



Sydney Dance Company announces 2026 Program

In 2026 Sydney Dance Company ignites new artistic collaboration and presents bold choreographic ideas in an empowering year that celebrates the evolving landscape of contemporary dance.

2026 will be an exhilarating year that reflects the Company's legacy while forging a future defined by creative expansion and fearless exploration. Across two Sydney seasons, national and international touring, and a suite of programs dedicated to supporting independent artists and providing audience with access to astounding experiences, 2026 continues the Company's exploration into contemporary dance.

Season One launches in June with a triple bill ***Engine*** at the Sydney Opera House, bringing together the work of three extraordinary choreographers. Artistic Director Rafael Bonachela premieres ***The Journey Itself is Home***, a new work featuring music by Grammy Award-winning composer **Bryce Dessner** and inspired by 17th century Japanese poet Matsuo Bashō.

The second work is the Australian premiere of ***The Mass Ornament*** by Berlin-based Spanish choreographer **Fran Díaz**, one of Europe's most exciting rising talents. Making his Australian debut, Díaz brings his acclaimed choreographic language to Sydney Dance Company with a hypnotic work set to the music of **Henryk Górecki**. Díaz transforms the concept of mass movement into a powerful piece that reveals a deeply human network, where individuality and collectivity coexist, not in opposition, but in dialogue.

Completing the bill is the return of viral sensation ***Love Lock*** from Australian/Japanese choreographer **Melanie Lane** — a re-imagined folk dance of the future, drawing upon collective experiences of diverse cultures, an accelerating world and disappearing lands. ***Love Lock*** celebrates the binding ability of dance to move, warn and empower, showcasing costume design by legendary Australian fashion designer **Akira Isogawa**, layered with textured colour, and a score composed by UK electronic artist **Clark**.

Throughout August and September, the Company will host a celebratory public program marking the 40 years of residency at Walsh Bay Arts Precinct, honouring the people and artistry that have defined this creative hub, looking towards a vibrant and contemporary future.

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[IMAGES available to download HERE](#)



Season Two's ***Current*** is at the heart of the 40 Years at the Wharf celebrations. *Current* will once again transform Sydney Dance Company's Neilson Studio into an intimate, up-close performance space. Audiences are invited into vivid proximity with the dancers — where every gesture, breath and shift of energy can be felt. Featuring new works by Australian choreographers **Raghav Handa**, **Jenni Large**, and **Azzam Mohamed**, woven together with the Australian premiere of Bonachela's seminal work ***E2 7SD***.

Together these four artists form a compelling portrait of contemporary Australian dance — diverse in form, voice and perspective, yet united by curiosity and originality of expression. Raghav Handa, The Balnaves Foundation Artist in Residence 2025, draws on the principles of Indian kathak to create layered explorations of modern Australian identity; Jenni Large, a *New Breed* alum, channels the personal, political, and transformational forces of the body, creating work that fuses movement with apparatus and hyper-design; and Azzam Mohamed, a Sydney-based Sudanese dancer, choreographer and educator, encompasses a rich blend of styles, spanning traditional cultural, street and club dance genres. First created over 20 years ago, and never performed in Australia, *E2 7SD* represents a significant moment in Bonachela's artistic evolution, fostering his enduring fascination with the intricate interplay between two bodies. *Current* will be a thrilling convergence of contemporary Australian perspectives – proximate and vital.

Sydney Dance Company reaffirms its commitment to nourishing the creative ecology of the dance sector, developing and presenting performances for audiences to engage with and experience the breadth of contemporary dance.

The fifth edition of ***INDance*** opens in April at the Neilson Studio, presenting works by **Christopher Gurusamy**, **Emma Harrison**, **Jenni Large**, and **Oli Matheisen**. Supported by the Neilson Foundation, *INDance* continues to present bold works by independent dance makers — a destination connecting exciting ideas with curious audiences.

We are excited to announce that Jenni Large will be The Balnaves Foundation Artist for Residence 2026.

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A major new initiative, **ORBIT** launches in November. A partnership between Australian Dance Theatre (South Australia), Dancehouse (Victoria) and Sydney Dance Company, **ORBIT** is a pilot national touring program that will see four existing independent dance works remounted and performed across three states. Supported by Creative Australia, **ORBIT** is intended to champion the longevity of exceptional independent dance. Across two weeks of double bills, audiences will experience a vibrant cross-section of Australian choreography and the opportunity to see some of the most compelling and seminal contemporary dance works.

Nationally, Sydney Dance Company will tour two main programs across New South Wales, Western Australia and the Northern Territory, including Bonachela's *Spell*, Tra Mi Dinh's *Somewhere between ten and fourteen*, Fran Diaz' *The Mass Ornament* and Melanie Lane's *Love Lock*. The touring schedule will present Australian audiences with a diverse palette of contemporary choreography. The Company will perform before Melbourne audiences with a captivating program to be announced soon. Following sell-out international seasons through Europe and the US, the Company will again take on a global tour, sharing its distinctly Australian voice before international audiences, sought after by leading festivals and presenters around the world.

Sydney Dance Company Artistic Director Rafael Bonachela said: "2026 will be a truly momentous year for Sydney Dance Company, a milestone that will be unforgettable. It's a year of reflection, celebration, reinvention... and empowerment.

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Every season we push contemporary dance to its edge, and next year will be something else entirely. Our empowering program celebrates the courage to create, to innovate and to inspire.

As we mark 40 years at Walsh Bay Arts Precinct, we honour the incredible artists who have shaped our story and those who will lead us into the future. This remarkable home on the wharf has been a wellspring of creativity and collaboration, a space where ideas are nurtured and dance continues to evolve.

[IMAGES available to download HERE](#)

From world premieres to stirring collaborations, 2026 celebrates the richness and diversity of our artform in Australia today, a season that empowers artists and audiences alike to see, feel and imagine anew."

Season Details

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Season One – *Engine*

The Drama Theatre, Sydney Opera House: 24 June – 12 July

Engine is a striking triple bill set to ignite the Sydney Opera House stage with raw power. *Engine* unites three extraordinary choreographers — Rafael Bonachela, Fran Diaz and Melanie Lane — for an exhilarating performance that promises bold, fearless dance.

★★★★★ “Lane has an uncanny ability to stretch your space-time perceptions and make live dance feel like a gorgeously filmed, addictive music video.” Sydney Morning Herald

Season Two – *Current*

The Neilson Studio, Sydney Dance Company: 3 – 20 September

Current invites audiences into the intimate Neilson Studio to experience the Company dancers up close and celebrate 40 years of dancing at the wharf. The season features new commissions by Australian choreographers Raghav Handa, Jenni Large, and Azzam Mohamed, woven into the Australian premiere of Bonachela’s seminal work *E2 7SD*.

The Balnaves Foundation Artist in Residence 2026 – Jenni Large

Sydney Dance Company and The Balnaves Foundation are delighted to announce The Balnaves Foundation Artist in Residence for 2026: acclaimed dancer and choreographer Jenni Large.

As an award-winning choreographer, contemporary dance artist and *New Breed* alum, Jenni wowed audiences with her 2022 piece *S U C K E R*. Jenni’s interests merge dance, performance/endurance art and visual art. Her work centralises materials, costuming and objects including foam, plaster and netting to explore how the body is in relationship to ‘other’, transfixed on unpacking current and historical socio-political issues. Jenni is from Palawa Country in lutruwita/Tasmania and continues to push boundaries with her work.

Moving into its third year, The Balnaves Foundation Artist in Residence program is an invaluable initiative that enables independent choreographers to work with all departments of Sydney Dance Company across a twelve-month period. This program provides a unique opportunity to have insight into the artistic, production and administrative processes of one of Australia’s leading contemporary dance companies.

INDance

Neilson Studio, Sydney Dance Company: 30 April – 9 May

In its fifth year, *INDance* 2026 invites audiences to experience a dynamic celebration of Australian dance. Showcasing cutting-edge works from some of the nation’s foremost choreographers, *INDance* offers a window into the diversity and innovation of contemporary movement. Audiences can expect an engaging, thought-provoking program that expands access to independent dance and connects communities through performance.

“*INDance* promises a space where independent artists can take risks, test ideas, and offer audiences a glimpse of dance’s ever-expanding future.”
Dance Informa

INDance is supported by the Neilson Foundation.

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ORBIT

Neilson Studio, Sydney Dance Company: November

ORBIT brings audiences across Australia fresh opportunities to experience outstanding contemporary dance from the independent and small-to-medium arts sector. Led by a consortium of three leading dance organisations, this national touring initiative presents innovative productions that deserve to be seen again — and seen more widely — showcasing the creativity, diversity, and vitality of Australia's independent dance scene.

ORBIT is supported by Creative Australia and delivered in partnership by Australian Dance Theatre, Dancehouse and Sydney Dance Company.

National Tour

Spellbound (*Spell, Somewhere between ten and fourteen, Love Lock*)

Orange (NSW), 18 February

Tamworth (NSW), 21 February

Engine (*The Journey Itself is Home, Mass Ornament, Love Lock*)

Wyong (NSW), exclusive preview performance, 19 June

Shoalhaven (NSW), 24 July

Albany (WA), 29 July

Mandurah (WA), 1 August

Perth (WA), 5 – 7 August

Darwin (NT), 12 August

Alice Springs (NT), 15 August

Fran Diaz's *The Mass Ornament* is generously supported by Sydney Dance Company's Visionary Patron, the Clegg Foundation.

Love Lock was originally supported as part of Sydney Dance Company's *TwoFold* season by Visionary Patron, the Clegg Foundation.

Somewhere between ten and fourteen was originally supported by The Balnaves Foundation as part of *New Breed* 2023.

International Tour

International touring details will be announced in 2026.

About Sydney Dance Company

Based on Gadigal Land at Sydney's Walsh Bay Arts Precinct, Sydney Dance Company is at the forefront of contemporary dance, pioneering and continuously evolving the artform. The Company's international reputation reflects contemporary Australia on a global scale, connecting with diverse audiences worldwide under artistic direction of Rafael Bonachela.

Sydney Dance Company is also a place of learning, encouraging engagement and participation through quality classes and a range of education and development programs that foster a robust creative sector, nurturing Australian talent and providing exposure to international opportunities.

More information sydneydancecompany.com