Great Britten

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Richard Alston Dance Company

Great Britten

Artistic Director Richard Alston
Executive Director Isabel Tanen
Rehearsal Director Martin Lawrence
Production Manager Paul Kostas

Dancers Issaah de Banya, Nicholas Bodych, Ely Brouard, Jennifer Hayen, James Muller, Nancy Nerantzi, Liam Riddick, Olhuma Vesa Bujan, Simon Donnellon, Phoebe Hart

Guest Artists
Heather J. Buchanan, Choral Director
Vincent Carn, Organ
Nicholas Pfinn, Tenor
Jason Ridgway, Piano

American Contemporary Music Ensemble
Montclair State University Vocal Accord

PROGRAM

American Premiere!
Rejoice in the Lamb

Unfinished Business Duet

American Premiere!
Hölderlin Fragments

Illuminations

To view our complete season and for more information, visit peakperfs.org.

The 2014/15 season is made possible in part by funds from:

The National Endowment for the Arts
The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
The New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State
The New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State
The New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State

Discover Jersey Arts
National Dance Project (NDP) of the New England Foundation for the Arts
Allison and James T. Cirenza
Robert and Holly Gregory
Alison and James T. Cirenza

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Rejoice in the Lamb (2014)

Choreography: Richard Alston
Music: Benjamin Britten, Rejoice in the Lamb (1943); music by arrangement with Boosey & Hawkes
Lighting: Zephyr Kopell
Costumes: Peter Todd
Dancers: Christophe Smart, Nicholas Bodych, Jordan Brathwaite, Èlia Brond, Phoebe Hart, Jennifer Hayes, Nancy Narozni, Simon Donnelton, James Muller, Liam Riddick, Oihana Végas Buján
Choir Director: Heather J. Buchanan
Choir: Montclair State University Vocal Academy
Organ: Vincent Carr

Unfinished Business Duet (2011)

Choreography: Richard Alston
Music: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Andante, Piano Sonata no. 15 in F major K. 533 (1786)
Lighting: Zephyr Kopell
Costumes: Rebecca Hayes
Dancers: Èlia Brond, James Muller, Piano: Jason Ridgway
Ballets: Boosey & Hawkes
Lighting: Zephyr Kopell
Dancers: Èlia Brond, Liam Riddick, Nicholas Bodych, Phoebe Hart, Nancy Narozni, Oihana Végas Buján, Jennifer Hayes, Nicholas Bodych
Choir: Montclair State University Vocal Academy
Organ: Vincent Carr

American Contemporary Music Ensemble

Artistic and Executive Director Danico Jensen

First Violins: Ksenia Dejtenneff, Anna Elasvilli, Ben Russell
Second Violins: Cabir Bahams, Catherine Orlando, Chris Otto, Alex Shiozaki
Cellists: Iancu Jianer, Shawn Jones
Bass: Kei Sawai

Montclair State University Vocal Academy

Conductors: duct, Jacob & Buchan
Instrumentalists: Jonathan Angel Edwards, Katie Carey, Nicole Jobin, Karen Levandoski, Christophe Ruchsäcker, Claire Tsopman
Altos: Lisa Avedaico, Lauren D’Imperio, Chris Harden, Christina McCullin, Allison Meze, Elaine Thomas
Tenor: Fred Foster, Zachary Mandos, Nygelita Peter Ncayiwa, Timothy Price, Joseph Schnorrbusch, Tom Thurlow
Basses: Gabriel Baeznan, John McLain, Stéphane Gaubert, Junji Yama, Jason Zachar
Rehearsal Accompanist: Steven W. Ryan

*Stilistak *: Stilistak understudy

Hölderlin Fragments (2013)

Choreography: Richard Alston
Music: Benjamin Britten, Sechs Hölderlin-Fragmente (1958); music by arrangement with Boosey & Hawkes
Lighting: Charles Ballor
Costumes: Fettor Dinio
Dancers: Iassan de Bayra, Nicholas Bodych, Nancy Narozni, Oihana Végas Buján, Liam Riddick, James Muller
Tener: Nicholas Phan
Piano: Jason Ridgway

Illuminations (1953)

Choreography: Richard Alston
Music: Benjamin Britten, Les Illuminations (1959); music by arrangement with Boosey & Hawkes
Lighting: Charles Ballor
Costumes: Fettor Dinio
Dancers: Rimbaud Liam Riddick, Nicholas Bodych, Phoebe Hart, Nancy Narozni, Oihana Végas Buján
Tener: Nicholas Phan
String Ensemble: American Contemporary Music Ensemble

Rejoice in the Lamb (1844)
The 18th-century poet Christopher Smart was susceptible to bouts of religious mania. He had a tendency to pull passers-by in the street to kneel down and pray with him, so he was committed to a mental hospital, where he spent time writing long sprawling poems from the hand of the artist indignis.

One of these was Jobiligo (Rejoice in the Lamb), a comical and brilliant expression of Smart's fervent and unswerving faith. The words start with a stirring hymn of Old Testament figures and animals, climaxing in a serene and solemn Hallelujah. Smart took time to contemplate his own most holy companions—-the cat, the bird, the dog. For him, the poet's possession of a cat surpassing in beauty— and also to consider frogs— which he described as (particularly the poetry of Christ). Regular attacks of depression undercut the poet, causing him to imagine that everyone was against him. For him, it was the undercurrent with a Sawyer— for they said he is besides himself.

Eventually it was music that brought him comfort. "For it is Music and therefore he is God," and the poem-emboos a message of light to all of the sounds different instruments make. This music, though it may be, seems to soothe his spirit. "For at this time multiplicity and the dotes themselves are at peace." And so, eventually, was Kit Smart.

British poet, with the remarkable man, Walter Hussey, at his first vice of St. Matthew's Nonconformist Church. Later he joined the Dean of Chichester where he continued to commission new art for the Cathedral, including the Chichester Psalter by Berenson. I dedicate this choreography to him.

Unfinished Business Duet

Unfinished Business is danced to the beautiful, elucidating, and moving music of Mozart, who composed for K. 297b and K. 563, which he himself had just called "Deus omnis ars". He is the first dance to a composition by Mozart, and it is the only time free and in a burst of anger breaks completely with Verlaine. He turns away to start a new journey. "Soleil d'aïeul (death of a new world)" (expressed in music of love and new sounds).

Background

Britten was introduced to the poetry of Rimbaud by W. H. Auden in the 1950s. He recognized the figure of a young artist leaving his life in a compelling and imaginative metaphor, and more importantly, he identified with Rimbaud and Verlaine, two artists obsessively in love.

The pair imagine an ideally happy couple, an ideal marriage, and, of love to which Rimbaud cannot commit. He is too restless, dreaming of the sea and drifting like the stars. Gradually, Rimbaud's wild nature and disordered senses are inevitably beginning to take their toll. He staggers as he tries to reacquire his earlier confidence, but his mind is now troubled and uncertain.

The poet dreams of a "Beaming Brahms" coming to claim Verlaine as his own, and he wishes to find himself halfway free. After the death of his own imaginaries creatures, new aggression and threat take hold. Rimbaud breaks his way free and in a burst of anger breaks completely with Verlaine. He turns away to start a new journey. "Soleil d'aïeul (death of a new world)" (expressed in music of love and new sounds).

Program Notes

Richard Alston (Artistic Director) choreographed Rambert's premiere in February 2015.

Richard Alston Dance Company was born in 1966, as one of the 12 students at the Royal Ballet School who had studied under Richard Alston Dance Company as an apprentice in 1983, becoming a full company member in 1984.

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