

THE RICHARD B. FISHER CENTER
FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS AT BARD COLLEGE

Lucinda Childs's *Dance*

July 9 – 12, 2009



**The Richard B. Fisher Center for
the Performing Arts at Bard College**

Chair Jeanne Donovan Fisher

President Leon Botstein

Presents

Dance (1979)

Choreography Lucinda Childs

Film Sol LeWitt

Music Philip Glass

Original Costumes by A. Christina Giannini

Lighting Design by Beverly Emmons

Sosnoff Theater

July 9, 10, and 11 at **8 pm**

July 12 at **3 pm**

Dance was commissioned by the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 1979 and performed by the Lucinda Childs Dance Company with the Philip Glass Ensemble.

The Fisher Center commissioned the reconstruction of this piece, with additional support from The Yard, a colony for performing artists on Martha's Vineyard.

Dance was made possible by the National Endowment for the Arts American Masterpieces: Dance initiative, administered by the New England Foundation for the Arts.

Additional support for *Dance* has been provided by the Jerome Robbins Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Program

Dance (1979)

The program comprises three dances of approximately 20 minutes in length, performed together without intermission.

Performers (in order of appearance)

<i>Dance I</i>	Katie Dorn	Brett Alan
	Anne Lewis	Dušan Týnek
	Sharon Milanese	Travis Magee
	Shakirah Stewart	Vincent McCloskey

<i>Dance II</i>	Caitlin Scranton
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<i>Dance III</i>	Katie Dorn	Ty Boomershine
	Anne Lewis	Dušan Týnek
	Katherine Fisher	Travis Magee
	Shakirah Stewart	Vincent McCloskey
	<i>(Casting is subject to change.)</i>	

Recorded music for *Dance I* and *Dance III* performed by the Philip Glass Ensemble.

Recorded music for *Dance II* performed by Philip Glass and Michael Riesman.

Dancers in film (in order of appearance)

Megan Walker	Andé Peck
Susan Osberg	Erin Matthiessen
Judy Padow	Graham Conley
Cynthia Hedstrom	Daniel McCusker
Lucinda Childs	

Assistant to the Choreographer Ty Boomershine

Production Manager Tricia Oliver

Special thanks to Postworks NYC and Josh Telson for their work on the restoration of Sol LeWitt's film.

The use of recording equipment or the taking of photographs during the performance is strictly prohibited.

Pattern Recognition: Lucinda Childs's *Dance*

by Ed Halter

In her essay "Grids," published in the journal *October* in 1979, art historian Rosalind Krauss identifies the grid as "an emblem of modernity . . . the form that is ubiquitous in the art of our century, while appearing nowhere, nowhere at all, in the art of the last one." Tracing the history of the reticulated pattern in modern art, from its adoption and valorization in cubism to subsequent incidence in the works of Malevich, Mondrian, Agnes Martin, Ad Reinhardt, Jasper Johns, Robert Ryman and others, Krauss describes the grid as the ultimate marker of art's release from representation and, thereby, the mind's triumph over nature. She writes that "the relationships in the aesthetic field are shown by the grid to be in a world apart and, with respect to natural objects, to be both prior and final. The grid declares the space of art to be at once autonomous and autotelic." In short, "the grid functions to declare the modernity of modern art."

Krauss completed her essay prior to the 1979 premiere of *Dance*, but nevertheless concludes with a paragraph stating that "as we contemplate this subject, there [has] been announced for next season a performance project based on the combined efforts of Phil Glass, Lucinda Childs, and Sol LeWitt: music, dance and sculpture, projected as the mutually accessible space of the grid." For *Dance*, Childs's choreography and Glass's musical score are complemented by a film directed by artist LeWitt, projected onto a large, semi-transparent scrim positioned at the front of the stage. The image portrays Childs's dancers performing the same routines concurrent with their live counterparts, but LeWitt's film sets the filmed dancers upon a lattice of black lines on a white floor—a modernist grid that indeed serves to create the sense of an autonomous space, apart from physical reality.

The juxtaposition of physical bodies and projection makes the live dancers appear as if they are floating within the black-and-white film. The effect is uncannily reminiscent of the use of chroma-key superimpositions by video artists of the same decade, like Charles Atlas, Nam June Paik, and Doris Chase, who used this technique to situate dancers in electronic "video space." Writing on Childs's work in 1983,

Susan Sontag observed that “the film is a friendly, intermittent ghost that makes the dancers, seen behind the scrim, seem disembodied, too: each seems the ghost of the other.” In fact, this phenomenon has a spectral precedent: the Victorian theatrical illusion known as “Pepper’s ghost,” in which a live, translucent image is projected on stage via the manipulation of mirrors and special lighting. Sontag notes that the use of LeWitt’s film furthers “a recurrent structure in Childs’s work: splitting the performer into two versions, the action into two levels, which proceed simultaneously.”

Dance was not the first Childs-Glass collaboration: Childs wrote and performed dialog for *Einstein on the Beach*, the 1976 opera written by Glass and directed by Robert Wilson. After *Dance*, Childs collaborated on large-scale performances with a number of other artists and musicians, and worked again with LeWitt in 1989 for the production *Mayday*.

Though none embraced the label uncritically, Childs, Glass, and LeWitt have all been categorized under the rubric of “minimalism,” a somewhat loose designation meant to describe artists of the 60s and after who sought to reduce art to its barest, most fundamental elements. But this term fails to convey how the work each of these three artists creates complexity through the successive duplication of simple primary factors. For example, LeWitt’s drawings and sculptural “structures” repeat basic shapes like blocks, stars or pyramids to create complicated, epic forms. Glass is well-known for his looping musical phrases that build upon one another through subtle changes during extended repetition. Likewise, Childs’s earlier choreography largely disposed of the classical grammar of ballet, working instead from smaller, more vernacular gestures like walking, turning, and skipping, elaborating elegant, trancelike rituals from quotidian procedures.

The choreography of *Dance* hews to Childs’s earlier experiments in vernacular movement, with the sweeping expanse of a ballet. Dancers enter and exit continuously, traversing the stage in geometric lines as they move from one point to the other. LeWitt’s film offers an array of views of parallel actions: close-ups, camera angles from various heights and positions, split screens, freeze-frames. At one point,

LeWitt's film appears to float above the live dancers, as if they existed on two levels. In the original production of *Dance*, Childs performed her own solo in the middle, alongside her ghostly film double; today, that part is played by another dancer, but Childs's image from the late 1970s remains. Now, the projection creates displacements not just in space, but time.

Childs's reduction of dancing to a relentless, game-like logic proved controversial in its day, evoking sharply divided reactions. One ecstatic reviewer for the *Washington Post* wrote that "*Dance* has the power to induce a remarkable 'high' in those spectators attuned to its innermost core—a sensation of floating, cosmic euphoria that leaves one wishing the performance would go on and on without end." In contrast, an enraged cluster of audience members at a performance in Paris stormed out with verbal protestation, declaring that what they witnessed "was not dance."

If the formal sensibility of *Dance* feels less alienating today, perhaps it is because our popular imagination has caught up with its procedural aesthetic. Thirty years later, *Dance*'s grid reminds us of visual depictions of cyberspace in films like *Tron*, scientific representations of space-time as curving wireframes, or the vector graphics of classic arcade videogames—echoed in the science fiction-like phrase "space eaters," a term Childs has used to describe the role of her dancers. After decades of MTV and high-speed commercials, viewers today are better attuned to appreciate LeWitt's experiments in multiple perspective.

This rhetoric of mathematical models and theoretical worlds nevertheless remains true to Childs's meticulous vision. Sontag writes that "Childs's choreography suggests some ideal space, where ideal transactions and transformations take place . . . Dance as the art of ideal precision; ideal spatial relationships; idea, undiluted intensity." For an age that has embraced virtual realities made possible by the algorithmic logics of computer imaging and instantaneous data transfer, Childs's enthralling work of generative permutation now seems prescient.

Critic and curator Ed Halter is a visiting assistant professor of film and electronic arts.

Who's Who

Lucinda Childs Choreographer

Dance for Childs is the art of euphoria. . . . Childs's work assumes that dancing is a noble art.

—Susan Sontag

Lucinda Childs is one of America's most important modern choreographers. Of her work, which is often described as conceptual dance, she has said, "My dances are an intense experience of intense looking and listening." Childs was born in New York City in 1940. In her second year at Sarah Lawrence College, she took a class with visiting professor Merce Cunningham. After she completed her degree, she went on to study at the Cunningham Studio. There she met Yvonne Rainer, who went on to cofound (with Steve Paxton) the influential Judson Dance Theater and invited Childs to be one of Judson's original company members. Describing this period, Childs has said, "Nothing is necessarily extraneous to dance, including the professionally trained dancer's susceptibility to the influence of nonprofessionals. The Judson Dance Theater concerned itself with this idea . . . materials as objects combining dance phrases with movement activity in relation to objects . . . a unified idiom of action, but a cumulative trend of activity that did not follow along one isolated scheme." After she formed her own company in 1973, Childs collaborated with Robert Wilson and Philip Glass on the opera *Einstein on the Beach*, participating as leading performer and choreographer (she also took part in the opera's revivals in 1984 and 1992). It was during rehearsals for *Einstein* that Childs and Glass came up with the original idea for *Dance*. In a *Washington Post* review of *Dance*, Alan M. Kriegsman wrote, "A few times, at most, in the course of a decade a work of art comes along that makes a genuine breakthrough, defining for us new modes of perception and feeling and clearly belonging as much to the future as to the present. Such a work is *Dance*."

Along with Glass, LeWitt, and Wilson, Childs has worked with such artists, composers, and directors as John Adams, Frank Gehry, Henryk Górecki, Robert Mapplethorpe,

Terry Riley, and Iannis Xenakis. Childs received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1979, the year she created *Dance*. She is also a recipient of the NEA/NEFA American Masterpiece Award, and in 2004 she was elevated from the rank of Officer to Commander in France's Order of Arts and Letters. Childs's original scores for *Dance*, Sol LeWitt's storyboard for the film, Philip Glass's original musical score, and a DVD recording of a performance of *Dance* are on view in an exhibition titled *A Dance* at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City through September.

Philip Glass Composer

Philip Glass has had an extraordinary and unprecedented impact upon the musical and intellectual life of his times. His operas—*Einstein on the Beach*, *Satyagraha*, *Akhmatov*, and *The Voyage*, among many others—and his symphonies, as well as the compositions he creates for his own ensemble, play throughout the world's leading houses, and rarely to an empty seat. Glass has also written music for experimental theater and for Academy Award-winning films such as *The Hours* and Martin Scorsese's *Kundun*. His associations, personal and professional, with leading choreographers, writers, filmmakers, and rock, pop and world music artists date back to the 1960s, including collaborative relationships with artists ranging from Lucinda Childs and Twyla Tharp to Allen Ginsberg, Robert Wilson, Sol LeWitt, Woody Allen, and David Bowie. He is deservedly celebrated for being the first composer to bring multigenerational audiences to opera houses, concert halls, the dance world, film, and popular music.

Sol LeWitt Film

Sol LeWitt (1928–2007) was among the first artists to formally define conceptual art as a phenomenon. He is best known for his deceptively simple geometric structures and architecturally scaled wall drawings, but his oeuvre also includes sculptures, photographs, prints, and films. LeWitt reduced art to a few basic shapes—spheres, triangles, quadrilaterals—colors, and types of lines, and organized these elements into guidelines. Much of his production for his drawings was in the form of a set of ideas or instructions that he gave to teams of assistants to carry out. His method permitted other people to participate in the creative process. During his lifetime, LeWitt was the subject of hundreds of solo exhibitions in museums and galleries around the world.

Beverly Emmons Lighting Designer

Beverly Emmons's Broadway credits include *Annie Get Your Gun*, *Jekyll & Hyde*, *The Heiress*, Stephen Sondheim's *Passion*, *The Elephant Man*, and *Amadeus*, for which she won a Tony Award. Her Off-Broadway work includes *The Vagina Monologues* and several works by Joseph Chaiken. She has also designed productions at the Kennedy Center, the Guthrie, Arena Stage, and the Children's Theatre of Minneapolis. For Robert Wilson, she has lit eight productions, including *Einstein on the Beach*. Along with her work with Lucinda Childs, she has designed lighting for choreographers Alvin Ailey, Trisha Brown, Merce Cunningham, and Martha Graham. Her honors include seven Tony nominations, the 1976 Lumen award, 1984 and 1986 Bessies, a 1980 Obie for Distinguished Lighting, and several Maharam/American Theater Wing Design Awards.

A. Christina Giannini Original Costumes

Christina Giannini's dance design credits include costumes for Alvin Ailey Dance Company, American Ballet Theatre, American Repertory Ballet, Joffrey Ballet, Lucinda Childs Dance Company, and Pennsylvania Ballet Company, among many others. International audiences have seen her work performed by the Ballet du Nord (France), Ballet of Flanders (Belgium), Royal Danish Ballet, Hong Kong Ballet, Teatro Colón Ballet Company (Argentina), and Ballet Terese Carrena and Ballet National de Caracas (both in Venezuela). She has also designed costumes for on and Off-Broadway theater and opera companies as well as New York Shakespeare Festival, Hartford Stage Company, Roundabout Theater, and Portland Stage.

Ty Boomershine (Assistant to the Choreographer) was trained at the Fort Hayes Arts and Academic High School in Columbus, Ohio, and Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri. In New York he has danced for Lucinda Childs as well as Dan Wagoner, Bill T. Jones, Dancenoise, Ton Simons, Gus Solomons Jr., and the Merce Cunningham Dance Foundation Repertory Group. In Europe he has worked with Dance Works Rotterdam, Leine & Roebana, Giulia Mureddu, Emio Greco|PC, and Irish Modern Dance Theatre. He has taught at universities, professional dance companies, and studios throughout the United States and Europe, as well as assisting Lucinda Childs in setting her works.

Brett Alan is a native of Jericho, New York. He graduated magna cum laude from Adelphi University with a B.F.A. in dance. He is now a member of BODYART Dance Company and Vissi Dance Theater. He has performed works by Donald McKayle, Danny Grossman, Roger Jeffrey, Aszure Barton, David Parsons, Leda Meredith, Tracy Kofford, Sharon Wong, Ayelen Liberona, Rebecca Kelly, Chung-Fu Chang, Oliver Daehler, Nick Seligson-Ross, Janis Brenner, Trebien Pollard, and August Bournonville restaged by Frank Augustyn. He has performed with Hydroflo, Naganuma Dance, Genesis Dance Company, Mary Seidman and Dancers, and Flexicurve. He is the choreographer for Double G Productions, and the guest choreographer for Jericho High School's annual Choreo performance. He is the rehearsal assistant to Leda Meredith for Wong Dance and Stockton College, and he teaches at several Long Island dance studios. He has been a scholarship student with Jennifer Muller|The Works since 2007.

Katie Dorn is a graduate of the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, where she received a B.F.A. in contemporary dance. In 2006 she received an M.F.A. from the Hollins University/American Dance Festival program. That same year, the Martha Hill Dance Fund honored her with the Young Professional Award. Since moving to New York City, she has worked with the Metropolitan Opera Ballet, Mary Seidman and Dancers, Amanda Selwyn Dance Theatre, Meredith Glisson, and Janice Lancaster. She has presented her own work at the Galapagos Art Space and at A.I.R. Gallery in Brooklyn. She is a former scholarship recipient at the Merce Cunningham Studio. Dorn hails from Buffalo, New York.

Katherine Fisher is a dancer and choreographer based in Brooklyn. She has danced with MOMIX, ODC/Dance San Francisco, Jennifer Muller|The Works, johannes wieland, PersonWidrig Dance Theater, Mark Dendy, Janis Brenner, and Ann Carlson. Along with her partner, Breezy Berryman, she produced In The Company of Women, a dance festival featuring emerging female choreographers. *Seven Dolors*, her solo work, was selected to be performed at Dancers Respond to Aids and through the Brooklyn Museum of Art's dance forum, Conflict/Catalyst. Fisher's choreographic work has also been shown through film at the Slamdance Festival. She attended the

Baltimore School for the Arts and earned a B.F.A. with honors from the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University.

Anne Lewis, born in Des Moines, Iowa, is a recent graduate of Mount Holyoke College, where she earned a B.A. in critical social thought and dance. Prior to attending Mount Holyoke, she trained at the Harid Conservatory in Boca Raton, Florida, on a full tuition scholarship. There she performed in *Le Corsaire*, *La Bayadère*, *The Nutcracker* and in a solo excerpt from *A Little Love* choreographed by Martin Fredmann. At Mount Holyoke, she took advantage of the Five College Dance Department, which combines the resources of Smith, Amherst, Mount Holyoke, and Hampshire Colleges and the University of Massachusetts Amherst. During her studies, she was strongly influenced by Wendy Woodson, Candice Salyers, and Cynthia McLaughlin. She has performed in Trisha Brown's *Set and Reset*, restaged by Abby Yager; Mark Davis's *Ella*; Doug Elkins's *Narcoleptic Lovers*, restaged by Fritha Pengelly; Rodger Blum's *Falling Slowly*; and Jim Coleman and Terese Freedman's *Alchemy*. Outside of the dance studio, Lewis directed performances by Mount Holyoke's Unusual Suspects, one of the country's only all-female improvisational comedy troupes.

Travis Magee earned a B.F.A. degree in dance from the Boston Conservatory, where he worked with Yuriko, Luis Fuente, and Jennifer Scanlon. He is a recurring guest artist with the Metropolitan Opera, where he recently appeared in *La Sonnambula*, choreographed by Daniel Pelzig. He played the role of Nijinsky in the premiere of Matt Williams's *Ward 9* at the 2008 New York Musical Theater Festival. He recently completed *Clear Blue Tuesday*, a soon-to-be-released film that was choreographed by Chase Brock. He has been a member of several companies, including Anna Myer and Dancers, Noel Macduffie and Dancers, and the New Dance Group. Most recently he has been a guest artist with Yung-li Chen's I-danse.

Vincent McCloskey grew up in Washington, D.C., where he began his dance career at the age of five. After studying at the Chicago Academy for the Arts, he moved to New York to study at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Center and the Joffrey Ballet

School. He has worked with many choreographers, including Jeffrey Bauer, Karen Reedy, Peter Kyle, Daman Harun, Helen Pickett, Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, Laura Scozzi, Sean Curran, Ariane Anthony, Mark Morris, and Dušan Týnek.

Sharon Milanese is originally from New Jersey, where she began her dance career at Robin Horneff's Performing Arts Center. She continued her training at Southern Methodist University, in Dallas, Texas, graduating with a B.F.A. in dance performance. She has studied at the Boston Ballet, Royal Academy of Dancing, Ballet School New York, Paul Taylor School, and ODC/Dance San Francisco. Her professional career includes performing with New York Theatre Ballet, Cortez & Co. Contemporary/Ballet, Verb Ballets, Take Dance Company, Lydia Johnson Dance, and Muse Dance Theater. She has most recently been dancing with Patrick Corbin's CorbinDances in New York City.

Caitlin Scranton began her ballet training under Emma Rainey at Dance Theater of Iowa when she was 12 years old. She later studied modern and jazz at Idyllwild Arts Academy in California, spent a year in Australia training at Sydney Dance Company, and attended Smith College, graduating in 2005 with a degree in American history. After moving to New York she completed the Independent Study Program at the Ailey School. She has been a member of Cornfield Dance for three years, and she recently joined the Metropolitan Opera Ballet for the Met's premiere of *La Damnation de Faust*. She has also worked with the Rebecca Davis Dance Company in Philadelphia as a soloist and rehearsal director.

Shakirah Stewart began her professional training at LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts. While there, she worked with Troy Powell, Jamel Gaines, Penny Frank, and Elisa King. She earned a B.F.A. in dance at Purchase College, where she performed works by Lauri Stallings, Paul Taylor, Ori Flomin, Megan Williams, and Kevin Wynn. While at Purchase she also worked with Mark Morris, performing his *Gloria* there as well as at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. After graduating, Stewart went on to dance at New Dance Group, Forces of Nature, and, with Amanda Selwyn, at Notes in Motion. She has also performed works by Sidra Bell at Purchase College, Jacob's Pillow, and the Modern Dance Festival at Alvin Ailey.

Dušan Týnek is a Czech-born dancer and choreographer who is a 1997 graduate of Bard College. He owes much of his training and inspiration to Judson Church luminary and Bard Dance Program professor Aileen Passloff as well as Merce Cunningham, who tutored him for several years while Týnek served as an understudy for the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. Týnek went on to perform and tour with a number of New York City-based modern dance companies, including Lucinda Childs Dance Company, Douglas Dunn & Dancers, Molissa Fenley, and Dance Works Rotterdam in the Netherlands. In 2002, Týnek founded his own eight-member company, Dušan Týnek Dance Theatre, which has created over a dozen major dances and held five critically acclaimed seasons in New York City at the Kitchen, Joyce SoHo, Ailey Citigroup Theater, Brooklyn Lyceum, and Dance Theater Workshop. In addition to New York, Týnek has presented his work in Massachusetts, Florida, North Carolina, the Netherlands, Poland, and Russia. He teaches modern dance at the Mark Morris Dance Center in Brooklyn.

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