, we have continued to bring to this work living memory of the man at the center of the work. In the course of working on the original production, we talked to as many people as possible who knew Malcolm X or were witnesses to the movement he built. After the first run, people began to seek us out and share more experiences. In doing a book tour for my book, *Malcolm X, The Great Photographs*, people in cities across the country sought me out to tell of various encounters with Malcolm, working a shoe shine stand with him in Roxbury as teens, going to the mosque there, or telling me of postcards received from him when he was in Africa, or showing a photograph taken with him abroad. One day it will not be possible to bring living memory of this period to the artists realizing a production and, that being the case, we are trying to leave guideposts in the work and in the current experience of those with whom we work. This is the main reason that I have written all of this down for the first time. In the years when the first productions appeared a number of reporters asked what it was like to work in the opera environment, and I did not feel like I could really make an analysis of this unique journey. Nor did I think I should. In the decades since, I have never been asked in any

context about working in opera until a conference about three years ago in UW-Madison on women in theater. So this is some of what looking back for the first time has prompted.

## WHAT IS NEW NOW?

The opera today is tighter than it was in 1986. It is a more tautly drawn work than it was in its original two-and-a-half-hour rendition. It opens with more immediacy, rather than the simple calling of young Malcolm's name. We have chosen to replace one of Betty's arias with the original words. The music is the same. I wrote the second version to the same notes in 1986 because so many people in the seats were still suffering the loss of the man in the opera and others killed during the late '60s. And though we used some spoken word passages to share Malcolm's speaking style and rhythms, some of his public speaking is now sung and the language lifted to be more anthemic. We have added a few lines of singing in places that were musical interludes. In this libretto I have also tightened scene descriptions, added some specific information younger audiences may need, and caught a few errors I missed as we rushed to print then. Character specifics, such as "postman" and "numbers runner," have been removed to allow the director to envision the people in various communities as they choose. Welcome to X's second century!

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*Thulani Davis is an interdisciplinary artist and historian, whose work includes poetry, theater works, and cultural criticism.*

- 1 John Rockwell, "Tenor in 'X' Talks of Debut and Blacks in Opera," *New York Times*, September 30, 1986, accessed March 11, 2022. [www.nytimes.com/1986/09/30/arts/tenor-in-x-talks-of-debut-and-of-blacks-in-opera.html](http://www.nytimes.com/1986/09/30/arts/tenor-in-x-talks-of-debut-and-of-blacks-in-opera.html)
- 2 Les Payne and Tamara Payne, *The Dead are Arising: The Life of Malcolm X* (New York: Liveright, 2020), Winner of the 2021 Pulitzer Prize, the 2020 National Book Award, and others; Manning Marable, *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention* (New York: Penguin Books, 2011), Winner of the Pulitzer Prize, and a *New York Times* bestseller; Peniel E. Joseph, *The Sword and the Shield: The Revolutionary Lives of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: Basic Books, 2020); Clayborne Carson, *Malcolm X, The FBI File* (New York: Skyhorse, 2012); Herb Boyd, *The Diary of Malcolm X, El Hajj Malik Shabazz, 1964* (Chicago: Third World Press, 2013); For young readers: Ilyasah Shabazz

and AG Ford, *Malcolm Little: The Boy Who Grew Up to Be Malcolm X* (New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2014). Ashley Southall and Jonah E. Bromwich, "Two Convicted of Killing Malcolm X Will Be Exonerated After Decades," *New York Times*, November 17, 2021. Accessed March 6, 2022. [www.nytimes.com/2021/11/17/nyregion/malcolm-x-killing-exonerated.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/17/nyregion/malcolm-x-killing-exonerated.html)

- 3 The idea came from a 1928 story by Charlotte Osgood Mason, a Harlem Renaissance philanthropist, and was chosen by Langston Hughes. Tammy L. Kernodle, "Arias, Communists, and Conspiracies: The History of Still's 'Troubled Island,'" *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 83, No. 4 (Winter, 1999), 487-508; Eileen Southern, *The Music of Black Americans: A History*, New York, Norton, 1971, 457-460; [no author] "Troubled Opera," *Time Magazine*, April 11, 1949, accessed March 7, 2022. [www.nytimes.com/1949/02/17/archives/william-stills-new-opera-troubled-island-to-be-offered-by-city.html](http://www.nytimes.com/1949/02/17/archives/william-stills-new-opera-troubled-island-to-be-offered-by-city.html)
- 4 The role of *Porgy* in this culture is still being debated, especially perhaps by singers, see: Michael Cooper, "The Complex History and Uneasy Present of 'Porgy and Bess,'" *The New York Times*, September 19, 2019, accessed March 6, 2022. [www.nytimes.com/2019/09/19/arts/music/porgy-bess-gershwin-metropolitan-opera.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/19/arts/music/porgy-bess-gershwin-metropolitan-opera.html)
- 5 Donal Henahan, "Opera: Anthony Davis's 'X' in Premiere," *New York Times*, September 30, 1986, accessed March 11, 2022. [www.nytimes.com/1986/09/30/arts/opera-anthony-davis-s-x-in-premiere.html](http://www.nytimes.com/1986/09/30/arts/opera-anthony-davis-s-x-in-premiere.html); John Rockwell, "Malcolm X — Hero to Some, Racist to Others — Is Now the Stuff of Opera," *New York Times*, September 28, 1986, accessed March 13, 2022. [www.nytimes.com/1986/09/28/arts/malcolm-x-hero-to-some-racist-to-others-is-now-the-stuff-of-opera.html](http://www.nytimes.com/1986/09/28/arts/malcolm-x-hero-to-some-racist-to-others-is-now-the-stuff-of-opera.html); C. Gerald Fraser, "A Committed Crowd Supports Premiere of 'X,'" *New York Times*, September 29, 1986, accessed Mar 11, 2022 ; Samuel G. Freedman, "Others had Trials in Staging Malcolm X," *New York Times*, October 5, 1986, accessed March 14, 2022. [www.nytimes.com/1986/10/05/arts/others-had-trials-in-staging-malcolm-x.html](http://www.nytimes.com/1986/10/05/arts/others-had-trials-in-staging-malcolm-x.html)
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## **X: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF MALCOLM X**

Music by Anthony Davis

Libretto by Thulani Davis

Story by Christopher Davis

**Malcolm X**

**Louise/Betty**

**Ella**

**Street / Elijah Muhammad**

**Reginald**

**Young Malcolm**

**Queen Mother / Social Worker**

**Garvey Preacher**

**Policeman**

**Policeman**

**Policeman/Reporter**

**Reporter**

**Davóné Tines** bass-baritone

**Whitney Morrison** soprano

**Ronnita Miller** mezzo-soprano

**Victor Robertson** tenor

**Joshua Conyers** baritone

**Jonathan Harris** treble

**Amber Garrett** soprano

**Miguel Ángel Vásquez** baritone

**Nathan Rodriguez** tenor

**Andrew Miller** baritone

**Matthew Arnold** tenor

**Maggie Finnegan** soprano

## ACT I

**[1|2] Scene I: "Africa for Africans"**

1931, Lansing, Michigan. The home of Reverend Earl Little and his wife, Louise, and four of their children. It is a farmhouse with Depression-era furnishings. This evening there is a meeting of the local following of Marcus Garvey's Universal Improvement Association, led by Rev. Little, but he is late. Mrs. Little has been uneasy all day. Members of the group go on with the meeting; tensions are high because everyone is concerned about two active white supremacist groups terrorizing blacks in the area. A visiting organizer is recruiting for Garvey's Black Star Line, ships being fitted to take blacks back to Africa.

The guest speaker leads the meeting as young Malcolm and the other children watch. Louise, now very frightened that Earl has not returned, slips into her memories of the terror that has stalked their family. She forgets the others in the room. Strange lights move in the distance. Shadows move near the house and pass. A policeman arrives and announces that there was an accident. Rev. Little was cut in half by a streetcar. The neighbors say a white mob attacked the man and left him on the tracks. Louise becomes distraught, hysterical, sings to herself, and after a time, becomes unreachable.

A social worker comes to the home and declares the children wards of the state. Malcolm tries to get his mother to help him. Finally, Ella, Malcolm's older half-sister, arrives to take him to her home in Boston.

GARVEY PREACHER  
It's a mean time.

ALL  
Yes, brother.

GARVEY PREACHER  
Nothing left to call mine.

ALL  
Yes, brother. Yes, brother.

NEIGHBOR  
We didn't have much before the crash.

MEN  
Now they're going to take the last.

ALL  
Yes.

GARVEY PREACHER  
We'll be heading out soon.  
Taking the Black Star home.

ALL  
Takin' the Black Star home!  
We'll leave this white man's land  
Crushing us like the devil's hand.  
Garvey has shown us—Marcus!—  
Garvey has told us—  
Garvey has shown us, home!  
No more "darkie," no more "Rastus"  
No more "nigga" when we see Africa

MEN  
We'll be black men again.

WOMEN  
When we see Africa

POSTMAN  
Hang his picture high,  
Ethiop's prophet,  
Marcus, man who says  
"Africa for Africans"

GARVEY PREACHER  
Sign up now. Put your name where your heart is.  
We have a zion across the sea!

ALL  
"Africa for Africans"  
Yes, Africa's time has come  
Africa's time has come  
Like a thundrin' storm  
We've been waiting for a prophet

**[1|3] Scene 1: Louise's Aria, "I remember..."**

LOUISE (*thinking aloud, gazing out*)  
Earl should have been home by sunset.  
His day ended hours ago.  
When he left today  
I tried not to fret or worry,  
but when Earl is away  
the air seems thin and fragile,  
like it cannot carry the day.  
My strong body quakes with fear  
that 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.  
When Malcolm came  
the Klan came  
white hoods, thunder hooves  
hooting, howling, slashing  
galloping horsemen.  
A boy born in terror,  
marked by our fear.  
Not four,  
not ten,  
so many men,  
rushing in  
a black man's night.

ALL  
Not four,  
not ten,  
so many men,  
rushing in  
a black man's night.

LOUISE  
When Yvonne came  
the Klan came  
silently, without sound  
burned our house to the ground.  
Smoking, smoldering, burning  
Shots  
fired by white men.  
A girl born in terror,  
marked by our fear.

ALL  
Riding closer, riding closer, white hoods

LOUISE  
Not four,  
not ten,  
so many men,  
rushing in,  
a black man's night  
I remember so clearly  
the terror of night riders,  
horses coming closer  
riding down our lives.

**[1|4] Scene 1: "Reverend Little is dead."**

POLICEMAN (*comes to door, does not enter, speaks to the room*)  
A man was on the tracks.  
A streetcar ran him down.

*Word passes among the group*

ALL  
A man was on the tracks.  
A streetcar ran him down.

MAN  
Rev'rend Little is dead.

MEN  
He says that Earl was on the tracks;  
He says a streetcar ran him down.  
A white train cut him down,  
cut him down, cut him down.  
Some white men cut him down.  
They pushed him on the tracks.  
These devils hunt us down  
like cursed dogs.

LOUISE  
The air seems thin and fragile.  
In these twilight hours,

every light is a fire.

MEN  
They pushed him on the tracks  
Those devils dressed in white.  
They want to kill us all  
without a fight  
They killed his brothers too,  
It could be me or you.

LOUISE  
Now mine tonight,  
Now mine tonight.

MEN  
Hung one high in Georgia,  
Shot one dead up North,  
Murdered one low in the night,  
And Earl tonight.  
Some white men cut him down.  
These devils run us down  
like cursed dogs.

LOUISE  
The air seems thin and fragile.  
In these twilight hours,  
every light's a fire, fire.

*She screams, runs. Returns. Collapses into a sitting stillness that cannot be broken by the confusion and hysteria of the others. The children keep trying to shake her out of it; she does not see them. Neighbors try to decide what to do about the children. One by one some tum to reach for a child. The children reach for each other.*

**[1|5] Scene 1: "What is going on here?"**

*After a while a white social worker appears at the door. She intrudes directly into the living room.*

SOCIAL WORKER  
What is going on here?  
What is going on here?  
The father is dead.  
The mother is mad.  
The children are out of control.

*(Directed at no one and everyone, apologetic, but determined.)*

No one's in charge.  
It's out of hand.  
These Negroes are living like strays.  
Make them wards of the state.  
Make them wards of the state.

ALL  
Brother, Sister  
The father is dead.  
The mother is mad.

*Social worker grabs the children, hands them over to one adult and then another. Malcolm keeps coming back to his mother.*

**[1]6] Scene 1: "Momma, help me."**

MALCOLM  
Momma, help me.  
Momma, help me.  
I was good in school,  
The best in the class.  
They tell me to get some tools,  
I'll have to work with my hands.  
Momma, help me.  
Momma, help me.  
What do I do?  
The teachers tell me

That what's wrong with you  
Will never be right.  
Momma, help me.  
Momma, help me.  
Momma

*Malcolm sits staring at his mother. A neighbor tries to rouse him, but fails. Finally Ella arrives and reaches out for him with the opening lines of her song.*

**[1]7] Scene 2: Boston, "Come with me, child."**

*About 1940, Boston. Malcolm comes to live with his sister Ella in the Roxbury section. He is still very much of a country boy, an inexperienced adolescent discovering the lights and movement of a big city. But he is by no means giddy, he rarely laughs. He lights up most when someone mentions music—this is his passion. Otherwise he finds that to say nothing is his best defense against looking uncool or ignorant. Ella introduces him to "the hill," where middle-class blacks live, and the rest of the area where others who have come looking for work are moving about on the street.*

*Malcolm then meets up with Street, who schools him in the afterhours life of the community. Street leads him to a ballroom, scene of black dances, the great big bands of the era and "the Life."*

ELLA  
Come with me, child. Come with me.  
Come with me, child. Come with me.  
Your sister Ella will care for you.  
You know me and I know you.  
Come with me, child,  
You're my special one,  
a child like me  
with darting eyes.

I can remember  
the time you smiled.  
You told some tales,  
fantastic tales,  
of Arab lands and kings.  
Come closer my special one  
You know that you are mine.  
Come child, come with me.  
The whole big city waits  
for you to see.  
My side of town,  
they call "the hill,"  
it could be the "bottom,"  
the South Side or Harlem.  
It's always bustling and sprawling  
but it's still like a home.  
We call the streets  
by our very own names.  
We Negroes don't leave a place  
quite the same.  
MEN ON THE STREET  
We make a town dance  
with our sways and our glances.  
We're taking our chance  
on some midnight romancing.  
We make a town dance  
with our sways and our glances.  
We're taking a chance,  
taking a chance, taking a chance.  
ELLA  
Some men 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.

*She lets him go off to walk past some of the sights. He wanders into a pool room. People stand in the shadows watching a game. Street speaks first to his opponent.*

**[1]8] Scene 2: Pool Hall, "Shoot your shot!"**

STREET  
Shoot your shot.  
Just forget your job,  
play the dice that you got.  
Shoot your shot.  
Just forget your job,  
play the number you got.  
Shoot your shot.  
Just forget your job,  
play the chance that you got.

ELLA  
Some men are strivers  
with dreams of their own;  
and some are believers  
who help a dream along;  
and some speak of prophecy,  
of Garvey, slavery,  
of nations, visions and hope.  
They make the street their church,  
from a soap box perch.

STREET  
Shoot your shot,  
cut the talk,  
admit your two bits are mine.  
You'll be owin' me next week's pay  
before you get out from behind.  
Hey there! Take a look, it's a country boy  
up from the farm.

I once had that look before  
but now when their work is done,  
they all come to me.  
They all come to see,  
All come to me.

PLAYERS  
Sweet Street, Sweet Street.

ELLA  
Stay away from trouble,  
the users and the foolish.  
Never be careless.

STREET  
The "life" is a game  
like this green felt table—  
you die broke or win  
if you're good and able.  
Shoot your shot,  
or gimme the dough.  
You ain't got a lot  
from the white man to blow.  
Play the game,  
don't fool with no job.  
A job is a slave,  
it will leave you robbed.  
Doctors waitin' tables,  
farmers carryin' loads.  
They say they're in shippin',  
or other fables.  
They're just helpless losers  
Liftin' totin' fools.  
The white man takes  
while the black man breaks.  
Play the game,  
get into the "life."

Don't mess around  
with the white man's strife.  
(Spoken) If you mess around, mess with his wife.  
If you try and change things  
they'll take your life.

PLAYERS  
The white man takes  
while the black man breaks.  
Play the game,  
Get in the "life."  
Don't mess around  
with the white man's strife.  
Play the game,  
be smart like the Man.  
Get in the "life."  
Get your heaven while you can.

*Malcolm and Street shift to a ballroom. A shoeshine stand is at one side. Players congregate there, styling. They "signify" like they are the sax section of the Ellington band.*

STREET  
But wait.  
How about those clothes?  
I mean your sartorial condition is curious.  
Son, your future is dubious.  
If you ever hope to be one of the cats  
who has a chance to dance the dance  
in this rude rat race  
You need a little dash  
to get some cash.  
To get the girl of your dreams,  
you've got to be clean.  
(Sung) You need a zoot suit, a conk, and a pad.  
A hustler can't go 'round

lookin' poor, lookin' sad.  
Work for no one but yourself,  
keep your feelings  
right on the shelf.  
Shoot them craps  
and make a big deal—  
but you gotta stay cool  
or be someone's fool.  
(PLAYERS joining in)  
If you want more, take it.  
If you don't know, fake it.  
Take more, Make more.  
Play the Game  
Get in the "life."

STREET  
Play the game  
Don't be afraid—  
Make like you're shinin' shoes,  
Sell them reefer and tips,  
and dates with fast gals.  
When you're in your suit  
Stand real still, stay cool  
Point your fingers to the floor,  
keep your feet wide apart  
throw back your head,  
like you're not lookin' at all.

**[1]9 Scene 2: Dance Hall, "Just stand real still."**

STREET  
Just stand real still,  
just stay real cool.  
The hustler gets them all.

*During this sequence Malcolm picks up Sweetheart, leads her to the dance floor and back. He then spots the Blonde*

*cruising him, grabs her as she comes close, twirls her and starts to exit. She has another idea in mind. Malcolm and Street come up with a plan to pull off a heist. They exit. While they are off-stage the ensemble does a fantastic rendition of a crowded hot dance, in half-time.*

STREET  
Once in a while  
you dance the bop,  
show the lames  
you can Lindy Hop.  
Here's where it is,  
my side of town.  
(PLAYERS join in)  
But they all come down—  
they're blonde or brown,  
they all come round  
my side of town.  
Let the ladies come to you.

PLAYERS  
The player gets them all.  
The hustler gets them all.

STREET  
You know what to do.  
Let them come to you.

*Street, Blonde, enter with silver, furs and other valuables. A crowd gathers to buy the goods. Policemen enter, billly clubs in hand.*

**[1]10 Scene 2: "I see..."**

POLICE OFFICERS  
I see some nigras been  
on the wrong side of town,  
robbing leading citizens,



RONITA MILLER AS ELLA. PHOTO BY KATHY WITTMAN. BALL SQUARE FILMS

instead of earning their own.

*(To other officers)*

Round up those hoods. *(Indicating Malcolm and Street)*

Put them away.

A white man's home

isn't safe anymore.

Niggers like you

break in the door.

ALL *(Mocking)*

A white man's home

just isn't safe anymore

just isn't safe anymore.

OFFICER

Put them away.

*(To the Blonde)* You're no common goods,

What are you doin' here?

WOMEN *(To the Blonde)*

White women ought to know

where they belong.

They might be sold real low

and go wrong.

OFFICER *(To other officers, indicating the Blonde)*

Take her too.

Take them all.

*All exit.*

**[1|11] Scene 3: Malcolm's Aria, "You want the story, but you don't want to know."**

*Malcolm appears alone, handcuffed, under a glaring light. A chair sits stage center. He seems to be talking to interrogators, maybe in the shadows, maybe not there at all.*

MALCOLM

I wouldn't 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.

My truth is white men

killed my old man,

drove my mother mad.

My truth is rough,

My truth could kill,

My truth is fury.

They always told me

"You don't have a chance,

"You're a nigger, after all.

"You can jitterbug and prance,

"but you'll never run the ball."

My truth told me,

quit before you start.

My truth told me,

stayin' alive is all you've got.

I've shined your shoes,

I've sold your dope,

hauled your bootleg,

played with hustler's hope.

But the crime is mine

I will do your time,

so you can sleep.

I won't be out to get you

on the street at night  
but I won't forget  
any evil that's white.  
My truth is a hammer  
coming from the back.  
It will beat you down  
when you least expect.

## ACT II

### [1|12] Scene 1: Prison, "In the devil's grip"

*1946–48. Malcolm broods angrily in jail, left alone by the others. Malcolm's brother Reginald comes to visit him and teach him about Elijah, the Messenger of Allah. Malcolm doubts everything Reginald says. Gradually he comes to a point of initial acceptance of this new idea. Reginald leaves Malcolm in jail as Elijah's voice is heard off-stage. Malcolm spends time studying the Holy Koran and books on black history. He has to begin wearing glasses because of his habit of reading in poor light late at night. He becomes a serious and a more hopeful man. Malcolm X is born.*

*1952. The jail recedes as Malcolm hears, and eventually sees, Elijah. It is as though the word removed the bars. They come face to face. Elijah embraces Malcolm like a son and tells him he has much to learn. He tells him to obey the Law and to spread Allah's word. Malcolm is sent to start temples in the eastern states.*

PRISONERS  
In the devil's grip,  
the black men mourn  
the slaver's whip.  
Black men, wake

I would not tell you  
what I know  
You want the truth,  
You want the truth,  
but you don't want to know.

*Lights out.*

from your living graves  
before it's too late.

*Reginald comes to visit Malcolm. They sit opposite one another in the day room.*

REGINALD  
It has been too long.

MALCOLM  
Longer than you can know.  
You don't count time where I've been.

REGINALD  
You got my letter?  
Read what I said?

MALCOLM  
I just can't understand.  
What's the game?

REGINALD  
I've changed.  
I've found a new way.  
I'm clean,  
starting out new.  
I met a man

who showed me the truth.

MALCOLM  
You talk in riddles  
about truth and a man.  
Don't try and kid me  
when I need a plan.  
They're riding me hard,  
trying to make me break.  
They're ready to nail me  
if I make one mistake.

PRISONERS  
If he makes one mistake

MALCOLM  
I thought you had a way.

REGINALD  
Have you ever met a man  
who knows all things?

MALCOLM (*Incredulous*)  
No, brother.

REGINALD  
He knows who you are,  
where you've been.  
He knows your future.

MALCOLM  
I can't understand

REGINALD  
Your past was stolen,  
taken from you,  
your children tortured,  
your women taken too.  
Black is your skin,  
your fate is in your hands.

MALCOLM  
Brother, I know no such man.  
Is he a god?

I can't understand.

PRISONERS  
I can't understand.

REGINALD  
Black is your skin—

MALCOLM  
I can't understand

REGINALD  
Who once was king

MALCOLM  
Is he a god?

REGINALD  
You're now a slave

MALCOLM  
I don't understand  
what you say

REGINALD  
Listen to me  
the devil's got you in jail.  
The white man left you  
judged on a scale.  
This man taught me things—  
A nation we are,  
all of us.

PRISONERS  
A nation we see.

MALCOLM  
God does not know me,  
the hustlers or players.



On the fast track I see  
only winners or losers.  
REGINALD  
This man taught me things  
A nation he sees  
MALCOLM  
God knows the good ones—  
He betrays them.  
We're out there alone;  
God does not know me.  
REGINALD  
But God is a man  
His name is Allah.  
MALCOLM  
We're out there alone.  
REGINALD  
He came to this land.  
MALCOLM  
God does not know me.  
REGINALD  
He told Elijah.  
MALCOLM  
We're out there alone.  
REGINALD  
He told a black man  
MALCOLM  
Who is Elijah?  
REGINALD  
His own divine plan.  
MALCOLM  
How can God be man?  
Allah.

What a strange sound.  
MEN  
*Allahu-Akbar*  
REGINALD  
Elijah is the Messenger,  
the Messenger of Allah.  
MALCOLM  
Allah. Allah.  
REGINALD  
Say His name again and again.  
The rest will come in time.  
To say His name is to praise Him. *(Exits.)*  
MALCOLM  
Allah.  
What does it mean  
to say His name?  
ALL  
Allah!  
MALCOLM  
Does He know I steal,  
lie and take dope?  
ALL  
Allah. Allah.  
MALCOLM  
To say His name  
is to praise Him.  
Soon I will ask Him  
how empty it feels  
to be God of an empty man  
like me.

**[1|13] Scene 1: "You are not empty"**

ELIJAH *(Slowly appears in the back light)*  
You are not empty  
CHORUS  
Malcolm!  
ELIJAH  
nor are you lost.  
You're Malcolm,  
cold and just,  
no fear of loss  
MALCOLM AND REGINALD  
Allah!  
MALCOLM  
From Africa like me  
A God black men will praise.  
I can say His name.  
REGINALD AND CHORUS  
Allah. Allah.  
ELIJAH  
You are not empty,  
but full enough to scream aloud.  
MALCOLM  
I hear the shudders of slavers  
ELIJAH  
Your rage He will claim  
MALCOLM  
The sound that shakes the walls  
ELIJAH  
Malcolm!  
MALCOLM  
It bangs against the cells,

A name without fear.  
ELIJAH  
Who have you been?  
MALCOLM  
A power gathers I can hear.  
To say His name  
is to praise Him! Allah!  
*Malcolm leaves prison, and comes to meet with Elijah.*  
ELIJAH  
Malcolm,  
who have you been?  
Malcolm,  
from where do you come?  
Why are you so thirsty and worn?  
Who would you be?  
MALCOLM  
I come from a desert  
of pain and remorse,  
from slavery, exile,  
from jail's brute force  
ELIJAH  
Who would you be?  
MALCOLM  
I would just be a man  
who knows right from wrong,  
who knows the past  
was stolen away.  
ELIJAH  
A life we see.  
A reason to be.  
But who will you be?



JOSHUA CONVERS AS REGINALD. PHOTO BY KATHY WITTMAN, BALL SQUARE FILMS.

MALCOLM

My name means nothing.

ELIJAH

An "X" you must claim

MALCOLM

My name means I was a slave

ELIJAH

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.

CHORUS

An "X" will stand

for what was lost.

An "X" will stand

until God returns.

*Allahu-Akbar.*

ELIJAH

*As Salaam-Alaikum,*

Peace be unto you.

MALCOLM

*Wa-Alaikum-Salaam,*

and unto you

be peace.

ELIJAH

We join all others

who love Allah.

CHORUS

*Allahu-Akbar!*

*Elijah shows Malcolm how to pray in the manner of the Nation of Islam during the early 1950s, standing, as opposed to kneeling, facing east, palms out.*

ELIJAH

We seek Freedom,

Justice,

Freedom,

Equality,

But to know these things

You must know history.

And you must know

Armageddon comes.

I carry its word.

CHORUS

Freedom, justice, freedom

Equality

*Allahu-Akbar*

*Allahu-Akbar*

Freedom, justice, freedom

Equality, freedom, justice

Freedom, equality

MALCOLM

Dark is our history,

A flame is our prophecy.

Allah's Messenger

carries His word.

ELIJAH

We have been blind,

the white man's tool.  
For four hundred years,  
we've been made his fools.  
He laughs at us  
who once were kings.  
He has us beg  
and call him boss,  
then he gives us his God  
to keep us downtrod.  
We've sunk so low,  
we can't let him go.

MALCOLM  
We've sunk so low,  
can't let him go.

MALCOLM AND ELIJAH  
Let our eyes see  
We can set our lives free.

MALCOLM  
I wanted to fight—

ELIJAH  
You did not know how.

It's your time now. (*Embraces him*)  
Spread His word!

ALL  
*Allahu-Akbar*

**[2]1 Scene 2: 125th Street, Harlem, "We are an African people"**

*1954-63. Malcolm begins his ministry, helping to found temples in Boston, Philadelphia, Springfield, Hartford, Atlanta, and New York.*

*This scene spans a considerable number of years in telescopic fashion. This is the time of the landmark Supreme Court decision, Brown v. Board of Education. It is the era in which Rosa Parks refused to sit in the back of a Montgomery, Alabama, bus, thus sparking a long boycott organized by black working women which integrated the buses and brought to the public the name of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. The period closes at the time of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Malcolm is seen on the corner of 125th Street and Seventh Avenue, in front of Micheaux's National Memorial African bookstore, "The House of Common Sense, Home of Proper Propaganda." The front of the store is a tall montage of placards bearing black nationalist slogans from all over the globe and decades gone. "Repatriation Headquarters-Back to Africa movement, Register Here"; "Black Man's Cod." Portraits of African princes, ex-slaves, Americans such as W.E.B. DuBois and Paul Robeson abound. It's like the secret attic of J.A. Rogers, author of World's Great Men of Color and one of Malcolm's teachers.*

*A woman street preacher is holding forth on a soapbox as Minister Malcolm approaches. She is dressed in a long, sparkling African garb with a cloth wrapped around her head. She is trying to get people interested in her group, which promotes the adoption of African lifestyles. The general point is that blacks may return to their former greatness by returning to their former ways: religious practices resembling those of the Yoruba religion, communal living, polygamy, matriarchal family lines. She is followed by a Garvey speaker. Malcolm and several Muslims listen and wait for their moment to get the attention of the crowd. Later, as Malcolm takes to the soapbox, his comrades reach out for passersby and work up the crowds.*

QUEEN MOTHER  
We are an African people,  
we must live as Africans here.  
We are not of this place.  
We've only been ruined by its ways.  
Black men hide from the social worker,  
afraid to claim their children,  
cause they ain't got a job.  
Your ancestors didn't need money,  
why, they dug gold out of the ground,  
and grew their own food.  
They had many wives.  
Let's go back to our old ways,  
and find a land for our dreams.

GARVEY SPEAKER (*Interrupting*)  
We can go back, back to Mother Africa!

ALL  
Take us back

GARVEY SPEAKER  
You were once kings of Mali,  
Dahomey and Songhay  
Your prince is Haile Selassie I  
The Lion of Judah

MALCOLM  
Where are we now, brother?  
20 million kings of Mali?

*(Crowd laughs and turns toward Malcolm, who strikes a formidable pose at the rear, smiling, head high, like a boxer waiting to climb in the ring. He moves forward a few feet, feeling the crowd is with him.)*

Where are we now, brother?  
20 million sad and sorry?

MUSLIM  
Speak it, speak it!  
Let the man speak!

**[2]2 Scene 2: "When I was little"**

*Malcolm moves to the front and takes over as the Garvey speaker relinquishes his spot.*

MALCOLM  
Yes, we had it once,  
now we got nothing to lose.  
When I was little  
they called me "nigger,"  
they called me "nigger" so much,  
I thought it was my name.  
Now the chickens they sent out  
are coming home to roost

MALCOLM AND CROWD  
20 million

MALCOLM  
kings of Mali,

MALCOLM AND CROWD  
20 million

MALCOLM  
so-called Negroes,

MALCOLM AND CROWD  
asking the white man for mercy.

MALCOLM  
Imagine that!  
The white man tricked the Negro,  
used the Negro,  
made him a fool,  
till the Negro woke up!

We have awakened!  
Allah is all-wise,  
the true and living God.  
I come to say His praise.  
I come to tell the history.  
I come to tell the past,  
of the black man's bondage.

MUSLIMS  
It may sound bitter,  
may sound like hate,  
but it's just the truth.

CROWD (*Joining in*)  
It may sound bitter,  
may sound like hate,  
but it's just the truth.

MALCOLM  
We don't hate the white man—  
his world is about to fall.  
It may sound bitter  
It may sound like hate,  
but it's just the truth.

### [2|3] Scene 3: "If we are going to be free"

*Stage freezes for a second, then goes into motion. People who were at the rally exit. One Muslim hands Malcolm a briefcase, another hands him a suitcase. One picks up a paper, the other grabs a bunch of leaflets to distribute. With everything in motion, they begin all over. While his fellow travelers continue to "fish" in the crowd, and hand out flyers, Malcolm speaks. Sometimes he is preceded on the "rostrum" by another Muslim who warms up the crowd—in mime.*

*Malcolm always smiles when he speaks, not broadly, but he is happy to do what he does and enjoys the audiences. He likes to lead the crowd along a train of thought for a while and then surprise them. He also likes to shock. He is physically reserved, not demonstrative, but a trace of the swagger of Big Red is there in his bearing. Men and women like to be around him, find him charismatic.*

*One or two more people in the crowd appear to be Muslims at each new rally, until finally, they are the majority. Once the group becomes largely Muslim, women stand or sit on one side, men on the other. This separation should not appear planned, but should just happen. Women who appear in Muslim attire in the beginning must be moving through and not linger in the street. One or two Muslims frequently return to Elijah to make reports on Malcolm's work.*

CROWD  
Say your piece, brother, teach.

MALCOLM (*Spoken*)  
If we are going to be free,  
it will be done by you and me.  
And we won't tum the other cheek,  
we won't tum the other cheek  
(*Sung*)

to get our freedom.  
We are ready to die,  
to get our freedom.  
We will use any means—  
whatever means necessary—  
to stand for themselves,  
to live for themselves,  
or keep catchin' Hell.

*Scene freezes for a second, then everyone moves. People at rally exit, perhaps leaving a policeman and a vendor.*

### [2|4] Scene 3: "Jones is not your name"

*Muslims enter and set up rostrum. People gather as if for an expected speech at a given time, others are passersby who stop.*

MUSLIMS  
All praises to Allah,  
the All-merciful, the All-wise.

MALCOLM  
Allah does not teach us  
to suffer more and more.  
Allah does not teach us  
to fight the white man's wars.  
Allah does not teach us  
to stay as slaves  
after four hundred years  
(*Spots a young man in the audience, singles him out*)  
Jones is not your name,  
it's a slave name.  
Smith is not your name,  
it's a slave name.  
(*Crowd joins in*)  
What are you gonna do with a slave name?  
You need a good name,  
you need a holy name,  
a name that praises you and God—  
a name like Malik, Amilcar.

ALL  
(*Crowd laughs, then whispers rhythmically*)  
Toussaint, Toussaint,  
Kenyatta, Kenyatta, Kenyatta

MALCOLM  
Lumumba (*Broad smile*), Nkrumah, Ny-er-e  
(*Short satisfied laugh*)

ALL  
Lumumba, Lumumba,  
Nkrumah, Nkrumah, Nkrumah,  
Nyere!

*Scene freezes, then everyone exits.*

### [2|5] Scene 3: "We're not askin' Massa to sit at a lunch counter."

*A large crowd gathers. Malcolm is now facing the audience at a podium downstage center, with people on stage appearing to be at the sides and front of the rally. He speaks into a microphone directly to the audience. After he finishes, he takes Betty by the arm as he moves to next location.*

MALCOLM (*Spoken*)  
We're not askin' Massa to sit at a lunch counter.  
We want self-determination.  
We want to get our people off of dope,  
off alcohol, off the welfare rolls.  
We must *rebuild* the black family,  
and our communities, ravaged by despair.  
We need to look at our brothers in Africa  
taking *back* their plundered countries,  
tellin' Massa what time it is.  
We need to work, we need jobs,  
and we need to create them.  
But we know if whites are forced  
to give us their jobs,  
there'll be war, (*Sung*) a bloody race war.  
We want freedom, justice, equality.

ALL  
Freedom, equality, justice.

MALCOLM (*Spoken*)  
Down south blacks sit in  
and red necks sic dogs on them, bomb their churches.  
Now, who are the law-breakers, who are the violent ones?  
Muslims don't expect anybody  
to give our people freedom.  
We want to *stand up* against racism,  
all black people together!

ALL  
Freedom, equality, justice.

**[2|6] Scene 4: "We are a nation"**

*Muslims gather at a mosque, Elijah comes in, greets Malcolm and then various people in audience, exits to position at the rear.*

MALCOLM  
*As-Salaam-Alaikum*

ALL  
*Wa-Alaikum-Salaam*

MALCOLM (*Sung*)  
We are a nation,  
trapped inside a nation.  
We are a nation,  
dying to be born.

BETTY, ELIJAH, REGINALD  
We are a nation,  
trapped inside a nation.  
We are a nation,  
dying to be born.

MALCOLM  
We dream of our land,  
our own land.  
We dream of our home,  
a black zion.

It is our will to be,  
our will to be free.  
A black zion.

ALL  
We are a nation  
trapped inside a nation.  
We are a nation,  
dying to be born.

MALCOLM, BETTY, ELIJAH, REGINALD  
Chains took the lives of our young,  
took the blood of the old,  
and yet we go on,

ELIJAH  
and still we are one.

MALCOLM AND ALL  
We will only know peace

MALCOLM AND REGINALD  
in a land that is free.

MALCOLM  
a black zion

ALL  
We are a nation,  
trapped inside a nation,  
dying to be born.

**[2|7] Scene 4 : "The chickens come home to roost."**

*Muslims break into hurried organized activities, setting up stands to sell goods, running classes. Minister Malcolm X oversees the production of the Nation of Islam newspaper, Muhammad Speaks; as he exits the mosque, he is greeted by the news reporters and TV cameras that frequently follow him. The Nation of Islam is the subject of much*



WHITNEY MORRISON AS BETTY AND DA'VONE TINES AS MALCOLM X. PHOTO BY KATHY WITTMAN. BALL SQUARE FILMS

*public attention and surveillance by police, who should be obvious.*

*As Malcolm is finishing a speech before a large gathering of Muslims, whispers of horror begin to fly through the crowd. A Muslim sent by Elijah brings a message to Malcolm. News is passed that President John F. Kennedy has been murdered in Dallas, Texas. Reporters first approach Elijah for comment and are rebuffed, they then press to the front of Malcolm's meeting to ask questions.*

REPORTER (Spoken)

Mr. X, what do you make of the recent tragic events in Dallas—President Kennedy's assassination?

MALCOLM

America's climate 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 the chickens coming home to roost.

*Flashbulbs go off in his face. Reporters act astounded at what they've heard, huddle, exit. One or two Muslims quickly carry word to Elijah, who reacts angrily to news of Malcolm's remark. Malcolm exits with his men.*

REPORTERS

The chickens come home to roost.  
The chickens come home to roost.

ELIJAH (*To two of his men*)

Now Malcolm disobeys the Messenger!

I do not know this Malcolm X!

I sent word to all the ministers:  
Do not talk about the president,  
do not talk about his death.

Do not make enemies for the Nation;  
We have enemies enough.

Do not make enemies for black men;  
Black men have enemies enough!

*Orders the men out. Lights out.*

## [2]8] Scene 5: Malcolm and Betty, "Are you sure?"

BETTY

Are you sure?

MALCOLM

About hate? Yes.

BETTY

What about the Messenger?

MALCOLM

Life is easy without doubt,  
without truth or light in shadows

BETTY

What can I do? I'm afraid.

MALCOLM

Come here.

MALCOLM AND BETTY

What matters most is our children  
living without fear to dream,  
their dreams found in quiet,  
not answers given to them  
or shouted in the streets.

## ACT III

### [2]9] Scene 1: "Betrayal is on his lips."

*1963. Malcolm is called to see Elijah, who is incensed that Malcolm has possibly jeopardized the situation of the Nation of Islam by making his remark concerning Kennedy's assassination. He is also concerned that his chief spokesman may have already become too powerful, within the Nation and outside as well. He is worried that perhaps he will no longer be able to control his minister. Malcolm comes with his own misgivings about the Messenger's leadership. Muhammad censures Malcolm by silencing him for three months, even extending this to his teaching at Malcolm's own Mosque #7 in Harlem.*

*Muslim community people are milling about, and waiting outside of the Messenger's home. Many are Fruit of Islam (FOI), Muhammad's army. An FBI agent can be seen, as well as one or two reporters. As Malcolm passes through this crowd they begin to mumble and whisper; their sounds become a kind of drone.*

ALL

Betrayal is on his lips.  
Is it truth or lies?

MUSLIMS

Malcolm brings us down  
with his talk.  
He spreads poison.  
He has a loose tongue.  
The Nation is betrayed  
by the Messenger.  
Does he come to judge  
or be judged?

ELIJAH

*As-Salaam-Alaikum, Brother Malcolm*

MALCOLM

*Wa-Alaikum-Salaam, Mr. Muhammad.*

ELIJAH

An uproar is all around us.  
It's a bad time  
for us all.  
Listen to me: you disobeyed.  
You have a loose tongue.

MALCOLM

It's a bad time.  
Have I not served,  
have I not served you?  
Spread Allah's teaching across the land?

ELIJAH

Your fame helped us once,  
now it only does harm.  
Fame is a double-edged sword.

MALCOLM

Look into my heart  
I am here to serve,  
I am here to serve the Nation,  
the Messenger, the Law.  
I could still be in Hell,  
in the streets.  
For that I will believe.

ELIJAH

Is betrayal on your lips, my son?

MALCOLM  
Betrayal flies around us.  
It haunts the air we breathe.  
I hear things I cannot believe;  
they say the Messenger  
has his own law.

ELIJAH  
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.

MALCOLM  
This talk consumes our Nation.  
We must stand up strong.  
We must reach the people,  
and bring change,  
by whatever means.

ELIJAH  
Are you revolution,  
whirling forward  
without Allah's wisdom?  
The white man has used you  
to bring us down.  
This is when your chickens  
come home to roost.

MALCOLM  
I am a servant of the Nation,  
and that is all.

ELIJAH  
They say you have grown too big

for the Nation.

MALCOLM  
Liars and betrayers cut me down—  
it is not true.

ELIJAH  
You spoke against the Nation,  
you spoke against my word.  
Do you come to judge  
or be judged?

MALCOLM  
Liars and traitors cut me down.  
I'm a just man.

ELIJAH  
You kick the dead  
while the country weeps!  
You will be silent!  
You will say nothing!

MALCOLM  
I bow to your will.  
I will not speak.

*Malcolm bows to Elijah, exits through crowd, which divides with a small number falling out of the Muslim ranks to follow Malcolm. Those who do not, pick up mumbling chorus.*

**[2]10 Scene 2: Betty's Aria, "When a man is lost"**

*The Nation becomes divided, and although many Muslims come to follow Malcolm, he is in deep turmoil over the division and feels he must search alone for some answers. He feels betrayed by his mentor and many of his brothers in the movement. He tires of being constantly surrounded*

*by other people—followers, reporters, people trying to warn him of various dangers ahead.*

*Behind him is the devastated landscape of Harlem, forbidding, isolating, a grey vacantness similar to the open spaces of his childhood, yet crowded with structures. He goes to his family and is consoled by his wife and confidante, Betty. Two of their young girls are present. She hands him an envelope, and urges him to go to make the Hajj, or pilgrimage to Mecca, of an orthodox Muslim, knowing that Allah somehow is with him and will help him.*

BETTY *(At first addressing their daughters)*

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 with his dreams  
in a light seldom seen.  
Soon the henchmen will come  
take his sky and stars  
and leave only blood.

*(To Malcolm)*

When a man is lost,  
what is left inside?  
What makes him take one step  
or keep on breathing?

MALCOLM  
Allah made me and left me here.  
Life is what He gave me,

I must ask His help  
to give a life back to God.

*Embraces them and exits*

**[2]11 Scene 2: Mecca, "Bismillah hirrahman-irrahim"**

*When Malcolm appears again he is making a pilgrimage to Mecca. He has abandoned his western clothing for a simple white cloth, as all pilgrims must. Where he waits many other pilgrims pray, eat, and sleep on rugs they have brought with them. Being unprepared, he has a space on the bare floor. At the first sign of dawn, a call to prayer is heard and the pilgrims rise to say their first prayers. Malcolm has not slept. The pilgrims face east and make the motions of ablutions and prayer.*

PILGRIMS

*Bismillah hirrahman-irrahim*  
[I begin with the name of Allah,  
the Merciful, the Compassionate.]

MUEZZIN

*Ash-hadu an la ilaha  
ill-Allah*

[I bear witness that there is  
no God but Allah.]

*Ash-hado anna  
Muhammad-ar*

*Rasul-ullah*

[I bear witness that Muhammad  
is the messenger of Allah].

*Malcolm has made an attempt to follow the movements of those around him, but he has never learned the orthodox prayer ritual and now finds it is difficult to*



DAVONE TINES AS EL-HAJJ MALIK EL-SHABAZZ (MALCOLM X). PHOTO BY KATHY WITTMAN, BALL SQUARE FILMS.

*recreate what the pilgrims are doing. He gives up for a moment, watches them, speaks.*

**MALCOLM**

I have come so far, among so many.  
I have never been so alone.  
No one knows who I am.  
Perhaps the high court  
will not believe I am true.  
I am waiting for a message.  
Mecca!  
Here I hear so many tongues speak.  
Allah is praised by all men.  
I watch and I bow and pray,  
I'm tied in a silence unknown, alone,  
so alone.

*(Interlude)*

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.  
I have seen both black and white men  
all bow and pray before God.  
El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz  
has found a new way.  
Praise!  
I bow and pray.  
Praise!  
New born today  
Praise Allah!

*At the closing of the song he returns to making the motions of prayer, stubbornly trying at least to approximate them. After all, this will be how he must live the rest of his life. Finally, he succeeds in getting his knees to really bend, his head to touch the floor.*

**PILGRIMS**

*Bismillah hirrahman-irrahim*

**[2|12] Scene 3: Riot**

*1964-65. Just before Malcolm returns from his sojourn to the Near East and Africa a riot breaks out in Harlem. It starts when a white police officer accuses a black youth of stealing. One or two people on the street try to get into the matter. A scuffle ensues and the young boy tries to escape. He is shot by the policeman. People attack the policeman, seriously injuring him, and rioting breaks out in the area. As sirens are heard, people scatter.*

**[2|13] Scene 3: "The name is Shabazz."**

*Malcolm returns a deeply changed man, but outwardly he appears the same. He is greeted by reporters who wish to question him about the rioting. He is warned of death threats against him. It is Malcolm's plan to go to the U.N. with the grievances of black Americans. Some of those with Malcolm are wearing dashikis and other African garb popular in the mid-'60s. One or two wear traditional Muslim garb, such as Malcolm would have seen in Cairo or Jeddah. As before, he is constantly observed.*

*Malcolm is not concerned with the fear so evident all around him. Still, he takes some precautions for his safety. Later, as he begins a speech before his own newly formed group, the Organization of Afro-American Unity, he is gunned down.*



REPORTERS  
Mr. X—, Mr. X—  
Mr. Malcolm X—, Malcolm X—

MALCOLM  
The name is Shabazz.  
El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz  
What do you want to know  
that you've not been told?  
We have explained ourselves  
(*Indicating blacks around them*)

so many times.  
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?  
It has begun  
and I am no more its cause  
than any one here.  
I do not stand alone  
against their foolish blows.

MALCOLM'S ALLIES  
It has begun, a rising tide.  
There is no time to wonder why.

MALCOLM  
Men pursue me  
every step I take,  
and yet they don't see  
the brothers behind me.

ALLIES  
brothers behind  
MALCOLM  
Men of 50 nations  
lead their people on.  
Throw off the tyranny of states,  
the slaver's greedy hand.  
A tide rises at your back  
and sweeps you in its path.  
Can you see at all?  
Do your eyes tell you lies?

*Exits with friends*

REPORTERS  
Are you not the one?  
Are you not the one  
who sent the youth  
into our streets?  
Are you not the one?  
Are you not the one  
who called us devils,  
who preached black hate?  
Mr. X—, Mr. X—

*Malcolm turns his back and exits.*

**[2]14] Scene 4: "I have learned so much  
in Africa."**

*Malcolm proceeds to a hotel room where he meets with  
his close allies to tell them of his plans.*

MALCOLM (*Sung*)  
I have learned so much in Africa.  
We're a part of something so big,  
a movement spanning the globe.

We're freedom fighters all  
from here to Angola,  
Mozambique and Ghana,  
Zimbabwe, South Africa  
They teach us that freedom can come  
from ballots or bullets  
This is no race revolt,  
Settlers came, took the ground  
from Black, Yellow folks and Brown.  
A global struggle is now on!  
The settler's power will come down  
ensuring Human rights not just  
for some but for everyone!  
We have the right to self-defense.  
We're done with slaver's crumbs,  
promises and small reforms.  
We're sick from deaths of daughters,  
from burying our sons.  
The world hears our call!  
In our loss and pain,  
We hear them all!  
We're  
We must aim well  
for freedom.

*Exit.*

REPORTERS  
America is a house of glass,  
anyone can see the violence inside.  
Bricks fly to the walls.  
The roof shatters.

ELIJAH AND FRUIT OF ISLAM  
The Nation is a house of cards,  
men like Malcolm push too hard.  
Men like Malcolm light the match,

cards teeter and fall.  
The house collapses.

*Sound of explosion. Reginald, Malcolm and others enter  
hotel room.*

REGINALD  
Who set the bomb,  
destroyed your home?  
Men are hunting you down.  
Where will you go?

MALCOLM  
We've been hunted before

REGINALD  
We've been hunted before

MALCOLM  
by men who hide in darkness.  
There is nowhere to hide.

ALLIES  
Nowhere to hide

MALCOLM  
We do not know  
which mask evil wears.  
These men don't wear white hoods,  
but hide on the street in suits.

BETTY  
Who set the bomb,  
destroyed our home?  
Men are hunting you down.  
Where can we go?

ALLIES  
Where can you go?  
Have you heard the news?  
Bricks and glass fly in Harlem.

REGINALD

Have you heard the word?  
Your life is marked  
say the streets.

REGINALD AND ALLIES

First a car bomb,  
then a fire bomb.  
They'll get you,  
hunt you down.  
They'll keep coming.  
Some say it's police.  
Some say hired hands.  
Some say FBI  
First a car bomb,  
then a fire bomb.  
They'll get you,  
hunt you down.  
They'll keep coming.  
Men are hunting you down!

MALCOLM

They can call me names,  
call me trouble.  
They can kill Malcolm X,  
but blacks will stand up  
because we have rights.  
We want our freedom  
at any cost.

*(Moving away from the others)*

They do not know  
El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz  
is a man of peace,  
a man already free.  
Allah has set me free.

*Goes to make prayer*

## [2|15] Scene 5: Audubon Ballroom

*The stage is in motion once again as members of the movement begin to rearrange the scene to set up the Audubon Ballroom.*

*The scene is a meeting of the Organization of Afro-American Unity, February 21, 1965. Chairs are set up for the meeting, but the arrangement will also be a mirror of the Garvey meeting in Act I. A crowd slowly assembles—men, women, children of various backgrounds. Cops gather outside the ballroom, where they will remain. The assassins gain entrance to the meeting, followed by reporters.*

*A member of the OAAU warms up the audience as Malcolm tries to free himself from people stopping him to speak as he approaches. He enters after everyone is seated and listening to the first speaker. This other speaker quickly wraps it up and sits. Malcolm goes to the podium.*

MALCOLM (Spoken)  
As-Salaam-Alaikum

*A scuffle stirs up in the back, but those causing it are part of the assassins' group. Two men in the front row with handguns and a third behind them with a sawed-off shotgun, rise and shoot Malcolm.*

*Lights out.*

DAVONE TINES AS MALCOLM X. PHOTO BY KATHY WITTMAN BALL SQUARE FILMS.





**Anthony Davis** is an internationally recognized composer of operatic, symphonic, choral, and chamber works, and a winner of the Pulitzer Prize for his opera *The Central Park Five*. He is also known for his virtuoso performances both as a solo pianist and as the leader of the ensemble Episteme, a unique ensemble of musicians who are disciplined interpreters as well as provocative improvisers. In April 1993, Mr. Davis made his Broadway debut, composing the music for Tony Kushner's Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches*, directed by George C. Wolfe. His music is also heard in Kushner's companion piece, *Perestroika*, which opened on Broadway in November 1993.

As a composer, Mr. Davis is best known for his operas. *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X*, which played to sold-out houses at its premiere at the New York City Opera in 1986, was the first of a new American genre: opera on a contemporary political subject. The recording of *X* was released on the Gramavision label in August 1992 and received a Grammy Nomination for "Best Contemporary Classical Composition" in February 1993, but has since gone out of print. Mr. Davis's second opera, *Under the Double Moon*, a science fiction opera with an original libretto by Deborah Atherton, premiered at the Opera Theatre of St. Louis in June 1989. His third opera, *Tania*, with a libretto by Michael-John LaChiusa and based on the abduction of Patricia Hearst, premiered at the American Music Theater Festival in June 1992. A recording of *Tania* was released in 2001 on Koch, and in November 2003, Musikwerkstaat Wien presented its European premiere. A fourth opera, *Amistad*, about a shipboard uprising by slaves and their subsequent trial, premiered at the Lyric Opera of Chicago in November 1997. Set to a libretto by poet Thulani Davis, the librettist of *X*, *Amistad* was staged by George C. Wolfe.

Reacting to two of Mr. Davis's orchestral works, *Maps* (Violin Concerto) and *Notes from the Underground*, Michael Walsh said in *Time* magazine: "Imagine Ellington's lush, massed sonorities propelled by Bartók's vigorous whiplash rhythms and overlaid with the seductive percussive haze of the Balinese gamelan orchestra, and you will have an idea of what both the Concerto and *Notes from the Underground* sound like." Mr. Davis's works also include the Violin Sonata, commissioned by Carnegie Hall for its Centennial; *Jacob's Ladder*, a tribute to Mr. Davis's mentor Jacob Druckman commissioned by the Kansas City Symphony; *Esu Variations*, a concert opener for the Atlanta Symphony; *Happy Valley Blues*, a work for the String Trio of New York with Mr. Davis on piano; and *Pale Grass and Blue, Then Red*, a dance work choreographed by Ralph Lemon for the Limon Dance Company; and *Tales (Tails) of the Signifying Monkey* commissioned by The Pittsburgh Symphony. His orchestral works have been performed by the New York Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Atlanta Symphony, Orchestra of St. Luke's, Brooklyn Philharmonic, Kansas City Symphony, Beethoven Halle Orchestra of Bonn, and the American Composers Orchestra. In the 2003–2004 season, Mr. Davis served as Artistic Advisor of the American Composers Orchestra's *Improvise!* festival and conference which featured a performance of *Wayang V* with Mr. Davis as piano soloist. Both *Notes from the Underground* and *Wayang V* appear on a 2014 CD from BMOP/sound devoted to Anthony Davis's orchestra works.

Born in Paterson, New Jersey, on February 20, 1951, Mr. Davis studied at Wesleyan and Yale universities. He was Yale's first Lustman Fellow, teaching composition and Afro-American studies. In 1987 Mr. Davis was appointed Senior Fellow with the Society for the Humanities at Cornell University, and in 1990 he returned to Yale University as Visiting Professor of Music. He became Professor of Music in Afro-American Studies at Harvard University in the fall of 1992, and assumed a full-time professorship at the University of California at San Diego in January 1998. Recordings of Mr. Davis's music may be heard on the Rykodisc (Gramavision), Koch, and Music and Arts labels. His music is published by G. Schirmer, Inc.



Heralded as “[one] of the most powerful voices of our time” by the *Los Angeles Times*, the “immensely gifted American bass–baritone **Davóne Tines** has won acclaim, and advanced the field of classical music” (*The New York Times*) as a path-breaking artist whose work not only encompasses a diverse repertoire but also explores the social issues of today. As a Black, gay, classically trained performer at the intersection of many histories, cultures, and aesthetics, he is engaged in work that blends opera, art song, contemporary classical music, spirituals, gospel, and songs of protest, as a means to tell a deeply personal story of perseverance that connects to all of humanity. He was recently named *Musical*

*America’s* 2022 Vocalist of the Year.

Mr. Tines is Artist-in-Residence at Detroit Opera—an appointment that culminated in his performance in the title role of Anthony Davis’s *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* in the spring of 2022—and Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra & Chorale’s first-ever Creative Partner. His ongoing projects include Recital No. 1: *MASS*, a program exploring the Mass woven through Western European, African-American, and 21st-century traditions, with performances this season at the Ravinia Festival, in Washington, DC, presented by WPA, and at the Barbican in London. He also performs *Concerto No. 1: SERMON*—a program he conceived for voice and orchestra that weaves arias by John Adams, Anthony Davis, Igeé Dieudonné, and Mr. Tines himself, with texts by James Baldwin, Langston Hughes, and Maya Angelou—with the Philadelphia Orchestra and BBC Symphony.

Mr. Tines is a member of AMOC and co-creator of *The Black Clown*, a music theater experience commissioned and premiered by The American Repertory Theater and presented at Lincoln Center. He has premiered works by today’s leading composers, including John Adams, Terence Blanchard, and Matthew Aucoin, and his concert appearances include performances of works ranging from Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony with the San Francisco Symphony to Kaija Saariaho’s *True Fire* with the Orchestre national de France.



**Whitney Morrison**, a Chicago native and recent alum of the Ryan Opera Center, champions the African American aesthetic in classical music, embracing a style of performance that blends classical singing technique with elements of the gospel singing tradition. She recently appeared as Leonie Baker in the world premiere of *Freedom Ride* at Chicago Opera Theater, prompting *Classical Voice America* to say, “the production’s big surprise was soprano Whitney Morrison, who nearly stole the show.” Ms. Morrison also garnered acclaim for her “richly textured performance and luxurious voice” (*The Times Weekly*) as Sister Rose in *Dead Man Walking* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Other recent credits include the role of Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*) with Chicago’s Floating Opera Company and appearances at the 2018 Grant Park Music Festival and the Rochester Institute of Technology’s celebration of Martin Luther King Jr.’s legacy, “MLK Expressions.”

Ms. Morrison received her bachelor’s degree in Vocal Performance and Pedagogy from Alabama’s Oakwood University. She went on to earn a master’s degree in music from the Eastman School of Music. Ms. Morrison is a 2020 National Semifinalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, first place winner in the National Classical Singer University Competition, a finalist in the Luminarts Classical Music Competition, and recipient of a She Shines Award from Girls Inc. of Chicago. Ms. Morrison is a two-time recipient of the UNCF John Lennon Endowed Scholarship and also trained at the Georg Solti Accademia di Bel Canto in Italy and the Neil Semer Vocal Institute in Germany.



In the 2022 season, American mezzo-soprano **Ronnita Miller** joined the Metropolitan Opera as Big Stone in Matthew Aucoin's *Eurydice*, appeared as soloist with the San Diego Symphony in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, and in recital with New World Symphony. She has also performed at The Atlanta Opera and Deutsche Oper Berlin, and in the summer of 2021 she curated a recital titled *What the Heart Desires* with tenor Nicholas Phan for the Merola Festival. Throughout her distinguished career, Ms. Miller has appeared with numerous ensembles and companies, including Teatro Real Madrid, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Semperoper

Dresden, the London Symphony Orchestra, the Berlin Philharmonic, and the Los Angeles Opera.

In the 2019–2020 season, she completed her seventh season as a member of the ensemble at Deutsche Oper Berlin. Performances there included Mamma Lucia in *Cavalleria rusticana*, Third Lady in *Die Zauberflöte*, Mary in *Der fliegende Holländer*, Madelon in *Andrea Chénier*, and Ulrica in *Un ballo in maschera*. She also made her debut at the Het Concertgebouw Amsterdam as Fricka in a performance of *Die Walküre*, conducted by Jaap van Zweden, and in the US she joined the Chicago Symphony Orchestra to sing Mamma Lucia in *Cavalleria rusticana* under the baton of Riccardo Muti.

In addition to performing, Ms. Miller has conducted masterclasses at St. Petersburg College in St. Petersburg, Florida, outreach classes in NYC, written for online publications including *Interview En L'air*, and has taught private lessons.

American tenor **Victor Robertson** made his Metropolitan Opera debut in their new 2017 production of *Merry Widow* as Raoul, and in the same year, his Broadway debut in its longest running show, *Phantom of the Opera*, as Piangi. Mr. Robertson has sung his signature role, Count Almaviva in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, at Minnesota Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, Manitoba Opera, Portland Opera, Arizona Opera, Opera Carolina, Sarasota Opera, Coeur D'Alene Opera, Toledo Opera, and with Santa Cruz Symphony. Other roles in the artist's



repertoire include Tonio in *La fille du régiment* at Lyric Opera of Kansas, Ramiro in *La Cenerentola*, Fenton in *Falstaff* at Cleveland Lyric Opera, and Nemorino in *L'elisir d'amore* at Kentucky Opera. In the 2022 season, the artist sings Remendado in *Carmen* at Cincinnati Opera, Alfredo in *La traviata* at Orlando Opera, appears as Raymond Santana in Anthony Davis's *Central Park Five* at Portland Opera, and returns to Cincinnati Opera for their world premiere by Gregory Spears, *Castor and Patience*, in the role of Nestor.

With a natural ability for contemporary music, Mr. Robertson inaugurated the role of Benny "Kid" Paret in Terence

Blanchard's celebrated *Champion* in its world premiere in 2017 at Washington National Opera and later revived the role at Detroit Opera and at Opéra de Montréal. He appeared as Hosea Williams in Douglas Tappin's *I Dream*, a piece based upon a series of dreams, reminiscences, and premonitions leading up to a fateful moment in modern American history—the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King.

Making his off-Broadway debut, Mr. Robertson joined the cast of *Three Mo' Tenors* at the Little Schubert Theatre in 2007–8 and remained with the show when it toured the US and went on to play the Edinburgh Festival and in Moscow, the Dominican Republic, and the UK's Henley Festival. Mr. Robertson made his professional Broadway debut in Baz Luhrmann's *Rent* at the Ahmanson Theatre in Los Angeles in a record 82 sold-out performances, for which he won the coveted Ovation Award in 2004.

A native of the Bronx, NY, baritone **Joshua Conyers** is recognized for his captivating performances and championed as one of the promising young dramatic voices of today. Active in contemporary opera, Mr. Conyers performed the role of Jason in the world premiere of Matt Boehler's *75 Miles* and Uncle Wesley in Carlos Simon's *Night Trip* for Washington National Opera's American Opera Initiative. In the 2020–2021 season, he was seen as Eustis in *Le maréchal ferrant* with Opera Lafayette, Sprecher in *Die Zauberflöte* with Aspen Opera Theater, and joined Atlanta Opera as Tonio in *Pagliacci* and Tiger Brown in the *Threepenny*



*Opera*. In the 2021–2022 season, Mr. Conyers made his Seattle Opera debut as Policeman 3/Congregant 3 in Tesori's *Blue*, sang Schaunard in *La bohème* with Annapolis Opera, and debuted with Opera Memphis as Tonio in *Pagliacci*. Mr. Conyers also sang the role of Reginald in *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* with Detroit Opera in spring 2022, prior to BMOP's production.

As a concert artist, Mr. Conyers made his Carnegie Hall Debut in 2018 performing Mozart's *Regina Caeli*, K. 276, Vaughn Williams's *Serenade to Music*, Beethoven's Choral Fantasy, and Mark Hayes's *Te Deum* under the baton of distinguished composer and arranger Mark Hayes with MidAmerica Productions. Mr. Conyers also made his debut at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in 2018 in the Duruflé Requiem with Manhattan Concert Productions under the baton of conductor Anton Armstrong.



**Jonathan Harris** is an honors student from Randolph, MA. He performs regularly with the Boston Children's Chorus. This past season, he performed the role of Young Emile Griffith in Terence Blanchard's *Champion: An Opera in Jazz* with Boston Lyric Opera; and as Young Malcolm in Anthony Davis's *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* in the *As Told By* series with BMOP and Odyssey Opera at the historic Strand Theatre.



**Amber Patrice Garrett** is an honors graduate of both Hampton University and The Boston Conservatory. Being reviewed as having a "robust connected voice with intense conviction," Ms. Garrett's accomplishments are diverse and noteworthy, including performing for dignitaries around the world and collaborating with organizations such as the TODAY Television Show, Virginia Opera, Chautauqua Opera as a Studio Artist for two seasons, Des Moines Metro Opera as an Apprentice Artist, Virginia Symphony Orchestra, Got Black Listed, River City Opera, and Chrysler Museum, just to name a few. She also made her European debut in Naples, Italy, and along the Amalfi Coast. Seeking diversity in her artistry, Amber arranged, produced, and released her debut album *Project Journey: Inspirational Songs and Hymns*.

This "thrilling artist" has made it her mission to seek inclusion in opera and provide genuine, transparent, heartfelt performances that every viewer and listener deserves.



**Miguel Ángel Vásquez** is an Afro–latino baritone lionized for his "ardent baritone and strong dramatic presence" (*OperaWire*) and "golden voice" (*The Post-Standard*). As a cross-over artist and graduate of The Hartt school of music, he has performed internationally (Europe), regionally and in NYC singing with the NY Philharmonic at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and New York City Opera's world premiere of *Stonewall* at Jazz at Lincoln Center. Other notable venues include Carnegie Hall, Off-Broadway, 54 Below, and more.

A few favorite operatic roles include Figaro in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Alfonso in *La Favorita*, Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*, Enrico in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and the men in *Don Giovanni*. Theater roles include Jake in *Side Show*, Javert in *Les Misérables*, Beast in *Beauty and the Beast*, Cinderella's Prince/Wolf in *Into the Woods*, and Coalhouse in *Ragtime*.

Orchestral works include bass soloist for Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and Choral Fantasy, Handel's *Messiah*, Mozart's Requiem, and Faure's Requiem. He is also a recipient of a 2019 Encouragement Award from the Metropolitan Opera in Puerto Rico.

Passionate about bringing living composers' music to life, Vásquez is thrilled to be a part of this recording! [miguelangelvasquez.com](http://miguelangelvasquez.com)



KEVIN CONDON

**Gil Rose** is one of today's most trailblazing conductors, praised as "amazingly versatile" (*The Boston Globe*) with "a sense of style and sophistication" (*Opera News*). Equally at home performing core repertoire, new music, and lesser-known historic symphonic and operatic works, "Gil Rose is not just a fine conductor, but a peerless curator, sniffing out—and commissioning—off-trend, unheralded, and otherwise underplayed repertoire that nevertheless holds to unfailingly high standards of quality. In doing so, he's built an indefinable, but unmistakable, personal aesthetic" (WXQR).

A global leader in American contemporary music, Rose is the founder of the performing and recording ensemble the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP), who "bring an endlessly curious and almost archaeological mind to programming... with each concert, each recording, an essential step in a better direction" (*The New York Times*), as well as the founder of Odyssey Opera, praised by *The New York Times* as "bold and intriguing" and "one of the East Coast's most interesting opera companies."

Since its founding in 1996, the "unique and invaluable" (*The New York Times*) BMOP has grown to become the premier orchestra in the world for commissioning, recording, and performing music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Under Rose's leadership, BMOP has won seventeen ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming, been selected as *Musical America's* Ensemble of the Year in 2016, and in 2021 was awarded a *Gramophone* Magazine Special Achievement Award in recognition of its extraordinary service to American music of the modern era. Under Rose's baton, BMOP has been featured at numerous festivals including the Festival of New American Music (Sacramento, CA), Concerts at the Library of Congress (Washington, DC), and the MATA Festival in New York.

In 2013, Gil Rose expanded his musical vision with the founding of Odyssey Opera, a company dedicated to eclectic and underperformed operatic repertoire from all eras. Working with an international roster of singers and directors, Odyssey has presented more than 35 operas in Boston, with innovative, thematically linked seasons. The company has also established

itself as a leader of modern opera in the United States, having given three world premieres and numerous U.S. premieres.

In addition to his role as conductor, Rose is leading the charge for the preservation and advancement of underperformed works through recordings. BMOP/sound, the independent record label Rose founded in 2008, has released over 86 recordings of contemporary music by today's most innovative composers, including world premieres by John Cage, Lukas Foss, Chen Yi, Anthony Davis, Lisa Bielawa, Steven Mackey, Eric Nathan, and many others. With Rose as executive producer, the label has secured five GRAMMY® nominations and a win in 2020 for Tobias Picker's opera *Fantastic Mr. Fox*. Odyssey Opera's in-house label has released five CDs, most recently a complete version of Camille Saint-Saëns's *Henry VIII*.

Beyond Boston, Gil Rose enjoys a busy schedule as a guest conductor and educator. Equally at home on the podium in both symphonic and operatic repertoire, Rose has led performances by the Tanglewood Opera Orchestra, the Netherlands Radio Symphony, the American Composers Orchestra, the National Symphony of Ukraine, the Matsumoto Festival of Japan, the New York City Opera, and the Juilliard Symphony among others. In addition to being former faculty at Tufts University and Northeastern University, Rose has worked with students across the U.S. at institutions such as Carnegie Mellon University, MIT, New England Conservatory, and the University of California at San Diego. He is a visionary curator of music, inaugurating the Ditson Festival of Music at Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art and programming three seasons for the Fromm Concerts at Harvard series.

In the coming seasons, Gil Rose leads Odyssey Opera in a concert performance of three one-act operas by Rachmaninoff and brings John Corigliano and Mark Adamo's new opera *The Lord of Cries* to Boston audiences. In addition, he and BMOP will travel to Carnegie Hall for the orchestra's debut performance and culmination of their 25th season, and BMOP and Odyssey will co-produce *Harriet Tubman: When I Crossed That Line to Freedom*, the second opera in *AS TOLD BY: History, Race, and Justice on the Opera Stage*, a five-year initiative highlighting Black composers and vital figures of Black liberation and thought.



TINA TALLON

The **Boston Modern Orchestra Project** is the premier orchestra in the United States dedicated exclusively to commissioning, performing, and recording music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Described by *The New York Times* as "one of the most artistically valuable" orchestras in the country, BMOP is a unique institution in today's musical world, disseminating exceptional orchestral music "new or so woefully neglected that it might as well be" via performances and recordings of the highest caliber.

Founded by Artistic Director Gil Rose in 1996, BMOP has championed composers whose careers span over a century. Each season, Rose brings BMOP's award-winning orchestra, renowned soloists, and influential composers to the stage of New England Conservatory's historic Jordan Hall, with programming that is "a safe haven for, and champion of, virtually every *ism*, and every genre- and era-mixing hybrid that composers' imaginations have wrought" (*Wall Street Journal*). The musicians of BMOP are consistently lauded for the energy, imagination, and passion with which they infuse the music of the present era.

BMOP's distinguished and adventurous track record includes premieres and recordings of monumental and provocative new works such as John Harbison's ballet *Ulysses*, Charles Wuorinen's *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, and Lei Liang's *A Thousand Mountains, A Million*



*Streams*. The composers performed and commissioned by BMOP contain Pulitzer and Rome Prize winners, Grawemeyer Award recipients, and MacArthur grant fellows.

From 1997 to 2013 the orchestra won thirteen ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming. BMOP has been featured at festivals including Opera Unlimited, the Ditson Festival of Contemporary Music with the ICA/Boston, Tanglewood, the Boston Cyberarts Festival, Concerts at the Library of Congress (Washington, DC), the Festival of New American Music (Sacramento, CA), Music on the Edge (Pittsburgh, PA), and the MATA Festival in New York. During its 20th anniversary season, BMOP was named Musical America's 2016 Ensemble of the Year, the first symphony orchestra in the organization's history to receive this distinction.

BMOP has actively pursued a role in music education through composer residencies, collaborations with colleges, and an ongoing relationship with the New England Conservatory, where it is Affiliate Orchestra for New Music. The musicians of BMOP are equally at home in Symphony Hall, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, and in Cambridge's Club Oberon and Boston's Club Café, where they pursued a popular, composer-led Club Concert series from 2004 to 2012.

BMOP/sound, BMOP's independent record label, was created in 2008 to provide a platform for BMOP's extensive archive of music, as well as to provide widespread, top-quality, permanent access to both classics of the 20th century and the music of today's most innovative composers. BMOP/sound has released over 75 CDs on the label, bringing BMOP's discography to 100 titles. BMOP/sound has garnered praise from the national and international press; it is the recipient of a 2020 GRAMMY® Award for *Tobias Picker: Fantastic Mr. Fox*, nine GRAMMY® Award nominations, and its releases have appeared on the year-end "Best of" lists of *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, National Public Radio, *Time Out New York*, *American Record Guide*, *Downbeat Magazine*, WBUR, NewMusicBox, and others.

BMOP expands the horizon of a typical "night at the symphony." Admired, praised, and sought after by artists, presenters, critics, and audiophiles, BMOP and BMOP/sound are uniquely positioned to redefine the new music concert and recording experience.

**FLUTE**

Sarah Brady\*  
Rachel Braude

**OBOE**

Jennifer Slowik

**CLARINET**

Jan Halloran\*  
Gary Gorczyca

**BASSOON**

Ron Haroutunian

**HORN**

Kevin Owen\*  
Whitacre Hill

**TRUMPET**

Eric Berlin

**IMPROVISER ENSEMBLE****SAXOPHONE/FLUTE**

Daniel Ian Smith

**SAXOPHONE/CLARINET**

Kenji Kikuchi

**CONTRA ALTO****CLARINET/SAXOPHONE**

Peter Hess

**TROMBONE**

Hans Bohn\*  
Alexei Doohovskoy

**TIMPANI**

Craig McNutt

**PERCUSSION**

Nicholas Tolle

**VIOLIN I**

Katherine Winterstein\*  
Susan Jensen  
Zoya Tsvetkova  
Piotr Buczek  
Matthew Vera  
Rose Drucker

**VIOLIN II**

Colleen Brannen\*  
Paola Caballero

**TRUMPET**

Richard Kelley

**TROMBONE**

David B. Harris

**PERCUSSION**

Maria Finkelmeier

Lilit Hartunian  
Kay Rooney Matthews  
Betsy Hinkle  
David Rubin

**VIOLA**

Peter Sulski\*  
Noriko Futagami  
Alexander Vavilov  
Abigail Cross

**CELLO**

David Russell\*  
Jing Li  
Nicholas Johnson  
Darry Dolezal

**BASS**

Bebo Shiu\*  
Randall Zigler

**DRUMS**

Robert Schulz

**PIANO**

Michael Karloff

**BASS**

Mark Helias

CHORUS Kenneth Griffith, Choral Conductor

**SOPRANO**

Amber Garrett  
Ashley Victoria Jones  
Emily Mwila  
Kay Patterson

**ALTO**

Kristin Buabin  
Destiny Cooper  
Alexis Peart  
Arielle Rogers  
Madison Smith

**TENOR**

Joel Edwards^  
Johnny Nichols Jr.  
Ehimemen Omigie^  
Elliott Paige  
Nathan Rodriguez  
Fred C. VanNess Jr.^  
Edward Washington II

**BASS**

Wayne Arthur  
Keith Brinkley  
Brandon Coleman^  
Tyreese Kadle^  
Miguel Ángel Vásquez  
Ron Williams^

^Soloists

**Anthony Davis**

X: *The Life and Times of Malcolm X*

Producer: Gil Rose

Recording and postproduction engineer: Joel Gordon

Assistant engineer: Peter Atkinson

SACD authoring: Brad Michel

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X: *The Life and Times of Malcolm X* was recorded on June 18, 19, and 20, at The Strand Theatre in Boston, MA.



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**A Note to K-12 Educators & Teaching Artists:**

A companion teaching guide to Anthony Davis's X: *The Life and Times of Malcolm X* was developed by Castle of our Skins, a Boston-based concert and educational series dedicated to Black artistry. Offering lesson plans suitable for a variety of K-12 classroom subjects, including Music, Art, History, Theater, and English, this curriculum guide brings the life and legacy of Malcolm X alive while being rooted in Davis's opera. Learn more at [www.CastleSkins.org](http://www.CastleSkins.org).

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