



SYDNEY DANCE COMPANY ANNOUNCES 2026 ENSEMBLE

Sydney Dance Company announces five dancers to its Ensemble ahead of the 2026 performance season, bringing together new perspectives and a breadth of experience grounded in exceptional training and professional practice.

Under the direction of Artistic Director **Rafael Bonachela**, the new appointments will contribute to the dynamic physicality of the Company and to the quality of its performances. **Caití Ellen Carpenter** and **Jai Fauchon** join the Ensemble alongside Trainee **Mahalia Adamson**. **Finn Armstrong** and **Ali Dib**, who made their Company debuts in late 2025, continue with the Ensemble in 2026.

The announcement follows a period of heightened international profile for the Company shaped by several years of extensive touring across some of the world's major stages.

Sydney Dance Company's new dancers for 2026

UK-born **Caití Ellen Carpenter** trained at Rambert School under Amanda Britton, graduating in 2020 and joining Rambert2 that same year. In 2021 she accepted a position in Rambert's main company, working with choreographers including Alonzo King, Ben Duke and Wim Vandekeybus. Since 2023 she has collaborated with independent artists and companies as a freelance performer across the UK and Europe, also appearing as an actor with the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Born in Sydney on Dharug Country, **Jai Fauchon** discovered dance at the age of eight after moving to Chile. Returning to Australia, he trained at Newtown High School of the Performing Arts and Van Loon Dance Academy. He joined The Australian Ballet School in 2020 and in early 2023 travelled to Switzerland to perform in Goyo Montero's *Bold* as part of the Prix de Lausanne Partner School Choreographic Project. Before graduation he performed as part of the The Australian Ballet's 2023 and 2024 National Tours, and in 2024 Jai premiered his first choreographic work for the ballet school's 60th Anniversary Gala. In 2025 he joined Queensland Ballet as a Jette Parker Young Artist.

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Originally from the land of the Bundjalung people on the Gold Coast, Queensland, **Finn Armstrong** began his formal dance training at the age of 14 attending Amanda Bollinger Dance Academy. In 2022 he relocated to the Netherlands to further his training, graduating with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Codarts Rotterdam. During the 2024–2025 season, Finn was offered an apprenticeship with Danish Dance Theatre in Copenhagen under Marina Mascarell and performed in the company's Denmark and Europe tours. Finn made his Sydney Dance Company debut in October 2025 with the *Continuum* and *New Breed* seasons.

Born and raised on Gadigal Land, **Ali Dib** is of Lebanese heritage and began his dance training at age eight at the Dorothy Cowie School of Dance and Brent Street Studios. He furthered his dance training at Alegria Studios and in 2024, Ali was the recipient of the Brisbane International Contemporary Dance Prix and in 2025 won the Contemporary Dance Open. Ali graduated from Newtown High School of the Performing Arts in 2025, completing his HSC while making his Sydney Dance Company debut in the *Continuum* and *New Breed* seasons.

Born on Biripi Country, Taree, New South Wales, Traniee **Mahalia Adamson** began her dance training at the age of three at Andrea Rowsell Academy of Dance. She joined Sydney Dance Company's Pre-Professional Year (PPY) in 2024, graduating in 2025 with an Advanced Diploma of Professional Dance (Elite Performance). During her time with PPY, she performed in James Batchelor's Sydney season of *Resonance* and in works by Zee Zunnur, Emma Harrison, Thomas E. S. Kelly, Cass Mortimer-Eipper and Rafael Bonachela's *Lux Tenebris*.

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Sydney Dance Company Artistic Director Rafael Bonachela said: "*The Ensemble is at the heart of Sydney Dance Company, and these remarkable artists arrive at a time of reflection as we mark 40 years in our iconic harbourside home and look forward with fresh creative impetus.*"

Each dancer brings a distinct perspective, depth of training and curiosity for their work, and together they reflect the unique alchemy that continues to define us. I'm excited to see what they contribute to the studio and how it inspires the diverse choreographic collaborations we bring to the stage this year."



Caiti Ellen and Jai along with Finn, Ali and Mahalia will join Sydney Dance Company's dancers: Lucy Angel, Mathilda Ballantyne, Timmy Blankenship, Mali Comlekci, Sonrisa Hubbard, Morgan Hurrell, Ngaere Jenkins, Sophie Jones, Naiara de Matos, Ryan Pearson, Piran Scott and Sam Winkler.

Audiences will have their first chance to see the newly announced dancers in Orange, Tamworth and Wyong from February, as part of the Company's 2026 National Tour.

These performances will be followed by the Company's return to the Sydney Opera House stage in June with the triple bill season *Engine*, featuring Bonachela's premiere work *The Journey Itself is Home*. *Engine* also includes Melanie Lane's critically acclaimed *Love Lock* and the Australian premiere of *The Mass Ornament* by Fran Diaz.

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 the 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.

Philanthropic investment continues to play a crucial role in sustaining Sydney Dance Company and the wellbeing of its artists. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, whose support empowers artists, creates meaningful cultural experiences, and brings communities together, we are able to create moments of joy and connection through movement.

More information sydneydancecompany.com

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