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For Immediate Release

## Richard Alston Dance Company Brings U.S. Premiere of Alston's 'A Ceremony Of Carols' For Company's Peak Performances Debut, December 13-16



Ever since he began making dances in 1968, audiences and critics worldwide have sung the praises of British choreographer Richard Alston's adventurous response to a score and spirited sense of invention. Three Alston dances, including the American premiere of "A Ceremony of Carols," will be seen when the Richard Alston Dance Company makes its Peak Performances debut in Montclair, NJ, December 13-16. The work was co-commissioned by The Marlowe Theatre in Canterbury; Sadler's Wells in London and Peak Performances at Montclair State University.

Set to Benjamin Britten's celebrated composition of the same name, "A Ceremony of Carols" received its world premiere in Canterbury, England last February. Sidestepping the narrative of the music's medieval text and traditional religious connotations, Alston created an abstract dance, contemplative in spirit and formal in structure, whose great sweeping movement suggests the music's dark mysteries and ecstatic revelations.

First sung at the world premiere by 19 boys from the Canterbury Cathedral choir, the music for the Montclair performances will be performed by 23 female members of Prima Voce, conducted by Montclair State University's Choral Director Heather J. Buchanan. The accompanying harpist is André Tarantiles. "A Ceremony of Carols" marks Alston's first dance to Britten, whose centenary is being celebrated this year.

In dramatic contrast is Alston's 20-year-old "Roughcut," whose quicksilver speed and furious energy rival Steve Reich's fast driving scores *New York Counterpoint* and *Electric Counterpoint*.

The third work on the program is Alston's "Unfinished Business," set to two movements of Mozart's unfinished piano sonata, *Opus K533*. To these Alston added Italian virtuoso Federico Busoni's arrangement of Mozart's *Gigue in D*, creating an energetic third movement for the dance. Pianist Jason Ridgway will play the music live.

### PERFORMANCE TIMES

Thursday, December 13 @ 7:30 pm  
Friday, December 14 @ 7:30 pm  
Saturday, December 15 @ 8:00 pm  
Sunday, December 16 @ 3:00 pm

**MORE**

## WHERE TO GO

The Alexander Kasser Theater at Montclair State University is located at 1 Normal Avenue, Montclair, New Jersey 07043. Tickets are \$15, and are available at the box office, [www.peakperfs.org](http://www.peakperfs.org), or by calling 973-655-5112.

Charter bus service is provided from New York City's Port Authority Bus Terminal – arcade on 41st Street between 8th and 9th Avenues – to the Alexander Kasser Theater (\$10 per person, roundtrip) for all Saturday and Sunday performances. Bus reservations may be made by calling 973-655-5112 or by visiting [www.peakperfs.org](http://www.peakperfs.org). For train service, available only on weekdays, go online to [www.njtransit.com](http://www.njtransit.com) or call 973-275-5555.

For restaurants close to the Alexander Kasser Theater, visit [www.destinationmontclair.com](http://www.destinationmontclair.com).

## ARTIST BIOS

**RICHARD ALSTON** choreographed his first work as one of the original students at the London School of Contemporary Dance. He went on to choreograph for London Contemporary Dance Theatre before forming the UK's first independent dance company, Strider in 1972. In 1975 he left for New York to study at the Merce Cunningham Dance Studio, and on his return two years later he worked throughout the UK and Europe as an independent choreographer and teacher. In 1980 Alston was appointed Resident Choreographer for Ballet Rambert and became the company's Artistic Director from 1986-1992. During his time there he created 25 works for Rambert while also being commissioned to create works for the Royal Danish Ballet (1982) and the Royal Ballet (1983). In 1992 Alston was invited to create a full evening of his own work for the Ballet Atlantique based in La Rochelle, France. He made another full evening for London Contemporary Dance Theatre at the 1994 Aldeburgh Festival. He launched his own company, Richard Alston Dance Company, when he became Artistic Director of The Place in 1994. Over the past fifteen years Alston has made over 30 pieces for RADC. He was made an honorary Doctor of Philosophy (in Dance) at Surrey University in 1992 and in 2003 he received an honorary MA from University College Chichester. 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 CBE in the New Year Honours list. In 2008, to mark Alston's 60th birthday and 40 years of choreography, he was commissioned by Dance Umbrella and Sadler's Wells to create a special program, which was performed at the Wells. In 2009, in addition to directing RADC, Alston choreographed a critically-acclaimed "Carmen" for Scottish Ballet and was appointed Chair of Youth Dance England. 2010 began with a four-week American tour, which included RADC's third, sold-out season at The Joyce Theater in New York City. In 2011, he made "A Rugged Flourish" for New York Theater Ballet's season "Signatures 11: A Celebration of Legends & Visionaries." In 2012 Alston received the Award for Excellence in International Dance by the International Theatre Institute - British Centre and choreographed "Particle Velocity" for Phoenix Dance Theatre. For more information, visit <http://www.theplace.org.uk/radc>.

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Front photo by Chris Nash.