

AKILA WORK SONGS

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CRAIG HARRIS “BREATHE” RETURNS TO HARLEM ON OCTOBER 16, 2022!

FROM THE U.S. TO AUSTRIA AND NOW BACK TO HARLEM, HARRIS’ FREE JAZZ CONCERT IS A BOLD CALL-TO-ACTION IN THE FACE OF SOCIAL INJUSTICE.

New York, NY - - This month **Aquastra Media Productions** and **Arts & Education Continuum** announced the return of **BREATHE**, a large ensemble free concert composed by pioneering trombonist **Craig Harris**. More than 20 musicians will come together on **Sunday, October 16, 2022**, at Mt. Olivet Baptist Church in Harlem to offer “a powerful love-filled sonic statement” in response to the long-term and current injustices inflicted upon African American people. **BREATHE**—conceived by Harris who is known as a “sonic shaman,” is a reminder for the community to remain resilient in fighting for justice.

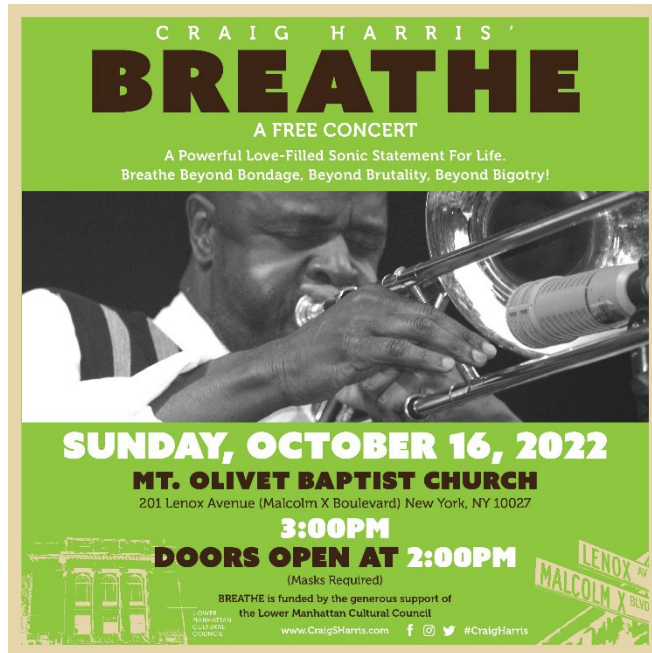
Mt. Olivet Baptist Church is located at 201 Lenox Avenue (Malcolm X Boulevard) | New York, NY 10027. The concert starts at 3:00 pm (doors open at 2:00 pm). **BREATHE** is free and open to the public. RSVP via Eventbrite is encouraged but *not* required. Register [here](#). **BREATHE** is funded by the generous support of the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council.

BREATHE premiered in Harlem on October 16, 2016, with an ensemble of nearly 50 musicians. In January 2017, Harris presented **BREATHE** at the *13th Annual Winter JazzFest* in New York City and later that year **BREATHE** was performed at the *Outreach Festival* in Schwaz, Austria. Most recently, **BREATHE** was performed at Brooklyn Botanic Garden in 2021 and at the River to River Festival in Manhattan in 2022.

Harris gives insight into the history of the work, “*When Ferguson happened and Michael Brown was killed - if Amiri Baraka was alive I would have gotten that call. If my friend, Sekou Sundiata was here, I would have gotten that call. What are WE going to do? I had thought for a long time about what to do, then I saw Eric Garner on the ground saying, “I can’t breathe” and it hit me right away.*



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The whole concept of playing brass and woodwind instruments is that you must breathe; it's essential. The breath is essential to everything. BREATHE is about the ancient contemporary sonic offerings we play, which will inspire one to only accept social justice...past, present, and future."

BREATHE'S FEATURED MUSICIANS

John Clarke, French Horn • **Strickland Shanyse**, French Horn • **Alexander Gertner**, French Horn • **Joseph Daley**, Euphonium • **Omar Kabir**, Euphonium • **Earl McIntyre**, Trombone • **Joe Fiedler**, Trombone • **Dick Griffin**, Trombone • **Cameron Alforque**, Trumpet • **Eddie Allen**, Trumpet • **Jonathan Finlayson**, Trumpet • **Franz Hackl**, Trumpet •

Joe Exley, Tuba • **Ben Stapp**, Tuba • **Joan Ashley**, Shekere & Djembe • **Neil Clarke**, Percussion • **Abdou Mbaye**, Percussion • **Veux Mbaye**, Percussion • **Abdoulaye Diop**, Percussion • **Damon DueWhite**, Drums

ABOUT THE COMPOSER Craig Harris is a trombonist, composer, and gifted sonic shaman. His musical journey began when he started touring with the inimitable **Sun Ra** in 1976. Craig started on a path that would ultimately affirm his place among music's most progressive thought leaders. He is a prolific composer and bandleader of various-sized ensembles. Celebrating 50 years as a musician in 2022, Craig has amassed an extensive discography which features his own influential work as well as contributions he has made on the projects of esteemed colleagues. Also in 2022, Harris was nominated for a 2022 NAACP Image Award for his co-composition of the score for **Judas and the Black Messiah** (the Oscar-winning film directed by Shaka King and starring Daniel Kaluuya and LaKeith Stanfield).

Internationally, the Harlem-based musician is respected as one steeped in the tradition of using art and culture to push back against social injustices. His newest recording, **Managing the Mask**, is available on all streaming platforms here: <https://songwhip.com/craigharris/managing-the-mask>

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Craig Harris is available for media interviews regarding BREATHE, his latest recording (*Managing the Mask*), and other topics related to jazz music, culture, and history; Sun Ra and Afrofuturism, and art as a tool for social change. Media/press inquiries are directed to April R. Silver (april@akilaworksongs.com) or Lea Byrd (lea@akilaworksongs.com).

Photo Credit: Diane Allford for Jazz in the Valley (TRANSART & Cultural Services)