

The Jewish Museum and Bang on a Can Present
Meredith Monk and Vocal Ensemble



Photo by John Edward Mason (courtesy of Meredith Monk/The House) available in high resolution upon request

Thursday, May 23, 2019 at 8pm
Scheuer Auditorium at the Jewish Museum
1109 5th Ave at 92nd St | New York, NY

Tickets: \$20 General; \$16 Students and Seniors; \$12 Jewish Museum Members
Available at www.thejewishmuseum.org. Includes museum admission.

“As [Monk] sang, there was a palpable sense of love and joy between her and the audience that spoke volumes. An antidote to the troubled times we live in.” - Financial Times

New York, NY, April 17, 2019 – Bang on a Can and the Jewish Museum’s 2018-2019 concert season, pairing innovative music with the Museum’s exhibitions and showcasing leading female performers and composers, continues on **Thursday, May 23, 2019 at 8pm**. Recognized as one of the most unique and influential artists of our time, composer/performer **Meredith Monk** (voice and keyboard) offers one of her more rare, intimate concerts in her premiere at the Jewish Museum, with renowned members of her Vocal Ensemble, **Katie Geissinger** (voice) and **Allison Sniffin** (voice, violin and keyboard). A long-time and frequent collaborator with Bang on a Can, Monk has been hailed as “a magician of the voice” and “one of America’s coolest composers.” This performance reflects Monk’s six decades of innovation and awe-inspiring vocal mastery, mining the depths of the myriad possibilities of the human voice, and is presented in conjunction with the exhibition *Leonard Cohen: A Crack in Everything*.

Leonard Cohen: A Crack in Everything, a contemporary art exhibition inspired by the themes of Leonard Cohen’s life and work, is the first exhibition entirely devoted to the imagination and legacy of the influential singer/songwriter, man of letters, and global icon from Montréal, Canada. The exhibition includes commissioned works by a range of international artists who have been inspired by Cohen’s life and work, a video projection showcasing Cohen’s own drawings, and an innovative multimedia gallery where visitors can hear covers of Cohen’s songs by musicians such as Lou Doillon; Feist; Moby; and The National with Sufjan Stevens, Ragnar Kjartansson, and Richard Reed Parry, among others.

The 2018-2019 season marks the fifth year of the Jewish Museum and Bang on a Can’s partnership, producing dynamic musical performances inspired by the Museum’s diverse slate of exhibitions. This is the final concert of this season focused on pioneering female artists. Details about the 2019-2020 season to be announced.

About Meredith Monk: Meredith Monk is a composer, singer, and creator of new opera and music-theater works. She is a pioneer in what is now called “extended vocal technique”. 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. Celebrated internationally, her work has been presented at major venues around the world.

In 1965, Monk began her innovative exploration of the voice as a multifaceted instrument, composing solo pieces for unaccompanied voice and voice and keyboard. In 1978, she formed Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble to further expand her musical textures and forms. The majority of her work can be heard on the ECM label, including the Grammy-nominated *impermanence* and highly regarded recent release, *On Behalf of Nature*. Her music has also been featured in films by Terrence Malick, Jean-Luc Godard, David Byrne and the Coen Brothers.

Since the early 2000s, Monk has created vital new repertoire for orchestra, chamber ensembles, and solo instruments, with recent commissions from the San Francisco Symphony and Carnegie Hall, where she held the 2014-15 Richard and Barbara Debs Composer's Chair in conjunction with her 50th Season of creating and performing. Recently she received two of the highest honors bestowed to a living artist in the United States—the 2017 Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize and a 2015 National Medal of Arts from President Barack Obama. Monk's newest music-theater piece, *Cellular Songs*, premiered in March 2018 at the Brooklyn Academy of Music to sold-out houses, and continues to tour internationally.

Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble consists of some of the finest and most adventurous singer/ instrumentalist/ performers active in new music. Founded in 1978 to further expand Monk's groundbreaking exploration of the human voice, the Ensemble has received multiple awards and critical acclaim, including a 2008 GRAMMY nomination for *impermanence*. Appearing in festivals, theaters and concert halls around the world, Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble can also be heard on numerous recordings on the ECM New Music Series label.

About Allison Sniffin: Multi-instrumentalist, singer, composer, and member of Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble since 1996, Sniffin has performed in Monk's *The Politics of Quiet*, *A Celebration Service*, *Magic Frequencies*, *mercy*, *Turtle Dreams*, *Book of Days* (concert version), *impermanence*, *Songs of Ascension*, *On Behalf of Nature* and *Cellular Songs*. She has collaborated with Meredith Monk on the orchestration of *Possible Sky*, *Night*, *WEAVE*, *Realm Variations* and *Backlight*; arranged Monk's music for Bang on a Can All-Stars; edited and contributed to two albums of her piano music; and prepared many of her *acapella* and instrumental works for publication. Ms. 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, NYC. She was also winner in the New York Philharmonic's 2017 New World Composition Challenge. Ms. Sniffin serves as organist at Middle Collegiate Church and Temple Sha'aray Tefila in NYC.

About Katie Gessinger: Katie has performed with Meredith Monk worldwide, in concert and in theater pieces such as *ATLAS*, *mercy*, the Grammy-nominated *impermanence*, *Songs of Ascension*, *On Behalf of Nature* (all on ECM), *Cellular Songs* and *The Politics of Quiet*, for which she received an ensemble Bessie award. Other career highlights include the premiere of Bang on a Can's Obie-winning *The Carbon Copy Building* (Canteloupe), touring with Philip Glass and Robert Wilson's *Einstein on the Beach* (Elektra Nonesuch), and performances at Carnegie Hall as a soloist in Bach's *Magnificat*, Honegger's *Le Roi David*, and Monk's *WEAVE*. Katie also sang in 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 Boheme*, 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, Marisa Michelson's oratorio *Naamah's Ark*, conducted by Ted Sperling, and Monk concerts at Lincoln Center's White Light Festival with the Young People's Chorus of New York City. Katie is a member of the professional Cathedral Choir of St. John the Divine under the direction of Kent Tritle.

Tickets for the May 23, 2019 program are \$20 general public; \$16 students and seniors; and \$12 for Jewish Museum members and Bang on a Can list members, and include exhibition admission prior to the performance. Further program and ticket information is available by calling 212.423.3337 or at TheJewishMuseum.org/calendar. The Jewish Museum is located at Fifth Avenue and 92nd Street, NYC.

Support: Public programs are made possible, in part, through public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with City Council and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

About Bang on a Can: Bang on a Can is dedicated to making music new. Since its first Marathon concert in 1987, Bang on a Can has been creating an international community dedicated to innovative music, wherever it is found. With adventurous programs, it commissions new composers, performs, presents, and records new work, develops new audiences, and educates the musicians of the future. Bang on a Can is building a world in which

powerful new musical ideas flow freely across all genres and borders. Bang on a Can plays “a central role in fostering a new kind of audience that doesn’t concern itself with boundaries. If music is made with originality and integrity, these listeners will come.” (*The New York Times*)

Bang on a Can has grown from a one-day New York-based Marathon concert (on Mother’s Day in 1987 in a SoHo art gallery) to a multi-faceted performing arts organization with a broad range of year-round international activities. “When we started Bang on a Can, we never imagined that our 12-hour marathon festival of mostly unknown music would morph into a giant international organization dedicated to the support of experimental music, wherever we would find it,” write Bang on a Can Co-Founders Michael Gordon, David Lang and Julia Wolfe. “But it has, and we are so gratified to be still hard at work, all these years later. The reason is really clear to us – we started this organization because we believed that making new music is a utopian act – that people needed to hear this music and they needed to hear it presented in the most persuasive way, with the best players, with the best programs, for the best listeners, in the best context. Our commitment to changing the environment for this music has kept us busy and growing, and we are not done yet.”

Current projects include the new **LOUD Weekend at MASS MoCA**; **The People's Commissioning Fund**, a membership program to commission emerging composers; the **Bang on a Can All-Stars**, who tour to major festivals and concert venues around the world every year; recording projects; the **Bang on a Can Summer Music Festival at MASS MoCA** - a professional development program for young composers and performers led by today’s pioneers of experimental music; **Asphalt Orchestra**, Bang on a Can’s extreme street band that offers mobile performances re-contextualizing unusual music; **Found Sound Nation**, a new technology-based musical outreach program now partnering with the State Department of the United States of America to create **OneBeat**, a revolutionary, post-political residency program that uses music to bridge the gulf between young American musicians and young musicians from developing countries; cross-disciplinary collaborations and projects with DJs, visual artists, choreographers, filmmakers and more. Each new program has evolved to answer specific challenges faced by today’s musicians, composers and audiences, in order to make innovative music widely accessible and wildly received. Bang on a Can’s inventive and aggressive approach to programming and presentation has created a large and vibrant international audience made up of people of all ages who are rediscovering the value of contemporary music.

About the Jewish Museum: Located on New York City’s famed Museum Mile, the Jewish Museum is a distinctive hub for art and Jewish culture for people of all backgrounds. Founded in 1904, the Museum was the first institution of its kind in the United States and is one of the oldest Jewish museums in the world. Devoted to exploring art and Jewish culture from ancient to contemporary, the Museum offers intellectually engaging exhibitions and programs, and maintains a unique collection of nearly 30,000 works of art, ceremonial objects, and media reflecting the global Jewish experience over more than 4,000 years.

Location: 1109 Fifth Avenue at 92nd Street, New York City
Hours: **During the run of the Leonard Cohen exhibition, Jewish Museum hours will be:** Saturday and Sunday, 10am to 5:45pm; Monday and Tuesday, 11am to 5:45pm; Thursday, 11am to 8pm; Friday, 11am to 4pm.
Admission: \$18.00 for adults, \$12.00 for senior citizens, \$8.00 for students, free for visitors 18 and under and Jewish Museum members. Free on Saturdays and select Jewish holidays.
Information: The public may call 212.423.3200 or visit TheJewishMuseum.org

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