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## IN Performance

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**January 12**

***Alvin Ailey Studios, New York, NY***

Shared evening - Mason/Rhynes Productions Showcase

**March 8-9**

***Dance Place, Washington, DC***

Shared evening with VT Dance

**April 4-5**

***Tribeca Performing Arts Center New York, NY***

Shared evening - Part of TPAC's Work and Show Festival  
New works by Alexandra Houston and Sharon Manuel

**For more information regarding performances, future or past; photography or video of the company's work; or more articles about the company, please visit our website at: [www.inspiritdance.com](http://www.inspiritdance.com) .**

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## Additional Repertory

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**Until Fruition:** (9min. 03 sec.) trio, recorded music

*Until Fruition* examines the aspirations and disappointments of the human spirit. This trio uses the rhythms of African music and the imagery of Greek mythology to explore the span of human life as it is woven, measured, and eventually cut off by fate.

**Beg-In Her:** (10min 22sec.) 5 performers, text and recorded music

*Beg-In Her* includes both music and text and explores the depths of female lineage and intangible inheritances. As mothers give birth to females they are overwhelmed by the weight of their responsibility to impart wisdom to a creature who possesses the power to give life. With athleticism and finesse, the piece explores the tension between the unattainable perfection for which our mothers teach us to strive and the people we actually become—often mirroring of our mothers' flaws.

*Beg-In Her* opens with a nude figure (the central character) who traverses across the stage. Upon completion of her journey, three dancers are revealed beneath billowing swaths of fabric. They dance in unison but are forced to exit when the mother-figure arrives onstage. She dances a solo of empowerment and apology, segueing into a duet with her daughter. The movement is much more varied and conversational than that of the trio, making an obvious juxtaposition between the effect of the myriad of influences in the young woman's life and the paramount opinion of the matriarch.

**Made to Disorder:** (10min 11sec) quartet, recorded music

*Made to Disorder* is an evolving work that examines the complexity of personality constructs and how they are perceived by the outside world. In the year 2004 everything from burgers to body parts can be made to order, making it hard to decipher what we're really made of – what is real. *Made to Disorder* is a quartet that presents four different personalities: the loner, the follower, the socialite, and the observer. These characters are displayed and moved about in the opening tableaux of the piece. They interact when necessary to overcome obstacles and climb onto, fall off, surround, and rescue one another throughout the course of the piece. The work resolves, and the women present a united front against their obstacles at its conclusion.

**The Cutting Place:** (6min) solo, live text

*The Cutting Place* is an improvisational text and movement solo performed by Christal Brown. During the course of this piece viewers are given an in-depth look into Brown's childhood, upbringing, views of life, spiritual beliefs and self-proclamation. The work is both gut wrenching and humorous and leaves audiences wanting to know more.

**34 Prayers**: (10 min) 5-8 performers, recorded text

*34 Prayers* captures the emotional devastation of the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Set to a poem by two-time National Poetry Slam champion Patricia Smith, the work is an elegy to a culture tied to the life, breath and resilience of its people. The piece evokes images of prayer and struggle, wrote the Washington Post, “poignantly suggesting that despite their anger and disillusionment, some people never lost their faith or hope for survival.”

**Past Her Rites** (12 min) 6 performers, recorded music

This piece is a four-part expose into the accumulative culture of the modern day professional female. Set to the music of Nina Simone and Mocean Worker, *Past Her Rites* delves into the psyche of women who push past their womanly identities and find themselves lost in a sea of untailed affectations.

**Made to Disorder** (10 min) 4 performers, recorded music

*Made to Disorder* is a three-part dissection of women and the roles they can play. It begins with a dancer making the journey from birth to adulthood and then regressing to infancy, continues with three other dancers going through the daily drudgery and hectic chaos, and ends with a chilling reminder that sometimes we may try to fulfill all the dreams and hopes others may have for us as we have for ourselves, but cannot always do so.

**Wishes** (5 min) live text, partial nudity

*Wishes*, written and performed by Christal Brown is a moving monologue that tackles the issue of catcalling. By taking on both a playful and sensual demeanor Brown is able to speak frankly about a scenario that many women encounter on a daily basis. The piece finds its strength in the presence of women while making the assumption that all females regardless of race or class have at some point had to endure disparaging remarks about their physical state from the male species. The monotony of these events and their lack of conscious thought, leads one to question the validity of the remarks and the desire behind them.

Brown speaks from the perspective of a cognizant apparition declaring the catcallers dream come true. The monologue is performed nude to represent the desire of the catcaller to which he surprisingly has no response. Thus, the wishes of the apparition and the catcaller are granted. *Wishes* was called 2006’s “fiercest use of nudity,” by Eva Yaa Asentewaa.

**Open Space** (10 min) 6-8 performers, recorded music

*Open Space* is a lively sneak peak into the personality of INSPIRIT’s individual performers. One by one, dancers enter the space to show off their style while being taunted or cheered on by their fellow company members, eventually coming together for an energy-filled finale.

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## Critics' Voices

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“...evoking the strength of the ancestors and the sassiness of today’s feminists/womanists...”

**Eva Yaa Asantewaa**

**Field Notes: Dance, Performance & Theater Commentary**

“INSPIRIT, an all-female company made up of mostly black women, was the opposite. Fervid in their expression, the company conveyed hearts swelled with passion. *The Cutting Place*...stood out. Brown spoke of the burdens of family and race with eloquence. Every word and gesture landed with searing meaning. ...*Past Her Rites*...pulsated with energy –sleek, heady and tough.”

**Wendy Liberatore**

**Daily Gazette**

“...favored text and dove deeply into female-female, mother-daughter relationships in *Beg-In Her*. ...Brown presented some intriguing staged moments, especially the opening image of women engulfed in waving swaths of cloth and the closing moment of two—sisters? mother and daughter? –separated but, perhaps, still connected.”

**Lisa Trager**

**DanceView.org**

“The strongest work was Paloma McGregor’s *34 Prayers*, inspired by Hurricane Katrina and its tragic aftermath. Dancers gently swayed their arms to the sound of flowing water as though it were washing over them. Then they angrily pushed against a wall at the back of the stage and fell to the floor with their hands clasped in prayer, poignantly suggesting that despite their anger and disillusionment, some people never lost their faith or hope for survival.

In *Wishes*, a nearly naked Christal Brown delivered a humorous yet defiant monologue about men who degrade her with catcalls.”

**Sarah Halzack**

**The Washington Post**

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## Critics' Voices cont'd

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“Christal Brown proved herself a choreographer with the same feisty attitude toward life as the group she dances with, Urban Bush Women. In her *Accumulation* (now entitled *Past Her Rites*), five women dressed in men’s suits, complete with white shirt and tie, sashayed across the stage looking macho and sassy. As the work continued they shed their coats, then their pants, then knotted their discarded ties around their waists. The dance was witty and breezy and its finale, with one woman piling on all the discarded pants and jackets, was a hoot.”

**Jean Battey Lewis**

**The Washington Times**

“{John David Project} a dynamic and forceful dance problem solved to music by India.Arie. Brown’s initial section sees just how far and how fast she can push a dance staged on the top of a conventional office table. After exhausting the possibilities and the audience, she takes to the floor in further meditation on the song “Ready for Love.”

**Byron Woods**

**Independent Weekly**

“...danced a gut-wrenching “roots modern” piece of desperate hand-to-mouth gestures.”

**Rachel Howard**

**San Francisco Chronicle**

“...contexts enriched the dances...strongest works were created by current Urban Bush Women Christal Brown and Nora Chipaumire. Brown’s *Made to Disorder* opened on the frozen tableau...described a late-night domestic disturbance. One dancer slid onto a table; alternately huddling and writhing, she embodied both the sleepless neighbors and the victim of abuse.”

**Claudia LaRocco**

**Associated Press**

{Shattered If’s} “...the sharpness of Brown’s technique...her laser-like focus is more on content—and intent.”

**Byron Woods**

**Independent Online**

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## 2007 Season Performances

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- February 3-4**      **Danceplace, Washington, D.C.**  
Christal Brown performs as guest artist with VT Dance
- February 10-11**      **Danceplace, Washington, D.C.**  
Shared Evening –Part of Black Expressions Program  
co-presenters with Princess Mhoon
- February 16-17**      **Kinston Performing Arts Center, Kinston, NC**  
Company Performance –Coming Home  
Performance in Artistic Director’s hometown
- March 16-17**      **Tribeca Performing Arts Center, New York, NY**  
Company Performance –*16 Stories* an evening-length  
multi-media performance Part of the Artist in Residency  
Program at TPAC
- March 17**      **Studio 303, Montreal, QC**  
Christal Brown performs as part of the Edgy Women  
Festival
- April 20-22**      **Dance New Amsterdam, New York, NY**  
Christal Brown performs as part of OB.ject ob.JECT
- May 4 - 6**      **Long Island University, Brooklyn, NY**  
Company Performance – Part of Live Arts in Progress,  
New media and performance from MFA candidates
- June 6**      **BAAD! Research: Movement in the Bronx, Bronx, NY**  
Shared evening – co-curated by Christal Brown and  
the Curation/Production Group
- June 7**      **Ciprianis, New York, NY**  
INSPIRIT presented entertainment with Camaroonian  
singing sensation, Kiesa at the Foundation Fighting  
Blindness fundraisers’ annual event
- June 9, 10**      **Todo Mezclado Festival, New York, NY**  
Company Performance
- June 23**      **Khrome Bar and Lounge, Brooklyn, NY**  
Collaboration with Reflect, Move, Connect: addressing  
gender violence on a state and family level

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## 2007 Season Performances Cont'd

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- July 18**                      **Long Island University, Brooklyn, NY**  
Company Performance of its original work *16 Stories*
- July 26-28**                      **Solar 1 Dance Festival, New York, NY**  
Shared evening in which the company presented the work of Paloma McGregor
- August 10**                      **Carter Baron Amphitheater, Washington, D.C.**  
Shared evening – part of the Black Expressions Showcase
- August 15**                      **Dancewave's Demitasse Summer Café, Brooklyn, NY**  
Shared evening
- September 1**                      **Mudbone Theater, Bronx, NY**  
INSPIRIT presented its first annual blend of music, dance, visual art, and spoken word at the Arts for All Festival
- October 6**                      **Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY**  
INSPIRIT performed new work commissioned by the Museum as part of Target 1<sup>st</sup> Saturdays
- October 13**                      **Battery Park, New York, NY**  
Shared Performance – part of Culture Fest NYC
- October 20**                      **Museum of Contemporary Art, Cleveland, OH**  
INSPIRIT dancing the work of Paloma McGregor in Her concert Re: Present
- October 27**                      **Bronx Academy of Art and Dance, Bronx, NY**  
Shared evening – part of the Blaktino Performance Series  
Three INSPIRIT choreographers on 1 program
- November 2**                      **Trinity College, Hartford, CT**  
Company Performance – part of the arts at Trinity series
- November 3-4**                      **Kaatsbaan International Dance Center, Tivoli, NY**  
Shared evening – part of the Kaatsbaan Upstream Series
- November 29**                      **Brooklyn Academy of Music, Brooklyn, NY**  
INSPIRIT II showing – part of BAM Dancing into the Future
- December 7-8**                      **Unviversity Settlement, New York, NY**  
Shared evening – Part of The Dance Gallery – Intimate  
Presented by Von Ussar danceworks

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# IN Collaboration

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Currently in Development...

## Dreams and Visions

Christal Brown, INSPIRIT's Founding Artistic Director is in the process of creating a new work entitled *Dreams and Visions*. *Dreams and Visions* will test the states of sleep and wakefulness by creating moving tapestries teetering on the precipice of fantasy and reality. To infuse this movement-scape with an intangible sense of foundation Brown will employ the use of projection and an original sound score created by Zimbabwean composer Fahari Malianga.

### 2008 Company Choreographic Commissioning Project (CCCP)

As part of INSPIRIT's mission to produce and promote the choreographic work of emerging female choreographers, we have formalized our Company Choreographic Commissioning Project. Within this project two company members are chosen to create new works for the company that are then eligible for touring support through INSPIRIT. The company offers each choreographer 50 hours of rehearsal space, a \$250 creation stipend, two works in progress showings and as well as a performance venue.



In 08 INSPIRIT is extremely excited to be producing the work of Alexandra Houston and Sharon Manuel.

Alexandra Houston's *Venus* examines the exploitation of women and ponders why in the aftermath of American slavery, women of African descent continually chose to use their femininity for ill-gotten gain. This work is inspired by the story of Sarah Baartman and the work of visual artist Kara Walker.

Sharon Manuel's *After the Fall* is an examination of the role women play during and after wartime throughout history. There exists a strong correlation between the ancient fall of Troy and the current devastation wreaking havoc in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other war-torn countries. While the narrative is derived from the play, *The Trojan Women*, the story is timeless. Too often the lure of power or monetary gain, and the protection of the ego, leads men into horrific deeds, and women remain to pick up the pieces. While such acts proceed under the flag of religious right, the greed sought and acquired envelops any drop of morality promised. Must women consistently pick up the pieces only to scrape by: repeating the cycle, or are we capable of transforming tragedy to prosperity?

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# Write to Dance

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**A text and movement workshop presented by Urban Bush Women and facilitated by Christal Brown**

**Goal:** The goal of the *Write to Dance* workshop is to introduce its participants to text and movement as a way of investigation, choreography, and performance.

**Participation Requirements:** Participants should be at least 15 years of age and have a desire to merge their writing with dance or dance with writing. No previous text and/or movement knowledge or professional performance experience is required for the workshop. The curriculum caters to both the lay writer and dancer.

**Supplies:** Participants will need to be dressed in comfortable attire (i.e. sweat pants, tee-shirts, socks). Clothing such as jeans and dresses will inhibit movement. Participants are also asked to bring paper, pencil, and a piece of prepared text if possible.

**Duration:** 2 hours

**Outline of Workshop:**

- Introduction of facilitator and participants
- Physical Warm-up
- Explanation of Tool Box
- Introduction to tool one: Detail
  - Exercise in using Detail
- Introduction to tool two: Equivalence
  - Exercise in using Equivalence
- Writing exercise using opposites: for example, reality vs. fantasy
- Movement creation: with a partner
- Editing
- Showing
- Wrap –up
- Q&A

*Note:* Tools presented in this workshop are courtesy of the Liz Lerman Dance Exchange and vary per workshop at the discretion of the facilitator.

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## IN Community

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INSPIRIT is extremely involved in the community—not only through dance, but also through education, INReach, and social commentary. Members of the company have taught in Queens, Brooklyn, Manhattan, New Jersey, and of course, the Bronx: our home.

The launch of INSPIRIT II through *Dancing into the Future* at **Brooklyn Academy of Arts and Music (BAM)** provided a much warranted outlet for young girls in Brooklyn. Educators from INSPIRIT have also helped students at Dancewave (also in Brooklyn) to create their own version of the company’s evening length piece *16 Stories*. Students are taking their own stories and collectively creating their own work which will be presented in conjunction with established company choreography in 2008. The Bronx Academy of Letters provided a jumping-off point for the program Write to Dance (see separate page), and we are currently involved in our second year as teaching residents there. INSPIRIT has also held a faculty position as well as an Artist in Residence position at the Bronx Charter School for the Arts. Members have not only performed works in the school’s final showing, they have assisted students in the creation of their own works for the concert. INSPIRIT also entered new “territory” in 2007 by entering into a partnership with Queens Crossroad Connections. In addition to these residencies and faculty positions, INSPIRIT also performs lecture demonstrations while on tour, including a 15 school 3-day experience in Kinston, North Carolina in February of 2007; which has forged possibilities for the future expansion of Project: BECOMING in that state.

This year, with funding from **Eileen Fisher** and **The Bronx Council on the Arts**, INSPIRIT will once again host a week long session of Project: BECOMING for 10 young women in each of New York City's five boroughs. In addition to each borough having its own closing ceremony, the culminating event will be a public appearance by the participants at INSPIRIT's "Art for All Festival" at the Bronx Museum of Art. The teens will have an opportunity to showcase their research and dance theater creation over the week long workshop.

Project: BECOMING is a spin-off of INSPIRIT's 2004 collaboration entitled BECOMING, which explored the evolution of the modern day woman. As a company, we discovered that women of today deal with a many issues that relate to spirituality, health, relationships, education, beauty, and their careers. Subsequently, at the end of our performance season we realized our artistic work had a greater platform, to cultivate young women into strong competent individuals not overly influenced by media, environment or societal pressures. Thus Project: BECOMING was born.

Unlike the performance centered company work, Project: BECOMING works in collaboration with teen girls from communities throughout the five boroughs. The goal of these collaborations is to equip participants with the tools necessary to take independent steps toward their life goals.

The Project: BECOMING curriculum affects an invaluable journey into womanhood, involving yoga, creative writing, dance, meditation, capoeira, and discussions on body image/fashion as well as diet and exercise.

This program is free of charge to the 10 young women selected from each borough. In addition, participants will receive metro cards, healthy snacks throughout the day, and supplies to continue their lessons beyond the program.



