



Our new man from Barcelona steps up

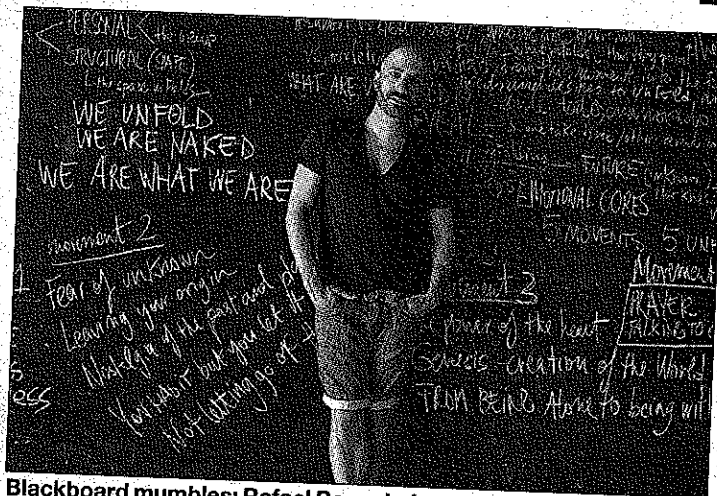
WHEN Rafael Bonachela accepted an invitation to create a work for Sydney Dance Company last year, never did he imagine that he would soon be running the company.

The Barcelona-born, London-based choreographer arrived to begin work on his sleek, intensely physical, edgy piece *360 Degrees* just as SDC was in the throes of interviewing for an artistic director following the death of appointee Tanja Liedtke.

"When I first got here I genuinely wasn't going to apply," Bonachela says.

"I said, 'I have my own company in England (a project-based, six-member group called Bonachela Dance Company formed in 2006). I have been working so hard to build that.'

"But people said it would be silly for me to not at least meet the board. And then during the process of making *360* (I had) the realisation of the real opportunity for me as an artist: to have on a constant basis a group of 17



Blackboard mumbles: Rafael Bonachela Picture: Dean Marzolla

dancers, to be able to commission music and collaborate with good artists.

"To grow in this way was a dream I had to investigate."

Appointed last November and now based in Sydney, Bonachela is choreographing his second full-length work for SDC to launch the 2009 season. Called *We Unfold*, his ideas for it are scribbled all

over one wall in his office, which he has turned into a giant blackboard.

"It's all to do with moving here: fear of the unknown, leaving your origins, nostalgia for the past," he says.

"To unfold is to blossom, to unveil, to reveal, to change, to develop so I was looking at what does that mean for me and the com-

pany and for the city in a way. We unfold as a new group of people."

The production will feature the world premiere of a symphony for orchestra and solo cello by Italian composer Ezio Bossó, a friend of Bonachela's. The design is by Daniel and Jordan Askill, sons of musician Michael Askill of Synergy fame.

Daniel has created a video installation while Jordan, who recently returned from working at Christian Dior in Paris, designs the costumes.

Like *360 Degrees*, *We Unfold* is about the steps.

"I'm obsessed with physicality," Bonachela says.

"But there will be a greater depth to this work that comes from all these thoughts. It's about dance and that's what I do best, but my dance does talk about emotions and human relationships, though not in a signposted way."

We Unfold, Sydney Theatre, March 27 to April 11; bookings: 9250 1999



Hot tickets

THEATRE

THE BEAUTY QUEEN OF LEENANE

A terrific production of Martin McDonagh's black comedy about a lonely spinster caring for her ghostly mother in a remote Irish village. Wildfire Theatre Company, Seymour Centre, until April 4; bookings, 9351 7940.

THE ALCHEMIST

A Bell Shakespeare/QTC production of Ben Jonson's rip-roaring satire about greed and con men. Playhouse, SOH until April 18; bookings, 9250 7777.

DAVID COPPERFIELD

The master magician manifests here for "an intimate evening of grand illusion" at Acer Arena on August 8. Tickets on sale from Thursday at Ticketek, 13 28 49.

CONCUSSION

A bashed cop has lost his memory. This promising new play by Australian Ross Mueller unravels what happened to him through several interconnecting stories rife with sex, lies, Internet porn, ruthless ambition, humour and intriguing time shifts. Griffin/Sydney Theatre Company, Wharf 2 to April 4; bookings, 9250 1777.

DANCE

FIREBIRD AND OTHER LEGENDS

A triple bill of works including Graeme Murphy's interpretation of Firebird. Australian Ballet, Opera Theatre, SOH, April 2-22; bookings, 9250 7777.

MUSIC

PLATFORM 2 HIP HOP FESTIVAL

DJs, MCs, beatboxers, breakdancers