

Lucinda Childs's spare and orderly dances have both mystified and mesmerized audiences for more than a decade.

Like other so-called "postmodern" choreographers.

Childs sees dance as pure form Her dances are mathematical explorations of geometric shapes, and her dancers are expressionless, genderless instruments who etch intricate patterns on the floor in precisely timed.

repetitive sequences of relatively simple steps.

The development of Childs's career, from its beginning in the now legendary Judson Dance Theater.

paralleled the development of minimalist art, although the choreographer herself has taken issue with those critics who describe her work as minimalist.

In her view, each of her dances is simply "an intense experience of intense looking and listening," in addition to performing with her troupe, the Lucinda Childs Dance Company.

Childs has appeared in the avant-garde opera Einstein on the Beach, in two of Broadway plays, and in the films Jeonne d'Iman by Marie Jimenez and 21:12 Piano Bor.

As a little girl, Childs had dreamed of becoming an actress.

She appeared regularly in student productions throughout her school years, and when she was about eleven she began to take drama lessons.

it was at the suggestion of her acting coach that the youngster, who was, by her own admission.

"clumsy, shapeless, and on the heavy side.

" enrolled in a dancing class Among her early teachers were Hanya Holm.

the dancer and choreographer who introduced the Wigman system of modern dance instruction to the United States, and Helen Tamiris, the Broadway choreographer.

Pleased with her pupil's progress.

Ms.Tamiris eventually asked the girl to perform onstage.

After that exhilarating experience, Lucinda Childs "wasn't sure [she] even wanted to be an actress anymore.