



Image from left to right; former Company dancers Kip Gamblin and Linda Ridgeway, Artistic Director Rafael Bonachela, Choreographer Gideon Obarzanek, former Company dancers Sheree da Costa, Lea Francis and Brad Chatfield

## Sydney Dance Company

### Season Two 2019

#### *Us 50*

#### **BONACHELA / OBARZANEK**

2 November – 9 November  
Roslyn Packer Theatre  
Walsh Bay

#### **“The history of the company is in the bodies of the dancers and the memories of the audiences” Gideon Obarzanek**

Sydney Dance Company’s Season Two celebrates 50 years of cutting-edge contemporary dance with a thrilling double bill from Rafael Bonachela and Gideon Obarzanek, choreographers who have, in their unique ways, defined the art form and helped to take Australian dance to the world.

Bonachela and Obarzanek will join forces in 2019 to celebrate a half-century of Sydney Dance Company in a double bill culminating in *Us 50*, a grand-scale work by Obarzanek performed by 50 performers made up of past dancers that have graced our stage, current Company dancers, and members of our community.

“When we speak about 50 years of a dance company we also speak about 50 years of dance making,” says Obarzanek. “What is made, however, is ephemeral. The dancer’s body... can be videoed and photographed but dance itself only truly exists when it is danced. So, the history of the company is stored and transmitted through the bodies of its dancers and collected in the memory of its audiences.”

Completing the double bill is Bonachela’s award winning *6 Breaths*. Since its 2010 premiere *6 Breaths* has toured to New York, London, Barcelona, the Venice Biennale and the prestigious Movimentos Festival in Germany. A symphony of dance, music by Italian composer **Ezio Bosso** and costume design by **Josh Goot**, this is an emotive and breathtaking master work.

“The curtain-raiser, for six cellos and a piano, is a real beauty. *6 Breaths* is an artfully abstract journey through the cycle of life but based upon breathing. Thoughtful, refined and musical...” – *The London Times*

Join Sydney Dance Company in a celebration of its past, present and future.

#### ***Us 50* On Stage Performance Volunteers**

Each night, 23 members of the general public are invited to be part of *Us 50* by performing on stage alongside company dancers and 10 alumni dancers who have graced the stages with Sydney Company over the past 50 years. The company are looking for a diverse range of people; all ages (14+), all shapes and sizes. No performance or dance experience is necessary. When attendees purchase tickets to *Bonachela / Obarzanek*, they will be required to fill in an application form to be part of the experience.

If press would like to experience performing on stage as a volunteer, please contact Alexandra Barlow [alexandrab@sydneydancecompany.com](mailto:alexandrab@sydneydancecompany.com)

## CHOREOGRAPHER BIOS

### **RAFAEL BONACHELA**

#### **Artistic Director, Sydney Dance Company**

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 dance works 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 honored 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).

The 2015 production, *Frame of Mind* was the winner of all four categories of the 2015 Helpmann Awards including 'Best Choreography', 'Best Dance Work', 'Best Male Dancer' and 'Best Female Dancer'.

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 company's artists including singers Kylie Minogue, Tina Turner, Sarah Blasko and Katie Noonan; fashion designers Dion Lee and Toni Matceveski; 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.

In 2016 he premiered *Lux Tenebris* for Sydney Dance Company's *CounterMove* Sydney, also touring to Canberra, Melbourne, NSW, QLD, NT and WA, as well as the premiere of *Anima* for *Untamed* in October of the same year.

In January 2017, Rafael created *Nude Live*, a collaboration with the Art Gallery of NSW for Sydney Festival which was declared a highlight of the festival by *Sydney Morning Herald*.

Rafael's critically acclaimed work, *Ocho* was created in April 2017 as part of the double-bill *Orb*, alongside Taiwanese choreographer, Cheng Tsung-lung's work, *Full Moon*.

*ab [intra]* was Rafael's first full-length work since the epic masterpiece *2 One Another* in 2012. *ab [intra]* had its world premiere at the Roslyn Packer Theatre in Sydney in May 2018.

In October 2018, Rafael Bonachela's award-winning *Frame of Mind* will be brought back to life as part of a double bill alongside Antony Hamilton's brand-new work *Forever & Ever*.

*Frame of Mind* is set to a dramatic contemporary-classical soundtrack by Bryce Dessner of The National and will be performed live on stage by the renowned Australian String Quartet.

2019 is Rafael's 10-year anniversary as Artistic Director of Sydney Dance Company.

## **Gideon Obarzanek**

### **Choreographer**

Gideon Obarzanek is a director, choreographer and performing arts curator. He was Artistic Associate with the Melbourne Festival, 2015-17, co-curator for XO State at the inaugural Asia Pacific Triennial of Performing Arts (Asia TOPA) 2015-17 and is currently Chair of the Melbourne Fringe Festival.

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 Dance Biennale, Southbank London 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.

Recent creations include *There's Definitely a Prince Involved* for the Australian Ballet, *L'Chaim* for the Sydney Dance Company and *'Stuck in the Middle With You'* the first Virtual Reality film commissioned by the Australian Centre of Moving Image

In 2017 Gideon co-created *Attractor* with fellow choreographer Lucy Guerin, commissioned by Dancenorth Australia and co-produced by Asia TOPA, WOMADelaide and Brisbane Festival. He stage-directed *Bangsokol – A requiem for Cambodia* which premiered at the 2017 Melbourne Festival and later at BAM Next Wave Festival, New York. In 2018 Gideon directed, *One Infinity*, a collaboration between Chinese music ensemble, Jun Tian Fang, musician Genevieve Lacey, Beijing Dance Theatre & Dancenorth Australia for Melbourne, Sydney and Perth festivals.

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.

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*.

In 2019 Gideon was announced as a co-Artistic Director of the new Melbourne International Arts Festival.

### **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 1986 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.

#### **Media Contact**

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