

Canada's National Ballet School & Aszure Barton Launch Artistic Mentorship Program

5/51

March 11, 2010....Canada's National Ballet School is pleased to announce the creation of a new mentorship program featuring NBS alum and world-renowned choreographer, Aszure Barton. Beginning this month, Barton will be paired with senior NBS students who are gifted in choreography. The students will correspond with Barton, and have the opportunity to shadow her as she runs and rehearses her company, Aszure & Artists, in New York City.

The idea for the mentorship sprang from the Student Forum and Ideas Exchange, held during the Assemblée Internationale, one of the many celebratory events happening during Canada's National Ballet School's 50th anniversary year's celebrations. The Student Forum & Ideas Exchange discussed a variety of topics pertinent to emerging dance artists, including the challenges they face in the professional world today. Guaranteed careers with professional dance companies are no longer the norm, so emerging dancers must be prepared to enter the professional world capable of increasing their own options. From this discussion, NBS moved to find new and different opportunities that would empower its students and their future career choices.

The first student paired with Barton will be Robert Binet, who is in NBS' Post-Secondary Program. Binet, a student at NBS for 8 years, has created several choreographic works for NBS. Among his works are *Surge*, performed at the Assemblée Internationale and *Helicase*, performed at NBS' recent Fête d'Or, the 50th anniversary Gala.

The relationship between Barton and Binet will be encouraged by the School, but not facilitated by it. Binet will take the lead on initiating contact and correspondence with Barton, with the ongoing support of NBS' administrative team. One of the many learning tools this opportunity will provide NBS students is the administrative skills required to mount a show and run a company. One of the first tasks the mentorship presents to Binet is the presentation of Barton's company, Aszure & Artists, in a performance in NBS' Betty Oliphant Theatre, in April, 2010. Details of the performance and ticket sales will be announced on Monday, March 15.

While Barton will interact intensely with specific students like Binet, all of NBS' senior students will benefit from interactions with her and her company. Not only will senior students have the opportunity to watch rehearsals of Barton's company, they will also take movement classes with her, as well as have the chance to discuss with her issues pertinent to young, emerging dance artists.

"I'm thrilled at this new opportunity NBS is launching. The dance world poses increasing challenges to artists today, and I firmly believe projects such as this will increase our

students' awareness of the many possibilities that await them in their professional careers. I'm also very pleased that this initial mentorship is happening with Aszure, an NBS alumnus. There is nothing so bonding as sharing a creative experience, but that Robert will have this experience with someone who graduated from NBS makes the relationship and the experience that much more meaningful," says Mavis Staines, Artistic Director and Co-CEO of Canada's National Ballet School.

"In today's arts world, artists have to take on responsibilities far beyond that of performing and creating. They must be administratively skilled, understand budgets, and be able to function both as a performer and a producer. This opportunity will allow NBS students to gain first-hand knowledge of the experiences a professional artist and company have. I'm pleased that NBS continues to evolve and expand the opportunities offered to our students, and that we continue to provide not only world-class dance training, but also cutting edge arts experiences," says Jeff Melanson, Executive Director and Co-CEO of Canada's National Ballet School.

About Canada's National Ballet School

Canada's National Ballet School is a world leader in the training of professional dancers and teachers. Dedicated to advancing the art of ballet, NBS develops dance professionals in a student-centred environment by weaving innovation with evolving practice in the finest teaching traditions. NBS graduates can be found as dancers, choreographers, artistic directors, teachers, and administrators in over 65 dance companies world wide, and in even more schools around the globe. NBS' fiftieth anniversary celebrations began on September 28, 2009 and continue throughout the academic school year.

- 30 -

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