

Press Release

The Brooklyn Museum Announces Niles Luther as Its First Composer in Residence

Luther has released three original compositions—inspired by artworks in the new exhibition *Hiroshige's 100 Famous Views of Edo* (feat. Takashi Murakami)—that offer an immersive musical commentary on nineteenth-century Tokyo.



Courtesy Niles Luther

Marking a groundbreaking moment in its commitment to transformative artistic encounters, the Brooklyn Museum has welcomed New York–based classical cellist Niles Luther as its first-ever Composer in Residence. During his residency, which is supported by a fellowship from the Ford Foundation, Luther will bring his unique artistic vision to enhance the Museum’s cultural programming by composing original scores, or Art Music, inspired by the collection and exhibitions. This remarkable collaboration advances the Museum’s efforts to deepen the visitor experience and amplify artistic excellence across time and genres.

With this innovative role, Luther builds upon his long-standing relationship with the Museum, having performed at the opening reception of Kehinde Wiley’s 2015 retrospective *A New Republic* and at the Black History Month–themed First Saturday in February 2020. As the Museum’s first Composer in Residence, Luther is breaking ground in both the music and art worlds. While he has previously worked with acclaimed musical and visual artists, theater productions, and film and television projects, this residency marks a new chapter in his career—and a welcome addition to the Museum. Through his specialization in composing scores directly inspired by historical and contemporary art, Luther will create immersive experiences for

Brooklyn Museum

museumgoers of all ages, allowing visitors to engage with art through sight and sound.

“I am deeply honored to inaugurate the role of Composer in Residence at the Brooklyn Museum, supported by a generous fellowship from the Ford Foundation. This position represents a novel convergence of visual and musical arts, allowing me to explore and expand the boundaries of Art Music,” says Luther. “It is a unique opportunity to engage with the Museum’s diverse and rich collections, drawing inspiration to create compositions that resonate with contemporary audiences while paying homage to the classical tradition. I look forward to crafting musical works that not only complement the Museum’s exhibitions but also forge a lasting legacy of cultural enrichment and innovation.”

“Building on our tradition of pushing the boundaries of artistic dialogue, our Composer in Residence program offers visitors an entirely new way to engage with art,” says Sharon Matt Atkins, Deputy Director for Art, Brooklyn Museum. “We are so thrilled to welcome Niles Luther as we head into a landmark 200th anniversary year for the Brooklyn Museum.”

“Niles Luther’s vision and talent have set him apart as a composer, and welcoming him as the inaugural Composer in Residence is an investment in the Brooklyn Museum’s future of music innovation and artistic excellence,” said Darren Walker, President, Ford Foundation. “The Ford Foundation is proud to join the Brooklyn Museum to support Luther’s work, and we look forward to seeing how his work will add to the richness of this treasured New York City institution.”

Luther has kicked off his residency by composing three musical arrangements to accompany the exhibition [Hiroshige’s 100 Famous Views of Edo \(feat. Takashi Murakami\)](#), open April 5–August 4, 2024. Luther’s compositions deftly incorporate traditional Japanese scales, modes, and techniques to evoke the era’s ambiance as reflected in Utagawa Hiroshige’s prints. Drawing on his own experiences in Tokyo and collaborations with Japanese instrumentalists, Luther blends Eastern and Western musical elements to capture the essence of Hiroshige’s work, underscoring its lasting relevance. In this way, Luther’s music serves as a link between eras.

“I wanted to get as close as possible to Hiroshige’s creative source, so I could arm myself with the understanding needed to emulate the sounds of his time and create a dialogue that bridges the traditional Eastern and contemporary Western worlds,” says Luther.

In these three pieces, Luther employs binaural audio technology to create a multisensory experience, capturing and reproducing sound in a manner that simulates the natural hearing experience of human ears. Visitors can engage with the arrangements through the Museum’s digital guide on the Bloomberg Connects app, available to download for free at bloombergconnects.org.

In addition to composing music for *Hiroshige’s 100 Famous Views of Edo (feat. Takashi Murakami)*, Luther will play an integral role in collaborating with the Museum on its bicentennial programming. As the Museum embarks on its anniversary year, Luther will continue to enhance the visitor experience, creating original scores and

immersive audio elements to complement the Museum’s masterpieces and special exhibitions. [See all that’s in store for the Museum’s 200th anniversary.](#)

About Niles Luther

Hailed by the *Guardian* for his “rousing” and “romantic” orchestral scores, Niles Luther is a composer-cellist at the forefront of the Art Music genre. Based in New York City, Luther is rooted in the classical tradition, having studied the violoncello privately with Ole Akahoshi, Professor of Cello at the Yale School of Music, and Wolfram Koessel at the Manhattan School of Music.

Luther’s breadth as a musician has been evident since his time at school and continues to be recognized through his collaborations with a diverse array of artists, such as Jon Batiste, H.E.R., Mac Miller, Solange Knowles, SEAL, The Roots, Bastille, Common, and OneRepublic. He has also demonstrated his ability to transcend genres through performances on *Good Morning America*, *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, and *Late Night with Seth Meyers*. Luther was the on-site contractor for the recording of Alexandre Desplat’s score for *Little Women*, as well as principal cellist for the soundtracks of *Palmer* on Apple TV+ and *Mudbound* on Netflix.

From 2019 to 2021, Luther held the role of musical director at the Kehinde Wiley Studio—a significant turn in his career. In this position, Luther composed, orchestrated, produced, and installed scores for art films in galleries and museums across New York, London, and Paris. In 2022–23, he served as the principal cellist for the National Broadway Tour of *Les Misérables*, further showcasing his versatility and commitment to his craft.

About the Brooklyn Museum

At the Brooklyn Museum, art is a vital force for personal transformation and social change. For 200 years, the Museum has expanded the definitions of art and what it means to be a museum by revealing untold stories and uplifting our shared humanity. Among the oldest, largest, and boldest art museums in the United States, the Brooklyn Museum holds an encyclopedic collection of over 500,000 objects representing more than 5,500 years of creativity from cultures around the globe. Highlights range from ancient Egyptian masterpieces and world-class American works to our Center for Feminist Art, the only one of its kind in the country. Housed in a landmark building in the heart of Brooklyn, the Museum is dedicated to its communities—both near and far—and remains an advocate for growth, healing, and social change.