



Engine

Three choreographers. One driving force. Sydney Dance Company returns to the Sydney Opera House with *Engine*

24 June – 12 July 2026

Drama Theatre,
Sydney Opera House
[Tickets on sale now](#)

Media Contacts

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[IMAGES available to download HERE](#)

Sydney Dance Company takes to Sydney Opera House with a high-impact triple bill celebrating the strength, precision, and expressive power of the human body. *Engine* unites three extraordinary choreographers – Rafael Bonachela, Fran Díaz and Melanie Lane – in an exhilarating showcase of contemporary dance.

Sydney Dance Company Artistic Director **Rafael Bonachela's** new work, *The Journey Itself Is Home*, is set to a score by Grammy Award-winning composer **Bryce Dessner** and draws inspiration from the writings of 17th-century Japanese poet **Matsuo Bashō**. Exploring movement as a state of being, the work traces an evolving landscape of change, longing and transformation, where fragility and strength exist in tension. Bonachela's signature style drives the work's shifting emotional arc, underscoring a choreography that unfolds through momentum rather than destination. Bryce Dessner's four-movement score weaves together orchestral and electronic recordings, reflecting the arc of tension, release and renewal.

Berlin-based Spanish choreographer **Fran Díaz**, one of Europe's most exciting rising talents, makes his Australian debut with *The Mass Ornament*, set to the music of Polish composer **Henryk Górecki**. Reimagining Siegfried Kracauer's 1927 essay, Díaz transforms mass movement into a study of the collective and the individual to reveal a deeply human network where bodies operate in unison, en masse, in constant dialogue with one another.

The program includes the Sydney return of the critically acclaimed *Love Lock* – a vivid, futuristic work that collides romance, tradition, and imagination – by Australian choreographer of Javanese/European cultural heritage **Melanie Lane**. Drawing on social ritual, symbolic gesture and the emotional charge of love songs, Lane reimagines folk dance for an accelerating world, celebrating its power to move, warn and empower. Featuring spectacular costumes by legendary Australian designer **Akira Isogawa** and a pulsating score by UK electronic artist **Clark**, *Love Lock* unfolds with a palpable otherworldly energy.

For the first time Sydney Dance Company will offer an under 25's ticket tier of \$35, encouraging greater access to the physicality, creativity and innovation of contemporary dance. This will be an ongoing offering during Sydney Dance Company's mainstage Sydney seasons.



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Sydney Dance Company Artistic Director Rafael Bonachela said *"I'm especially proud to introduce Fran Díaz to Australian audiences for the first time. Celebrated as a rising international dance artist his work offers a humanity and powerful physicality through its exploration of choreographic formation. I am absolutely thrilled to bring Melanie Lane's Love Lock back to Sydney. This work has continued to delight audiences both at home and internationally with its dynamic interplay of ideas, theatrical textures and energy."*

It is also incredibly special to share with you my new work The Journey Itself Is Home, created in collaboration with composer Bryce Dessner. Bryce is the most wonderful, brilliant and inspiring person and our work together has emerged from a deeply creative and personal exchange. Engine reflects the creative impetus driving contemporary dance today and I can't wait to present this program to audiences at the Sydney Opera House."

Choreographer Fran Díaz said *"I am deeply humbled to have the chance of sharing my piece The Mass Ornament with Australian audiences in such a world-renowned institution as the Sydney Opera House. I believe the dancers of Sydney Dance Company are the perfect fit to reinterpret the intense physicality, abandon and emotional rawness that the piece requires, and I am truly honoured to be sharing the program with some of my choreographic heroes, Rafael and Melanie, two artists I deeply admire for their commitment to pushing the boundaries of contemporary dance, not only in Australia but internationally."*

Choreographer Melanie Lane said *"I'm honoured to share the iconic Sydney Opera House stage with Rafael and Fran, two artists that inspire me greatly. Thank you Raf for the ongoing support of my work and the opportunity to create and share this special collaboration with Akira Isogawa, Clark, Damien Cooper and the incredible artists of Sydney Dance Company. I'm excited to share this wild, synergistic crush with audiences."*

Sydney Dance Company's season, *Engine* is supported by our Season and Tour presenting partner **The Art House, Wyong**.



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The Journey Itself Is Home

Choreography	Rafael Bonachela
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Composer	Bryce Dessner
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Lighting Design	Damien Cooper
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Set and Costume Design	Kelsey Lee
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Commissioning Partner of *The Journey Itself Is Home*, **Orsolina28 Art Foundation**.

Generously supported by the **Carla Zampatti Comissioning Fund** including leadership support from the foundation and donors to the fund.

The Mass Ornament

Choreography	Fran Díaz
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Choreographic Assistant	Keren Leiman
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Music	Henryk Górecki
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Additional Composition / Sound Design	Tom Foscett-Barnes
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Lighting Design	Tanja Rühl
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Set Design Advisor	Manuel Cornelius
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Costume Assistant	Janine Schwind
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Fran Diaz's *The Mass Ornament* is generously supported by Sydney Dance Company's Visionary Patron, the **Clegg Foundation**. *The Mass Ornament* was commissioned by Hessisches Staatsballe and performed in Australia with its kind permission.

Love Lock

Choreography	Melanie Lane
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Composer	Clark
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Lighting and Set Design	Damien Cooper
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Costume Design	Akira Isogawa
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Love Lock was originally supported as part of Sydney Dance Company's *Twofold* season, by Visionary Patron, the **Clegg Foundation**.



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★★★★★ “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 (*Twofold* 2024)

★★★★★ “...choreographed with electric intelligence by Melanie Lane.” – Sydney Morning Herald (*Twofold* 2024)

“...*Love Lock* feels exceedingly contemporary. In fact, it feels like a glimpse into the future. You just can’t look away.” – ArtsHub (*Twofold* 2024)

Rafael Bonachela is a globally celebrated choreographer, Artistic Director and curator, recognised for his transformative impact on contemporary dance. With a career spanning over three decades and crossing international borders – from London and Sydney to the global stage – his work has revolutionised both high art and popular culture. Bonachela seamlessly integrates contemporary dance with diverse art forms, including art installations, pop concerts, musicals, films, commercials, and fashion.

Fran Díaz is a choreographer based in Berlin. His choreographic practice deals with themes related to collectivity, often focusing on how interpersonal dynamics are shaped by institutional frameworks and systems of power. Rather than treating collectivity as a harmonious concept, Díaz examines its contradictions and structural complexities, exploring how experiences of belonging, resistance, and desire emerge through the organisation of space, structure and social systems.

His choreographic language stems from collaboration and from a conscious rejection of the codes and movement hierarchies inherited from his classical and later contemporary dance training. He is interested in virtuosity, not as a showcase of impressive physical feats, but as the result of shaping mundane movement into intricate compositions marked by precision, a sharp and unexpected musicality and a certain emotional resonance.

Melanie Lane is an Australian choreographer and performer of Javanese/European cultural heritage. She works across visual arts, theatre, music and film. Her work interrogates physical and cultural histories to explore current social mythologies and extrapolates these into surreal futures that are confounded, broken and reconfigured. These independent works have been presented globally at festivals and theatres in Europe, Indonesia, United States and Australia. Drawing on her European and Indonesian heritage, Lane moves between cultural landscapes and influences.



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About Sydney Dance Company

Sydney Dance Company is Australia's leading contemporary dance company, creating and presenting a repertoire of new work across Australia and internationally under the artistic direction of Rafael Bonachela. Based on Gadigal Land at Sydney's Walsh Bay Arts Precinct, the Company has shaped the evolution of contemporary dance in Australia for more than five decades.

Beyond the mainstage, Sydney Dance Company is a centre for creative development and learning, offering Australia's largest public in-studio dance class program alongside a breadth of training, education and independent sector initiatives that contribute to the national cultural landscape.

More information sydneydancecompany.com