

RAJENDRA RAMOON MAHARAJ

Director & Writer

rajendramaharaj.com

Rajendra Ramoon Maharaj (he/him) is a multi-disciplinary American Theater Artist, Administrator, and Cultural Activist who investigates the complexities of narrative, perception, identity, political, social, and community storytelling, through research driven work that explores BIPOC narratives that have been historically bypassed in the American Theatre. He is an alumnus of the Art Equity BIPOC Leadership Circle in partnership with the David Geffen School of Drama at Yale University, member of the Metropolitan Opera / American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA) DEI Council, the former Associate Artistic Producer at Milwaukee Repertory Theater, and the former Artistic Director of New Freedom Theatre and American Stage Theatre Company. He is the former Stage Director and Artistic / Community Consultant for the inaugural Opera Theatre of St. Louis New Works Collective in partnership with the Mellon Foundation and the Edward Jones Foundation. Mr. Maharaj is the Founder and former Director of Artistic Programming for the Voices at the River Biennial Latinx and African American Playwright's Residency Program, in partnership with Arkansas Repertory Theatre and the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation. He is currently the Assistant Professor of Stage Direction (Musical Theatre & Theatre) at SUNY Geneseo.

After his graduate studies at Brooklyn College, Mr. Maharaj was awarded a Masters of Fine Arts Degree from Brooklyn College. Mr. Maharaj is a proud alumnus of the Actors Studio Playwrights and Directors Unit, Lincoln Center's Directors Lab, and Theater Communication Group's Rising Leaders of Color in the American Theater.

As a storyteller, Mr. Maharaj has worked on Broadway, Off-Broadway, and at many of our nation's top Regional Theaters including the Bernard B. Jacobs, The Theater at Madison Square Garden, The Sheen Center for Thought & Culture, The Public, Second Stage Theatre, Soho Playhouse, Classical Theater of Harlem, New Federal Theater, New World Stages, Nuyorican Poets Café, Tribeca Performing Arts Center, Theatre Row, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Portland Stage, Actors Theater of Louisville, Alabama Shakespeare, Signature Theater, Theater Works, Goodman Theater, New Freedom Theater, Arkansas Repertory Theater, Perseverance, and The Kennedy Center.

Mr. Maharaj has been honored with numerous awards for his body of work in the American Theater including the prestigious Woodie King Jr. Award, four Vivian Robinson AUDELCO Awards, Barrymore Award, Stage Directors and Choreographers Society Theatrical Moment of the Year, The New York International Fringe Festival Overall Excellence Award, Theater Communications Group Directors Grant and Playwriting Grant, Recipient of the National Alliance for Musical Theater Fifteen-Minute Musical Theater Challenge Award, he is a two time semi-finalist for the Blue Ink Playwriting Award Competition presented by American Blues Theater and a semi-finalist for the Austin Film Festival.

Mr. Maharaj was twice hailed in The New York Times as a Critics Pick for his work in the American Theatre. His playwrighting residencies include the Nuyorican Poets Cafe, New Orleans Writer's Residency, Alliance Theater, Arkansas Repertory Theater, Crossroads Theater, Amas Musical Theater, Triskelion Arts, the Resident Playwright of the Letter of Marque Theatre, is an alumnus of Theater Now's Virtual Musical Theater Writer's Group, a Season Finalist in The Downtown Urban Arts Festival in New York City, the inaugural playwright for the Theatre Raleigh New Works Reading

Series, and a finalist for the Eugene O'Neill National Playwrights Conference. He is the recipient of the Negro Ensemble Company Cutting Edge Playhouse Playwriting Residency.

Mr. Maharaj was recently the stage director of the World Premiere of *The Factotum* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago in their 22-23 season. He is also the Co-Book Writer and Dramaturg for this dynamic new American opera.

He also served as the stage director and consultant for *Slanted: An American Rock Opera*, *Madison Lodge*, and *Cook Shack* as part of Opera Theatre of St. Louis' Inaugural New Works Collective in their 22-23 season, as well as the stage director for Scott Joplin's *Treemonisha* re-imagined by composer Damien Sneed and librettist Karen Chilton.

In the 21-22 Season, Mr. Maharaj served as the Assistant Director on the World Premiere of *Fire Shut Up In My Bones* (Terence Blanchard / Libretto by Kasi Lemmons) at the world-famous Metropolitan Opera House. This groundbreaking opera was the first in the one-hundred-thirty-eight-year history of The Metropolitan Opera to feature on the main stage an African American composer and librettist while opening the world of Opera to BIPOC and Queer BIPOC communities throughout New York City, many of whom saw themselves reflected on The Metropolitan Opera stage for the first time.

As a scholar, he has lectured at Yale University, Columbia University, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, The Kennedy Center for Performing Arts, Howard University, George Washington University, Catholic University, St. John's University, St. Joseph's College, and Brooklyn College.

He has been featured in numerous articles and interviews in notable industry publications such as *The American Theater Magazine*, *The New York Times*, *The Yale School of Drama / Repertory Theater*

Review, The Dramatist, The Uptown Magazine, Playbill, Broadway World, The Daily News, The New York Post, The New York Beacon, The Philadelphia Sun, Time-Out New York, Harlem News, Amsterdam News, and The Stage Directors and Choreographers Journal for his work as a theater practitioner and leader.

Mr. Maharaj is the former Third Vice-President for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People for the Borough of Brooklyn as well as the founding Chairman for the Equity in the Arts and Culture Committee of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People for the Borough of Brooklyn. Mr. Maharaj has been recognized with the Time Warner Diverse Voices Grant, New York City Council Citation for Outstanding Community Service Leadership, New York State Senate Citation for Outstanding Community Service and Mentoring Leadership, The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania House of Representatives Citation for Excellence in the Performing Arts, Philadelphia Mayoral Proclamation, and a Proclamation from New York City Mayor, Eric L. Adams. Mr. Maharaj was recently awarded the 2020 Trinidad and Tobago United Community Association Inc. Award for his outstanding contribution to the Trinidad and Tobago Diaspora as an Artist, Advocate, and Educator in the United States of America.

He is represented by Michael Moore of Michael Moore Agency Literary and Creatives.

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