



The Kitchen Center
for Video, Music, Dance,
Performance, Film & Literature

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**TRACIE MORRIS, GRAHAM HAYNES, LAURIE CARLOS,
DAVID THOMSON, and MICHELLE HALSELL:**
**A major confluence of talent across media to conjure up
three different futures...**

***Afrofuturistic* (World Premiere)**

A Kitchen Production

**May 15-17 [Thu-Sat], May 21-24 [Wed-Sat] 8pm \$20 advanced
sales/\$25 at door**

Post-performance discussion: May 22 [Thu]

Lunch-break performance: May 14 [Wed] 12pm \$10

Written and performed by **Tracie Morris**
Choreographed and performed by **David Thomson**
Music by **Graham Haynes**
Visual design by **Michelle Halsell**
Directed by **Laurie Carlos**

“Exhilarating visionary African-American poetry and music at the
vanguard of a new generation of creative artists.”—*Stowe Reporter*

A multimedia journey through the poetic landscape of social possibilities, *Afrofuturistic* is the latest offering by visionary sound poet **Tracie Morris**, in collaboration with four outstanding artists: Bessie Award-winning choreographer **David Thomson**, composer and musical innovator **Graham Haynes**, visual artist **Michelle Halsell**, and director **Laurie Carlos**. Marking the poet’s first foray into a movement-oriented project, *Afrofuturistic* weaves interior dialogues and movements with cutting-edge electronica and virtual images to create a morality tale informed by scientific facts and refracted through the lens of racial politics. Morris, who emerged at the forefront of the spoken word scene a decade ago, was recently featured as a 2002 Whitney Museum Biennial Artist for her sound work.

“*Afrofuturistic* represents the confluence of four major talents at the vanguard of experimental performance,” says Kitchen Director Elise Bernhardt. “**Tracie Morris** is one of these artists who fluidly navigates between media—venturing into new and revelatory modes of expressing a

contemporary African-American experience.” A journey of multiple endings through disparate sonic and visual landscapes, *Afrofuturistic* explores three possible futures—utopic, dystopic, and unknown. It is a non-linear, theatrical excavation of an African-American intellectual and imaginary “interior” to take a look at what is, what will be, and what could be. All the elements of the production will follow the movement of a cycle, referring back to the original situation, with its same set of circumstances, environments, communities, and trends.

Afrofuturistic evolved out of **Tracie Morris’ MIST** residency at The Kitchen. **MIST** (Movement, Image, Sound, Text) is The Kitchen’s in-house laboratory offering artists time and support to experiment with their work through new collaborations.

Commissioned by The Kitchen, *Afrofuturistic* was made possible by the Doris Duke Fund for Dance of the National Dance Project, a program administered by the New England Foundation for the Arts with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the Philip Morris Companies Inc.

Additionally, it was commissioned as part of the national series of works from Meet The Composer *Commissioning Music/USA*, which is made possible by generous support from the National Endowment for the Arts, The Helen F. Whitaker Fund, The Catherine Filene Shouse Foundation, and the Target Foundation.

Partial support has also been provided by the Live Music for Dance Program of the Mary Flager Cary Charitable Trust, administered by the American Music Center. Additional commissioning support from Scotland’s International Center for Contemporary Arts.

About the artists:

Tracie Morris (Author/Performer) is a poet has worked in multiple media: printed text, theater, dance, music, and film. She has toured extensively throughout the U.S., Canada, Europe, Africa, and Asia, collaborating with an extensive range of artists and participating in over a dozen recording projects. She has received critical acclaim around the country with her own band, *Sonic Synthesis*, recently having completed a national tour. Her performance work has been featured in commissioned pieces for several organizations (Aaron Davis Hall, the International Festival for the Arts, Franklin Furnace, Yale Repertory Theater, the 2002 Whitney Biennial), and her writing has been anthologized in literary magazines, newspapers, and books (*360 Degrees: A Revolution of Black Poets*, *Listen Up!*, *Aloud: Voices from the Nuyorican Poets Café*, *The Outlaw Bible of American Poetry*, *Soul: Black Power, Politics and Pleasure*, *110 Stories*). This year alone, her work has appeared in the book *An Exaltation of Forms*, and the magazines *Calahoo* (spring) and *Social Text* (summer). She has received a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship, Creative Capital Fellowship, the National Haiku Slam Championship, and an Asian Cultural Council Fellowship. She is the author of two poetry collections, *Intermission* and *Chap-T-her Won*. Tracie Morris received a Masters Degree in Fine Arts for Poetry (Hunter College) and a Masters in Performance Studies (New York University). She teaches poetry at Sarah Lawrence College.

Laurie Carlos (Director). Interdisciplinary artist Laurie Carlos is an original player in the New York Avant-Garde Performance scene. She has developed new characters and new aesthetics for the stage for over thirty years. Her pieces, including *White Chocolate*, *The Cooking Show* and *Organdy Falsetto* have been widely anthologized. She has earned a Bessie Award for *White Chocolate* and for *Heat*. She is an OBIE Award-winning actress, that created the role of Lady in

Blue in Ntozake Shange's *For Colored Girls who Have Considered Suicide when the Rainbow is Enuf*. As a director, she has helmed the premieres of new work by award-winning writers Sharon Bridgforth, Carl Hancock Rux, Luis Alfaro, Rebecca Rice and Daniel Alexander Jones. Laurie Carlos, Robbie McCauley and Jessica Hagedorn formed the performance group Thought Music in the mid-1980's (*Teenytown*). Laurie Carlos is the co-artistic director of Movin' Spirits Dance Theater Company. She is currently Artistic Fellow at Penumbra Theatre Company in St. Paul, Minnesota, the U.S.'s where she curates the celebrated performance series *Non-English Speaking Spoken Here*. Laurie Carlos has received numerous grants and awards from the New York Foundation for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Theater Communications Group. She was the artist fellow at Penumbra Theater (St Paul, MN) for six years (1996-2002).

Michelle Halsell (Visual Designer) merges a background in filmmaking and new media developing new approaches to filmmaking and digital storytelling projects for the past nine years. In 1999, Ms. Halsell worked with Stanley Nelson in an interactive film prototype of the film *Black Press: Soldiers Without Swords* for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. That research to the production of an interactive and educational DVD for his next project *Marcus Garvey: Look for me in the Whirlwind* (Time Warner, 2002). Some of Ms. Halsell's past works include: co-Producer on the Digital Divide Series airing on PBS in 2000; Project Producer for Healthlinks; a 25-part interactive series funded by a U.S. Department of Education Star Schools Grant, Producer; a 5-part series on *Ancient Nubia*, and *Black Legacies* - Exhibits of the National Center of Afro-American Artists. In 2000, Ms. Halsell co-founded the award winning company, Missing Pixel, specializing in the design and development of interactive Web sites, CD-ROMs, DVDs and digital video. Ms. Halsell received her Masters Degree in Interactive Telecommunications from New York University and she teaches a graduate seminar on Interactive Documentary Production at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts.

Graham Haynes (Composer) is regarded as a leading force in contemporary electronic music and World Beat. He has produced a body of work that is both ancient and futuristic, anti-modern and postmodern, funky and contemplative, tribal and individualistic, sacred and secular. In 1979, in the midst of this musical and spiritual journey, he found an artistic soul mate in alto saxophonist Steve Coleman. The beginnings of their band Five Elements ultimately evolved into the collective M-Base--Coleman's vision of improvisational music. Their recordings include the albums *Motherland Pulse* (1985), *World Expansion* (1986), *Five Elements* (1986), and *Sine Die* (1987). In 1990 he moved to Paris to seek out the city's African, Arabic, and Indian music scene. His first efforts resulted in the subtle and enigmatic *Nocturne Parisian* released in 1991. Combining electronics with the ancient acoustic sounds of the djembe drum and the Indian tampura, *Nocturne Parisian* was a major step toward consolidating Haynes's expansive musical vision. By 1993 he was ready to return to New York, but not before recording the critically acclaimed *The Griots Footsteps*, and signing with Polygram/France. In 1995, he recorded *Transitions*, expanding even more upon the fusion between digital, turntable, and traditional ensemble musicianship. Becoming involved more with hip-hop and popular dance music, he appeared on The Roots' first two albums, and continues to work across many genres, with artists such as Cassandra Wilson, Rodney Kendrick, Vernon Reid, and his father Roy Haynes, Marque Gilmore, Abbey Lincoln, Bob Stewart, Bheki Mseleku, Bill Laswell, Tetragramaton: Submerge and Organik Mechanix.

David Thomson (Choreographer), a native New Yorker, began dancing at Haverford/Bryn Mawr Colleges and later received a degree in Liberal Arts from SUNY Purchase. He has had the privilege of working and collaborating with over thirty diverse artists and companies including Mel Wong, Jane Comfort, Bebe Miller, Marta Renzi, Kevin Wynn, Michael Dinwiddie, Wendy Perron, Remy Charlip, Lee Nagrin, Susan Rethorst, Irene Hultman, David Roussève, Robert Wilson, Laurie Anderson, Michel Laub/Remote Control (Europe), Ralph Lemon, Bo Madvig (Denmark) and the Lavender Light Gospel Choir. From 1987-93, as a member of Trisha Brown Company, he toured extensively throughout the United States, Europe, Asia and the former Soviet Union. Mr. Thomson has performed downtown, off-Broadway, and in London's West End with the acclaimed a cappella performance group Hot Mouth, of which he is a founding member. He has taught both nationally and internationally, and was guest faculty at Sarah Lawrence College from 1994-95. His work has been presented in New York and Europe and during the last two years he has worked on The Forest Project, an on-going series of collaborations with various artists. He was awarded a 2001 New York Dance and Performance (Bessie) Award for Sustained Achievement in Performance.

The Kitchen is located at 512 West 19th Street (between 10th & 11th Avenues). For tickets, call The Kitchen Box Office at 212-255-5793, ext. 11. For more information or press comps, call 212-255-5793, ext. 14.