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Incorporated in 1971, The House Foundation for the Arts provides production and management services for Meredith Monk, Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble, and The House Company.

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MEREDITH MONK AND ANN HAMILTON:

SONGS OF ASCENSION

October 29–November 1, 2008 | 8:30pm
November 2, 2008 | 3:00pm

presented by
REDCAT
Roy and Edna Disney/CalArts Theater
California Institute of the Arts and
The House Foundation for the Arts
MEREDITH MONK and ANN HAMILTON: SONGS OF ASCENSION

Featuring Meredith Monk & CalArts Vocal Ensemble:

Ellen Fisher, Katie Geissinger, Ching Gonzalez, Meredith Monk, Allison Sniffin: voices
Bobdan Hilash: winds
John Hollenbeck: percussion
Allison Sniffin: violin

and

The Todd Reynolds Quartet

Todd Reynolds: violin, viola
Esther Noh: viola
Nadia Sirota: viola
Ha-Yang Kim: cello

With

CalArts Vocal Ensemble

Music / Direction: Meredith Monk
Video: Casandra Scarlett, Fahad Siadat, Laura Kay Swanswon, Argenta Walther, Marie Wise-Hawkins and Mary Zastrow.

Lighting: Elaine Buckholz
Costumes: Yoshio Yabara
Assistant Stage Manager: Gary Graham

Sound: Jody Elff

Score preparation / Music Direction: Allison Sniffin

Production Manager: Video Wrangler - Michael Casselli

Sound Engineer: Harry Chakian

Assistant Stage Manager: Lily Perlmutter

Ensemble Preparation: Fahad Siadat

Faculty Advisor, Paul Berkelods, Coordinator, Voice Program
CalArts TAC Producer: Lisa Barr

All music compositions © Meredith Monk 2008 (ASCAP) except “Mieke’s melody # G” by Mieke van Hoek and Meredith Monk.

Video, ©Ann Hamilton 2008

Meredith Monk would like to acknowledge and thank the performers and designers for their invaluable creative contributions, suggestions, patience and generosity in the development of “Songs of Ascension.”

Special thanks to Jenny Billfish and Michelle Witt of Stanford Lively Arts for making the premiere of this work possible. Thank you to California Institute of the Arts and Mark Murphy; Philip Bither and the Walker Art Center, the Elysian Quartet, Gavin Henderson and Laura Lloyd from Dartington College of the Arts, The MacDowell Colony, Norman Fischer, Steve and Nancy Oliver, Doug Cox of Cox Violins for their generous donations, Jonathan Nye, Olivia Georgia and Peter Sciscio.

Singers of Ascension has been commissioned by Stanford Lively Arts by Van and Edith Van Auken in honor of the Bonnie J. Addario Lung Cancer Foundation, Stanford University (World Premiere). Transtaltic Arts Consortium (a partnership between the California Institute of the Arts, Dartington Plus, and Idyllwild Arts). The Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN, and commissioned by BAM for the 2009 Next Wave Festival. Additional support provided by the William and Nadine McGuire Commissioning Fund.

Violist ESTHER NOH has garnered acclaim for her achievements as a classical and alternative music performer. She won the Audience Prize at the Carl Nielsen International Violin Competition in Denmark, and has soloed with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Houston Symphony, and the Danish National Philharmonic. In April 2007, she performed at Carnegie Hall’s Zankel Hall as part of the elite Kronos Quartet Professional Training Workshop. Ms. Noh holds degrees from Oberlin Conservatory and the University of Michigan School of Music. She received her doctorate with honors from SUNY Stony Brook in May 2007, and is a member of the Brooklyn Philharmonic. She was the visiting professor of violin at Wichita State University in Wichita Kansas and concertmaster of the Wichita Symphony from January 2004-May 2005. As a passionate advocate of contemporary music, Ms. Noh has performed with the International Contemporary Ensemble, the Sirius String Quartet, the Stony Brook Contemporary Chamber Players, and has given numerous premieres of works by composers acquisition of improvised and alternative music. She has worked with John Zorn, Mark O’ Connor, and Edgar Meyer, as well as many singer/songwriters throughout the country. She has given concerts at venues such as the Stone, Roulette, Cornelia Street Café, Tonic, and the Cutting Room.

ELAINE BUCKHOLTZ (Lighting Designer) is a multi-media artist. Her work combines the mediums of moving light, video, and sound. She has shown work at The Luggage Store in San Francisco, New Langton Arts, Fusion ArtSpace and San Francisco Arts Commission. Over the past 15 years she has made lighting and visual designs for many bay area performing designers. Presently she is the Annual Lighting Design and Lighting Director for Meredith Monk’s solo concert tours. She did her master studies in Media Arts at California College of The Arts on a Jacob K. Javits Fellowship from 2002-2004, and is currently attending Stanford’s MFA program to continue her studies.

MICHAEL CASSELLI (Production Manager) graduated from Rhode Island School of Design with a master’s degree in sculpture. He has worked extensively in NY downtown performance scene, with artists and companies including Anne Bogart, En Garde Arts, Elizabeth Streb, Richard Foreman, Big Art Group, Reza Abdoh, Yehuda Duwanys, Juliana Francis, Foundry Design. Design credits include: MomMade with Susan Mosakowski at The Oh, NYC, I.E. with Kip Fagan at The Flea, NYC, Edith and Jenny with Tamar Rogoff at PS 122 NYC, Abondon with Matthew Maguire at La Mama NYC, Pastoraliza with Yehuda Duwanys at P.S. 122, NYC, Major Bang with Paul Laz at St Ann’s Warehouse, Brooklyn, Sweet Night: Angs for Five, a surgeon with Chelsea Bacon at the with Meredith Monk at Lincoln Center, NYC, The Boccahe with Dawn Akaimo Saito’s at Fordham University, Death Might be Your Santa Claus with Lear DeBessonet/ Juliana Francis LMCC, NYC, A Parsafield (based on Susan Sontag’s 1991 script) with John Jahnke at P.S. 122, NYC, Streb vs. Gravity with Elizabeth Streb, which premiered at the Lincoln Center Festival in July 2006, and Tight Right White with Reza Abdoh, NYC. Installation Design credits include Revwsing Site, Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio, Bunker Oasses, Outfest, L.A, I in The Sky with Rauff Enriquez, Chashama NYC, Abbey, a collaboration with Grisha Coleman, CalArts, Valencia Ca., Managing, with David Manning, The Myth of Control: Remix, CalArts, Valencia Ca. Casselli received a 1998 Bessee for Theatrical Design with Elizabeth Streb.

JODY ELFF (Sound Designer) is an audio engineer & sound artist living and working in New York City. His live audio production and recording credits include work with Yo-Yo Ma, Laurie Anderson, Bang On A Can, Tan Dun and many others. He is the resident sound designer for the National Theatre, also composed and performed music for film and dance. His fine art sound installations have been shown in various galleries and museums internationally, including a commissioned sound-piece permanently installed in a public parking facility in Lyon, France.

YOSHIO YABARA (Costume Designer) received a B.A. in Linguistics in his native Japan and studied stage and costume design in West Germany and West Berlin. He started his professional career as a costume designer for the Oscar winning film, “The Tin Drum”, directed by Volker Schlondorf, and on the stages at Schaubuehne under the direction of Peter Stein in West-Berlin. It was here that he met Meredith Monk and she hired him in 1981 for her epic “Vessel”. He also worked on Monk’s opera, ATLAS, and her feature-length film, “Book of Days”. Yabara has worked on numerous theatrical and film productions as a costume designer, stage designer and art director in Europe, USA and Asia. These productions include “Line One”, a mesmer, in Berlin, “The Civil Wars”, “King Lear” by Robert Wilson, “Oedipus”, “Madame de Sade” by Tadashi Suzuki, “Don Giovanni”, and “Le nozze di Figaro”, directed by Barenboim-Asia. These productions include “Line One”, a musical, in Berlin, “The Civil Wars”, “King Lear” by Robert Wilson, “Oedipus”, “Madame de Sade” by Tadashi Suzuki, “Don Giovanni”, and “Le nozze di Figaro”, directed by Barenboim-Asia.

Yoshihiko Noh (Violinist) has garnered acclaim for her achievements as a classical and alternative music performer. She won the Audience Prize at the Carl Nielsen International Violin Competition in Denmark, and has soloed with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Houston Symphony, and the Danish National Philharmonic. In April 2007, she performed at Carnegie Hall’s Zankel Hall as part of the elite Kronos Quartet Professional Training Workshop. Ms. Noh holds degrees from Oberlin Conservatory and the University of Michigan School of Music. She received her doctorate with honors from SUNY Stony Brook in May 2007, and is a member of the Brooklyn Philharmonic. She was the visiting professor of violin at Wichita State University in Wichita Kansas and concertmaster of the Wichita Symphony from January 2004-May 2005. As a passionate advocate of contemporary music, Ms. Noh has performed with the International Contemporary Ensemble, the Sirius String Quartet, the Stony Brook Contemporary Chamber Players, and has given numerous premieres of works by composers acquisition of improvised and alternative music. She has worked with John Zorn, Mark O’ Connor, and Edgar Meyer, as well as many singer/songwriters throughout the country. She has given concerts at venues such as the Stone, Roulette, Cornelia Street Café, Tonic, and the Cutting Room.
Ensemble, she has enrolled, prepared or orchestrated a number of Monk’s works including Possible Sky, Stringsongs and Night, and edited a book of her piano music. A recipient of awards from Meet the Composer and Concert Artists’ Guild, Sniffin's music has been performed by New York Philharmonic-based duo Lambchops also by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and with a grant from Open Meadow. In 2001, Sniffin received a commission from Melody Women's Choir of NYC to create a work based on the writings of Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz which premiered at Merkin Hall in New York in November 2002.

TODD REYNOLDS, violinist, is best known for his long-term collaborations with boundary-busting artists from Steve Reich to Bang on a Can, Yo-Yo Ma to Todd Rundgren and from India-sensibilities to The Books, to most recently, Meredith Monk. Todd’s real-time compositions and improvisations have evolved out of his work with those icons, and his solo performances and compositions have received critical acclaim from The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, The Philadelphia Inquirer, The Washington Post, The New York Times Magazine, The Village Voice, The New York Times Magazine, The Morning Call, and the Chicago Tribune. In addition to performances at venues such as the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, The Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, and the Barbican, Todd has played at festivals such as the Aldeburgh Festival, The Stockholm Festival, The International Festival of Contemporary Music, and the Donaueschinger Musiktage. He has commissioned new works by David Behrman, Curtis Bump, Fred Frith, and Anthony Scherr.

Born in Seoul, Korea, HA-YANG KIM is a composer, cellist, and improvvisor who has developed a unique language of extended string techniques and has created her own music based on this work. Her musical influences draw equally from a range of western classical music, American experimentalism, rock, jazz and improvisational music, and to non-western musical sources. Her music has been performed in the United States, Europe, South America, Asia, including Belgium, Korea, and Germany. Ha-Yang made her professional solo debut at age 16 with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. She is the founder of Odd Appetite, a cello-percussion duo which performs and commissions new work for cello and percussion. Ha-Yang has performed with conductor Marin Alsop and the Juilliard Orchestra in Alice Tully Hall, and she has also collaborated as soloist and chamber musician with such artists as Joseph Kalichstein, Itzhak Perlman, and the Juilliard String Quartet. Ethereal and improvisational in style, “ECM computer violinst” and “fiddler”, he has been an innovator in the music world. He continues to teach and perform in residencies across the country, touring as a ‘one-man laptop band’ with video artist, Luke DuBois and works of filmmaker, Bill Morrison. As a conductor, composer and chamber musician, he continues to assemble groups of new music all-stars for creating new work. Having recently completed a work with Gavin Bryars in string quartet format in Philadelphia with 'A Man in a Room, Gambling', and in residence composing six site-specific works for the TaskForce in Los Angeles. Upcoming performance includes a new Messiaen project with David Krakauer and Matt Haimovitz, and Byon Dorothy’s Mackerton band.

In 2002 Biennial at the Whitney Museum, ev+a 2002 Exhibition at Limerick City Gallery of Art and group exhibits for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center in 1996. Other recent art exhibits are comprised of a major installation, Meredith Monk: Archeology of an Artist 2007. A retrospective art exhibition, American Archeology #1: Roosevelt Island (1969). She has been proclaimed as a “magician of the voice” and “one of America’s coolest composers.” During a career that spans more than 40 years she has been acclaimed by audiences and critics as a major creative force in the performing arts.

Since graduating Sarah Lawrence College in 1964, Monk has received numerous awards including the prestigious MacArthur “Genius” Award in 1995, two Guggenheim Fellowships, a Brandeis Creative Arts Award, three “Obes” (including an an Honorary Doctorate from the Belgarde University), two ASCAP Awards, two “Bessie” awards for Sustained Creative Achievement, the 1986 National Music Theatre Award, the 1992 Dance Magazine Award, and a 2005 ASCAP Concert Music Award. In 2006 she was awarded the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and named a United States Artists Fellow. In 2007 she received a 2007 International Award for Musical Excellence in combination with Rodolfo Serurf for a department of their composition. In 2008 the premo Arlecho d'Oro from the Festival of Italy, in 2009 Monk holds honorary Doctor of Arts degrees from Bard College, the University of the Arts in Philadelphia and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music (ECM New Series) and Our Lady of Lute: The Vanguard Tapes(Wergo) which were honored with the German Critics Prize for Best Records of 1981 and 1986. Her music has been heard in numerous films, including La Nouvelle Vagueby Jean-Luc Godard and The Big Lebowskiby Joel and Ethan Coen. In 2000, Monk began a publishing relationship with Boosey & Hawkes. Several of her scores, including her recently released Piano Album, are now available to the general public.

In 1968 Ms. Monk founded The House, a company dedicated to an interdisciplinary approach to performance. In 1978 Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble to expand her musical textures and forms. She has made more than a dozen recordings, most of which are on the ECM New Series label. Her music has been performed by numerous soloists and groups including The Chorus of the San Francisco Symphony, Musica Sacra, The Pacific Mozart Ensemble, Doug Cameron & the Artful Dodger, and Many other groups and artists, among others.

Meredith Monk is a pioneer in site-specific performance, creating works such as Jace: A Theater Cantata in 3 Installations (1969) and American Archeology #1 (1969). She was also an accomplished filmmaker who made a series of award-winning films and videos, including Els Island (1881) and her first feature, Book Of Days (1988), which was released on PBS. She has also released more than 40 records, most of which are on the ECM New Series label. Her music has been performed by numerous soloists and groups including The Chorus of the San Francisco Symphony, Musica Sacra, The Pacific Mozart Ensemble, Doug Cameron & the Artful Dodger, and Many other groups and artists, among others.

In 1999 October Monk performed a Vocal Offering for His Holiness, the Dalai Lama as part of the World Festival of Music and Arts in New Delhi, India, and also a BEST award from the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center in 1996. Other recent art exhibits are comprised of a major installation, Art Performs Life at The Walker Art Center, a show, Shriners at the Frederieke Taylor ’ T’Z Gallery, an exhibition at Thomas Wolfe and Sandra Mood & Thought of Sound, Graphic Notation, A Monograph, and Mrs. Robert Goodale, Augusta H. Gross and Leslie B. Samuels, Jr., Dr. Ann C. Hill, Frances Kazan, Elisa King and Ellynne C. Skove has been provided by:

New York-based violist NADIA SIROTA is best known as an interpreter of new music, having commissioned and premiered dozens of works by composers and songwriters including Marcia Balter, Bryce Dessner, Judd Greenstein, Nico Muhly, Valger Sigursson and Ryan Streyer. She received her undergraduate and Master’s degrees from The Juilliard School, where she performed as co-founder of the experimental Improvisation Ensemble, Castleman/Amy/Huang studio’s New Music Project, and contributed to the study of new music composers. After performing with the Juilliard String Quartet and the Manhattan School of Music, Nadia has collaborated as soloist and chamber musician with such artists as Joseph Kalichstein, Itzhak Perlman, and the Silk Road Ensemble. Nadia is currently a member of the (ACME) and was a founding member of the Academy, a program of Carnegie Hall, the Juilliard School, and The Well Music Institute. She has also been found performing with such groups as Continuum and Alarm Will Sound. In the fall of 2007, Nadia joined the faculty of the Manhattan School of Music for its new Contemporary Music Performance. She has performed in-studio for NPR’s Morning Edition, Talks Free, and A&E Breastfed with the WNYC Radio Network. Nadia is currently the artistic director of the premiere work for MTV2, Neuma, Bedroom Community, the Royal Academy of Music, and 11:11 Records. In the fall of 2008, Nadia will make her solo recording debut with an album on the newly-minted Arden label. In addition to playing viola, Nadia also hosts on, 93 FM and WNYC.org.
of Sacred Music in Los Angeles. In July 2000 her music was honored by a three concert retrospective entitled Voice Travel as part of the Lincoln Center Festival. Monk’s first orchestra piece, Possible Sky (commissioned by Michael Tiszon for the New World Symphony), premiered in April 2003 in Miami and was performed by the Hanns Eisler Orchestra (Vienna). Her first composition for a chamber orchestra (commissioned by the Kronos Quartet) had its world premiere at the Barbican Centre in January 2005. Her most recent CD, Impermanence, was released on the ECM New Series label in March 2008.

ANN HAMILTON is a visual artist internationally recognized for the sensuous properties of her large-scale multi-media installations. Known for creating temporal environments that are rich in accumulated material, Hamilton’s installations transform familiar experiences into visually evocative events. Her installations often explore historical, political and social history of their sites.


ELLEN FISHER is a performance artist whose work combines gestural actions with visual components such as film, shadow play, objects and puppets. She began performing with Meredith Monk/The House in the ‘70s, in such works as the Plateau Series and Current Rains, and more recently has appeared in mercy and other performances. 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 performances with her own collaborators. Her film work, including American Passion, Trailing the Sound of Ticking Metronome, 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 speak with artists on community intergenerational and intercultural projects, both domestically and internationally.

KATIE GIESSER has been touring throughout the world with Meredith Monk since 1990, in concert and in pieces such as ATLAS (Houston Grand Opera), The Politics of Quiet (for which she is a “Bessie” recipient), mercy (with Ann Hamilton), and most recently, she has also performed Face North with Fellow company member Theo Blackmann in China’s first-ever UNESCO concert. Katie was featured in, and recorded, Philip Glass and Robert Wilson’s Einstein on the Beach, and premiered and recorded Bang on a Can’s OBIE-winning The Carbon Copy Band, which recently played in Liverpool, England. Broadway credits include Coram Boy and The King and I at Long Center, and most recently as the Witch in The Good Mother. Katie is a founding member of The St. Matthew Passion. Katie made her Carnegie Hall solo debut in Bach’s Magnificat, and returned this spring to perform the role of the Witch in Honegger’s King David. In addition to performing, Katie has taken part in several performances of The Rosenkneggen, a collection of puppetry, original music, and literature by Philip Glass. She has also directed and choreographed for the New York City Opera’s叫做The King and I. Katie also sings cabaret, and has recent and future appearances at Feinstein's at the Regency in the show called Rendezvous. She has recorded for ECM, Canteloupe, and Elektra Teaching experience ranges fromchoral work in Estonia and San Francisco to workshops at Naropa, Oberlin, the Experimental Theater Wing at NYU, Berklee, and the Carnegie Hall Professional Training Workshop.

CHING GONZALEZ was born in Manila, raised in Honolulu, and has worked in New York City’s experimental dance, music, and art scenes since 1976. He has been a member of Meredith Monk’s The House and Meredith Monk Ensemble, performing in her operas, musicals, and theater pieces in concert, film, and television. In 1984. He also has presented his original dance/theater works in New York, San Francisco and Honolulu. Highlights: originating member of Laura Dean’s Dancers and Musicians, member of Hot Mouth, a cappella hip-hop theater, appearing in Jeff Weiss’ midnight anthology, The Kibbutz. On Broadway with Yuri Yosemite. Special thanks to Columbia University Human Resources, where he has worked as an officer of administration since 1998.

BOBDAN HILASH, clarinetist and multi-instrumentalist Bobdan 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 major festivals, including those of Mozart in Salzburg, the Bach Academy, and the Lucerne Festival, where he was a member of the opera orchestra, and at a major international 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, Zoltan Kocsis, Leonard Slatkin and Kurt Masur. He has appeared throughout Europe with many of the world’s leading performers including Stephen Isserlis and Shlomi Butz. Mr. Hilash has also performed with many of the world’s leading musicians in jazz such as: Bob Brookmeyer, Fred Hersch, Tony Malaby, The Valley Vanguard, and Kyle Weather. Hilash has released several acclaimed recordings on ECM (Cyclical Beauty) and on his own label, TCH (Copland's Appalachian Spring). He was named “Rising Star” by Down Beat magazine for his work as a clarinetist in 2005.

HOLLENBECK’s numerous commissions include the IAJE Gil Evans Fellowship, IAJE/ASCAP Commission, Bamberg Symphony Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic with conductors including Leonard Bernstein, Kurt Masur, Zoltan Kocsis, Leonard Slatkin and Kurt Masur. He has appeared throughout Europe with many of the world’s leading performers including Stephen Isserlis and Shlomi Butz. Mr. Hilash has also performed with many of the world’s leading musicians in jazz such as: Bob Brookmeyer, Fred Hersch, Tony Malaby, The Valley Vanguard, and Kyle Weather. Hilash has released several acclaimed recordings on ECM (Cyclical Beauty) and on his own label, TCH (Copland's Appalachian Spring). He was named “Rising Star” by Down Beat magazine for his work as a clarinetist in 2005.

Nonesuch. Teaching experience ranges from choral work in Estonia and San Francisco to workshops at Naropa, Oberlin, the Experimental Theater Wing at NYU, Berklee, and the Carnegie Hall Professional Training Workshop.