

Anthony Davis is an internationally known composer of operatic, symphonic, choral, and chamber works. 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. Born in Paterson, New Jersey, on February 20, 1951, Davis studied at Wesleyan and Yale universities. He was Yale's first Lustman Fellow, teaching composition and Afro-American studies. In 1987 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.



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Anthony Davis

OPERAS

Tania (1992), *Under the Double Moon* (1989), *Amistad* (1997),
X - the Life and Times of Malcom X (1986)



X-The Life and Times of Malcom X

an opera in three acts (1986)



Libretto English by Thulani Davis

Duration: 2 hours 30 minutes

World Premiere: September 1986, New York City Opera

Cast List: 5S, 5Mz, 5T, 4Bar, B-Bar, B, non-speaking roles

Orchestration: 2(pic).1.2(2sax).2(cbn)/2120/timp.3perc/cel.pf/str; jazz band: fl.2cl.
tpt.perc.vc.db.pf.dms

synopsis

The opera traces the life of Malcolm X from his boyhood in Lansing, Michigan, through his early brushes with the law, his conversion to the teachings of Elijah of the Nation of Islam, his own ministry and his breach with Elijah, his pilgrimage to Mecca, and his assassination.

"One extraordinary contemporary opera... [X] is a riveting work, uncompromising politically... splendidly theatrical. A spellbinding work... authentically important and original."

- Edward W. Said, *The Nation*

Tania

 an opera in one act (1992)

Libretto (English) by Michael John La Chiusa

Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes

World Premiere: June 1992, American Music Theater Festival

Cast: 5S, Mz, 3T, B-Bar, 2B

Orchestra: 2(pic).1.2(2sax).2(cbn)/2120/timp.3perc/ cel.pf/str; jazz band: fl.2cl.tpt.
perc.vc.db.pf.dms

synopsis

Loosely based on the kidnapping of Patricia Hearst in 1974 by the Symbionese Liberation Army, this opera examines the loss and destruction of an identity, and the collapse of an established social structure.

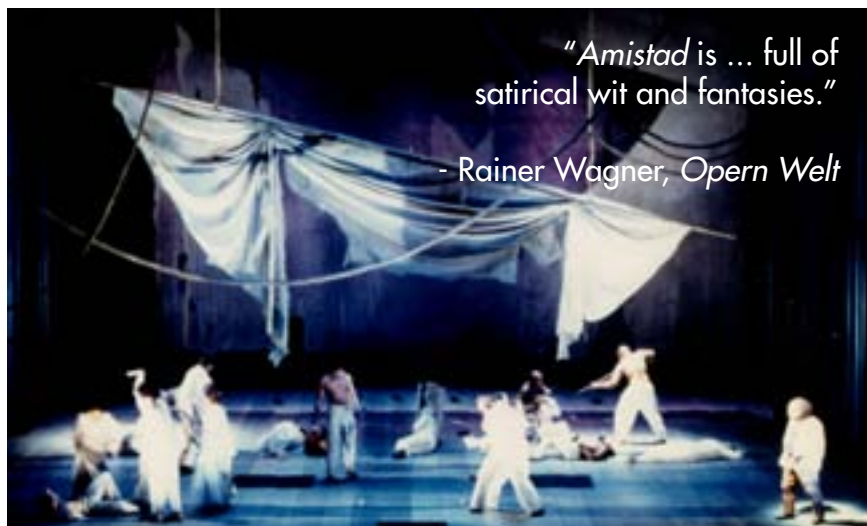


"Davis... writes in a fully modernist mode that is winningly underlaid by grooves ranging from fusion to samba. The harmonies and melodies, even at their most astringent, remain quite compelling with the beat as a point of reference. Davis always seems to be monitoring the proceedings with his shrewd ear..."

- Joshua Rosenblum,
Opera News

Amistad

an opera in two acts (1997)



"Amistad is ... full of satirical wit and fantasies."

- Rainer Wagner, *Opern Welt*

Duration: 2 hours 40 minutes

World Premiere: November 1997, Chicago Lyric Opera

(Revised/reduced version: May 2008, Spoleto Festival)

Libretto (English) by Thulani Davis

orchestra

2+pic.2+ca.2+bcl.2+cbn/4331/timp.3perc/
pf(CEL) hp/str; Jazz ensemble: 2 reeds, trom-
bone, bass

ALTERNATE: 2(pic).2(ca).2+bcl.2.2jazz
ww/2.2.2+jazz tbn.0/timp.perc.jazz perc/cel.
hp/str.jazz db

synopsis

The story of the slave ship Amistad, which was overthrown by slaves; their subsequent trial and ultimate vindication in an American court of law.

Under the Double Moon

an opera in two acts (1989)



Duration: 1 hour 45 minutes

World Premiere: June 1989, Opera Theatre of St. Louis

Libretto (English) by Deborah Atherton

Cast: S, Mz, 2T, Bar, B-Bar, B

Orchestra: 2(pic,af).1.2(cbcl,[bamboo fl]).1/2120/timp.3perc/hp/str

synopsis

Under the Double Moon is a science fiction opera about human choice and change. Set in the far future on the planet Undine, the opera tells the story of the telepathic twins, Tarj and Xola, as they are forced to grow from troublemaking children into decision-making adults.

press

"Two things stand out about [Double Moon]: the integrity of gesture behind a wild array of surface influences, and the clarity with which the text is projected. Chunks of mainstream atonality, bits of jazz and rhythm and blues, traces of avant-garde effects and generous helpings of controlled improvisation are among the ingredients in Davis' sonic stew..." - Kenneth LaFave, *The Kansas City Star*