



**CARMEN MATEU**  
YOUNG ARTIST EUROPEAN AWARD  
*Opera and Dance*

## **RAFAEL BONACHELA**

### **Choreographer and Artistic Director**

Rafael Bonachela is a Choreographer, Artistic Director and Curator whose career has seen him successfully span high art and popular culture, working across a range of art forms, including contemporary dance, art installations, pop concerts, musicals, film, commercials and fashion.

Bonachela's appointment as Artistic Director of Sydney Dance Company in 2009 made international headlines and heralded a new era in Australian contemporary dance. His vision for the Company embraces a guiding principle that sees commissioned dance works by Australian and International choreographers alongside his own critically acclaimed creations. Bonachela's work is strong, sober and sharp. The exploration of pure movement is where he finds his unmistakable style. The result is an incandescent dance that springs from the power of movement, in which energy and muscle strength combine with a great emotional sensitivity.

Bonachela was born in La Garriga near Barcelona (1972) where he began his early dance training before moving to London to join the legendary Rambert Dance Company where he danced from 1992 to 2004. His career has seen him performing works by some of the world's greatest choreographers including Merce Cunningham, Christopher Bruce, Jiri Kylian, Twyla Tharp, Mats Ek, Sue Davies, Wayne McGregor, Ohad Naharin, Karole Armitage, Frederick Ashton and Antony Tudor among others.

His first choreographic work for Rambert, "Three Gone, Four Left Standing" was premiered in 1999 at Sadler's Wells. He was appointed as Rambert's Associate Choreographer from April 2003, a position he held until 2005 where he created a total of nine works.

In 2006 Rafael was invited to become one of the first Artists in Residence at the South Bank Centre at which time he successfully set up the Bonachela Dance Company to concentrate on the rapid rise of his choreographic career. Bonachela has created and collaborated with companies worldwide including Acosta Danza, Dresden Frankfurt Dance Company, Danza Contemporanea de Cuba, the Ballet Boyz and Candoco among others.

In September 2019, a duet from Bonachela's full length work *ab [intra]* was performed by étoilés of the Paris Opéra Ballet for their prestigious 350th Anniversary Fundraising Gala at Palais Garnier. Bonachela and his ensembles are the recipient of multiple awards, most notably in February 2013, Bonachela was honored with an Officer's Cross of the Order of Civil Merit by His Majesty the King of Spain. The inaugural The Place Prize in London (2004), Bloomberg New York Choice Award (2004), Choo San Goh Award, USA (2005), 19th International competition for Choreographers Hannover (2005), Guglielmo Ebreo prize and the Critics' Prize, Biennale Danza e Italia (2006), Critics Award Villanueva Cuba (2007), Australian Dance Award (2011, 2013), Helpmann Awards (2015), Green Room Award (2012,2016) and the Imagine Award Nude Live Sydney (2017).