



DANCE CELEBRATION

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JPEG images available upon request

Rising choreographic star Aszure Barton and her virtuosic dance troupe make their Dance Celebration debut

May 5 – 7 at the Annenberg Center

“One of the most innovative choreographers of this generation” – Mikhail Baryshnikov

(Philadelphia, April 7, 2011) — She has been called “brilliant” by the *San Francisco Chronicle*, “audacious” by the *New York Times*, the *Globe & Mail* has called her choreography “exuberant” and the *Boston Globe* considers her “a rare accomplishment in the world of contemporary dance.” Now Philadelphia audiences can experience for themselves the joyful, sassy, playful and quirky work of rising choreographic star and Baryshnikov protégée **Aszure Barton** and her collective of visual, sound and performing artists, **Aszure Barton & Artists**. Performances take place on **Thursday, May 5 at 7:30 PM; Friday, May 6 at 8:00 PM; and Saturday, May 7 at 2:00 PM & 8:00 PM and are the final performances of the 2010/11 Dance Celebration series**, presented by Dance Affiliates and the Annenberg Center. Tickets are \$24-\$42 (afternoon performances) \$28-\$48 (evening performances). For tickets or for more information, please visit **AnnenbergCenter.org** or call **215.898.3900**. Tickets can also be purchased in person at the Annenberg Center Box Office located at 3680 Walnut Street.

The program opens with **Blue Soup**, a movement-to-music spectacular drawn from Barton's early repertoire. A series of vignettes, *Blue Soup* is set to an eclectic score that mixes Hungarian, Italian and African music with American pop music including artists such as Paul Simon, Andy Williams and even a recording of Maya Angelou reciting her poetry. Each section is related to the whole by the spiffy blue suits sported by the ensemble.

Barton's newest work, the evocative and theatrically striking **Busk**, which recently received rave reviews and an extended run at the Jerome Robbins Theatre in New York, is set to a soundtrack of Russian gypsy music by Russian violinist and composer Lev Ljova Zhurbin and performed live by Ljova + the Kontraband. The word busk comes from the Spanish root word buscar, meaning "to seek"; buskers (another word for street performers) literally seek the fantasy of fame and fortune. *Busk* opens with video imagery of trees, which soon gives way to bare stage.

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In another poignant scene, the dancers wear hooded robes and pile in a clump to a chant-like chorus, moving their heads and hands in precise, witty choreography.

Edmonton-born, New York-based dancer-choreographer **Aszure Barton** has established herself as one of the most promising and consistently commissioned young choreographers in modern dance and ballet. According to *The Globe & Mail*, "Barton makes dance that moves through the body like a firecracker. It's an unstoppable explosion of amazing, full-out movement that feels fresh and unique... This is fabulous dancing, with heart and lots of visceral surprises. You could safely recommend it to your neighbour who thinks modern dance is intimidating." Her work is created in a celebration of music and movement, and with a love for collaboration with dancers, filmmakers, designers, photographers and musicians with the aim to provoke the audience into developing new ways to look at their lives and their bodies. Her choreography mixes the elements taken from ballet, modern, folk, pop and hip hop.

At only 35, she has already created works for established groups like Nederlands Dans Theater, American Ballet Theater, Martha Graham Dance Company, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, celebrated dancer Mikhail Baryshnikov as well as choreographed the 2006 Broadway revival production of *The Threepenny Opera*. Barton's works have toured in Europe, Brazil, Argentina, Australia, Asia, Africa, Canada and the United States. She was the Resident Choreographer for Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal (2005-08) and was named the very first Artist-in-Residence at the Baryshnikov Arts Center in 2005, creating new works each year since. She has been proclaimed the official ambassador of Contemporary in Choreography. As a dancer she has performed with such celebrated artists and companies including Mikhail Baryshnikov, Hell's Kitchen Dance, the National Ballet of Canada, Wendy Osserman Dance Company and Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal. In 2002, she formed Aszure Barton & Artists, presenting her first piece at a deli on 42nd Street in New York City.

Aszure Barton & Artists features the incredible talent of nine dancers with whom Barton collaborates; Jonathan Emanuell Alsberry, William Briscoe, Tobin Del Cuore (who has danced with local Philadelphia company BalletX), Jenna Fakhoury, Charlaine Katsuyoshi, Andrew Murdock, Emily Oldak (Cirque du Soleil's *Love*) and Evan Teitelbaum. Barton herself appears in *Blue Soup*.

Performances in Philadelphia are part of an eight-city US spring tour for the troupe which includes stops in Hawaii, Rhode Island, California and Minnesota.

Under the artistic direction of Randy Swartz, Dance Celebration maintains its tradition of bringing Philadelphia audiences the world's best contemporary touring dance companies. This season, *Superstars of Dance, Today and Tomorrow*, pays homage to the great masters of dance while exploring new voices who challenge the status quo and reflect the style, taste and beat of the 21st century. According to Swartz, "Perhaps once a decade, a new artist emerges and brings new luster and excitement to the dance scene. One look and you know. Aszure Barton is that artist."

In addition to performances, Aszure Barton & Artists will offer outreach activities including a master class as part of the Artist to Artist Series and a special school performance as part of Dance Celebration's Student

Discovery Series. For more information about the Artist to Artist Series call 215.636.9000 ext. 110 or visit www.danceaffiliates.org. For more information about the Student Discovery Series, call 215.898.6789 or visit www.AnnenbergCenter.org/studentdiscovery.

Performances of Aszure Barton & Artists are supported in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

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CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

Aszure Barton & Artists
Busk & Blue Soup

Thursday, May 5 at 7:30 PM

Friday, May 6 at 8:00 PM

Saturday, May 7 at 2:00 PM

Saturday, May 7 at 8:00 PM

Zellerbach Theatre at the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts

Baryshnikov's protégée, Aszure Barton burst onto the scene creating works for Nederlands Dans Theater, The National Ballet of Canada, Sydney Dance, American Ballet Theatre, Hubbard Street, Martha Graham Dance Company and Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal (where she was resident choreographer from 2005-2008). A rising star, her virtuoso troupe makes its Philadelphia debut with *Busk*, a work inspired by street performers, and *Blue Soup*, a dazzling potpourri of her best works set to a multicultural score.

These performances are part of the Dance Celebration series, presented by Dance Affiliates and the Annenberg Center.

Tickets: \$24-\$42 (afternoon performances) \$28-\$48 (evening performances). For more information please call 215.898.3900 or visit www.AnnenbergCenter.org.

For further press information or to set up interviews, please contact:

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