

INSPIRIT

a dance company

A Note from the Founding Artistic Director:



As the Founding Artistic Director of INSPIRIT, I have the pleasure of bringing together a diverse group of female choreographers and performers to collaborate on new work that touches and inspires communities across the country. This is both my way of fulfilling my dreams and of pushing the current nature and focus of dance companies.

Unlike a typical collective, INSPIRIT collaborations are driven by an artistic theme and an artistic director. Artistic excellence is the top priority, so careful decisions are made to pair co-creators – choreographers, musicians, visual artists, poets – in ways that will best serve the creative process and product. Unlike a traditional repertory company, all the choreographers come from within INSPIRIT, which allows for a deep commitment to the company’s mission.

Currently the company is made up of 14 incredibly bold and highly trained artists living and working in Washington, D.C., New York and North Carolina. These artists come from various cultural backgrounds and life experiences, allowing INSPIRIT to draw from and project a kaleidoscopic view of the world. Our success has been felt in venues across the country: from Aaron Davis Hall, The Joyce Soho and Mulberry Street Theater in New York to Dance Place and The Lincoln Theater in Washington, D.C. to the Huerbst Theater in California.

Each performance reinforces our sense of purpose: to infuse one another with ideas, to encourage rich collaboration and to invigorate audiences everywhere.

In the Spirit,

Christal N. Brown

Artistic Statement

There is a gravitas in the seductive narratives and captivating kinetics of this collaborative company of women. As its name suggests, INSPIRIT creates contemporary dance works imbued with spiritual exuberance, ancestral strength and startling perception. The works created by and for the company consistently stretch the artists' understanding of body and performance. There exists an ephemeral correlation between the two, but the artistry created by INSPIRIT attempts to make that correlation more tangible. The rich movement vocabulary draws from the ensemble's wide-ranging experiences, from postmodern forms to traditional West African dance, from ballet to yoga. It is the belief of the company that technique is a journey. INSPIRIT seeks to expose the tools we have within in order to create a more succinct and fulfilled performance both on stage and in life. The multi-dimensional dance works that result forge a visceral and emotional connection by expressing our collective hopes, struggles and truths.

About the Company

INSPIRIT, a dance company, based in the Bronx, New York, was founded in 2000 to provide a forum for collaboration among emerging female artists and choreographers. Currently the company consists of bold, highly trained artists living and working in New York. Since its inception, the company has performed in New York at Danspace Project, Dance Theater Workshop, Dance New Amsterdam, Joyce SoHo, Aaron Davis Hall, Bronx Academy of Art and Dance, Mulberry Street Theater, and the Solar 1 Festival; in Washington D.C. at Lincoln Theater and Dance Place; in Cleveland at the Museum of Contemporary Art; at the San Francisco Street Theatre Festival, and at several universities, colleges, and high schools from New York to Mississippi. Founder and Artistic Director, Christal Brown has been awarded a two-year position in the Artists in Residence Program offered at Movement Research which began the summer of 2007. This teaching intensive allowed Brown to further codify and aptly identify the company's technique entitled Liquid Strength. Additionally, the company is currently involved in its third residency at Tribeca Performing Arts Center. This year we are proud to produce the works of company members, Alexandra Houston and Sharon Manuel. Their works will premier April 5 and 6. In addition to excellence in performance, the company places great importance on education and community IN-reach, providing its members an inclusive company structure that allows them to excel in multiple areas of interest. The dance curriculum, created by the company has been formally recognized by the Department of Education for being in accordance with the New York State learning standards for the arts; allowing its implementation in Bronx charter schools. Launched in 2005, Project: BECOMING, a rite of passage program for young women ages 13-19, quickly infused the name of INSPIRIT with community and betterment of self. In the fall of 2007 we joined forces with BAM's educational department through an initiative entitled, Dancing into the Future. This marked the inception of INSPIRIT II: an opportunity for young women to perform, create and explore their inner artists.

About the Artistic Director

Christal Brown (choreographer, educator, performer, writer, activist) is a native of Kinston, North Carolina, and received her BFA in Dance and minor in Business from the University of NC at Greensboro. Upon graduation Brown toured nationally with Chuck Davis'African-American Dance Ensemble and internationally with Andrea E.

Woods/Souloworks.

Immediately following those experiences Brown performed with and managed Gesel Mason Performance Projects while apprenticing with the Liz Lerman Dance Exchange in Takoma Park, MD. Upon relocating to New York Brown apprenticed with the Bill T Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company before finding a home with Urban Bush Women: where she spent three seasons as a principal performer, community specialist and apprentice program coordinator. Aside from performing, Brown is the Founding Artistic Director of INSPIRIT (formerly Women @ Work) a performance ensemble and educational conglomerate dedicated to bringing female choreographers together to collaborate and show new work, expanding the views of women of all ages, and being a constant source of inspiration to members of its audience and company. Founded in 2000, INSPIRIT has been honored to show work at Aaron Davis Hall, St. Marks Church, Joyce Soho, The Lincoln Theater of Washington, DC, and various other venues across the country. Combining her athleticism, creativity, love for people, and knack for teaching, Brown continues to teach and create works that redefine the art of dance and the structure of the field.

Biographies of Artistic Collaborators

Beatrice Capote (Assistant Educational Liaison/Dancer), West New York, NJ, is a graduate from the North Carolina School of the Arts. She began her dance training at Amarylis American Dance Center in New Jersey. Then she continued her training at Alvin Ailey American Dance Center Junior Division Program. She has studied and performed works by Camille A. Brown, Kevin Wynn, Milton Myers, Oliver Steele, Dianne Markham, Troy Powell, Ruth Barnes, Brenda Daniels, Craig Patterson, Paul Matteson, Earl Mosley, Jenn Nugent, Sean Sullivan, BJ Sullivan, Elena Commendador, Robert Atwood, Sharon Wong, Beth Goheen, and Denise Jefferson. Ms. Capote is currently teaching in various after school programs and is delighted and blessed to have joined the company.

Jazmine Dugall (Educator/Dancer) is a native of Cupertino, CA. She trained at the Santa Clara Ballet School under Benjamin and Josefa Reyes. She spent summers at the Joffrey Ballet School and the Martha Graham Center of Contemporary Dance, and studied on fellowship at The Ailey School. Ms. Dugall received her B.F.A. in dance from Marymount Manhattan College under Katie Langan-Santee. Ms. Dugall was a member of Washington Reflections Dance Company, and joined INSPIRIT a dance company in 2007.

Carlita V. Ector (Educator/Dancer) began her dance career in Raleigh, NC. Her dream of inspiring others through dance encouraged her to go to The University of North Carolina at Greensboro to major in Dance Performance, Choreography and Education. Her thirst for cultural enrichment further inspired her to attain a Spanish degree and travel to Madrid, Spain.

Carlita has had the pleasure of performing full concerts and/or evening length works at Kumble Theatre (NY), The American Dance Festival(NC), and Dance Africa (TX). Ms. Ector has enjoyed touring with the Chuck Davis African American Dance Ensemble, and currently tours with Christal Brown's INSPIRIT. She thanks dance mentors Gerri Houlihan, Christal Brown (INSPIRIT, Urban Bush Women), Baba Chuck Davis (African American Dance Ensemble), Jawole Zollar (Urban Bush Women), Shani Collins (Evidence), Earl Mosely (Diversity of Dance), bj Sullivan, Jan Van Dyke for their guidance.

New York based dancer, actor and educator **Samara Gaev (Educator/Dancer)** began her dance training at the Hampshire Dance Academy in Northampton, Massachusetts and continued her studies at the Five College Dance Department where she trained with Andre Tyson and Nia Love. Samara received a BA from New York University's Gallatin School of Individualized Studies during which time she performed extensively with Universal Arts Co., in the Beat and Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome, directed by Robbie McCauley. She also lived in Brazil and traveled to Cuba to study both contemporary and folkloric dance traditions. Samara teaches in New York City public schools, shelters and community centers as a teaching artist and is currently an artist in residence at the Brooklyn Children's Museum.

Alexandra Joye Houston (Community Liaison/Dancer) is a native of the Washington, D.C. Metro area. She began her intense training as a dance major at Suitland High School for Visual and Performing Arts. She received her BA degree in Drama with a concentration in Dance/Pre-Medicine from Spelman College in 2003 and in 2006 received her Master of Fine Arts degree in Dance Performance from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Upon graduation from UNCG Alexandra relocated to Brooklyn, NY and was offered an apprenticeship with Urban Bush Women. She has since found a home with Christal Brown's INSPIRIT dance company. Alexandra has been fortunate to work with Bill T. Jones on the Fela Kuti Project and as a teaching artist with the Brooklyn Arts Council. Alexandra is also an emerging dance filmmaker her first film short shown in the Urban Literature Film Festival in 2006 and at the University of Chicago's Eyes on Mosaic conference in 2007. Alexandra is also a freelance writer of dance and urban culture with articles published in Greensboro's Go Triad and Urban Literature Magazine. In the summer of 2007, Alexandra participated in the Africa and the Diaspora dance intensive workshop in Senegal at the company home of Jant-Bi, under the leadership of Germaine Acogny and other guest artists. This is Alexandra's second season with INSPIRIT and is grateful to be working with such amazing women.

Toni Renee Johnson (Educational Liaison/Dancer) is a native of Plainfield, New Jersey. She is a freelance artist: performer, choreographer, dance educator. Toni Renee holds a BS degree in Communications from Drexel University in Philadelphia and an MFA degree in Dance with honors from Florida State University. Toni Renee has extensive dance training and performance experience. She studied dance on scholarship at Drexel University and Florida State University, spent a summer at the Ailey School, earned a merit scholarship to Bates Dance Festival as well as apprenticed with Urban Bush Women in 2005. She has had her choreography commissioned at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival and Drexel University. She also teaches for New York and New Jersey school systems where she works as a dance educator. Currently, Toni Renee is Artistic Director of her company: BOLDE (Breath of Life Dance Experience) for which she creates socially conscious work to underscore the human experience. Toni Renee performs with Blacksmith's Daughter, under direction of Nia Love and is excited to be a part of INSPIRIT.

Melana L.Lloyd(Strategic Planner/Dancer)is a native of Lafayette, Louisiana. At age 16 she began her studies in modern dance and has since acquired a Bachelor's of Science in Education and a Master of Fine Arts degree in Dance from New York University Tisch School of the Arts. Accomplished in both fields, Ms. Lloyd has taught for over seven years; receiving several awards and recognition for her work in grades K-12. She currently teaches Kindergarten in the NYC Public School System and has done so for the past two years.

As a performer, she is pleased to have spent six seasons with Of Moving Colors, a multimedia dance company (Baton Rouge, Louisiana) under the direction of Garland Goodwin Wilson. She has worked with choreographers such as Irene Rampino, Paloo

Zustiac, Edisa Weeks, Andrea Woods, Baraka De Soliel, Patricia N. Nanon and more. At present, in addition to her teaching commitment, she also performs with Ase Dance Theater Collective, apprentices with Nia Love's Blacksmith's Daughter, Queen of All Saints Bell Choir and INSPIRIT, a dance company directed by Christal Brown.

Sharon Manuel (Marketing/Dancer), born and raised in Cleveland, Ohio, moved to New York City in January of 2006, and has been privileged to dance with INSPIRIT since. Manuel received a BA in History and Theater Arts (2002), and an MFA in Contemporary Dance (2004) from Case Western Reserve University. While attending CWRU Manuel had the pleasure to serve as a founding member of Antaeus Dance -- Artistic Director, Joan Meggitt. Upon graduation, she worked as a part-time lecturer at the university. Currently Manuel teaches for INSPIRIT when the opportunity arises, and performs with the company regularly. While the majority of her training has been Graham-based technique; having performed in works by Martha Graham, Diane Gray and Pascal Rioult among others, she has immensely enjoyed this foray into West African influenced work in NYC. This new avenue in dance provided her the privilege to perform *Macbeth* with the Classic Theater of Harlem this past spring. Manuel will challenge herself this upcoming year to create a new work for INSPIRIT based upon *The Trojan Women*. The half-hour piece, which will be in collaboration with actors, dancers and a puppeteer, will premiere in NYC in spring of 2008.

Juri Nishio (Costume Mistress/Dancer) was born and grew up in Tokyo Japan, graduated from Nihon University of Art (Majoring in Drama). Juri finished the International Student Independent Study program at the Ailey School, in 2006. Juri is happy to be in her second year with INSPIRIT and also feels very thankful for unconditional support and love from her family.

Michelai Sancho (Apprentice) began her pre-professional training at the Dance Theatre of Harlem and at The Alvin Ailey American Dance School. She then ventured into Theatre work at Ithaca College where she majored in Occupational Therapy. However, Michelai decided to pursue her passion instead and joined the Charles Moore Dance Company in 2003 under the direction of Ella Thompson Moore. She later joined Genesis Dance Company led by Artistic Director, Karen Arceneux. In May 2007 Michelai received her BFA in Dance from Long Island University Brooklyn Campus. Since graduation she has worked with Tony Award Winner, Bill T. Jones in his summer institute at Skidmore College and was an Apprentice with Urban Bush Women under the direction of Jawolle Willa Zollar.

Chevon Stewart (Fiscal Agent/Dancer) is a Native New Yorker. Raised in the Bronx and Beacon, NY, She currently resides in Brooklyn where she works as a Performer, Teaching Artist and Yoga instructor. She began her dance training at Ballet Arts Studio under the direction of Valerie Feit in Beacon, NY. In High school she went on to study at Central Pennsylvania Youth ballet and attended the Ailey school as a fellowship student.

She attended Hobart and William Smith Colleges as an Arts Scholar and received her B.A. in Dance and Psychology in 2004. Since 2004 Chevon has had the privilege to perform with Urban Bush Women's apprentice program, Arthur Aviles Typical Dance Theater, Keila Cordova Dances and Richard Rivera. She is currently a proud member of INSPIRIT, a dance company and Baraka De Soliel's D Underbelly.

Jema Taylor (Assistant Artistic Director/Dancer), from Lake Park, Florida, is a graduate of North Carolina School of The Arts. She began her dance training under the fabulous direction of Joan Miller at Palm Beach Ballet Center. While in attendance at NCSA, she worked with Alberto del Saz, Scott Rink, Kraig "Bopi" Patterson, Neta Pulvemacher, and Andrea E. Woods. Jema is very thankful to be in her fourth season with INSPIRIT, a dance company. She would also like to thank her Mom for her love and support

Tina Louise Vasquez (Grants/Development Director/Dancer) is a Certified Movement Analyst and a graduate of New York University's Gallatin School of Individualized Study. She received her primary dance training from Coupe Dance Studio in Nanuet, New York, and at the age of 15, she attended the Contemporary Traditions Program at Jacob's Pillow. She has also studied in dance programs in Cuba and Italy. In 2001, she was awarded the Rockland County Executive Arts Award in Arts Education. In addition to dancing for INSPIRIT, Tina also dances for Von Ussar Dance Works directed by Astrid von Ussar, as well as for independent choreographers, Lisa Parra and Sita Fredrick. At NYU, she created a dance club, Dancers Choreographers Alliance, which assists student dancers and choreographers in the creation and production of their work. Tina has showcased her own choreography at Joe's Pub, BAAD Theater in the Bronx, the Laban Institute's Mosaic, DNA, and DTW, and has continued her explorations in the arts as a glass blower.

Residency Activities

Master Class with Founding Artistic Director Christal Brown

Christal Brown's "Liquid Strength": (a technique laboratory focused on moving, intention, and analysis): Combining the focus and intention of a meditative practice with a series of exercises designed to train the body in articulate expression as well as athletic execution; Browns class focuses on developing the total artist. Exercises will focus on alignment, torso and spinal flexibility, clarity of focus, upper body strength, lower body strength, and abdominal control. Working to transform philosophical notions of being into movement explorations students will discover intersections between technique and performance; yielding transference.

The Write to Dance Workshop

The Write to Dance Workshop is formulated for writers, dancers, choreographers and enthusiasts. Integrating a series of improvisational and creative writing exercises, participants learn how to merge the two worlds of text and movement. There are no prerequisites for participation. Non-dancers and writers are strongly encouraged to attend. The Write to Dance Workshop lasts two hours, and enrollment should not exceed 15 people.

Project: BECOMING

Project: BECOMING is a 10 session rites of passage program designed for young women ages 13-19. The goal of the program is to prepare teenage girls to make positive definitive choices in their lives. INSPIRIT accomplishes this goal by exposing participants to yoga, meditation and movement which subsequently leads to discussions about body image, societal structures, class, media interpretations of women and harnessing personal power to affect change. Project: BECOMING has received recognition and support from Eileen Fisher, The Bronx Council on the Arts, The Bronx, Museum of Art, ActionLab, Urban Assembly, Long Island University, and the Harlem School of the Arts.

Repertory

Original and pre-existing choreographic works are available for commissioning and remounting. This process entails a minimum of three rehearsals with the intended performers. Please see repertory list for available works.

TECHNICAL RIDER

This Technical Rider is an integral part of the contract. The Presenter and resident Technical Director must sign at the end, acknowledging the requirements stated in this document will be met. Any changes or deviations in these technical requirements must be approved in writing by an authorized Company representative.

EXCLUSIVITY

The Company must be notified of any unrelated activities schedules for all facilities involved in its engagement, and requests to have those facilities available for its use and direction the entire period from the load-in until completion for the final performance.

THEATER

The Presenter agrees to furnish at its own expense the use of the theater, well heated or air-conditioned, well lit, cleaned, appropriately staffed (including box office and janitorial personnel), and with equipment and personnel there-in contained as specifically described in this Technical Rider. Presenter agrees that these facilities shall be clear and in good order at the time of load-in and maintained in good order throughout the engagement. The theatre, including all on-stage and backstage areas must be secure and kept for the exclusive use of the Company throughout the engagement including setup time(s), rehearsal(s), and performance(s).

The Presenter agrees to provide the Company Technical Director with the following detailed and up-to-date technical data about the place of performance: a ground plan, a section plan, an inventory of lighting instruments and control equipment, an inventory of sound equipment, an inventory of soft goods, and description of the dressing room facilities. The Presenter is responsible for sending all technical data to the Company Technical Director, c/o INSPIRIT, a dance company, 1515 Grand Concourse, #5D, Bronx, NY 10452.

FLOOR/HEATING REQUIREMENTS

The Company requires a clean, smooth, sprung wood floor with a marley overlay. The space shall be heated to 75 degrees for rehearsing, teaching, and performing. In addition, the Company reserves the right, at no penalty to the Company, to cancel any activity including, performances, which, without prior Company approval of exception, are to take place in a poorly heated space over concrete or otherwise present a health hazard to the performers.

STAGE REQUIREMENTS

- Minimum acceptable stage size acceptable is 30' wide x 28' deep
- Minimum proscenium height is 18'-20'
- Wood Sprung Floor
- Black Marley over entire stage area
- Full Stage Black velour drop with crossover space behind

- Minimum of four wings with one 12'-16' boom stand per wing (or ladder on each side).
- Black legs in front of each side boom
- AIR CONDITIONING OFF for all rehearsals, including dress rehearsals
- Blue running lights as needed backstage
- Main curtain is not required for this performance

LIGHTING

See attached lighting plot (Fig. 1). Please note that this is a representative plot, not a finalized plot. A final light plot will be forwarded by the Company prior to load-in. The Company's plot must be hung, circuited, gel checked and ready to focus before the load-in commences. Please include theater light and sound specs in inventories with this agreement.

TECHNICAL TABLE

During rehearsals and the setting/writing of cues, the Company requires a technical table to be set up in the middle of the audience area. The technical table must be equipped with: light on a dimmer, headset communications (as listed in the communications section of this document), lighting control monitor(s). The table should be equipped with enough A/C outlets to run a computer and printer in addition to monitors and lights.

SOUND

The sound system must include an audio mixer with separate channels for each microphone, CD, and equalizer. The sound system will also have adequate equalizers, effects, amplifiers and speakers for clear high quality playback of recorded material, percussion, and reinforcement and processing of the performers voices. The sound system must be sufficient size and power to fill the audience area with clear, undistorted sound. Preferably four onstage and backstage monitors should be provided for the performers.

COMMUNICATION

The Company Stage Manager requires clear, reliable handset communication to the lighting operator, sound, operator, stage left deck hand, stage right deck hand, and any other personnel who would need such communication to perform their duties. All cables will be run safely and made secure before the company in on stage.

MINIMUM RUN CREW REQUIREMENTS

The personnel required to prepare and operate Company performers varies with the size and the complexity of the facility to be used, the skill level of its personnel, the equipment available for the Company's use, and the time constraints. Presenter agrees to provide adequate time and staff to ensure the completion of the hanging, circuiting, and checking of the Company's repertory light plot before the arrival of the company or any of its staff. It is necessary that the same technical personnel will work rehearsals and performance(s).

SECURITY

The presenter will guarantee proper security to all performers, musicians, instruments and their personal property before, during and after the performance(s). Special attention is to be paid to dressing rooms, stage areas, and entrances/exits. Security will commence upon Artists' arrival.

HOSPITALITY

Please provide the following in quantities adequate for 10 people in a location adjacent to the stage and/or dressing room five hours before curtain on days of performances.

- Water
- Assorted Fresh Fruit
- Assorted Snack Foods
- Coffee and hot water with Herbal Teas
- Honey and Lemons

If there is a morning rehearsal or show coffee, juice, water, and an assortment of bagels and cream cheese, rolls, and donuts should be provided when the dancers arrive at the theatre.

SIGNATURE

Signature of Technical Rider implies that the Presenter and his agents, including theatre managers, technical directors and operating staff, agree to the above requirements unless specifically amended in writing and agreed to by the Company Director and Company Technical Director.

Presenter

INSPIRIT, a dance company

By: _____

By: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

Presenter's Technical Representative

By: _____

Date: _____