

**Meredith Monk
&
Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble**

**2012-2013
COMPANY INFORMATION**

NEW PIECE IN DEVELOPMENT: *On Behalf of Nature*

NUMBER OF PEOPLE: exact number tbd, likely 8 performers and 4-5 crew, totaling 12-13

SET UP: likely one day before first performance

STAGE SIZE: TBD

RECENT VENUES: Ms. Monk will begin rehearsals on this project in the winter/spring of 2011

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: In late 2010, Meredith Monk will begin developmental rehearsals on a new movement, music and media work for theater entitled *On Behalf of Nature*. The inspiration for the title is from a poem by Gary Snyder. The project's overarching concepts and imagery have been drawn from the writings of Snyder and other authors who address the precarious state of our global ecology. This poetic meditation on the environment continues Monk's profound consideration of the human condition through addressing notions of impermanence, compassion, and spiritual practice through her own unique language that transcends ethnicity, nationality, gender and age. This new work will focus attention on what we are in danger of losing and will aspire to make all who experience it more conscious of what we have – to cherish and preserve the natural environment. Ms. Monk seeks to convey the interconnections and the larger context of human behavior and existence. Her intentions are suggested by a quote from Snyder's oeuvre. "Art takes nothing from the world; it is a gift and an exchange. It leaves the world nourished." Through images of flocking and other forms of animal behavior, Monk intends to portray the human realm as just one layer in a multitude of realms. Informing this consideration are the writings and research of animal scientist Dr. Temple Grandin who has designed livestock handling systems for meat processing facilities that improve animal welfare. Monk's multitalented Vocal Ensemble will work closely with her on the creation of this new performance. Not only will each ensemble member be integral to the movement, but all will sing and perform instruments, a new departure for the company. Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble include Ellen Fisher, Katie Geissinger, Ching Gonzalez, Bohdan Hilash, John Hollenbeck, and Allison Sniffin and may involve one or more special guest artists



Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble will be looking for workshop and development partners and opportunities in the 2011-2012 season, with an aim towards touring in 2012 and 2013.

**Meredith Monk
&
Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble**

**2012-2013
COMPANY INFORMATION**

PIECE: *Songs of Ascension* a new work by Meredith Monk in collaboration with Ann Hamilton

NUMBER OF PEOPLE: 12 performers and 6 crew – Total 18

SET UP: One day before first performance

STAGE SIZE: Proscenium opening 36' wide; 16' wing space left and right; 40' from plaster line to rear theatre wall including on-stage crossover; Orchestra pit with lifts or platforms for leveling.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: *Songs of Ascension* explores the spiritual, vocal and physical notions of ascension across geography and time. This new evening-length work – a combination of Meredith Monk's pristine music and iconoclastic theatricality and artist Ann Hamilton's raw, sensuous visual elements – refocuses perceptions of music-theatre. The otherworldly sounds of Monk's Vocal Ensemble, a string quartet led by violinist Todd Reynolds and a chorus of local singers create an exquisite music and performance event.



A monumental tower designed by visual artist Ann Hamilton is one of several inspirations for *Songs of Ascension*. With evocative video images that rotate throughout the theater and innovative sound design by Jody Elff, Monk and Hamilton recast theater spaces in dynamic and subtle ways that augment the relationship of performer to audience. The sound design emulates the enveloping acoustics of Hamilton's tower, turning the theater itself into a resonant chamber. Processional transitions through the audience evoke a physical as well as spiritual transformation. These explorations have helped to fuel a dynamic musical and visual language into an unparalleled theatrical experience, that is customized for every space it's performed in. *Songs of Ascension* has been conceived as a continuous composition, a departure from the collaged or episodic structures Monk has utilized in her recent works. The choreography uses various motifs of procession and circumambulation – such as those aligned with spiritual rituals. The image of perpetual motion, with one figure moving throughout the production, heightens the work's evocation of trance or transcendence.

Since the project's insemination, Monk has worked to include a string quartet as part of the musical landscape. Her previous work composing for Kronos Quartet and the New World Symphony has fed the pallet for *Songs of Ascension*, alongside her music for voice and untraditional instrumentation, performed by herself, the Vocal Ensemble and chorus, including the Eastern Asian drone instrument, the Sruti. In March 2008 Monk worked with the Elysian Quartet while in residence in Dartington, England. Returning to New York for further development, Monk has worked closely with her Vocal Ensemble and renown violinist Todd Reynolds' string quartet, to complete the compositions and choreography, as well as with the talented costume designer, Yoshio Yabara. In June 2008, Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble were in residence at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis to develop the staging and refine the project, culminating in preview performances. In October 2008, *Songs of Ascension* premiered at Stanford Lively Arts in California, followed by an acclaimed run at Cal Art's Redcat Theater in Los Angeles. In the spring of 2009, *Songs of Ascension* went to The Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, and will have its New York premier in BAM's Next Wave in the fall of 2009.

260 WEST BROADWAY, SUITE #2, NEW YORK, NY 10013 T 212.904.1330 F 212.904.1305 WWW.MEREDITHMONK.ORG

MEREDITHMONK, Artistic Director • LINDA S. GOLDING, Chair and President • ARBIER. THALACKER, Treasurer • HARUNO ARAI, Secretary
MICKI WESSON, President Emerita • CATHY APPEL • ROBERT GRIMM • SALI ANN KRIEGSMAN • LINDA R. SAFRAN
BARBARA G. SAHLMAN • CAROL SCHUSTER • FREDERIEKE SANDERS TAYLOR • OLIVIA GEORGIA, Executive Director

**Meredith Monk
&
Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble**

**2012-2013
COMPANY INFORMATION**

PIECE: *impermanence*

NUMBER OF PEOPLE: 8 performers and 5 crew – Total 13

SET UP: Two days before the first performance

STAGE SIZE: Proscenium opening 36' wide; 8' wing space left and right; 40' from plaster line to rear theatre wall including on-stage crossover; white full stage "opera" front projection plastic drop; stage deck painted to 'midnight blue' as specified by company.



RECENT VENUES: Riverside Studios, London, England; Galvin Playhouse, Tempe, AZ; Yerba Buena Center, San Francisco, CA; George Mason University Center for the Arts, Fairfax, VA; Burghof Theatre, Lorrach, Germany; Yugoslav Drama Theatre, Belgrade; Brooklyn Academy of Music; Teatro Comunale, Ferrara, Italy

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Meredith Monk's *impermanence* utilizes a multidisciplinary approach to reveal a joyful and poignant look at change and the essential experiences we all share, from "...what we leave behind, to our fears and our celebrations of life....(*Dance Insider*)". Embodying a broad spectrum of emotions, the phenomenal Meredith Monk and her dynamic Vocal Ensemble offer a reflection on the delicacy and power of the human spirit.

impermanence uses music, video, movement, and text to create a celebratory and moving meditation on life. Each section of the work, announced cabaret-style by a spoken title (*Last Song; Liminal; Seeds; Particular Dance; Disequilibrium Song, Mieke's Melody #5*), provides a non-narrative look at the different facets of impermanence and the joy and wonder of being. Accompanied by voice, piano, woodwinds, bicycle wheel and other inventive instrumentation, the many scenes -- a montage of video portraits; performers balanced on chairs that seemingly float in space; a celebration dance; ten hands playing one piano; songs of beginnings and endings -- create a collage of emotion, image, and sound that gently transport the audience through a haunting and mysterious, but at its core, essentially human experience.

Once again Monk works with the multitalented singers / performers / instrumentalists in the Vocal Ensemble: Theo Bleckmann, Ellen Fisher, Katie Geissinger, Ching Gonzalez, Bohdan Hilash, John Hollenbeck, and Allison Sniffin. On the heels of Monk's highly acclaimed *mercy*, *impermanence* presents another opportunity to feed our senses with Monk's rich expression of the inexpressible.

PRESS:

"*impermanence* is a meditation on death and the passage of time, done with Monk's inimitable brand of voluptuous spareness. With its fluid blend of choral music, song, film and dance, it marks the latest unclassifiable effort by this visionary creator."

Joshua Kosman, *San Francisco Chronicle*

**Meredith Monk
&
Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble**

**2012-2013
COMPANY INFORMATION**

PIECE: Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble in Concert
Vocal Ensemble in Concert



NUMBER OF PEOPLE:

7 performers and 3 crew - Total 10 / 5 performers and 3 crew – Total 8 / 4 performers and 2 crew – Total 6

SET UP: One day before first performance

STAGE SIZE: Minimum performing space of 28 feet (8.5 meters) width by 13 feet (4 meters) depth, and minimum 16.5 feet (5 meters) to lighting grid over stage

RECENT VENUES: Archa Theatre, Prague; Trafo Theatre, Budapest; Joe's Pub, New York; Bumbershoot Festival, Seattle, WA; La Milanese Festival, Milan, Italy; Symphony Space, New York; Opear House, Syria; Norrlands Operan, Sweden; Teatro Ariston, Teatrro Communale, Italy; Centro Culturol de Belle, Spain;

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble consists of some of the finest and most adventurous singer/performers active in new music. The group has received multiple awards and critical acclaim, performing in numerous Monk recordings on the ECM New Music Series label, and at many of the world's most lauded theaters and concert halls (including Carnegie Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall in London, and Cologne Philharmonie, among others). The artistic traditions and backgrounds which the Vocal Ensemble encompass are wonderfully diverse, ranging from Chinese and Western opera, to Broadway and musical theater, to all forms of movement theater and interdisciplinary performance.

Performances can range in size and instrumentation, often including multi-instrumentalists as well as singers. Vocal Ensemble members joining Ms. Monk may include: Allison Sniffin, Katie Geissinger, Theo Bleckmann, Ching Gonzalez, Bohdan Hilash, John Hollenbeck, and others. Vocal Ensemble concerts without Ms. Monk are also available. Repertoire varies, consisting of a range from Ms. Monk's vast 40+ years of composing. Selections may include: MUSIC FOR UNACCOMPANIED VOICE (*Songs from the Hill; Light Songs and Volcano Songs (duets)*); Selections from FACING NORTH; MUSIC FOR VOICE AND PIANO (1972-1993), which includes *Gotham Lullaby, Travelling, Madwoman's Vision, Choosing Companions*, as well as selections from THE GAMES and a selection from her most recent music theater piece, *impermanence*, and her newest piece, *Songs of Ascension*.

PRESS:

"...when you see Meredith Monk perform, she climbs up over the bulwark of your plans and strategies and ambitions; she makes them seem small and insignificant, and you get really close to that naked, unconcealed thing, the music of the heavens." -Rick Moody, *Men's Journal*

"A composer, singer and theater artist for whom experimentation has led to wondrous discovery, Monk conjures up a spectrum of colorful and evocative sounds from her one-of-a-kind vocal instrument. The results are haunting, poignant, terrifying and sometimes screamingly funny...Her concert, the opening event...introduced a musician of boundless imagination and vision. Both alone and with her Vocal Ensemble, she took the audience into enchanting, compassionate and disturbing worlds...the shadings, effects and expressive elements captured the listener's attentions and never let go." - Donald Rosenberg, *The Plain Dealer*

260 WEST BROADWAY, SUITE #2, NEW YORK, NY 10013 T 212.904.1330 F 212.904.1305 WWW.MEREDITHMONK.ORG

MEREDITHMONK, Artistic Director • LINDA S. GOLDING, Chair and President • ARBIER. THALACKER, Treasurer • HARUNO ARAI, Secretary
MICKI WESSON, President Emerita • CATHY APPEL • ROBERT GRIMM • SALI ANN KRIEGSMAN • LINDA R. SAFRAN
BARBARA G. SAHLMAN • CAROL SCHUSTER • FREDERIEKE SANDERS TAYLOR • OLIVIA GEORGIA, Executive Director

**Meredith Monk
&
Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble**

**2012-2013
COMPANY INFORMATION**

PIECE: Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble with Local Chorus – *Other Worlds Revealed*

NUMBER OF PEOPLE: 8 performers and 2 crew – Total 10

SET UP: Concert set up day of performance; work with local chorus to be determined – contact artist's management

STAGE SIZE: : Minimum performing space of 28 feet (8.5 meters) width by 13 feet (4 meters) depth, and minimum 16.5 feet (5 meters) to lighting grid over stage



RECENT VENUES: San Francisco Symphony Chorus as part of the Mavericks series curated by Michael Tilson Thomas; the Montclair State University Singers in Montclair, NJ

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Meredith Monk's wordless compositions combine the technical virtuosity of classical music, the poignancy of folk music, the freedom and flexibility of jazz and the rhythmic excitement of rock and roll. Proclaimed "American's Coolest Composer," Monk uses her voice, and instrument of amazing flexibility, to create vibrant aural soundscapes. Ms. Monk rarely has an opportunity to perform her larger choral works from *Book Of Days* and *ATLAS: an opera in three parts*. A company member will travel in advance of the concert to work with your local choral ensemble and provide them with an invaluable opportunity to learn from some of the finest and most adventurous singer/performers active in new music today.

ATLAS: an opera in three parts (1991) - *ATLAS* was given its world premiere in February 1991 at Houston Grand Opera. In *ATLAS*, travel is a metaphor for spiritual quest and commitment to inner vision. The opera centers around one character, Alexandra Daniels, a female explorer whose spiritual quest unfolds over the course of the opera. In *Part I: Personal Climate*, young Alexandra dreams of far away places. She prepares for her journey and chooses three companions to accompany her. In *Part II: Night Travel*, two other companions join the travelers to undergo ordeals to test their inner resources - four survive. The others ascend to a timeless radiant place. *Part III: Invisible Light* is where they gain spiritual knowledge; Alexandra comes full circle, finding what she was looking for in simple acts.

The imaginative and memorable score is truly an ensemble work. It has been called a "...work of extraordinary musical charm, pristine freshness and a sense of wonderment..."

Book of Days (1988) - Meredith Monk has said, "*Book of Days* is a film about time...about the sadness and joy of human nature." The film takes place primarily in the Middle Ages, but the characters and their concerns are deeply familiar. Monk draws parallels between this age of war, plague and fear of the Apocalypse, with our modern times of racial and religious conflict, AIDS, and the fear of nuclear annihilation. *Book of Days* has a mythic quality, a sense of displacement; it encourages the viewer to ponder the ultimate fragility of the human experience. Monk sees the music as creating a sense of timelessness; of time as a circle or recurring cycle. *Book of Days* is very much about the transparency and relativity of time - the sense that you can see one period through another.

"*Book of Days* is adventurous music...nothing less than a paean to the vast image-creating potential that resides in the human voice."

260 WEST BROADWAY, SUITE #2, NEW YORK, NY 10013 T 212.904.1330 F 212.904.1305 WWW.MEREDITHMONK.ORG

MEREDITHMONK, Artistic Director • LINDA S. GOLDING, Chair and President • ARBIER. THALACKER, Treasurer • HARUNO ARAI, Secretary
MICKI WESSON, President Emerita • CATHY APPEL • ROBERT GRIMM • SALI ANN KRIEGSMAN • LINDA R. SAFRAN
BARBARA G. SAHLMAN • CAROL SCHUSTER • FREDERIEKE SANDERS TAYLOR • OLIVIA GEORGIA, Executive Director

**Meredith Monk
&
Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble**

**2012-2013
COMPANY INFORMATION**

PIECE: *Education of the Girlchild Revisited*

Part I: solo from *Education of the Girlchild* (1972)

Part II: *Shards*: music, images and movement from the “Girlchild” period (1969-1973)

NUMBER OF PEOPLE: 4 Performers and 2 crew, totaling 6 people

SET UP: One day before first performance

STAGE SIZE: Proscenium opening 36' wide; 8' wing space left and right; 35' from plaster line to rear theatre wall including on-stage crossover;

RECENT VENUES: Ms. Monk revived this solo comprising Part II of *Education of the Girlchild: an opera* (1972) for the 2008 American Dance Festival in Durham, NC. *Girlchild Revisited* premiered in June of 2010 in Paris, France opening the June Events Festival at The Cartoucherie, and was subsequently performed in at Marseille Objectif Danse in France. She and her Vocal Ensemble have performed other works extensively internationally in St. Petersburg, Dublin, Singapore, Montpelier, Paris, Basel and Ferrara, Italy and in the United States in New York, Idaho, New Jersey, Nebraska, Massachusetts, Ohio, California and Illinois among many other states and countries.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Meredith Monk is perhaps the most profoundly unique performer in any genre of performing arts today. She combines the talents of a composer, vocalist, choreographer and performance artist into a wholly original presentation. Recipient of countless honors, she has performed to critical acclaim in prestigious venues throughout the world.

The solo from *Education of the Girlchild* was originally performed by Meredith Monk in the spring of 1972 and subsequently became Part II of *Education of the Girlchild: an opera*, which premiered in November 1973 and included a cast of nine. A poetic work conjuring cycles of growth and transmutation by exploring female/male archetypes, it was awarded first prize in musical theater at the Venice Biennale in 1975. Monk revived her solo for the 2008 American Dance Festival, and once again shares her exhilarating voice and renowned presence in an inimitable performance of this legendary work. During the second half of the program, *Shards*, Monk is joined by Ensemble members Katie Geissinger, Ellen Fisher and Allison Sniffin to revive music and movement from the “Girlchild” era, including selections from *Key: an album of invisible theatre* (1970) and *Vessel: an opera epic* (1971). This masterful program revisits the source of Monk’s prolific outpouring, offering some of the most original music of our time.

PRESS:

“...[*Girlchild*] is art at its best, art that pulses with energy and sets up sympathetic vibrations which echo and reverberate down into our innermost selves.” – *NY Metropolitan Review* #30, 1972



260 WEST BROADWAY, SUITE #2, NEW YORK, NY 10013 T 212.904.1330 F 212.904.1305 WWW.MEREDITHMONK.ORG

MEREDITHMONK, Artistic Director • LINDA S. GOLDING, Chair and President • ARBIER. THALACKER, Treasurer • HARUNO ARAI, Secretary
MICKI WESSON, President Emerita • CATHY APPEL • ROBERT GRIMM • SALI ANN KRIEGSMAN • LINDA R. SAFRAN
BARBARA G. SAHLMAN • CAROL SCHUSTER • FREDERIEKE SANDERS TAYLOR • OLIVIA GEORGIA, Executive Director

**Meredith Monk
&
Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble**

**2012-2013
COMPANY INFORMATION**

PIECE: Meredith Monk in Concert

NUMBER OF PEOPLE: Meredith Monk, accompanist and crew – Total 3

SET UP: Same day

STAGE SIZE: Flexible

RECENT VENUES: Ms. Monk frequently performs as a soloist, with recent appearances internationally in St. Petersburg, Dublin, Singapore, Montpelier, Paris, Basel and Ferrara, Italy and in the United States in New York, Idaho, New Jersey, Nebraska, Massachusetts, Ohio, California, North Carolina and Illinois.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The repertory included in the concerts varies. Ms. Monk frequently performs Music for Voice and Piano (1972-1993), which includes GOTHAM LULLABY, TRAVELLING, MADWOMAN'S VISION, CHOOSING COMPANIONS, and THE TALE; NEW YORK REQUIEM, a work she composed for long-time ensemble member Tom Bogdan and SONGS FROM THE HILL. SONGS FROM THE HILL has been recorded on Wergo Records and many of Meredith's other solo work have been recorded on ECM New Series. Meredith can be accompanied by a Vocal Ensemble member, in which case the first half of the concert is solo, and the second half consists of a number of duets for voice, and voice and piano.

The voice has always been at the center of Meredith Monk's work. A pioneer in what is now called extended vocal technique, Monk has dazzled, startled, provoked and delighted audiences since the 1960s with her visionary work. Since 1965, Monk has been composing music for the voice as a multi-faceted instrument, expanding the boundaries of traditional vocal music.

For Monk, the voice is a language in itself, which can delineate energies and feelings for which we have no words. She has invented a stunning vocabulary including her characteristic ululations, multi-phonics, whispers, slides, range skips and hockets. Her wordless music combines the technical virtuosity of classical music, the poignancy and directness of folk music, the freedom and flexibility of jazz and the excitement of rock and roll. Monk's vocal art has had an important influence on many artists, from contemporary composers, to rock-and-roll singers, to present-day jazz stylists.

PRESS:

"An utterly unique sound based on a bold mixture of dramatic expression, sheer vocal strength and compositional elements ranging from folksong to birdsong." -*Christian Science Monitor*

"Its most striking feature is the unearthly form of primal song that Monk has evolved: strings of repeated syllables that never form words, intoned in a voice that slides from the guttural to the angelically pure. Monk calls her work an opera, perhaps because of...the primacy of music among its elements; I'd call it an incantation." -Tobi Tobias, *New York Magazine*



260 WEST BROADWAY, SUITE #2, NEW YORK, NY 10013 T 212.904.1330 F 212.904.1305 WWW.MEREDITHMONK.ORG

MEREDITH MONK, Artistic Director • LINDA S. GOLDING, Chair and President • ARBIER. THALACKER, Treasurer • HARUNO ARAI, Secretary
MICKI WESSON, President Emerita • CATHY APPEL • ROBERT GRIMM • SALI ANN KRIEGSMAN • LINDA R. SAFRAN
BARBARA G. SAHLMAN • CAROL SCHUSTER • FREDERIEKE SANDERS TAYLOR • OLIVIA GEORGIA, Executive Director