

# Anthony Davis

## Opera and Theatre Works

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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.

### RECORDINGS

#### *Amistad*

Chicago Lyric Opera and Chorus  
Dennis Russell Davies, conductor  
New World Records 80627-2

#### *Tania*

Episteme  
Rand Steiger, conductor  
Koch International Classics 7467

#### *X — The Life and Times of Malcolm X*

Orchestra of St. Luke's  
William Henry Curry, conductor  
Gramavision R2-79470

### PHOTO CREDITS

Front cover and *Amistad*, R. Kusel, Lyric Opera of Chicago; *X*, Carol Rosegg, Martha Swope Associates; *Tania*, Musikwerkstatt Wien; *Under the Double Moon*, Ken Howard, Opera Theatre of St. Louis.

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# Anthony Davis

## Operas

### X — The Life and Times of Malcolm X

### Amistad



### Tania

### Under the Double Moon

# X — The Life and Times of Malcolm X



Opera in Three Acts  
Duration: 2 hours, 30 minutes

Libretto in English by Thulani Davis

WORLD PREMIERE  
September 28, 1986  
New York City Opera

CAST AND ORCHESTRATION  
5S, 5Mz, 5T, 4Bar, B-Bar, B  
non-speaking roles

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



Opera in One Act  
Duration: 1 hour, 30 minutes

Libretto in English by  
Michael John La Chiusa

WORLD PREMIERE  
June 14, 1992  
American Music Theater Festival

CAST AND ORCHESTRATION  
5S, Mz, 3T, B-Bar, 2B

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

Opera in Two Acts  
Duration: 2 hours, 40 minutes

Libretto in English by Thulani Davis

WORLD PREMIERE  
November 29, 1997  
Chicago Lyric Opera

(Revised/reduced version)  
May 22, 2008  
Spoleto Festival

CAST AND ORCHESTRATION  
S, 2Mz, 7T, 6Bar, B-Bar, 5B  
largely male chorus

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

Alt: 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.

“The score floats between blues and beating game-lan echoes, avoiding the shallowness of minimalism and employing moderate use of bright tones... In addition to all the heroic and dramatic events, the *Amistad* [setting] is also full of satirical wit and fantasies.”

—Rainer Wagner, *Opern Welt*

# Under the Double Moon

Opera in Two Acts  
Duration: 1 hour, 45 minutes

Libretto in English by Deborah Atherton

WORLD PREMIERE  
June 15, 1989  
Opera Theatre of St. Louis

CAST AND ORCHESTRATION  
S, Mz, 2T, Bar, B-Bar, B

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.



“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*