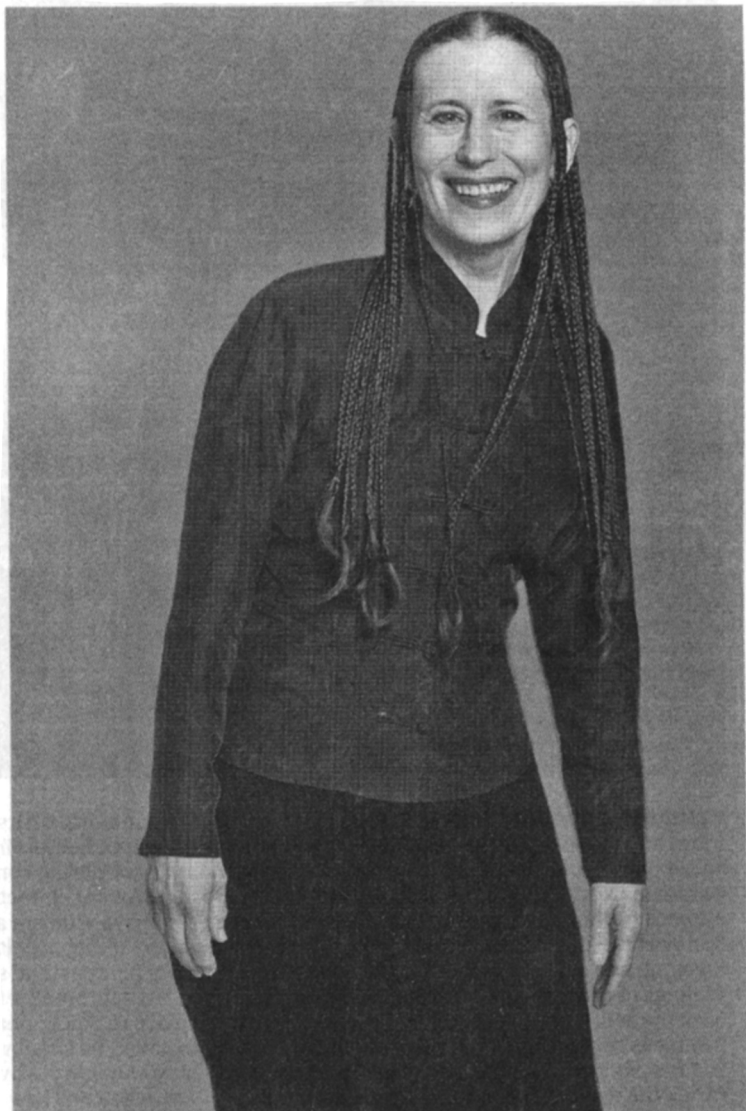


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Stephanie Berger

MEREDITH MONK Meredith Monk has been sidling through New York dance for four decades now. An elusive creature, she has managed not to be categorized as the performer, choreographer, composer or filmmaker that she has been over her rich career. But her roots are in dance, or at least in performance art before it was known as such. No one has ever quite matched the intensity of the hyper-real dreamscapes she created from the mid-1960's on, using film, her own vocal music, movement and plain but shimmeringly evocative props to create pieces that existed on several levels of the everyday. A believer in total theater, Ms. Monk combined her dance group, The House, with a new Meredith Monk Vocal Ensemble in 1978. And that seemed to open the floodgates of her prodigious imagination to pour out into film, opera and theatrical productions. Eventually she identified herself as a composer first and foremost. But dance is a persistent lover. If it couldn't have Ms. Monk, it could have her music, which has been a cool, eerie and bizarrely evocative staple of avant-gardish choreography ever since. This weekend, in "Dance to Monk: Choreographers Celebrate the Music of Meredith Monk," six dance artists will pay tribute to Ms. Monk in her 40th anniversary season with new and repertory pieces set to scores that include her "Dolmen Music," "Volcano Songs" and "St. Petersburg Waltz." They are Ann Carlson, Sean Curran, Molissa Fenley, the now rarely seen Dana Reitz, Doug Varone and Bill T. Jones (on film), all as fiercely individualistic as Ms. Monk. (Tonight through Sunday at 8:30 p.m., the Danspace Project at St. Mark's Church, 131 East 10th Street, East Village, (212) 674-8194. Tickets: \$20 or TDF voucher.)

JENNIFER DUNNING