

🕒 October 7–14, 1999

critic pick | dance

## Cathy Weis

Once there was a young, hearty Southern gal named Cathy Weis who kicked and twirled with the Louisville Ballet, tap-danced with a bluegrass band and even dabbled in some disco moves. But it wasn't long before a mysterious weakness crept into one side of her body and Weis found that she just couldn't dance like she used to. So she started fooling around with other stuff like videotaping her grandmother and glassblowing. By the time she found out that the pain in her body was actually multiple sclerosis, Weis had already decided to try to make stage works that somehow combined video and movement. But when technology and the body become partners, who leads? Weis (now a Bessie award-winning choreographer) believes that dance and video can share equal space in a live performance. In her humorous, eye-opening works, the movement is rarely overwhelmed by electronic hardware. Instead, the stage becomes a poetic realm where cool blue images mix with hot-blooded dancing. In her 1998 work *Gravity Twins*, dancers videotaped each other in the moment of the performance and projected those images on big film screens, which they wheeled crazily through the stage space. You'll have to think, feel and sense in a completely different way at Weis' upcoming premiere of *Monitor Lizards* at the Bride. Featuring longtime Weis collaborators Ishmael Houston-Jones, Scott Heron, Audrey Kindred and Philly's own David Brick of Headlong Dance Theater, *Monitor Lizards* again combines on-the-spot videotaping with storytelling and robust movement. At the center of all this magic a sharp, Southern gal still dances like a disco queen.

—Jonathan David Jackson

**Monitor Lizards**, Oct. 8-9, *The Painted Bride Art Center*, 230 Vine St., 215-925-9914.