



For Immediate Release

**THE RETURN OF URBAN BUSH WOMEN  
TWO PREMIERES, RECENT HITS AND CLASSIC  
WORKS MARK URBAN BUSH WOMEN'S  
JOYCE THEATER SEASON, MAY 8-13**

They're back!

Urban Bush Women takes the stage of The Joyce Theater, May 8-13, transforming it with its singular fierce beauty and defiant wit. Expect a series of new dances by UBW Artistic Director Jawole Willa Jo Zollar and guest artist Camille A. Brown, plus recent successes, as well as the revival of Blondell Cummings' 1981 "Chicken Soup" and Zollar's beloved 1995 "Batty Moves."

Celebrating her fascination with the human ability to challenge circumstance with grace and dignity, Zollar's "Walking with Pearl...Africa Diaries" centers on the intellectual and emotive power of Pearl Primus, the Trinidad-born dancer/choreographer who died in 1994. The dance's episodic structure integrates some of Primus's writings—"A plant I threw away for dead put forth new leaves. Dance is my medicine."—with compelling African music and riveting choreography that blends African and modern dance and ballet.

Radiant with passionate dancing, the 2006 Bessie Award-winning "Walking with Pearl...Southern Diaries," Zollar's second tribute to dance pioneer Primus, shares the intensity of the first section, while adding another spiritual dimension. The performers embody the indomitable power of African American women fed by the strength of their faith, their humor and rebellion against suppression and grief. The dance includes an excerpt of Primus's "Hard Times Blues," restaged by Philadanco Assistant Artistic Director Kim Bears-Bailey.

Rocking with outrageous humor, "Batty Moves" teases audience expectations and assumptions about female buttocks with the performers' hilarious dancing and their

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**URBAN BUSH WOMEN****ADD ONE**

rapped-out “backside” biographies. Example from company member Paloma McGregor: “They call me Pmac/ Like a semi-truck/ Diesel at the pump/ I can back that thang up.”

Blondell Cummings’ contribution to the season, “Chicken Soup,” presents the choreographer’s multifaceted portrait of a mother in her kitchen. Summarizing her lot through small, telling gestures, resonant movements and the metaphoric use of props, the 1981 dance wondrously compresses a complexity of feelings as the woman goes about her work. “Chicken Soup” is set to music by Brian Eno, Colin Wolcott and Meredith Monk, the latter with whom Cummings had once performed. Named an American Masterpiece by the NEA, the dance also uses text by Grace Paley, as well as a chicken soup recipe from “The Settlement Cookbook.” (Marjani Forte will dance the work opening night. Other nights TBA)

“Here We Go...Again!?,” a New York premiere by former Ronald K. Brown/EVIDENCE company member Camille A. Brown, is a witty, fast-paced adventure tale for five dancers with a map as their guide. “Here We Go” features an original electronic score by Anthony-Michael Alexander and costumes by Mechka Cherry. Brown, the recipient of numerous prestigious awards, including a 2006 Princess Grace Choreography Fellowship, a youngARTS Award and a Presidential Scholar Award, was selected by UBW to create a work for the company through its Project Next Generation commissioning award. The dance premiered in January 2007 at George Mason University.

Zollar is still in the throes of creating a brand new work, which is not yet titled. Whether it will be a solo or duet is also still to be determined. What is known, however, is that this world premiere is “quintessentially Urban Bush Women” and will use funk music for accompaniment.

Artistic Director Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, who grew up in Kansas City, MO, graduated from the University of Missouri at Kansas City with a B.A. in dance and earned an M.F.A. in dance from Florida State University (FSU) before moving to New York in 1980 to study with Dianne McIntyre at Sounds in Motion. Just four years later, Zollar founded Urban Bush Women. Zollar has choreographed 32 works for her own company, as well as dances for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Ballet Arizona, Philadanco, University of Maryland, University of Florida and Dayton Contemporary Dance Company,

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among others.

She was featured in the PBS documentary "Free to Dance," which chronicles the African American influence on modern dance, and her solo dancing is highlighted in the original HBO documentary "Beah—A Black Woman Speaks." Zollar was awarded a 2002 honorary doctorate from Columbia College in Chicago and named Alumna of the Year by both the University of Missouri (1993) and FSU (1997). A recipient of the Martin Luther King Distinguished Service Award from FSU, Zollar holds the tenured position of Nancy Smith Fichter Professor in the school's Department of Dance.

Throughout its 23-year history, Urban Bush Women has performed extensively in New York City, as well as throughout the United States, Asia, Australia, Europe and South America. The Brooklyn-based company has been honored with a 1992 New York Dance and Performance Award (Bessie), the 1994 Capezio Award for Outstanding Achievement in Dance and 1998 and 2004 Doris Duke Awards for New Work from the American Dance Festival. As one of their community-based projects, Urban Bush Women, in partnership with Florida State University, established the Summer Dance Institute in 1997 to offer intensive training for young artists looking to focus on community in their work. In 2004, the troupe revived the Institute in Brooklyn.

Urban Bush Women head to the Joyce following a 12-city tour across the country. Later this summer, the company will hold its 2007 Summer Institute, *Community Building for Change*, with culminating performances at The Kumble Theater at Long Island University in Brooklyn, NY (August 4).

Tuesday and Wednesday curtains for Urban Bush Women's Joyce Theater season are at 7:30pm; on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evening, curtains are at 8pm. Sunday evening's performance begins at 7:30pm. There will also be a 2pm matinee on Sunday. Tickets are \$36 and are available at The Joyce Theater box office or by calling JoyceCharge at 212-242-0800 or online at [www.joyce.org](http://www.joyce.org). The Joyce Theater is located at 175 Eighth Avenue at 19<sup>th</sup> Street.

**PLEASE SEE ATTACHED PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE.**

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Urban Bush Women gratefully acknowledges the following sponsors of the UBW Joyce season:  
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