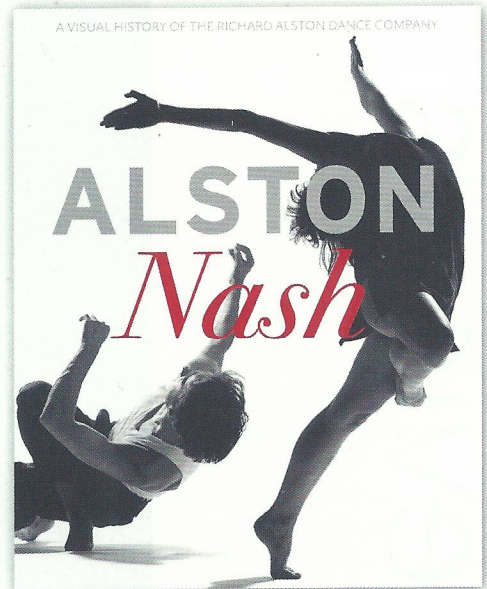


Media



Ballet Recipes

by Maricelle Peeters

ISBN 978-9082870114

Published by Balletstudio Le Rêve

<https://balletstudiolereve.nl/>

https://youtu.be/YL_U9H7PY6I

When I embarked on my own teaching career, I quickly realised the importance of metaphor when explaining movement. Everyone reacts in their own way to these word-pictures; it is up to the teacher to find the one that works for each individual. Maricelle Peeters, in her new book *Ballet Recipes*, focuses on the use of imagery throughout; the book is aimed at students wanting to progress their knowledge of technique outside the studio, but many teachers would gain from leafing through it and employing some of Peeters' luminous metaphors.

The title is perhaps not ideal; the contents have nothing to do with food! However, Peeters uses the idea of a recipe to break each movement down into its component parts, and then explains how to assemble these parts into a correctly formed whole. She speaks of drawing geometric shapes with your toes on the floor, or on your leg as you lift the foot from *coup de pied* to *retiré*; of lengthening and shortening muscles; of tapping into the feelings experienced by the whole body during each small movement. Youngsters in love with the art form will soak up every page, and it is all so correctly and clearly presented that one need not worry that students will misinterpret the instructions and do themselves harm.

Peeters has done some of the illustrations too, alongside those of Heleen van

der Hoogt, and the translation is by *Dance Europe's* own Susan Pond. In his foreword, Ernst Meisner, Artistic Co-ordinator of the Dutch National Ballet's Junior Company and Artistic Director of the Dutch National Ballet School, expresses the view that the metaphors used in the book will remain in readers' minds for years to come. I think he is right.

This is Peeters' first book. She has her own school in The Netherlands, and regularly takes refresher courses or observes classes at major schools around the world, demonstrating the inestimably important open-mindedness when it comes to methodology.

Amanda Jennings

Alston Nash

A Visual History of the Richard Alston Dance Company

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www.chrisnashphoto.com

It's often puzzling that when people go to all the trouble and expense of publishing a book - and there are shedloads of new books every week - they choose the cheapest possible printer in the Far East and paper better designed for wrapping chips. Quite a few of these sorry affairs arrive in our office for review. So it was a huge pleasure to receive *Alston Nash*, which is a lovingly produced volume of beautiful photographs chronicling the repertoire of the Richard Alston Dance Company.

Alston created his first choreography

in 1968 as one of the first students at the London Contemporary Dance School. He duly graduated in 1970, founded his group Strider, studied at the Merce Cunningham Studios in New York, and went on to become resident choreographer and subsequently artistic director with Ballet Rambert (as it was called then), a post he held until 1992. Two years later, he was appointed as the artistic director of The Place and founded his own company, for which he created over 50 pieces over the next 25 years. The company was closed in March earlier this year, not because of Covid but because of "new priorities for touring, agreed between The Place and Arts Council of England". Whilst the closure of any dance company is sad, not least because it leaves dancers suddenly jobless, it could be said that RADC's departure was astutely timed.

Over the company's many happy and successful years, images of Alston's dancers, from a publicity shoot in 1995 - remember the wonderful Darshan Singh Bhuller? - to Elly Braund and Joshua Harriette in *Shine On*, Alston's final piece for his company, have been captured by the eminent photographer Chris Nash. Excellently reproduced on top quality paper in this book, the photographs will serve as enduring record of Alston's achievements for decades to come.

Most of the photos are complemented by quite personal memories by Chris, Richard and, too, the company's long-serving associate choreographer, Martin Lawrance. But the eye always strays from the text - a photo, as ever, is worth a thousand words.

Emma Kauldhar