

MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

MEET THE NEW BREED

Australia's next generation of dance creators take centre stage



Sydney Dance Company and Carriageworks have this morning announced the four up and coming Australian choreographers commissioned to create new works as part of their acclaimed *New Breed* initiative, a major three-year program created to support the next generation of Australian dance-makers.

Daniel Riley, Kristina Chan, Bernhard Knauer and Fiona Jopp will be given the invaluable opportunity of a lifetime – to create work on Australia's leading contemporary dance company, for presentation at Carriageworks in December this year.

Additional commissions were also announced this morning, for independent designers Matt Marshall and Aleisa Jelbart, and musician/composers Nick Thayer, James Brown, Jürgen Knauer, Toby Merz and Alicia Merz, who will work with one or more of the choreographers and contribute to the creation of the works.

In introducing the four next generation choreographers this morning, Sydney Dance Company Artistic Director Rafael Bonachela said:

“Australia is lucky to be blessed with an extremely rich talent base of young dance creators. Yet in order for them to grow in their careers and reach their full potential, they need the opportunity to practice - the chance to take their ideas and put them on the stage in front of an audience. New Breed is about giving some of these talented young artists the best possible opportunity to experiment. The best dancers, the best production and marketing support, the best space to perform in, right here, at Carriageworks. I am delighted to introduce the four choreographers we have commissioned to create for our New Breed 2015 program. I have personally been inspired hearing of their ideas and have every confidence that their works will resonate with dance audiences and also, with the next generation of dance audiences.”

Daniel Riley is an Indigenous dancer/choreographer whose bloodline runs through the Wiradjuri clan of Western NSW. Daniel made his choreographic debut in 2010 with a work commissioned by Stephen Page for Bangarra Dance Theatre titled *Riley*, and since this time has made additional works with Bangarra/Stephen Page, QL2 Dance, Queensland University of Technology, Third Row Dance Company, UK, Louisville Ballet, USA, and Canberra Dance Development Centre 2015.

“Having been invited into the Sydney Dance Company studios to work and collaborate with such inspiring dancers has been such a joy and a privilege. To have this sort of environment made available to me, as an independent choreographer, through the support of Sydney Dance Company, Carriageworks and The Balnaves Foundation, is an experience that is important in the development of my career as a choreographer, and one that should be more available to a wider array of independent choreographers.” – Daniel Riley

Hong Kong born dancer/choreographer **Kristina Chan** choreographed her first work, *Kingdom Mourning*, for Adelaide College of the Arts in 2012. Since then she has created works for NAISDA, the Solo Festival of Dance Brisbane, Spring Dance Festival and iOU Dance. She is currently developing *A Faint Existence*, a full-length solo dance work produced by Force Majeure.

“I am honoured to be one of the guest choreographers for New Breed 2015. I am very grateful to be supported as an independent dance artist to make work on this prestigious company and working with their incredible artists has been inspirational.” – Kristina Chan

Bernhard Knauer was born in Dresden, Germany and attended the Palucca School before completing his dance training at The Royal Conservatory in The Hague. In Europe he danced with the ballet of Theater Görlitz, State Theatre of Tyrol, Dutch National Ballet and Zhukov Dance Theatre, before joining Sydney Dance Company in 2010. This is his first work in the role of choreographer.

“It is amazing to have been given the chance to choreograph in this forum, especially on my colleagues here at Sydney Dance Company, all of whom I know and respect so much, to find my own language as choreographer.” – Bernhard Knauer

Fiona Jopp was born on the Gold Coast and began her training at The Gold Coast City Ballet. At the age of 15 she travelled to Europe, where she studied at the Palucca School in Dresden and the Royal Conservatory in The Hague. As a dancer, Fiona has worked extensively in Australia and internationally across many disciplines. Fiona first danced with Sydney Dance Company in 2010, and has been a full-time member of the ensemble since 2013. This is Fiona’s first professional foray into choreography.

“It is such an honour and privilege to be given the opportunity to make my first work on my talented colleagues here at Sydney Dance Company, with the support of Rafael, and the entire organisation, Carriageworks and The Balnaves Foundation. I feel very lucky indeed.” – Fiona Jopp

Co-presented by two of Australia’s most dynamic contemporary arts organisations, with generous support from The Balnaves Foundation, *New Breed* provides an invaluable opportunity for emerging choreographers to work with some of Australia’s best contemporary dancers from the Sydney Dance Company ensemble, to create a newly commissioned dance work, presented at Sydney’s leading contemporary multi-arts precinct.

Sydney Dance Company and Carriageworks' **New Breed** initiative made its debut in 2014, supporting five young Australian choreographers through the creation and presentation of new dance works, resulting in a sell-out season at Carriageworks last November.

It has been exciting to see these choreographers progress in their careers following the 2014 program. Early this year Adelaide-based **New Breed 2014** independent choreographer Gabrielle Nankivell was announced as the recipient of the 2015 Tanja Liedtke Fellowship, established to honour dancer and choreographer, the late Tanja Liedtke. Whilst Sydney-based choreographer Cass Mortimer Eipper was commissioned to create a further work for Sydney Dance Company, which premiered at the Sydney Opera House as part of the Company's recent collaboration with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, for *Le Grand Tango*.

Carriageworks Director Lisa Havilah says, "*Carriageworks has a strong and ongoing commitment to supporting the development of contemporary Australian dance and ensuring that there are professional and sustained pathways for choreographers. Our ongoing partnership with Sydney Dance Company not only provides this but makes a significant contribution to the development of new audiences for Australian dance.*"

Sydney Dance Company Artistic Director Rafael Bonachela says, "*Over its 46-year history Sydney Dance Company has earned a reputation as a breeding ground for future generations of Australian choreographic artists. We are proud to further contribute to this legacy through what we believe is a truly unique program, and to further invest in what we believe is the very foundation of the future of Australian contemporary dance – its creators.*"

Neil Balnaves, The Balnaves Foundation founder says, "*I believe that the arts are the soul of the country and that our culture defines us. We are incredibly proud to be supporting this innovative partnership model between two significant contemporary cultural organisations, who are making a major investment in the future of the Australian arts. New Breed is a particularly pertinent and relevant program in light of the recent significant structural changes in the Australian arts funding environment. The Balnaves Foundation applauds Sydney Dance Company and Carriageworks for creating and delivering this initiative which provides such an exceptional opportunity to foster emerging Australian talent, by ensuring supported creative pathways for independent artists and therefore the future of the Arts in this country.*"

In the lead up to the Australian premiere of their works in December the four **New Breed 2015** choreographers will be given the opportunity to work intensively in studio with dancers from the Sydney Dance Company ensemble on the creation of their works, and will also benefit from extensive support from all departments of Australia's leading contemporary dance company, in readiness for the premiere of their works at Carriageworks from December 8 to 13.

Tickets are already selling fast for this limited season presentation, with an additional performance announced this morning, to meet demand. Six shows only, 8 to 13 December 2015, at Carriageworks. All tickets \$35, for more information and bookings go to sydneydancecompany.com/newbreed2015 or carriageworks.com.au

The **New Breed** initiative is made possible through generous support from the Balnaves Foundation.

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Image: The four **New Breed 2015** choreographers – (L to R) Fiona Jopp, Kristina Chan, Daniel Riley and Bernhard Knauer. Photo by Peter Greig.

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ABOUT NEW BREED

Sydney Dance Company debuted **New Breed** in 2009, as a platform for the next generation of Australian choreographic talent. The program was re-ignited in 2014 as a three-year initiative, in partnership with Carriageworks, and thanks to generous support from The Balnaves Foundation.

'How lucky are these five 'emerging' choreographers to have the support and resources of the Sydney Dance Company and Carriageworks for their early efforts? Best of all, to have the wonderful Sydney Dance Company dancers to help bring their ideas to physical reality.' – **Sydney Morning Herald**

Being given such an opportunity to work with the Sydney Dance Company has been likened to *'being taken into a Rolls-Royce showroom [and] ... given a bunch of keys'* - **The Australian**

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.

sydneydancecompany.com.

ABOUT CARRIAGEWORKS

Carriageworks is the largest and most significant contemporary multi-arts centre of its kind in Australia. Engaging artists and audiences with contemporary ideas and issues, Carriageworks has a reputation for presenting large-scale immersive programs that are artist led and emerge from Carriageworks' commitment to reflecting social and cultural diversity. The Carriageworks artistic program is ambitious, risk taking and unrelenting in its support of artists

carriageworks.com.au

ABOUT THE BALNAVES FOUNDATION

The Balnaves Foundation is a private philanthropic organisation established in 2006 by Neil Balnaves AO to provide support to charitable enterprises across Australia. The Foundation disperses over \$2.5 million annually to organisations that aim to create a better Australia through education, medicine and the arts, with a focus on young people, the disadvantaged and Indigenous communities.

balnavesfoundation.com

CHOREOGRAPHER BIOS

Bernhard Knauer

Bernhard Knauer was born in Dresden, Germany and attended the Palucca School before completing his dance training at The Royal Conservatory in The Hague, where he danced in works by choreographers such as Jiri Kylian, Jorma Elo, Nils Christe, Armando Navarro and Keith-Derrick Randolph.

As a dancer, Bernhard has worked extensively in Australia and internationally. In 2005 he was invited to join the ballet of Theater Görlitz in Germany under the direction of Franz Hoyer. He then performed in Innsbruck, Austria with the State Theatre of Tyrol, dancing numerous soloist roles including Siegfried in Birgit Scherzer's *Swan Lake* and the title role in *Brel - le Grande Jacques*. In 2008 he joined the Dutch National Ballet for their seasons of Toer van Schayk and Wayne Eagling's *Nutcracker* and

Mouse King. In 2009 he performed in Yuri Zhukov's *Pioneer Plaques* and Hlín Diego Hjálmarsdóttir's *Caught In The Square* as part of Zhukov Dance Theatre's season in San Francisco.

Bernhard joined Sydney Dance Company in 2010 and over the past five years has performed in numerous Company productions in Australia and internationally, including Rafael Bonachela's *6 Breaths, we unfold, LANDforms, The Land of Yes & The Land of No, 2 One Another, Project Rameau, Emergence, Les Illuminations, 2 in D Minor, Scattered Rhymes* and *Frame of Mind*; alongside works by guest choreographers including Emanuel Gat's *Satisfying Musical Moments*, Jacopo Godani's *Raw Models*, Lisa Wilson's *Desire*, Larissa McGowan's *Fanatic*, Alexander Ekman's *Cacti*, Stephanie Lake's *Elektra*, Gideon Obarzanek's *L'Chaim!*, Andonis Foniadakis' *Parenthesis*, Lee Serle's *White Elephant*, Charmene Yap's *Do We* Gabrielle Nankivell's *Wilbebest* and William Forsythe's *Quintett*.

Bernhard was also a part of Sydney Dance Company's 2013 collaboration with Kaldor Public Art Projects' *13 Rooms*, featuring in Allora and Calzadilla's *Revolving Door*.

This is Bernhard's first work in the role of choreographer.

Daniel Riley

Daniel is an Indigenous choreographer whose bloodline runs through the Wiradjuri clan of Western NSW. He is a graduate of the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) and in 2005 received *Making Tracks*, an Australia Council initiative, which allowed him to perform with Leigh Warren & Dancers in new works by Leigh Warren & Gina Rings (*Petroglyphs – Signs of Life*), and Antony Rizzi (*Like No One Is Watching*).

Daniel joined Bangarra Dance Theatre, Australia's leading Indigenous contemporary dance company, in 2007 and has toured and performed throughout Australia's capital cities and regional centres, as well as remote Indigenous communities and international stages.

In 2014 Daniel joined Irish dance theatre company, Fabulous Beast, for a UK tour of *Rites of Spring* and *Petrushka*. He was invited to take part in the initial development for a new work produced by Sadlers Wells and choreographed by Damien Jalet and fashion designer Hussein Chalayan and was also a guest artist with London based New Movement Collective, performing in *Casting Traces* and the world premiere season of *Please Be Seated* at The Southbank Centre.

Daniel made his choreographic debut in 2010 with a work commissioned by Stephen Page for Bangarra Dance Theatre titled *Riley*. In 2013 he created his second work for the company titled *Scar*, and collaborated with Stephen Page to create *Keepers*, which came from the work *Blak*. His other choreographic credits include QL2 Dance (2013), QUT (2013), Third Row Dance Company, UK (2014), Louisville Ballet, USA (2015) and Canberra Dance Development Centre (2015).

In 2015 Daniel makes his feature film debut, in Stephen Page's *Spear*, where he also worked as Directors Attachment. Later in the year he will rejoin Bangarra Dance Theatre for international and regional tours and perform in the 21st anniversary performance of *Ochres* at Carriageworks, Sydney.

In both 2010 & 2013, Daniel was nominated for an Australian Dance Award for Outstanding Performance by a Male Dancer, and is a multiple Deadly Award nominee in the National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Excellence Awards (2010, 2012 and 2013).

Fiona Jopp

Fiona Jopp was born on the Gold Coast and began her training at The Gold Coast City Ballet with Dawn and Joy Ransley. At the age of 15 she travelled to Europe, where she studied at the Palucca School in Dresden and the Royal Conservatory in The Hague.

As dancer, Fiona has worked extensively in Australia and internationally across many disciplines. As a freelance dancer she has worked with Michael Clark Company in their productions of *The Stravinsky Project, Mmm..., th, and come, been and gone*, in the UK, Europe, New York, Seoul, and Japan; with Bonachela Dance Company in the original production of Rafael Bonachela's *The*

Land of Yes & The Land of No in the UK and Europe; for Emanuel Gat in *Brilliant Corners* touring the UK Europe and USA; in Javier de Frutos and The Pet Shop Boys *The Most Incredible Thing* at Sadlers Wells in London; in *Gravitas*, a duet by Cameron McMillan; and for Sydney Dance Company in Rafael Bonachela's *Outsiders* in the City of London Festival. She has performed the roles of the Cheetah and Sarafina in the Australian production of *The Lion King* for seasons in Sydney, Melbourne and Shanghai.

In 2010 Fiona took time out from her commitments in Europe to join Sydney Dance Company for the tour of *we unfold* around Australia and to the Biennale di Danza in Venice, and performed in the Company's production of Emanuel Gat's *Satisfying Musical Moments*. She rejoined Sydney Dance Company in May 2013 and has since performed in numerous Company productions in Australia and internationally, including Rafael Bonachela's *2 One Another*, *Project Rameau*, *Les Illuminations*, *2 in D Minor*, *Scattered Rhymes* and *Frame of Mind*; alongside works by guest choreographers including Jacopo Godani's *Raw Models*, Gideon Obarzanek's *L'Chaim!*, Andonis Foniadakis' *Parenthesis*, Lee Serle's *White Elephant*, Cass Mortimer Eipper's *Dogs and Baristas* and Gabrielle Nankivell's *Wildebeest*.

Commercially, Fiona has appeared in PUMA advertising, music videos for M.I.A and Calvin Harris and in the films *Filth and Wisdom* directed by Madonna, *World War Z* by Marc Forster and Joe Wright's *Anna Karenina*.

Fiona was the assistant choreographer and played the role of Anybodys in Pimlico Opera's production of *West Side Story* in Wandsworth Prison, London. She assisted Cameron McMillan on *RE:sounding motion* for Ipswich's DanceEast CAT scheme with Aldeburgh Young Musicians. Fiona also assisted Rafael Bonachela, rehearsal directing and managing *Revolving Door* by Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla for Kaldor Arts Projects' *13 Rooms*.

This is Fiona's first professional foray into choreography.

Kristina Chan

Born in Hong Kong, Kristina grew up and trained in dance in Sydney. She studied classical ballet from the age of three. She went on to train in a full-time dance course at Dynamite Dance Studios, discovering her attraction to contemporary dance.

As a dancer Kristina has performed extensively throughout Australia, Canada, UK, USA, Asia, Israel and Europe. Over the past 16 years she has worked with Australian choreographers and companies including Australian Dance Theatre, Garry Stewart, Force Majeure, Chunky Move, Australian Ballet, Gideon Obarzanek, Lucy Guerin Inc, Stephanie Lake, Lisa Wilson, Sydney Theatre Company, Legs On The Wall, Tasdance, Narelle Benjamin, Anton, Tanja Liedtke, Victoria Chiu, Victoria Hunt and Martin del Amo.

During this time she has been recognised with a Helpmann Award for her performance in Narelle Benjamin's *In Glass* (Best Female Dancer in a Dance or Physical Theatre Production, 2011) and two Australian Dance Awards for Tanja Liedtke's *Twelfth Floor* (Outstanding Performance by a Female Dancer, 2006) and *construct* (Outstanding Performance by a Female Dancer, 2009).

Kristina's choreographic works are *Kingdom Mourning* (2012 Adelaide College of the Arts), *Two Player Games* (2013 NAISDA dance college), short solo works *Carnivorous* (Solo Festival of Dance Brisbane), *Lost and Found* (iOU Dance 2011 and Spring Dance Festival 2012), *Crestfallen* (iOU 2013) and *adrift* (iOU 2014). Kristina is the Project Manager of iOU Dance, which is a choreographic platform for NSW independent choreographers.

Kristina is currently developing *A Faint Existence*, a full-length solo dance work produced by Force Majeure.