

**SYDNEY DANCE COMPANY DOMINATES EUROPE  
WITH A SELL OUT 'STEPS' SEASON  
NEXT STOP SOUTH AMERICA, OPENING THIS WEEK**



**Sydney Dance Company departs Europe triumphant, following a sell-out season of seven shows at seven venues at the 2016 Dance Festival Steps.**

In their first appearance as part of the renowned Swiss program - the largest international biennale for contemporary dance in the country - the Company has filled auditoriums from Zürich to Monthey and Fribourg, garnering an outpouring of critical and audience acclaim for the triple bill, *Interplay*, comprising works by Sydney Dance Company Artistic Director Rafael Bonachela, Jacopo Godani and Gideon Obarzanek.

Speaking from Steps last week, Bonachela said, *'Switzerland has become a world celebration of the best that current contemporary dance has to offer. Eleven companies from every corner of the globe have travelled around the country and performed on forty different Festival stages. From time to time we cross each other's paths in hotel lobbies and at events and even have travelled to nearby cities to enjoy each other's performances.'*

*'Sydney Dance Company's first ever Steps Festival season has seen us perform to auditoriums filled with enthusiastic audiences, in seven Swiss and German towns across three weeks. The dancers, along with Veronique Serret (solo violin) and Gideon Obarzanek (guest performer and choreographer) have received standing ovations and vociferous accolades throughout the tour.*

*'It's been a busy schedule but a joyful toil to travel through the picture perfect countryside, where different languages are spoken from city to city, and arrive in each stop to hear at curtain call time, whether in German, French or Italian, a resounding "bravo" for Sydney Dance Company.'*

**Next stop South America! The Company flew from Europe on Monday and has just arrived in Brazil, ahead of a two week South American tour - the fifth in its 47 year history, and second in the past four years. 2016 marks the Company's inaugural presentations in Brazil and Chile.**

The tour begins in Brazil's financial centre and most populous city, São Paulo, with two performances of *Interplay* as part of Australia Now, a two-month long Festival presented by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The largest and most significant Australian cultural program ever presented in Latin America, Australia Now showcases the cream of the country's creativity and innovation in the lead up to the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympic and Paralympic Games.

In addition to its performances, Sydney Dance Company continues to expand international dance community relations through its education activities, taking time out to present a workshop in São Paulo.

The tour concludes with three performances in the Chilean capital of Santiago, where art and business continue as normal, despite the country's recent dramatic floods.

The Company returns to Australia on May 9 ahead of Canberra and Melbourne seasons of *CounterMove*, opening May 19 and 25.

Sydney Dance Company presents *Interplay* at:

**Vila Mariana, São Paulo, Brazil**

9pm Friday and Saturday April 29 and 30

Tickets, [http://www.sescsp.org.br/programacao/89649\\_INTERPLAY](http://www.sescsp.org.br/programacao/89649_INTERPLAY)

Presented by Australia Now in partnership with SESC. Made possible by the support of The Australian Government through: The Australia Council – its arts funding and advisory body; The Council of Australia Latin America Relations and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

**Teatro Oriente, Santiago, Chile**

8pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday May 2, 3 and 4

Tickets, <http://www.fundacionteatroamil.cl/sydney-dance-company/>

Presented by Teatro a Mil Foundation in partnership with Australia Embassy in Chile and The Council of Australia Latin America Relations (COALAR). Made possible by the support of the National Council of Culture and the Arts (CNCA) in Chile and the Australian Council for the Arts.

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ENDS

Image: Sydney Dance Company dancers Josephine Weise and Petros Treklis, arabesques in the alps at Monte San Salvatore, Switzerland. Photo by Josephine Weise and Petros Treklis (self-timed).

## **MEDIA CONTACT**

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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. 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 70,000 participants each year. A legendary force in contemporary dance in Australia, Sydney Dance Company will celebrate its 50th year in 2019.

[www.sydneydancecompany.com](http://www.sydneydancecompany.com).

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## **ABOUT INTERPLAY**

Sydney Dance Company's *Interplay* had its world premiere at Sydney Theatre on March 15, 2014, as part of the Company's 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations.

This 'tour de force' (*Limelight Magazine*) three-part program included two world premiere works - Rafael Bonachela's, *2 in D Minor*, and Gideon Obarzanek's *L'Chaim*, alongside Jacopo Godani's acclaimed *Raw Models*.

*Interplay* begins with Rafael Bonachela's *2 in D Minor*, a beautifully realised dance work set to *Bach's Violin Partita No 2 in D Minor*. Dancers from the Sydney Dance Company ensemble are joined on stage by acclaimed Australian violinist Veronique Serret for a riveting exchange between movement and music.

Jacopo Godani's critically acclaimed *Raw Models* took Australia by storm when it premiered in Sydney in March 2011. This dramatic, powerful 'sleek and super sexy' (*The Australian*) work for seven dancers is set to a score by renowned German composers 48nord.

Gideon Obarzanek's *L'Chaim!* takes an intriguing look at the audience view of the dance experience. A curious onlooker fires questions at the dancers as they perform, before joining them on stage to taste the joy of an ensemble dance experience. Created in collaboration with dramaturg David Woods, *L'Chaim!* ('To life!' in Hebrew and Yiddish) is a playful and epic piece showcasing Obarzanek's genius for choreographing movement on a grand scale. Sections of the work have recently been featured in a world-first virtual reality film, taking the viewer into the heart of the on-stage dance experience.

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## **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 and 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.

[www.sydneydancecompany.com/people/artistic-director/](http://www.sydneydancecompany.com/people/artistic-director/)

### **Jacopo Godani**

Internationally acclaimed choreographer Jacopo Godani was born in La Spezia, Italy, where he began studying classical ballet and modern dance techniques in 1984 at the Centro studi Danza under the direction of Loredana Rovagna. He also pursued studies in visual arts for three years at the Fine Arts School of Carrara. In 1986, Godani was accepted to further his studies at Maurice Béjart's international dance centre Mudra in Brussels.

Godani made his professional debut in 1988 performing with several Paris-based contemporary dance companies. In 1990 he formed his own Brussels-based company and began his choreographic career. His work in Brussels was produced by the theatre L'Atelier Saint-Anne and was supported by the Théâtre Plateau. From 1991 to 2000 Godani was a leading soloist with William Forsythe's Ballet Frankfurt and collaborated with Forsythe on the choreographic creation of many of Ballet Frankfurt's most representative pieces.

Godani developed his career as a choreographer creating original works for a vast range of international companies such as Royal Ballet Covent Garden, Bayerisches Staatsballett, Compañía Nacional de Danza, Nederlands Dans Theater, Royal Danish Ballet, Ballet British Columbia, Le Ballet du Capitole de Toulouse, Corpo di ballo del Teatro alla Scala, Royal Ballet of Flanders, Ballet de l'Opera national du Rhin, Finnish National Ballet, Semperoper Ballett, Sydney Dance Company, Israeli Opera Ballet & Suzanne Dellal Centre, Het Nationale Ballet, Aterballetto, Les Ballets de Monte Carlo, Cedar Lake Contemporary Ballet and many others.

In 2013 Jacopo Godani was appointed as Artistic Director and Choreographer of the acclaimed Dresden Frankfurt Dance Company.

Godani's work is sophisticated while remaining highly physical and raw. He uses the collective working as one organism in a highly articulated way. Godani conceives all stages of work from the initial choreography through to designing the spaces, objects, environments and stage settings where his actions take place, writes text and concepts for his dramaturgical work, styles the image of interpreters conceiving costumes, engineers and develops innovative ways of using lighting, video and projections, and creates/edits music for some of his pieces. Godani formed a team of like-minded professionals to collaborate on the development of original ideas applied to all fields that require a creative and innovative concept to reflect the progressive perspective of our contemporary world.

### **Gideon Obarzanek**

Gideon Obarzanek is a director and choreographer. He is also an Artistic Associate with the Melbourne Festival, Chair of the Melbourne Fringe Festival and board member of Critical Path – choreographic research centre based in Sydney.

Gideon founded dance company Chunky Move in 1995 and was CEO and Artistic Director until 2012. His works for Chunky Move have been diverse in form and content including stage productions, installations, site-specific works, participatory events and film. These have been performed in many festivals and theatres around the world including Edinburgh International, BAM Next Wave NY, Venice Biennale, Southbank London, Territoria Festival Moscow and all major Australian performing arts festivals.

In 2013 Gideon was a resident artist at the Sydney Theatre Company where he wrote and directed his first play, *I Want to Dance Better at Parties*. He later co wrote and directed a documentary screen version with Mathew Bate winning the 2014 Sydney Film Festival Dendy Award.

In 2014, Gideon choreographed a new work for Sydney Dance Company's *Interplay*. Created in collaboration with actor/writer/dramaturg David Woods, *L'Chaim!* ('To life!' in Hebrew and Yiddish) is a playful and epic piece showcasing Gideon's genius for choreographing movement on a grand scale.

Gideon recently created a new work for the Australian Ballet's fiftieth anniversary season. He is a recipient of an Australian Creative Fellowship working with theatre, dance and documentary filmmakers to develop projects with simultaneous live and broadcast outcomes.

Gideon's awards include 'Best Short Documentary' for *Dance Like Your Old Man* at the 2007 Melbourne International Film Festival, 2008 Flickerfest International Film Festival and the 2008 Cinedans Film Festival in Amsterdam. In collaboration with Lucy Guerin and Michael Kantor, Gideon has also received a New York Bessie award for outstanding choreography and creation for Chunky Move's production of *Tense Dave*. In 2008 he received two Australian Helpmann Awards for *Glow* and *Mortal Engine*.