BAM celebrates Meredith Monk’s 50th season with
*On Behalf of Nature*, Dec 3—7

“… a rapturous new work… some of the finest music Monk has yet written”—*Los Angeles Times*

“… a 21st-century oratorio… exquisite”—*The Scotsman*

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*On Behalf of Nature*
Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble

Music and direction by Meredith Monk
Lighting design by Elaine Buckholtz
Sound design by Jody Elff
Costumes and scenography by Yoshio Yabara

Commissioned by BAM for the 2014 Next Wave Festival

BAM Harvey Theater (651 Fulton St)
Dec 3—6 at 7:30pm; Dec 7 at 3pm
Tickets start at $20

November 11, 2014/Brooklyn, NY—Building on her rich BAM legacy and presented as part of her 50th season, *Meredith Monk* offers the NY premiere of her newest music-theater work, *On Behalf of Nature*, a mesmerizing hymn to compassion. Inspired by the Buddhist conception of oneness and poet Gary Snyder’s idea of the artist as “spokesperson for non-human entities,” *On Behalf of Nature* reaffirms our indissoluble connection to the natural realm.

*On Behalf of Nature* premiered to critical acclaim in January 2013 at UCLA. Moving collectively around a bare stage, eight performers intone a beguiling polyphony of sounds, suggesting a world in which the material, the spiritual, and the human coexist as a harmonious interdependent whole.

In addition to Monk, performers include: *Sidney Chen*, *Ellen Fisher*, *Katie Geissinger*, *Bruce Rameker*, *Allison Sniffin* (voices); *Bohdan Hilash* (winds); *John Hollenbeck* (percussion), and *Allison Sniffin* (keyboards, violin, and French horn).

In keeping with the work’s ecological ethos, *Yoshio Yabara* fashions costumes from the cast’s old clothes, which inherently suggest the performers’ personal histories.
About the artists:

**Meredith Monk** is a composer, singer, director/choreographer and creator of new opera, music-theater works, films and installations. A pioneer in what is now called “extended vocal technique” and “interdisciplinary performance,” Monk creates works that thrive at the intersection of music and movement, image and object, light and sound in an effort to discover and weave together new modes of perception. Her groundbreaking exploration of the voice as an instrument, as an eloquent language in and of itself, expands the boundaries of musical composition, creating landscapes of sound that unearth feelings, energies and memories for which there are no words. Over the last five decades, she has been hailed as “a magician of the voice” (*The New York Times*) and “one of America’s coolest composers” (*Time Out New York*). Celebrated internationally, Monk’s work has been presented by BAM, Lincoln Center Festival, Houston Grand Opera, London’s Barbican Centre, and at major venues in countries from Brazil to Syria. Among her many accolades, she was recently named an Officer of the Order of Arts and Letters by the Republic of France, and the 2012 Composer of the Year by Musical America. Monk is also one of NPR’s “50 Great Voices,” and has received a 2012 Doris Duke Artist Award and a 2011 Yoko Ono Lennon Courage Award for the Arts.

In 1968 Ms. Monk founded The House, a company dedicated to an interdisciplinary approach to performance. In 1978 she founded Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble to expand her musical textures and forms. As a pioneer in site-specific performance, she has created such works as *Juice: A Theatre Cantata In 3 Installments* (1969) and *Ascension Variations* (2009) for the Guggenheim Museum, and *American Archeology #1: Roosevelt Island* (1994). Monk’s award-winning films, including *Ellis Island* (1981) and her first feature, *Book of Days* (1988), have been seen throughout the world. Her music can also be heard in films by such directors as Jean-Luc Godard and the Coen Brothers, and on *So You Think You Can Dance* and the recent HBO series, *True Detective*. In addition to her numerous vocal pieces, music-theater works and operas, Monk has created vital new repertoire for orchestra, chamber ensembles, and solo instruments, with commissions from Michael Tilson Thomas/San Francisco Symphony and New World Symphony, Kronos Quartet, Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra and Los Angeles Master Chorale, among others.

Since graduating Sarah Lawrence College in 1964, Monk has received numerous honors including the prestigious MacArthur Genius Award, two Guggenheim Fellowships, three Obie awards (including an award for Sustained Achievement), and two Bessie awards for Sustained Creative Achievement. She holds honorary Doctor of Arts degrees from Bard College, the University of the Arts, The Juilliard School, the San Francisco Art Institute and the Boston Conservatory. Monk 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) and *Piano Songs* (2014). She has also been working with the publisher Boosey & Hawkes since 2001.

In October 1999 Monk performed *A Vocal Offering* for His Holiness, the Dalai Lama as part of the World Festival of Sacred Music in Los Angeles. Her 40th year of performing and creating new music was celebrated in 2005 by a four-hour marathon at Carnegie’s Zankel Hall, with additional performances throughout New York City. In February 2012 she was honored with a remix and interpretations cd, *MONK MIX*, featuring 25 artists from the jazz, pop, dj and new music worlds. In March 2012, she premiered *Realm Variations* for six voices and small ensemble, commissioned by the San Francisco Symphony, and performed in John Cage’s *Song Books* as part of the Symphony’s American Mavericks Festival. This fall, Meredith Monk will mark her 50th season as a creator and performer. Recognized as one of the most unique and influential artists of her generation, she has been appointed the 2014–2015 Richard and Barbara Debs Composer’s Chair at Carnegie Hall.

A founding member of The M6—a vocal sextet dedicated to Meredith Monk’s music—*On Behalf of Nature* is Sidney Chen’s first production as a member of Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble, after performing in Monk’s *Realm Variations* with the San Francisco Symphony. Previously, Sidney sang in
the Meredith Monk Young Artists Concert at Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall in 2006, and in Songs of Ascension at BAM in 2009. He has also performed Monk's music for solo voice at Oakland’s Garden of Memory. More recently, Sidney performed in the 45th-anniversary celebration of Terry Riley’s In C organized by the Kronos Quartet at Carnegie Hall, and a staged production of David Lang’s the little match girl passion by San Francisco Lyric Opera which toured to Denmark. This season he performs Berio's Sinfonia for 8 soloists and orchestra with the San Francisco new-music ensemble Volti. He has recorded with The M6 and Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble on Songs of Ascension.

**Ellen Fisher** 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 and Songs of Ascension. 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 U.S., 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 been performing with Meredith Monk since 1990, at festivals and venues worldwide, in concert and in theatrical pieces such as ATLAS, mercy, the Grammy-nominated impermanence, and Songs of Ascension (all released by ECM), receiving a Bessie award for The Politics of Quiet. She premiered Bang on a Can’s Obie-winning The Carbon Copy Building (Canteloupe), and performed in the second world tour of Philip Glass and Robert Wilson's Einstein on the Beach (Elektra Nonesuch), which was revived in concert at Carnegie Hall. Other Carnegie Hall appearances include Bach’s Magnificat with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, the Witch in Honegger's Le Roi David, and Osvaldo Golijov’s Aïnadam. Katie has also appeared in Jonathan Miller’s staged productions of Bach's St. Matthew Passion at BAM, in John Tavener’s The Veil of the Temple at Lincoln Center, in Julia Wolfe’s Steel Hammer at the Winter Garden, and in 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 Boheme and Coram Boy, and Off-Broadway she has appeared in many Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. She has premiered many new music theater pieces, including Mark Mulcahy and Ben Katchor’s The Rosenbach Company and Philip Miller’s The Hottentot Venus at MASSMoCA.

Clarinetist and multi-instrumentalist **Bohdan Hilash** joined the Vocal Ensemble in 2002. As part of his diverse career he has performed on four continents throughout the world as a performer of orchestral and chamber music, opera, contemporary music, jazz, musical theatre, and as a soloist. Mr. Hilash has appeared as a chamber and orchestral musician and as a soloist at many of the world’s pre-eminent concert venues and music festivals including those of Bayreuth, Spoleto, Tokyo, Evian, Lincoln Center, Rome, and Aspen. As an orchestral musician, Mr. Hilash has performed with some of the world’s leading orchestras including the London Symphony Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic with conductors including Leonard Bernstein, Kurt Masur, Zubin Mehta, Alan Gilbert, and Leonard Slatkin among many others. He is particularly active in the field of contemporary music and has worked with many of its leading practitioners including Speculum Musicae, Bang on a Can, and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. He has performed with jazz artists such as Dizzy Gillespie, Phil Woods, Dave Holland, Lee Konitz, and Kenny Wheeler among many others. In the theatre Mr. Hilash has worked as a featured performer in collaboration with several leading theater companies, playwrights, and directors of the New York stage including Arthur Miller and Lee Breuer. Mr. Hilash’s recordings may be heard on the ECM, Chandos, RCA Victor, CRI, Mode, CBC, Finlandia, RCA, New World, CCNC, TBM, Capstone, and RP labels.
Genre-crossing composer/percussionist John Hollenbeck, renowned in both the jazz and new-music worlds, has been working with Meredith Monk since 1998 and has appeared in Magic Frequencies, mercy, impermanence, and Songs of Ascension. John received degrees in percussion (B.M.) and jazz composition (M.M.) from the Eastman School of Music and moved to New York City in the early 1990’s. Since then, John has gained widespread recognition as the driving force behind the unclassifiable Claudia Quintet and the ambitious John Hollenbeck Large Ensemble, groups with roots in jazz, world music, and contemporary composition. He has earned four Grammy nominations: for his Large Ensemble’s releases, A Blessing (Omnitone, 2005) and eternal interlude (Sunnyside Records, 2009); for his composition Falling Men commissioned by the Orchestre National de Jazz and funded by the Chamber Music America French-American Jazz Exchange (2010); and for his arrangement of Jimmy Webb’s The Moon’s a Harsh Mistress commissioned by the hr-BigBand of Frankfurt, Germany (2013). John’s most notable awards include a 2007 Guggenheim Fellowship, a 2010 ASCAP Jazz Vanguard Award, and a 2012 Doris Duke Performing Artist Award. John’s recent works include commissions by Bang on a Can and the People’s Commissioning Fund; Ethos Percussion Group funded by the Jerome Foundation; Youngstown State University; Melbourne Jazz Festival; Scotland’s Edinburgh Jazz Festival; University of Rochester, New York; and Ensemble Cairn of France. Since 2005, he has been a professor of Jazz Drums and Improvisation at Jazz Institute Berlin, Germany and is currently serving as visiting professor at New England Conservatory in Boston and the Royal Academy of Music in London.

Bruce Rameker began performing with Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble in 2008. He has appeared as both a baritone and a countertenor on the stages of Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, Town Hall, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, and the Edinburgh and Spoleto Festivals in a diverse repertoire that includes ancient music, operetta, oratorio, tango and new music. A frequent collaborator with many composers, he has premiered new vocal works of Ben Yarmolinsky, John Kennedy, Richard Pearson Thomas, Anna Dembska, William George, Holly Herndon, Roberto Scarcella Perino, and Luna Pearl Woolf. Mr. Rameker has sung with the Skylight Opera Theatre, Chicago Opera Theater, New York City Opera, Anchorage Opera, San Francisco Ballet, Sacred Music in a Sacred Space, Waverly Consort, Voices of Ascension, Musica Sacra, and New York Ensemble for Early Music. Recordings include A Seeker’s Faith, One Body by John Kennedy, Just Another Hour with Trillium Ensemble, ¡Iberia! with Waverly Consort, Klaas de Vries’ opera, A King, Riding, and Meredith Monk’s Songs of Ascension. Born in Wisconsin, he is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

Musical Director Allison Sniffin is 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, impermanence and Songs of Ascension. She has engraved several of Monk’s works, including Basket Rondo, Possible Sky, Stringsongs, Night, WEAVE for Two Voices, Chamber Orchestra and Chorus, Realm Variations and Monk’s forthcoming commissioned work for Ensemble ACJW at Carnegie Hall. Sniffin has won awards for her compositions from Meet the Composer and Concert Artists' Guild; her Prelude for Horn and String Orchestra was performed at the 2011 International Alliance for Women in Music Congress, and Punch! for marimba and piano is awaiting publication.

For press information contact Sarah Garvey at sgarvey@BAM.org or 718.724.8025

Credits
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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 a dinner menu prior to BAM Howard Gilman Opera House evening performances. BAMcafé also features an eclectic mix of live music for BAMcafé Live on Friday and Saturday nights with a bar menu available starting at 6pm.

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: Commercial parking lots are located adjacent to BAM

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

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