A Ceremony of Carols

Office of Arts + Cultural Programming

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PRIME VOCE
Conductor: Heather J. Buchanan
Soprano | Angel Baker, Jessica Eckers,* Julienne Frechlien, Serena Gattuso, Cornelia Leitold, Lisette LaFrance, Maki Matsumoto
Soprano | Jordan Barry, Adrianz, Alan D’Esposito, Nicole Jodcas
Karen Levendoski,* Cassandra Paulier, Kristin A. Vai, Courtney Wright
Alisa Andreozzi,* Katrina Lee O’Dwyer, Daveda Browne, Lauren D’Imperio, Andra Kwasnicki, Christina McCulli, Gabriella Natale, Elaine Thoman
Rahsaan Avidov reads by Steven W. Ryan
*Section Leader

PROGRAM NOTES

A Ceremony of Carols
A Ceremony of Carols was written in 1942 at that time, Britten and his wife was living and working in America. Stricken with a sudden intense bout of homesickness, he somehow managed to get a passage to America (not too mid-war) on a Swedish freighter. The ship arrived late, and he was unable to perform any of the works he had created for the Royal Festival Hall and the BBC’s Festival of Contemporary Church Music in London. Britten invited to create a full evening of his own work for the Festival technique The idea behind the piece is to have a logical step to go on to form his own company, which he did when he took up the post of artistic Director of the Place in 1994: The Richard Alston Dance Company was launched at the Place in November of that year. Over the next 18 years the company has made over 30 pieces for this company.

Recent commissions for other companies include Stre Brevo for Ballet Theatre Munich, and Walk Through a Storm for Ballet Black. In 2001, Alston was offered an invitation to perform his full version of Carmen for Scottish Ballet. In 2011, he made A Ruged Fount for New York Theatre Ballet. In 2016, he created one of the Holland Dance Festival Alston’s Light Floating into Darkened Rooms will be performed by the New York City Ballet this fall.

Alston was made an honorary doctor of philosophy (in dance) at Surrey University in 1992, and in 2003 he received an honorary MA from Chichester University. In 1995, he was named Chevalier dans l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in recognition of his work in France, and in 2001 he received the Commander of the British Empire (CBE) in the New Year Honours List. In 2008, Alston won the Critics Circle Dance Award for Outstanding Achievement.

The piece, which he considered a logical step to go on to form his own company, which he did when he took up the post of artistic Director of the Place in 1994: The Richard Alston Dance Company was launched at the Place in November of that year. Over the next 18 years the company has made over 30 pieces for this company.

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Richard Alston’s Unfinished Business is danced to the beautiful, lucid and flowing music of Mozart, who composed his K. 533 in his short life, only four years before he died. There are two sublime and profoundly beautiful movements in Allegro flowing in an unending lyrical stream and a starker, more troubled Andante, dark, brooding, questioning. Desperate for money, Mozart rushed these off to his publisher; hastily attached to the end, and around the time he had written one year earlier, but the Rondo comes from a different world. For Unfinished Business Alston has chosen another composition from the same concerto in G major of his son, an unfinished sonata of only eighteen years. Sick with hay fever, he was unable to complete the concerto. The Rondo is a brilliant parody of music from the opera The Magic Flute which ran along not pause for breath.
Richard Alston Dance Company

Artistic Director Richard Alston
Executive Director Isabel Tamen
Rehearsal Director Martin Lawrence
Production Manager Zeynep Kepeki


Program

Roughcut (1996)
Choreography: Richard Alston

Unfinished Business (2011)
Choreography: Richard Alston
Music: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Piano Sonata no. 15 in F major, K. 533 (1789); Ferruccio Busoni,巨人, Giga, Bolero e Variazione (1909)

Pantin Jason Ridgway
Lighting: Zeynep Kepeki
Costumes: Rebecca Hayes

Dancers:
Agliehn Liddick, Hannah Kidd, Andrew Maclean, Nancy Nerantzi, Elly Braund, Olíana Vehga Bujan, Hannah Kidd, Monique Smith-McDowell

For Yi Bourne, founding director of Dance Umbrella.

American Premiere!
A Ceremony of Carol (2012)
Choreography: Richard Alston
Music: Benjamin Britten, A Ceremony of Carols (1942)

Costumes: Richard Alston (made by Rebecca Hayes)

Dancers: The Company

Choral Director: Heather J. Buchanan
Harps: André Tanantiel
Choir: Prima Voce

A Ceremony of Carol was co-commissioned by Sadler’s Wells, London, The Marktwies Theater, Carnegie, and Peak Performances @ Montclair State (NJ).

This appearance of Richard Alston Dance Company was supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Duration: 1 hour 45 minutes, including two 15-minute intermissions.

In consideration of both audience and performers, please turn off all electronic devices. The taking of photographs or videos and the use of recording equipment are not permitted. No food or drink is permitted inside the theater.

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Richard Alston Dance Company

December 13–16, 2012

Alexander Kasser Theater

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