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Sydney Dance Company – 2 One Another – Melbourne

By Jordan Beth Vincent on December 2, 2012 in [Reviews](#) · 0 Comments



Sydney Dance Company in *2 One Another*.
© Ken Butti. (Click image for larger version)

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Sydney Dance Company

2 One Another

Melbourne, The Playhouse

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www.sydneydancecompany.com

www.artscentremelbourne.com.au

Since taking over Sydney Dance Company (SDC) in 2009, Spanish choreographer, Rafael Bonachela, has revolutionised the company. Almost all of the original dancers from the Graeme Murphy era were replaced, the look of

history. She lectures at the Victorian College of the Arts, is the president of Ausdance Victoria, and reviews dance for The Age newspaper in Melbourne, Australia. You can check her updates on twitter at: @TalkingPointes

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the company has become more slick and virtuosic, and Bonachela has embarked on new collaborations, notably partnering with composers, Ezio Bosso and Nick Wales, and designer, Tony Assness. In only three years Bonachela has become an artistic force in New South Wales, curating the recent Spring Dance season at the Sydney Opera House. The program, *Contemporary Women*, featured new works by female choreographers, Larissa McGowan, Stephanie Lake, Lisa Wilson and SDC dancer Emily Amisano.

2 One Another - now just finished its Melbourne season – is Bonachela's fifth new work for SDC and one of his strongest to date. Melbourne audiences were familiar with this particular work; not only did the company perform an excerpt at the Australian Ballet's June Gala, *Let's Dance*, but the full work was screened nationally on television earlier in the year. The work lends itself beautifully to the screen, with a brilliantly-lit set of pinpoint lights and dynamically exciting movement material.

Poet Samuel Webster's text provides the backbone for *2 One Another*, not only as another layer of the musical score, but as an inspiration for the choreographic process. Together with composer Nick Wales (who mixes his own compositions with Baroque and Renaissance music) Bonachela has created a work that mirrors the structure of the music. The confluence of movement, sound and swirling lights makes for an engrossing result, allowing the audience the opportunity to revel in the sensory experience.



Chen Wen in *2 One Another*.

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There is something mathematical about the way Bonachela choreographs – but I don't mean to imply that there is something cold or unemotional in his work. Rather, there is a sense here of choreography as craft, of a choreographer piecing together a jigsaw puzzle of choreographic themes that fold and unfold as the work evolves.

Another strong aspect of *2 One Another* is the sense of style. Costumes designed by Tony Assness (Assness also directed the screen content and

production design) are slick and sexy; grey leotards, tights and tops with high necks and neon yellow zippers down the back. The costumes for the second half of the work consist of draped crimson leotards; men and women dressed the same in costumes that seem far too chic to be called simply 'androgenous,' no matter how apt the term.

Assness' style stamp is all over this work. A backdrop of stars glitters, swirls, and falls in the background, almost as though the dancers are suspended in some far-off galaxy. Together with Benjamin Cisterne's lighting – a golden glow from above that highlights the musculature of the dancers – this show is undeniably glamorous.

The moments of ensemble have such an impact that an ending that sees only two dancers gradually winding down to stillness feels unsatisfying. It is not as though Bonachela introduces new material in the ending duet between dancers Andrew Crawford and Juliette Barton, but rather that in comparison to the cacophonous moments of movement and music, the ending feels somehow small. However, there is so much to enjoy about *2 One Another* that this is a small quibble.



Natalie Allen & Andrew Crawford in *2 One Another*.
© Ken Butti. (Click image for larger version)

Dancers Natalie Allen, Charmene Yap, Richard Cilli and Andrew Crawford stand out in a very strong company of dancers. This work is extremely well rehearsed considering it has been touring for a number of months – a testament, perhaps, to the discipline of former SDC dancer-turned-rehearsal-director, Amy Hollingsworth. Unfortunately, a few dancers are leaving the company after this season – both Emily Amisano and Richard Cilli have decided to move on. It is a shame for SDC, as these two dancers demonstrate outstanding stage presence and strength.

2 One Another is a totally unapologetic work – powerful and unselfconscious in the way it turns up the volume in design, physicality and sound. It is this tone that sets this work apart from other choreographic explorations here, and reminds us all about how large distances between capital cities in Australia can lead to rare moments of influence and shared inspiration.

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5

