

DANCEMOTIONUSASM presents

Urban Bush Women

Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, Founding Artistic Director

Jana La Sorte, Executive Director

Christine King, Associate Artistic Director

Susan Hamburger, Technical Director/Lighting Designer

Company Members

Meghan Bowden
Catherine Dénécy
Marjani Forté
Paloma McGregor
Samantha Speis
Keisha Turner
Bennalldra Williams

DanceMotion USASM is a project of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State, produced by BAM (Brooklyn Academy of Music).

Visit www.DanceMotionUSA.org

Repertory and cast subject to change.

Photography or recording in any media prohibited.

For tour information, please contact:

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BAM



FLASHBACK/FLASH FORWARD... COOL, BABY COOL

(2007)

Length: 9 minutes

Choreography: Jawole Willa Jo Zollar in collaboration with The Company

Music: Mix by adapted by Everett Saunders based on an original mix by Erin Gorman and P. Funk (Wants to Get Funked Up), Parliament

Lighting: Susan Hamburger

Performed by: Meghan Bowden, Catherine Dénécý, Marjani Forté, Paloma McGregor, Samantha Speis, Keisha Turner, Bennalldra Williams

Exploring the evolution of funk through humor and African American social dances.

NAKED CITY

(2009)

Length: 22 minutes

Choreography: Jawole Willa Jo Zollar in collaboration with The Company

Music: "Safe & Found" and "In What Way," Pyeng Threadgill from Portholes to A Love, Other Short Stories

Costume Designer: Naoko Nagata

Lighting: Susan Hamburger

Performed by: Catherine Dénécý, Marjani Forté, Paloma McGregor, Samantha Speis, Keisha Turner, Bennalldra Williams

The title references the late 50's film noir television series "Naked City." Humorous and sometimes darkly satiric, Zollar's frenzy of bustling movement was inspired by the images of Toni Morrison's novel Jazz. Jawole extends special thanks to her Florida State University students who helped create the piece.

WALKING WITH PEARL . . . SOUTHERN DIARIES

(2005)

Length: 37 minutes

"I went into the South as a performer, a researcher. I went to the South to experience first-hand the earth; the people." —Pearl Primus

Choreography: Jawole Willa Jo Zollar in collaboration with The Company

Choreography for "Hard Time Blues": Pearl Primus (1945), re-staged by Kim Bears-Bailey

Costume Designer: Trebien Pollard; Lesley Myers, construction

Music: "Hard Times" by Josh White, Stinson Records; "Anybody Here," words and music by Bernice Reagon, TRO – Workshop Productions, Inc. - BMI

Lighting and Visual Design: Susan Hamburger



Performed by: Meghan Bowden, Catherine Dénécy, Marjani Forté, Christine King, Paloma McGregor, Samantha Speis, Keisha Turner, Bennalldra Williams

This work was created in honor of the life and legacy of Dr. Pearl Primus. It invokes the lives of rural African Americans in the South in the 30's & 40's — sharecroppers, church folk, strong women who live by their faith and their wit.

Walking With Pearl . . . Southern Diaries was commissioned by the American Dance Festival through the Doris Duke Awards for New Work with additional support from the National Endowment for the Arts. This work was developed via creative residency at the Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography at Florida State University. Original Primus choreography is used with permission of the Estate of Pearl Primus.

Voice-over text in *Walking with Pearl... Southern Diaries* is from interviews with Pearl Primus from The Schomburg Archives except for "From Here to Yonder" by Langston Hughes:

It was like a work weary sister suddenly shouting out loud on a Sunday morning when the minister starts singing JESUS KNOWS JUST HOW MUCH I CAN BARE. Dancing and shouting have a lot in common. Both are a kind of relief. An outlet for pent up emotion. Rhythm is healing. Music is healing. Dancing and shouting are healing. Exhorters and gospel singers know it instinctively. Shouters know it in their souls. Folks who work hard all week, all year, all their lives and get nowhere go to church on Sunday and shout and they feel better. Colored and poor and maybe born in Mississippi. JESUS KNOWS JUST HOW MUCH I CAN BARE.

So you holler out loud sometimes and leap high in the air in your soul like Pearl Primus does when she dances Jim Crow Train, which is a pretty hard thing to bear. Especially when you got relatives fighting in North Africa or New Guinea, and you at home riding in a Jim Crow car.

I went into the South as a performer. A researcher. I went to the South to experience first hand about the earth, the people. It was really an experience. Learning about the old connections. They would tell me I reminded them of their old granny or someone who came from Africa. I told them stories I made up. They told me stories too. Some made up. Some true.

On my trip South of the Mason Dixon line in 1944 I discovered in the Baptist churches the voice of the drum. Not in any instrument, but in the throat of the preacher.



ABOUT URBAN BUSH WOMEN

Urban Bush Women is proudly based in Brooklyn, New York. UBW has been presented extensively in New York City and has toured throughout the United States, in Asia, Australia, Europe and South America. Festival appearances include Jacob's Pillow, Spoleto USA, National Black Arts Festival, Dance Umbrella UK and Lincoln Center Out of Doors (NYC). The Company has been commissioned by major presenters nationwide, and counts among its honors a 1992 New York Dance and Performance Award ("Bessie"); and a 2004 Doris Duke Award for New Work from the American Dance Festival. The Urban Bush Women repertory consists of 32 works choreographed by Zollar including collaborations with jazz artist David Murray; poets Laurie Carlos and Carl Hancock Rux; directors Steve Kent and Elizabeth Herron; and the National Song and Dance Company of Mozambique (supported by The Ford Foundation's Africa Exchange Program).

In 2008 the company toured to 23 U.S. cities including New York City (BAM Next Wave Festival), and to Canada and Germany with *Les écailles de la mémoire (The Scales of Memory)*, an evening-length work created in collaboration with Germaine Acogny and her all-male Compagnie JANT-BI of Senegal. Long-term community engagement residencies culminating in public performances were produced in New Orleans, Sarasota and Tallahassee (Florida), Philadelphia, New Haven (Connecticut), Riverside (California), and Flint (Michigan). UBW produces an annual Summer Leadership Institute to train artists and activists in UBW's acclaimed community engagement techniques.

JAWOLE WILLA JO ZOLLAR (*Artistic Director*), is a 2008 United States Artist Wynn Fellow and recently appointed Fellow of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation.

She was born and raised in Kansas City, MO, and trained with Joseph Stevenson, a student of the legendary Katherine Dunham. Zollar received a B.A. in dance from the University of Missouri at Kansas City and an M.F.A. in dance from Florida State University. In 1980, she moved to New York City to study with Dianne McIntyre at Sounds in Motion and then founded Urban Bush Women in 1984.

In addition to creating 32 repertory works for Urban Bush Women, Jawole has created choreography for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Ballet Arizona, Philadanco, University of Maryland, University of Florida, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, Virginia Commonwealth University, Towson and others. Her many positions as a teacher and speaker include Worlds of Thought Resident Scholar at Mankato State University (1993-94), Regents Lecturer in the Departments of Dance and World Arts and Culture at UCLA (1995-96), Visiting Artist at Ohio State University (1996), and the Abramowitz Memorial Lecturer at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1998). She was named Alumna of the Year by University of Missouri (1993) and Florida State University (1997), and awarded an Honorary Doctorate from Columbia College, Chicago (2002). In 2006, Zollar was recognized with a New York Dance & Performance Award, a BESSIE, for her choreography of the Pearl Primus-inspired

dance, "Walking With Pearl...Southern Diaries." This work was also recognized by the National Endowment as an American Masterpiece: Dance – College Component. She is a former board member of Dance/USA, the national dance service organization based in Washington, DC, and member of the International Association of Blacks in Dance (IABD). Zollar has received the Martin Luther King Distinguished Service Award from Florida State University, where she holds a tenured position as the Nancy Smith Fichter Professor in the Department of Dance.

Zollar also directs the annual Urban Bush Women Summer Leadership Institute, an intensive training program in dance and community engagement for artists with leadership potential interested in developing a community focus in their art-making. In 2009 the Institute was relocated to New Orleans where UBW seeks to contribute to the city's re-building effort in partnership with local artists and activists including The People's Institute for Survival & Beyond, 7th Ward Neighborhood Center, ArtSpot Productions, Junebug Productions and members of the Tulane, Dillard, Xavier and UNO academic communities.

Jawole Willa Jo Zollar on the DanceMotion USAsm tour:

"Our company is based on the use of cultural expression as a catalyst for social change, so this speaks directly to who we are and what our mission is. We are so honored to be selected to represent our country and anticipate exciting cultural exchanges as a result of this important program."



CHRISTINE KING (*Associate Artistic Director/Performer*) is originally from Michigan and holds a B.A. in dance. She has performed in New York City for over a decade with artists including Claire Porter, Trinket Monsod, Kaleidoscope Dancers, and Amy Sue Rosen. She has also performed as a vocalist with Ancient Vibrations, Amasong, and as singer/actress with Skeleton Dance Project. Aside from originating and performing many roles with Urban Bush Women, King most recently appeared as an actor in a McGregor/Smith production of "Blood Dazzler". She has studied dance with Sara Sugihara, William Adair, and Dan Wagner and studied singing with Diane Barclay, Artie Sheppard, Toshi Reagon and many others. King is proud to be a long standing performer with Urban Bush Women and wishes to thank these artists and many others for their encouragement and love. King is a 20-year veteran of Urban Bush Women.

MEGHAN BOWDEN (*Alternate*) a Florida native, is a contemporary mover through space, time and geographic location. From Ghana to West Philadelphia, Marbella to DC, her experiences with choreographers Curt Haworth, Samantha Speis, Sara Pearson, Patrik Widrig, Liz Lerman, Nita Liem, and Gesel Mason daily inform her role as dancer, teacher, mover and speaker. Bowden earned her BFA in dance education and minor in strategic advertising from the University of the Arts in 2006. She is also a burgeoning practitioner of hip hop funk styles and teacher in Maryland-DC public schools..

CATHERINE DÉNÉCY (*Dancer*) started her training in her home of Guadeloupe, French West Indies. Among her teachers was Paris Opera Ballet Master Frederic Jahn. She came to New York City to pursue an intensive training program at the Ailey School as the recipient of the Oprah Winfrey Foundation Scholarship. Dénécy has worked with various companies including Genesis Dance Company directed by Karen Arceneaux, and Earl Mosley's Diversity Dance. Dénécy studied with Elizabeth Roxas, Jeffrey Gerodias, Denise Jefferson, Dudley Williams, and Jacqueline Buglisi and has worked with choreographers Nora Chipaumire, Camille Brown, and Peter London. As a member of Urban Bush Women, she has performed abroad in England, Germany, Canada, and Senegal, West Africa, and at the New York City Center and the Kennedy Center. Dénécy has been in Urban Bush Women since 2006.

MARJANI FORTÉ (*Dancer*) is a performer, instructor, and choreographer and a graduate of Los Angeles High School for the Arts. She earned a degree in business Marketing and a second major in dance from Loyola Marymount University. Her early training was with Los Angeles master instructors and choreographers Karen McDonald, Stephen Semien, Ka-Ron Brown-Lehman, ballet master Don Hewitt, and modern dance pioneer Rudy Perez. She later studied at the Ailey School when she moved to New York in 2004. Forté has worked with Earl Mosely, Garth Fagan, and Nia Love's Blacksmith's Daughter. She has premiered works by acclaimed choreographers Blondell Cummings and Camille Brown. She can be seen as an original cast member in the historical collaboration between Jawole Zollar and Germaine Acogny (director of Compagnie JANT-BI) in the acclaimed *Les écailles de la mémoire* (*The Scales of Memory*). Forté joined Urban Bush Women in 2005

PALOMA MCGREGOR (*Dancer*) has presented choreography in New York at The Kitchen, Tribeca Performing Arts Center, Bronx Academy of Art and Dance, and SolarOne Arts Festival, as well as at UCLA, Yale University, The Dance Place in Washington, DC, and Cleveland Public Theatre. She and her director sister, Patricia McGregor, co-founded Angela's Pulse Performance Projects. Their current collaboration, *Blood Dazzler*, recently won a prestigious ENVISION retreat through Voice & Vision. The work, to premiere this fall, is based on Patricia Smith's award-winning poetry collection about Hurricane Katrina. McGregor is associate artistic director of INSPIRIT dance company and earned her BS in journalism from Florida A&M University and her MFA in dance from Case Western Reserve University. She has toured with Urban Bush Women since 2005.

SAMANTHA SPEIS (*Dancer*) is a dancer, performer, and choreographer based in Brooklyn, NY. She graduated with a BFA in Dance and Choreography from Virginia Commonwealth University in 2005. Speis has performed with Gesel Mason Performance Projects, Liz Lerman Dance Exchange, Pearson Widrig Dance Theater, and Shani Nwando Ikerioha Collins (Eternal Works). Her work has been featured at the Kennedy Center, the American Dance Festival, Dance Bethesda, Long Island University, Joyce SoHo, Hollins University, Danspace Project, and Dance Place. Speis has taught master classes for Urban Bush Women throughout the U.S. and Germany, and has taught at the Liz Lerman Dance Exchange Studios, Florida State University and Towson State University. This is her second season with UBW.



KEISHA TURNER (*Dancer*) hails from Chicago and studied at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, graduating with a BFA in Dance. Professionally, she has studied with Germaine Acogny, Cynthia Oliver, and Gerri Houlihan, among others, and has performed with Chicago Dance Crash, Corpo Dance Company, and Margaret Morris Dance. Turner frequently performs with Inner Child, a collaborative, multi-disciplinary performance trio with creative partners Onome and Margaret Morris. She is honored to be sharing stories of social relevance and cultural celebration as a performer with Urban Bush Women, which she joined in 2008.

BENNALLDRA WILLIAMS (*Dancer*) began her dance training in her hometown of Birmingham, AL, at the Alabama School of Fine Arts. She received a BFA in Dance and a BS in Exercise Science Fitness and Nutrition from Florida State University. She has worked and trained with many artists including Lynda Davis, Ronald K. Brown, Christopher Huggins, Kevin Jeff, and Alex Ketley, to name a few. She has worked with the Alabama Ballet and was a member of Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble. She has conducted master classes throughout the US as well as in Europe. This is her fourth season with Urban Bush Women.

SUSAN HAMBURGER (*Lighting Designer and Technical Director*) has designed for Troika Ranch, Urban Tap, Alice Farley, Christopher Caines, Susan Chirniak, Carol Nolte, and David Parker and The Bang Group, among others. She has also designed for *The Abundance Project*, *Hamletmachine*, *Logic of the Birds*, *On The Verge*, *A Child's Christmas in Wales*, *Little Shop Of Horrors*, *Suddenly Last Summer*, *The Great Highway*, *West Side Story*, *The Cryptogram*, *Hamlet*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Waiting for Godot*, and *Mame*, and for many other original plays and performance pieces. Hamburger is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama. Hamburger joined Urban Bush Women in 2004 and is excited to be working with Urban Bush Women for her fifth year.

Naoko Nagata (*Costume Designer*)'s evolution into costume making is a long story. With literally no formal training, Nagata's first costume was created for Jeanine Durning in 1998. From that moment, she has been creating for a diverse group of choreographers and dancers non-stop. She has collaborated with David Dorfman Dance, Liz Lerman, Bebe Miller, David Neumann, Nina Winthrop, Gina Gibney, Reggie Wilson, Ellis Wood, Karl Anderson, Jill Segman, Urban Bush Women and many, many others. Working closely with collaborators, Naoko helps bring to life what she herself calls, "The creation of a shared dream."

URBAN BUSH WOMEN

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ABOUT DANCEMOTIONUSASM

Examining, sharing, and exploring the American modern dance experience with international audiences, DanceMotion USASM is a program of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State, produced by BAM (Brooklyn Academy of Music).

From January to March 2010, three dance companies are making month-long tours, each to a different region of the world: ODC/ Dance in Southeast Asia (Indonesia, Burma and Thailand), Ronald K. Brown/Evidence, A Dance Company in Africa (Senegal, Nigeria and South Africa), and Urban Bush Women in South America (Venezuela, Colombia and Brazil).

U.S. Embassies are partnering with leading cultural, social service, and community-based organizations and educational institutions to host unique residencies that create opportunities for engagement and exchange. Public performances are complemented by master classes, lectures, demonstrations, workshops, media outreach, and exchanges with in-country artists. In an effort to connect broadly and vitally, special outreach is being made to disadvantaged and underserved youth. Education and contextual materials further extend the scope of the project. Visit www.DanceMotionUSA.org

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BAM's mission is to be the preeminent, progressive performing and cinema arts center of the 21st century, engaging both global and local communities. Its enduring purpose is to provide a distinctive environment in which its audiences—annually, more than half a million people from a wide geographic area—may experience a broad array of challenging and enriching cultural programs.

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