

wexner center
for the arts

For Immediate Release

September 7, 2001

Contact: Karen Simonian, 614 292-9923 or simonian.4@osu.edu

MEREDITH MONK AND ANN HAMILTON JOIN FORCES FOR *mercy*

**WEXNER CENTER PRESENTS FIRST STOP ON TOUR OF NEW
MULTIMEDIA WORK CO-COMMISSIONED BY THE WEXNER CENTER**

“A multitude of visual and sonic wonders...Extraordinary.”—*The New York Times*, on *mercy*

Meredith Monk and Ann Hamilton—two of the most intelligent and unclassifiable artists working today—present their collaborative music/dance/theater work ***mercy*** on **Friday, October 12 at 8 pm** in Thurber Theatre at OSU’s Drake Union. This marks the first stop on tour of this acclaimed work, which was co-commissioned by the Wexner Center.

Famed choreographer/composer/filmmaker Monk and Columbus-based installation artist Hamilton—both winners of MacArthur “genius” Awards—are acknowledged trailblazers in their respective fields. This new collaborative piece, called “remarkable” by *The New York Times*, combines music, theater, and technology to create evocative scenes about the beauty and vulnerability of life, exploring both the outer world and the inner.

The piece has been reworked since its summer debut at American Dance Festival in Durham, N.C., and will benefit from its weeklong Wexner Center-sponsored residency prior to its U.S. tour. In this presentation, Ohio State students and volunteers from the Columbus community will perform with Monk, Hamilton, and the company.

Immediately following the performance, the artists will take part in a discussion with the audience.

news release

THE WORK

Hailed by *The New York Times* as “spellbinding,” *mercy* combines music, dance, and video. A succession of stage pictures, *mercy* is constructed as a myriad of scenes ranging from a doctor examining a patient (Monk), to a group of people who could be interpreted as refugees, to a prisoner appearing to be interrogated. The piece uses a live-feed video camera to project haunting images, and everything is woven together by the wordless songs of Monk’s original music score. “After venturing inward in its meditations, *mercy* returned to affirm the importance of the outer world,” wrote *The New York Times*.

THE CREATIVE RESIDENCY

Along with Monk, Hamilton, and the company members, *mercy* will feature 35 performers drawn from Ohio State University’s College of the Arts and the Columbus community. These additional cast members will work with Monk and Hamilton during a week-long creative residency prior to the Wexner Center performance.

THE COLLABORATORS

The American representative at the prestigious Venice Biennale in 1999, **Ann Hamilton** is a Columbus-based visual artist known for her sensory multimedia installations and collaborations. Since 1981, she has participated in more than 50 solo and group exhibitions in Europe and the Americas, including the 1991 São Paulo Bienial. Performance has been part of Hamilton’s practice for many years, evident in her collaborations with dancers, musicians, and other performers. In 1998, the Wexner Center commissioned and presented the U.S. premiere of *appetite*, Hamilton’s collaborative project with choreographer Meg Stuart. Hamilton was also the recipient of a 1994–95 Wexner Center Residency Award in the visual arts, which culminated in her 1996 retrospective exhibition, *the body and the object: Ann Hamilton 1984–1996*. Hamilton will be featured on an upcoming segment of PBS’s *Art: 21: Art in the Twenty-first Century*, a national broadcast series on contemporary artists and ideas.

A choreographer, composer, singer, filmmaker, and director, with a career spanning more than three decades, **Meredith Monk** has been a leading force in what is now called “interdisciplinary performance.” In 1968, Monk founded her groundbreaking company The House, creating such site-specific works as *Juice: A Theater Cantata in 3 Installments* (1969) and *American Archeology #1: Roosevelt Island* (1994). Her award-winning films include *Ellis Island* (1981) and *Book of Days* (1988), which was

aired on PBS and selected for the Whitney Biennial. In 1978 she formed Meredith Monk and Vocal Ensemble, which, in 1993, recorded Monk's only full-length opera available on CD, *ATLAS: an opera in three parts*, which was co-commissioned by the Wexner Center. In July 2000, Monk's music was honored by a three-concert retrospective as part of the Lincoln Center Festival. Earlier this year, Meredith Monk and Ensemble completed a tour of her latest work, *Magic Frequencies: a science fiction chamber opera*, in Eastern Europe. For more information, visit www.meredithmonk.org.

EVENT SUPPORT

Lead support for the Wexner Center's 2001–02 performing arts season is provided by **AT&T** and the **Doris Duke Charitable Foundation**. Major support is provided by **Philip Morris Companies, Inc.** Additional support is provided by the **Ohio Arts Council** and the **Wexner Center Foundation**.

mercy was commissioned by the Wexner Center with support from the **Doris Duke Charitable Foundation** and by the **American Dance Festival** through the **Doris Duke Awards for New York**. Additional commissioning support was provided by **Meet The Composer Commissioning Music/Usa**, which is made possible by generous support from the **National Endowment for the Arts**, **The Helen F. Whitaker Fund**, **The Catherine Filene Shouse Foundation**, and the **Target Foundation**.

mercy is funded in part by the **National Dance Project** of the **New England Foundation for the Arts**, with lead funding from the **National Endowment for the Arts** and the **Doris Duke Charitable Foundation**. Additional funding is provided by **The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation**, **Philip Morris Companies Inc.**, the **Pennsylvania Council on the Arts**, and the **British Council**.

This is a **Heartland Arts Fund Program** supported by the **National Endowment for the Arts** and the **Ohio Arts Council**.

Presented at the Wexner Center with support from the **National Endowment for the Arts** and the **Wexner Center Foundation**.

CALENDAR INFORMATION

Meredith Monk and Ann Hamilton: *mercy*

Description: Choreographer and composer Meredith Monk and artist Ann Hamilton collaborate for the dance work *mercy*, co-commissioned by the Wexner center.

Date and time: Friday, October 12 at 8 pm.

Location: Thurber Theatre at Drake Performance and Event Center, 1849 Cannon Drive, The Ohio State University.

Tickets: \$22 general public; \$18 Wexner Center members, OSU students.

Ticket outlets: Wexner Center (614 292-3535) and Ticketmaster (614 431-3600).

Public information: 614 292-3535 and www.wexarts.org.

Images of Hamilton, Monk, and *mercy* available upon request.

The Wexner Center for the Arts is The Ohio State University's multidisciplinary, international laboratory for the exploration and advancement of contemporary art. Through exhibitions, screenings, performances, artist residencies, and educational programs, the Wexner Center acts as a forum where established and emerging artists can test ideas and where diverse audiences can participate in cultural experiences that enhance understanding of the art of our time. In its programs, the Wexner Center balances a commitment to experimentation with a commitment to traditions of innovation and affirms the university's mission of education, research, and community service.

###30###