

ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

LIFT

(World Premiere 2013)

Choreography: Aszure Barton

Assistants to the Choreographer: Jonathan Emanuell Alsberry & William Briscoe

Music: Curtis Macdonald

Costume Design: Fritz Masten

Lighting Design: Burke Brown

Robert Battle commissioned in-demand choreographer Aszure Barton to create a world premiere on Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater for their 2013-2014 season. Set to an original, percussive score by musical collaborator Curtis Macdonald, the body of music, like the work itself, is inspired and driven by the energy of the dancers. With a collaborative stylistic approach that is constantly evolving like no other, Barton's exhilarating conversation and relationship with Ailey's renowned dancers informs the process, movement, composition and atmosphere of the creation by a wonderful group of artists.



Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in Aszure Barton's *LIFT*. Photo by Paul Kolnik.

Dance Magazine described her work as “vulnerable and feisty, brightly adept yet peculiar, witty and impetuously wild.” Born and raised in Alberta, Canada, Barton received her formal training at the National Ballet School in Toronto. Barton has created works for Mikhail Baryshnikov, The National Ballet of Canada, Nederlands Dans Theater, American Ballet Theatre, the Martha Graham Dance Company, Sydney Dance Company, and Les Ballet Jazz de Montréal (Resident Choreographer 2005-08), among others. She recently received the Banff Centre's 2012 Koerner Award for Choreography and Canada's prestigious Arts and Letters Award for her outstanding choreographic achievements.

“I rarely enter the studio with a fixed "concept" that the dancers have to fit into. I am far more interested in getting to know the artists and allowing the conversation and relationship with them to inform the process, the movement, composition, atmosphere and organization. In preparation for the work, I had the pleasure of observing the dancers in rehearsal and performances while they were on tour. I was deeply moved by their skill, passion, form, strength, beauty and power, both physically and emotionally. I then met with my collaborator, composer Curtis MacDonald, and together we built a body of music / sounds driven by the energy the dancers had so generously shared... The piece will not be about an "idea", but will embody an atmosphere created by our time spent together.”—Aszure Barton [on working with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater]

“...Barton is **one of the most promising and consistently commissioned young choreographers in modern dance and ballet**. She has the sort of infectious enthusiasm you might find in a favorite camp counselor, and her work is just as inviting: Not abstruse or overly clever, it fuses elegant fluidity with simple everyday gestures.”

New York Magazine

“Aszure's teaching, like her choreography and her dancing, is fearless. **She's a risk taker and a speaker of truths.**”

The Palm Beach Daily News



Aszure Barton

Born and raised in Alberta, Canada, Aszure Barton received her formal training at the National Ballet School in Toronto, where, as a student, she helped originate the ongoing Stephen Godfrey Choreographic Showcase. To date, she has collaborated with and created works for Mikhail Baryshnikov, Ekaterina Shipulina/Bolshoi Ballet, The National Ballet of Canada, Houston Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, The Martha Graham Dance Company, Nederlands Dans Theater, Sydney Dance Company, Ballet British Columbia, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, The Juilliard School, Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal (Resident Choreographer 2005-08), among many others. Other work includes choreography for the Broadway revival production of *The Threepenny Opera* directed by Scott Elliott. Aszure's choreography has been featured in numerous film and television projects, including the

Sundance Channel's Iconoclasts Series with Mikhail Baryshnikov and Alice Waters.

She is the founder and director of Aszure Barton & Artists, an international dance project, and her works continue to tour to Europe, Asia, and Africa as well as Argentina, Brazil, Canada, and the United States. She has been an artist in residence at The Baryshnikov Arts Center in New York City and The Banff Centre in Canada. She was proclaimed the official Ambassador of Contemporary Choreography in Edmonton, Alberta, and she has received numerous awards including, most recently, the Banff Centre's 2012 Koerner Award for Choreography and Canada's prestigious Arts & Letters Award.

Curtis Macdonald

Curtis Macdonald is a Canadian-born saxophonist, composer and sound designer based in Brooklyn, NY. In 2011, he released *Community Immunity*, under the Greenleaf Music record label. His band, The Curtis Macdonald Group has toured across Canada, New York and parts of Europe, and is currently celebrating the release of *Twice Through The Wall*, a limited edition, self-released EP. In addition to his artistic collaborations with Aszure Barton, Curtis' sound-art work has reached international audiences on many new music and modern jazz recordings where he organizes improvisation, sound art and digital technology.