

Sydney Dance Company, 45 years and going strong



In 2014 Sydney Dance Company celebrates a landmark 45 years since its inception, with this year's financial results reinforcing its position on solid ground. The Company has just released its 2013 Annual Report, in which they deliver their fifth consecutive operating surplus, further enabling the establishment of essential financial reserves.

Sydney Dance Company Chairman Andrew Messenger acknowledges this is an outstanding and unprecedented result for the Company, crediting Executive Director Anne Dunn, who took on management of the Company five years ago, for her role in restoring the Company's finances.

"It has been a pleasure to work closely with Anne Dunn and her team over the past 12 months, since taking on the role of Chairman of Sydney Dance Company in April last year. Since commencing in the role of Executive Director in 2009, Anne has steered the Company on a clear path to success. The Board is very pleased with the results she has achieved, both financially and in partnership with Artistic Director Rafael Bonachela. Together they are a formidable team, leading Sydney Dance Company from strength to strength," Mr Messenger said.

In addition to robust financial results the Company has continued to build its reputation as Australia's leading contemporary dance company, through an impressive artistic program, which in 2013 comprised 59 theatre based performances in addition to 11 days of performances as part of Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla's Kaldor Public Art Project, 13 Rooms

Three new works were created and premiered, the Company toured nationally and internationally – to seven countries across four continents, and expanded its education program activities to incorporate primary school students, in addition to an accredited one year training course for aspiring dance professionals, Sydney Dance Company's Pre-Professional Year.

Artistic Director Rafael Bonachela continued to build on his reputation for exciting artistic collaborations, bringing guest choreographers Alexander Ekman and Larissa McGowman to the Company, and working with songstresses Sarah Blasko and Katie Noonan, composer Nick Wales, musicians from the Sydney Symphony and Australian Chamber Orchestra, and fashion designers Dion Lee and Toni Maticevski.

The Company was very proud to accept a slate of awards in 2013 including the Australian Dance Awards for Most Outstanding Choreography for Rafael Bonachela's *2 One Another*, Most Outstanding Female Dancer for Charmene Yap and Most Outstanding Performance by a Company; and Greenroom Awards for *2 One Another* including Best Ensemble and Best Female Dancer for Natalie Allen.

Sydney Dance Company Executive Director Anne Dunn says, "Our 2013 surplus of \$511,866 was achieved through careful cost control, significant increases in philanthropic income and self-generated commercial revenue."

She believes 2013 will be remembered for the scale of Sydney Dance Company's international touring and the newfound relationships that have been developed along the way. During the 12-month period the Company returned to China for the first time since 2010, made a return to South America and debuted in Russia, performing at the prestigious Stanislavsky Theatre as part of the Dancelnversion Festival.

"It was wonderful to witness the impact of Sydney Dance Company on the profile of Australian arts abroad, with diplomatic missions and international audiences welcoming us wholeheartedly at every stop," Dunn comments.

"There is also a real sense of what it means to be cultural ambassadors for Australia when our dancers have the opportunity to engage in the genuine skills and cultural exchanges that round out the excitement of touring in a very meaningful way."

"Indeed the role of the dancers in the Company was a hallmark of much of 2013. Not only did they grace the stages beautifully and win awards for their performances, they also undertook the delivery of education workshops and schools programs with equal energy. "

"We are very proud to have shared our work with more than 66,000 audience members in 2013, and that our education program reached out to over 7,400 school students. "

In April Sydney Dance Company appointed renowned Melbourne architect Randall Marsh as their first interstate board member, reinforcing the Company's position as a national institution and further solidifying their commitment to a strong presence in Victoria.

Mr Marsh joins existing board members, Chairman Andrew Messenger, Pam Bartlett, Peter Brownie, Jean-Marc Carriol, Judy Crawford, Jane Freudenstein, Kiera Grant, Karen Moses, Naseema Sparks, Greta Thomas and Carla Zampatti.

A copy of the Company's 2013 Annual Report can be viewed at <http://www.sydneydancecompany.com/about/annual-report/>.

www.sydneydancecompany.com

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Image: Sydney Dance Company's *Cacti*, choreography by Alexander Ekman. Photo by Peter Greig.

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ABOUT SYDNEY DANCE COMPANY

Sydney Dance Company is Australia's leading contemporary dance company, presenting new works in Sydney, around Australia and internationally under the Artistic Direction of Rafael Bonachela.

Sydney Dance Company has its origins in a group founded in 1969 by dancer Suzanne Musitz. Soon known as The Dance Company (NSW), from 1975-1976 the Company was directed by Dutch choreographer Jaap Flier, before the appointment of Australian choreographer Graeme Murphy in 1976. In 1979 Murphy and his partner Janet Vernon instituted the defining name change to Sydney Dance Company and proceeded to lead it for a remarkable 30 years. Murphy and his collaborators created work that enthralled audiences in Australia and in extensive international touring, including being the first western contemporary dance company to perform in the People's Republic of China.

Since 2009, Spanish-born Artistic Director Rafael Bonachela had led Sydney Dance Company. Over the past five years the Company has cemented its reputation as a creative powerhouse, with an acclaimed group of dancers presenting new work by Bonachela and other choreographers, designers, composers and musicians. The Company has expanded its reach into the towns and cities it visits with work for schools and local dancers.

Since 1985 the Company has been a resident of the purpose-built studios at The Wharf in Sydney's Walsh Bay, minutes from the city's famed Bridge and Opera House. Its studios offer the largest public dance classes in Australia, with nearly 80,000 attendances annually. In 2014 a new Pre-Professional training course offers students the chance to work with some of Australia's most successful and award winning choreographers and educators.

More information, www.sydneydancecompany.com