Dancing to Self-Discovery in *Bring it down under your feet*, A New Work From Penelope Freeh and Alanna Morris-Van Tassel

Minneapolis, March 3, 2021 – Dance artists Penelope Freeh and Alanna Morris-Van Tassel, with The Cowles Center, present their new collaborative production, *Bring it down under your feet*, with a livestream premiere on March 12, 2021 at 7:30 PM. The performance features the duo’s first-ever duet (for which the production is named), bookended by solos from Morris-Van Tassel and Freeh, respectively. *Bring it down under your feet* is also available to watch on demand Saturday, March 13 and Sunday, March 14. Livestream and on demand tickets are $25, including fees. This program engages mature content and may not be suitable for viewers under the age of 16.

Freeh, Morris-Van Tassel, and their collaborators will be performing their works live for the Friday, March 12 livestream premiere, and will follow the performance with a Q&A. This piece is a part of the center’s MERGES IN MARCH series. To learn more about the show and for tickets, visit thecowlescenter.org/tickets.

The three pieces performed within the production all center on deeply personal themes of uncovering mythographies and histories of self-identity and femininity. Regarding developing their original duet, *Bring it down under your feet*, Morris-Van Tassel and Freeh share: “We’ve connected through the poetry of Rumi, valuing process and output equally, sharing hearts and time in the studio and on Zoom. Researching our lived experiences through the lens of shared and respective grief, we aspire to empower radical transformation from the inside out.”

Morris-Van Tassel’s evolving solo project, *Black Light re: Search*, will begin with a pre-show film that invites the audience to engage with the project’s core themes: honoring the energies of birth/creation; life, death and the partition between the two; and ancestral veneration. This collaborative solo work-in-progress ventures into the nobility of Black-ness; the divinity of the feminine expression; and the harnessing of the sensual expression. Morris-Van Tassel is joined by a cast of 5 performers.

Freeh’s solo, *Penelope – a cabaret*, reimagines Penelope of Ancient Greece as a German Weimar-era cabaret performer. Inspired by the subversive content of cabaret and pre-code film, the solo addresses the objectification yet erasure of women in chorus lines and corps de ballet and the tensions between onstage and off. Through curating the gaze, she aims to reclaim and celebrate hyper-feminine physicalites. Freeh is joined by pianist Marya Hart.
ABOUT PENELope FREEH

Through her practice of expanding the terms and exploding the tropes of ballet, dance artist and educator Penelope Freeh works to dismantle antiquated modes of how ballet is taught, languaged, applied in research terms, and expressed physically, intellectually, performatively, and at the gut level. Freeh danced with James Sewell Ballet (JSB) for seventeen years and served as Artistic Associate from 2007-2011. She is a McKnight Fellow for Choreographers, McKnight Fellow for Dancers, and Sage awardee for Outstanding Performer. Her work is in the repertoires of Alternative Motion Project, JSB, Minnesota Ballet, Minnesota Dance Theatre, and Zenon Dance Company, among others. She works frequently with living composers and opera and musical theater groups. Freeh is a Lecturer at the University of Minnesota and additionally teaches at Saint Paul Ballet, the Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists, TU Dance, and Zenon. She holds a Dance MFA from Hollins University.

ABOUT ALANNA MORRIS-VAN TASSEL

Alanna Morris-Van Tassel is a Saint Paul-based artist excavating cultural retention and geo-political fragmentation within their Caribbean diasporic identity. Morris-Van Tassel was a dancer with TU Dance from 2007-2017 and in 2018 named Dance Magazine’s “25 to Watch!” She is a founding Teaching Artist of The School at TU Dance Center and in 2020, served as the company’s Artistic Associate. Minneapolis’ City Pages named her Artist of the Year in 2019 and Best Choreographer for their solo, “Yam, Potatoe an Fish!” Alanna is the Artistic Director of AMVTP, founded in 2017 to produce dance, education and community-building initiatives. Morris-Van Tassel was recently named a 2022 Springboard Fellow. They will be creating a new ensemble work for presentation at the Place des Arts in Montreal, Canada as part of the Springboard Dance Montreal. This Spring Alanna joins the faculty at Bard College as a Guest Teaching Artist through Gibney Dance. She is a 2015 McKnight Dance Fellow and a graduate of The Juilliard School.

ABOUT MERGE

The Cowles Center created the MERGE program in 2016 to pair dance artists working in unconventional collaborations. This culminates in a premiere, evening-length performance on the Cowles’ 500-seat main stage. This approach fosters interorganizational collaboration, providing choreographers the opportunity to explore new ground and take artistic risks. It also cross-pollinates audiences, introducing fans dedicated to one dance style or artist to new forms or movement makers. This project is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts.

ABOUT THE COWLES CENTER

The Cowles Center is a dance and performing arts hub that promotes movement and growth for artists through supportive programs and spaces; engages audiences through dynamic performances; and educates learners of all ages through robust and inclusive education initiatives. The Cowles Center is owned and operated by Artspace. Learn more: thecowlescenter.org.

MEDIA CONTACT

Laura Moran, Communications Manager
(920)-636-6290
laura.moran@artspace.org

###