



BAM 2018 Winter/Spring Season

BROOKLYN ACADEMY OF MUSIC PETER JAY SHARP BUILDING 30 LAFAYETTE AVENUE BROOKLYN, NY 11217—1486

**BAM presents *Cellular Songs*, a world premiere by iconoclastic artist
Meredith Monk, Mar 14—18**

**The new work, exploring the interdependency of human beings and nature,
is performed by Monk and the women of her acclaimed, multigenerational
Vocal Ensemble**

Bloomberg Philanthropies is the Season Sponsor

Cellular Songs

Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble

Music and direction by Meredith Monk
Costume design and scenography by Yoshio Yabara
Lighting design by Joe Levasseur
Sound design by Eli Walker
Video design by Katherine Freer

BAM Harvey Theater (651 Fulton Street)

Mar 14—17 at 7:30pm, Mar 18 at 3pm

Tickets start at \$25

Master class: Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble

With Ellen Fisher and Katie Geissinger

Co-presented by BAM and Mark Morris Dance Group

Mar 7 at 10am

Mark Morris Dance Center (3 Lafayette Ave)

For dance, music, and theater practitioners

Price: \$25

“At once visceral and ethereal, raw and rapt, [Monk’s] works banish the spurious complexities of urban life and reveal a kind of underground civilization, one that sings, dances, and meditates on timeless forces.” — *The New Yorker*

Jan 30, 2018/Brooklyn, NY—Meredith Monk, one of the most influential and original composers, singers, choreographers, and directors, unveils a brand-new work at BAM. *Cellular Songs* pairs voice

with movement, instrumentation, and a site-specific video installation to explore the interconnected, ineffable relationship between human beings and the natural world.

Following Monk's celebrated *On Behalf of Nature* (2014 Next Wave), *Cellular Songs* contemplates the fundamental unit of life and its relation to the universe. Drawing inspiration from biological processes—layering, replication, division, and mutation—Monk looks to underlying systems in nature that can serve as a prototype for human behavior in our tumultuous world.

Cellular Songs will be Monk's 11th production at BAM, the earliest of which included *Quarry* (1976) and *Education of the Girlchild* (1979). Joining Monk in performance are the women of her acclaimed, multi-generational Vocal Ensemble: Ellen Fisher, who has worked with Monk since the '70s; Katie Geissinger, who started in 1990; Allison Sniffin, who joined the company in 1996; and Jo Stewart, who will be performing for the first time as a company member.

Meredith Monk is a composer, singer, director/choreographer and creator of new opera, music-theater works, films, and installations. Recognized as one of the most unique and influential artists of our time, she is a pioneer in what is now called “extended vocal technique” and “interdisciplinary performance.” Celebrated internationally, Monk's work has been presented by BAM, Lincoln Center Festival, Houston Grand Opera, London's Barbican Centre and at major venues around the world. She has made more than a dozen recordings, most of which are on the ECM New Series label, including the 2008 Grammy-nominated *impermanence* and the highly acclaimed *Songs of Ascension* (2011), *Piano Songs* (2014) and *On Behalf of Nature* (2016).

Recently Monk received the 2017 Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize and a 2015 National Medal of Arts from President Obama. Over the course of six decades she has received numerous other honors including the prestigious MacArthur “Genius” Award, two Guggenheim Fellowships, three Obies (including an award for Sustained Achievement), two Bessie awards for Sustained Creative Achievement, a Doris Duke Artist Award and a Yoko Ono Lennon Courage Award for the Arts. She has also been named an Officer of the Order of Arts and Letters by the Republic of France, one of NPR's 50 Great Voices and *Musical America's* 2012 Composer of the Year. In conjunction with her 50th Season of creating and performing, she was appointed the 2014–15 Richard and Barbara Debs Composer's Chair at Carnegie Hall.

Ellen Fisher is an interdisciplinary artist whose work combines dance with visual components. She began performing with Meredith Monk/The House in the 70s, in such works as *The Plateau Series* and *Recent Ruins*, and more recently has appeared in *mercy*, *impermanence*, *Songs of Ascension*, and *On Behalf of Nature*. Fisher's performance work is informed by ethnographic research in trance dance and rituals of South Asia, particularly Sri Lanka. Since 1981, she has toured solo work throughout Europe and the US, also directing large ensemble work reinterpreting myths and legends. Her film work, including documentaries, has been included in festivals throughout the world. She has received funding through the NEA, Art Matters Inc., Jerome Foundation, NYFA, and the Asian Cultural Council, winning a 2004 Humanities Fellowship and a 2005 Travel Grant. Fisher continues to teach and collaborate with artists on community intergenerational and intercultural projects, both domestically and internationally, and recently served as a Fulbright Scholar in Sri Lanka.

Katie Geissinger has performed with Meredith Monk worldwide in concert and theater pieces such as *ATLAS*, *mercy*, the Grammy-nominated *impermanence*, *Songs of Ascension*, *On Behalf of Nature*, and *The Politics of Quiet*, which received a Bessie award. Career highlights include the premiere of Bang on a Can's Obie-winning *The Carbon Copy Building* (Canteloupe), appearing in Philip Glass and Robert Wilson's *Einstein on the Beach* (Elektra Nonesuch), and performances as a soloist in Bach's Magnificat, Honegger's *Le Roi David*, and Osvaldo Golijov's *Ainadamar*. Other credits include Jonathan Miller's staging of Bach's St. Matthew Passion at BAM, John Tavener's *The Veil of the Temple* at Lincoln Center, and Ann Hamilton's *the event of a thread*, with music by David Lang, at

the Park Avenue Armory. Her Broadway credits include Baz Luhrmann's production of *La Bohème* and *Coram Boy*. Recent performances include Julia Wolfe's *Steel Hammer* in collaboration with Anne Bogart's SITI Company and The Bang on a Can All-Stars.

Allison Sniffin, a multi-instrumentalist, singer, and composer, has been a member of Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble since 1996, performing in *The Politics of Quiet*, *A Celebration Service*, *Magic Frequencies*, *mercy*, *Turtle Dreams*, *Book of Days* (concert version), *impermanence*, *Songs of Ascension*, and *On Behalf of Nature*. She has collaborated with Meredith Monk on the orchestration of *Possible Sky*, *Night*, *WEAVE*, *Realm Variations*, and *Backlight*; arranged her music for Bang on a Can All-Stars; edited and contributed to two albums of her piano music; and prepared numerous a *capella* and instrumental works of Monk's for publication. Sniffin has received grants from Meet the Composer and Concert Artists Guild for her compositions. She is a frequent arranger/orchestrator for The Stonewall Chorale and Melodia Women's Choir. She was also winner in the New York Philharmonic's 2017 New World Composition Challenge. Sniffin serves as organist at Middle Collegiate Church and Temple Sha'aray Tefila in New York.

Jo Stewart is a movement-theater artist and poet. This is her first year performing as a member of Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble. Her work has been presented at the Brick Theater (NY), MAAS (Nijmegen, the Netherlands), and Arts Letters and Numbers (Averill Park, NY). Stewart graduated from Reed College with a BA in English Literature in 2014, and currently teaches theater at Pierrepont School in Westport, CT.

For press information, contact David Hsieh at dhsieh@BAM.org or 718.724.8027.

Credits

Bloomberg Philanthropies is the Season Sponsor.

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Member Laurie A. Cumbo, and the Brooklyn Delegation of the Council; and Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams. BAM would like to thank the Brooklyn Delegations of the New York State Assembly, Joseph R. Lentol, Delegation Leader; and New York Senate, Senator Velmanette Montgomery.

Commissioned by BAM.

General Information

BAM Howard Gilman Opera House, BAM Rose Cinemas, and BAMcafé are located in the Peter Jay Sharp building at 30 Lafayette Avenue (between St Felix Street and Ashland Place) in the Fort Greene neighborhood of Brooklyn. BAM Harvey Theater is located two blocks from the main building at 651 Fulton Street (between Ashland and Rockwell Places). Both locations house Greenlight Bookstore at BAM kiosks. BAM Fisher, located at 321 Ashland Place, is the newest addition to the BAM campus and houses the Judith and Alan Fishman Space and Rita K. Hillman Studio. BAM Rose Cinemas is Brooklyn's only movie house dedicated to first-run independent and foreign film and repertory programming. BAMcafé, operated by Great Performances, offers varied light fare and bar service prior to BAM Howard Gilman Opera House evening performances.

Subway: 2, 3, 4, 5, Q, B to Atlantic Avenue – Barclays Center (2, 3, 4, 5 to Nevins St for Harvey Theater); D, N, R to Pacific Street; G to Fulton Street; C to Lafayette Avenue
Train: Long Island Railroad to Atlantic Terminal – Barclays Center
Bus: B25, B26, B41, B45, B52, B63, B67 all stop within three blocks of BAM
Car: Limited commercial parking lots are located near BAM. Visit BAM.org for information.

For ticket information, call BAM Ticket Services at 718.636.4100, or visit BAM.org.

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