

SYDNEY DANCE COMPANY
ARTISTIC PROGRAM
2016



Sydney Dance Company opens 2016 with a striking world premiere work, created by Artistic Director and Helpmann Award winning choreographer Rafael Bonachela, and set to a dusky sonic soundscape by composer Nick Wales (long term collaborator of Sarah Blasko).

Named for the Latin term meaning 'Light and Darkness', *Lux Tenebris* is a full ensemble piece, created on the Sydney Dance Company dancers. Movement follows deep, unexpected, visceral beats to discover a dark place where there is space for beauty and light.

In Australia, this stunning new production will be part of a double bill program, *CounterMove*, paired with a work from one of Europe's most highly sought-after artists, award-winning Swedish choreographer Alexander Ekman's acclaimed and hilarious *Cacti*.

Originally created by Ekman for the Nederlands Dans Theatre 2, *Cacti* had its Australian premiere in 2013, as part of Sydney Dance Company's triple bill season *De Novo*. In 2015 the Company toured the work to 11 cities and towns throughout regional Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory, leaving a trail of laughter in its wake, and a legacy of rapturous reviews.

This 'extraordinarily original and vibrant work of dance-theatre - witty, effervescent, playful, surreal and joyously physical' (The Australian) features the full Sydney Dance Company ensemble of 16 dancers, sharing the stage with a string quartet, a cat called Fluffy and a host of potted cacti of luminous delight.

CounterMove opens at Sydney's Roslyn Packer Theatre Walsh Bay on February 26, ahead of seasons at Canberra Theatre Centre, opening May 19, and Southbank Theatre, Melbourne, opening May 25. The show will also tour to Darwin and regional Western Australia, regional Queensland and regional New South Wales, from June 17 to August 27. See the full list of venues at sydneydancecompany.com/tours.

In October, a second Sydney Dance Company season sees Sydney Dance Company Artistic Director Rafael Bonachela share the bill with one of the country's most promising choreographers, Adelaide-based Gabrielle Nankivell, winner of the 2015 Tanja Leidtke Fellowship.

For his second world premiere of the year, Bonachela takes inspiration from a vibrant contemporary classical composition by Bulgarian Grammy nominee Dobrinka Tabakova - her *Concerto For Cello and Strings*.

Providing a perfect counterpoint to Nankivell's acclaimed *Wildebeest*, a masterful and evocative dancework based on the idea that 'underneath it all we are all animals and fanciful creatures... backed with an amazing score from Luke Smiles of stormy weather, soaring song and yet more industrial grind - enough to match a passing freight train.' (Daily Review)

Originally commissioned as part of Sydney Dance Company and Carriageworks' *New Breed 2014* program (supported by The Balnaves Foundation), and presented as part of a short sell-out season in December of that year, *Wildebeest* will be re-worked for its debut on the Roslyn Packer Theatre stage.

These two works come together in an 11-show season of *Untamed*, opening at Sydney's Roslyn Packer Theatre Walsh Bay October 18.

In November Sydney Dance Company and Carriageworks present the third edition of *New Breed*, a three-year initiative established to nurture the next generation of Australian choreographers. Made possible thanks to generous support from the Balnaves Foundation, this showcase for fresh young Australian choreographic voices has well and truly captured the imagination of audiences, with the 2014 season selling out, and 2015 well on its way... Get your tickets for this one fast!

Which four up and coming Australian dance creators will be commissioned to create a work on Sydney Dance Company in 2016? Stay tuned for an announcement early next year!

New Breed opens at Carriageworks on November 29.

In addition to 78 scheduled performances at 19 venues around Australia in 2016, Sydney Dance Company continues its strong tradition of international touring, showcasing Australian culture, ideas and talent on the global stage.

In April the Company will present at Switzerland's prestigious STEPS Festival, the country's largest contemporary dance biennale, which showcases a selection of the world's premier international dance companies, touring to venues across the nation for a four-week period.

This tour sees Sydney Dance Company take on one of its most ambitious international presentations to date, staging the stunning triple bill, *Interplay*, which took east coast Australian audiences by storm in 2014.

Comprising works by Rafael Bonachela, renowned Australian choreographer Gideon Obarzanek, and Italy's Jacopo Godani, (Artistic Director of the newly named Frankfurt-Dresden Dance Company, formerly the Forsythe Company), this is a diverse and high-energy program showcasing Australia's premier contemporary dance ensemble at its poetic and athletic best.

Alongside our own program, Sydney Dance Company is thrilled to collaborate with other leading Australian cultural institutions to present a series of new works, across a broad range of venues and events. Look out for opportunities to experience dance in unexpected ways and places. Details of our additional 2016 collaborations will be announced by our partners very soon.

Sydney Dance Company 2016 Sydney Packages go on sale at 10am Tuesday October 6. Tickets to individual performances will be available from November 25. Book at www.sydneydancecompany.com/2016.

Details of our 2016 Education Program will be announced on October 13. For information on School Matinees, Workshops, Masterclasses and more, contact our Education team at education@sydneydancecompany.com.

For all of the latest Sydney Dance Company news and behind the scenes happenings subscribe at www.sydneydancecompany.com, or follow us at:

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ENDS

Image: Sydney Dance Company 2016. Dancers Chloe Leong and Bernard Knauer. Photos by Irenaeus Herok.

MEDIA CONTACT

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A Sydney Dance Company 2016 Program Planner is provided overpage

SYDNEY DANCE COMPANY 2016 PROGRAM

FEBRUARY/ MARCH

SYDNEY

Sydney Dance Company presents

CounterMove

Double bill

World premiere, Rafael Bonachela, **Lux Tenebris**

Alexander Ekman, **Cacti**

Roslyn Packer Theatre Walsh Bay, Sydney, 26 February – 12 March

APRIL

INTERNATIONAL TOUR, SWITZERLAND/ GERMANY

Sydney Dance Company presents

Interplay

Triple bill

Rafael Bonachela, **2 in D Minor**

Jacopo Godani, **Raw Models**

Gideon Obarzanek, **L'Chaim**

Tour dates, April 8 – 23

STEPS Festival, Switzerland

8 April, Lugano

10 April, Fribourg

13 April, Lörrach, Germany

15 April, Zurich

17 April, Zug

20 April, Monthey

23 April, Neuchatel

MAY

CANBERRA/ MELBOURNE

Sydney Dance Company presents

CounterMove

Double bill

Rafael Bonachela, **Lux Tenebris**

Alexander Ekman, **Cacti**

Canberra Theatre Centre, 19 – 21 May

Southbank Theatre, Melbourne, 25 May – 4 June

JUNE/ JULY/ AUGUST

NATIONAL TOUR – REGIONAL NSW, QUEENSLAND, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Sydney Dance Company presents

CounterMove

Double bill

World premiere, Rafael Bonachela, **Lux Tenebris**

Alexander Ekman, **Cacti**

Tour dates June 17 – August 27

New South Wales

17 – 18 June, Wollongong

22 June, Orange

25 June, Newcastle

29 June, Port Macquarie

Queensland

2 July, Rockhampton

6 July, Gladstone

9 – 10 July, Cairns

15 – 16 July, Gold coast

Northern Territory

29 July, Darwin

Western Australia

3 Aug, Geraldton

6 Aug, Mandurah

9 Aug, Albany

13 Aug, Bunbury

New South Wales

20 Aug: Bathurst

24 Aug: Griffith

27 Aug: Dubbo

OCTOBER

SYDNEY

Sydney Dance Company presents

Untamed

World premiere, Rafael Bonachela, **Title TBC**

Gabrielle Nankivell, **Wildebeest**

Roslyn Packer Theatre Walsh Bay, Sydney, 18 – 29 October

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER

SYDNEY

Sydney Dance Company presents

New Breed

Four world premieres

New works by the cream of Australia's up and coming choreographers, commissions to be announced

Carriageworks, Sydney, 29 November – 4 December

STAY TUNED!!

Keep your eye on our website and social media for additional program announcements, or sign up for regular updates at www.sydneydancecompany.com.

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. Since 1985 the Company has been resident in purpose-built studios at Pier 4 in Sydney's Walsh Bay, minutes from the city's famed Harbour Bridge. Its studios house the largest public dance class program in Australia, attracting nearly 80,000 participants each year. A legendary force in contemporary dance in Australia, Sydney Dance Company will celebrate its 50th year in 2019. More information, www.sydneydancecompany.com

CHOREOGRAPHER BIOS

RAFAEL BONACHELA

Rafael Bonachela was born in Barcelona where he began his early dance training before moving to London, and in 1992 joined the legendary Rambert Dance Company.

He remained with Rambert as a dancer and Associate Choreographer until 2006 at which time he successfully set up the Bonachela Dance Company (BDC) to concentrate on the rapid rise of his choreographic career.

As a choreographer, Rafael has been commissioned to make works for Candoco, George Piper Dances, ITDANSA Danza Contemporanea de Cuba, Transitions Dance Company and Dance Works Rotterdam amongst others.

In 2008, he premiered his first full-length production *360°* for Sydney Dance Company. Less than six months later, he was appointed Artistic Director making headlines around the dance world.

Rafael's vision for the Company embraces a guiding principle that has seen the repertoire grow with the addition of commissioned dance works from Australian and visiting international guest choreographers.

These premiere works are often programmed alongside his own creations, ensuring diversity for audiences and providing much sought after opportunities for his remarkable ensemble of dancers to be exposed to the work of some of the most in-demand choreographers of our time.

Over the past seven years, Rafael has created numerous danceworks for Sydney Dance Company including *we unfold* (2009), *6 Breaths* (2010), *LANDforms* (2011), *2 One Another* (2012), *Project Rameau* (2012), *Emergence* (2013), *Simple Symphony* (2013) *Les Illuminations* (2013), *2 in D Minor* (2014), *Scattered Rhymes* (2014), *Frame of Mind* (2015) and *Variation 10* (2015).

In addition, he has remounted outstanding repertoire from BDC such as *Soledad* and *Irony of Fate* (2010) and *The Land of Yes & The Land of No* (2011).

Rafael's achievements in dance have been widely recognised both within the industry and in the broader community.

In 2012 he was listed as one of *Sydney Magazine's* Top 100 Most Influential People for his efforts to popularise dance since taking on the job of Artistic Director with Sydney Dance Company and as curator of Australia's international festival of contemporary dance, Spring Dance at the Sydney Opera House.

In 2013 he was honoured with an Officer's Cross of the Order of Civil Merit by His Majesty the King of Spain, and was named winner of the dance category for The Monthly's 2013 Arts Awards.

Rafael's 2012 work, *2 One Another* has won numerous awards including 'Best Ensemble' (Green Room Awards 2012), 'Outstanding Achievement in Choreography' (Australian Dance Awards 2013), and 'Outstanding Performance by a'

Company' (Australian Dance Awards 2013).

Most recently, his 2015 production, *Frame of Mind* was awarded 'Best Choreography in a Dance Work' and 'Best Dance Work' at the 2015 Helpmann Awards.

Rafael's internationally recognised talent has seen him work not only with contemporary dance at the highest level but also with artists from popular culture. He embraces the opportunity to collaborate on both dance and cross art-form projects, a philosophy which has seen him work with companies artists including singers Kylie Minogue, Tina Turner, Sarah Blasko and Katie Noonan; fashion designers Dion Lee and Toni Maticevski; visual artists Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla (for *Revolving Door, 13 Rooms, Kaldor Project, 2013*); and artist Mira Calix (*Inside There Falls, Sydney Festival, 2015*).

With Sydney Dance Company he has also collaborated with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Queensland Symphony Orchestra.

Rafael is currently working on a new piece, *Lux Tenebris*, which will premiere as part of Sydney Dance Company's season of *CounterMove*, opening 29 February 2015 at Roslyn Packer Theatre Walsh Bay, touring nationally until 17 August.

www.sydneydancecompany.com/people/artistic-director/

ALEXANDER EKMAN

Alexander Ekman is an international choreographer/director creating pieces for theatres, opera houses and museums. He also directs films and creates live performances/events in pop up locations around the world.

Ekman is known for his fast paced timing, witty humor and clever transitions. He aims to create work that the majority can relate and connect with. Since 2006 he has devoted his time to creating pieces that both entertain and question the observer. He aims to transform the atmosphere in the audience and to always surprise.

Ekman has created and collaborated with around 45 dance companies worldwide including the Royal Swedish Ballet, Cullberg Ballet, Compañía Nacional de Danza Goteborg Ballet, Iceland Dance Company, Bern Ballet, Cedar Lake Contemporary Dance, Ballet de l'Opéra du Rhin, The Norwegian National Ballet, Boston Ballet, Royal Ballet of Flanders, Sydney Dance Company, The Royal Ballet of Denmark and Vienna Ballet. He has also created for festivals the French Europa Danse and the Athens International Dance Festival.

In 2005, at the International Choreography Competition of Hannover, Ekman was awarded first prize by the critics, and won second prize with *Swingle Sisters* (one of the ballets from his *Sisters* trilogy).

During 2011 Ekman also worked as a teacher/choreographer at the prestigious Juilliard School in New York City.

Ekman's 2010 work *Cacti* has become a worldwide hit and has been performed by 15 dance companies. The work was nominated for the Dutch Zwaan dance prize in 2010, the National Dance Award (UK) in 2012, and also for the prestigious British Olivier Award. *Cacti* continues to entertain audiences around the world with its important message.

In 2009 Ekman created the dance film *40 Meters Under* for and with Cullberg Ballet, which was broadcasted on national Swedish television. That autumn he collaborated with the renowned Swedish choreographer Mats Ek on video projections for Ek's play *Håll Plats*. Ekman also created an installation for the Modern Museum in Stockholm with dancers of Cullberg Ballet.

In 2012 he collaborated with Alicia Keys and incorporated her into his work *Tuplet*.

In 2013 Ekman created his first commercial for the flooring Company Bolon, which has won several design awards internationally.

In 2014 Ekman created his own version of *Swan Lake*, a new take on the most famous ballet of them all. *A Swan Lake* received enormous attention worldwide and will return to the Oslo Opera House in 2016. Ekman filled the stage with 6,000 litres of water creating a real lake on stage. *A Swan Lake* is available on DVD and the documentary *Rare Birds* by TM Rives shows the process of how it became possible to create a lake inside an opera house.

Ekman has also collaborated closely with top fashion designer Henrik Vibskov who created the costumes for Ekman's *A Swan Lake*. Vibskov then adapted the choreography for his fall collection, which was shown in Paris and Copenhagen during Fashion Week.

In 2015 Ekman created his own version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Royal Swedish Ballet, which became an instant hit with the audience and critics. In September of that year he received the Swedish Medea Award for "Inventor and renewer".

<http://alexekman.com/>

GABRIELLE NANKIVELL

Gabrielle Nankivell is an Australian director and performer with formative ties to Europe. Informed by a somewhat nomadic existence, her work is concerned with notions of impermanence. Derived primarily from writing and improvisation, her hybrid choreographic practice invokes imagination, creature and sense memory while supporting perception as a creative and performative condition.

Gabrielle creates works independently, commissioned by professional companies and leading tertiary institutions and in collaboration with composer/performer Luke Smiles. She has been awarded choreographic residencies including, Dancehouse's Housemate, Adelaide Festival Centre's inSPACE:development and STRUT's SEED as well as creating works through residency platforms in Armenia, Belgium, Portugal, Singapore and Slovenia. Her work has been presented in 10 countries.

Recent choreographic commissions include, *Wildebbeest* for Sydney Dance Company's 2014 New Breed season, *Order of Things* for Frontier Danceland Singapore, *To Hunt* for LINK Dance Company and *SUITE SECRET* for STRUT's *Mi Casa Es Su Casa* at Fringe World 2015. Gabrielle also provides choreography and movement consultancy across various stage and film productions, notably for Windmill Theatre's multi award-winning *School Dance* and *Girl Asleep* and feature film *Girl Asleep*.

Gabrielle honed her dance career in Europe performing for Belgian artists Alexander Baervoets and Ultima Vez/Wim Vandekeybus and collaborating with Jurij Konjar (Slovenia), Raul Maia (Portugal) and Thomas Steyaert (Belgium). She has also lived and worked in Germany and Denmark. Since re-connecting with Australia through her own projects Gabrielle has worked with Australian Dance Theatre/Garry Stewart, Animal Farm Collective/The Farm, Branch Nebula, Chunky Move/Gideon Obarzanek, Gavin Webber, Grayson Millwood, KAGE and Torque Show amongst others.

Gabrielle is the recipient of the Marten Bequest Travelling Scholarship, two Impulstanz Vienna DanceWEB Scholarships, the inaugural Keith Bain Choreographic Travel Fellowship (2014) and the 2015 Tanja Liedtke Fellowship.

Gabrielle trained with Jacqueline Tucker in Adelaide and holds a Bachelor of Dance (Victorian College of the Arts), a Master of Arts in Writing (Swinburne University) and a foundation level teaching certificate in Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga.

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