

FORM Dance Projects & Sydney Festival present

## **CHAMPIONS**

Directed by Martin del Amo

*Dancers are the cleverest with their feet, next are footballers.* Johan Cruyff

Hot on the heels of their 2015 Sydney Festival hit PUNCTURE, FORM Dance Projects and Sydney Festival present CHAMPIONS, a genre-defying new Australian dance work, directed by choreographer Martin del Amo.

CHAMPIONS features an all-female dream team of 11 contemporary dancers in an epic, adrenaline-fuelled choreographic match. Drawing surprising parallels between football and contemporary dance, the piece reveals unexpected insights into the fundamentals of athletic and artistic performance.

Under the direction of Martin del Amo, one of Australia's most exciting and innovative independent choreographers, CHAMPIONS celebrates the talents of elite performers and harnesses the energy and enthusiasm of sport fans. Complete with pre-show analysis, backstage interviews and running commentary, hosted by popular Australian ( or Channel 7 TBC) sports presenter, Mel McLaughlin.

*"We see CHAMPIONS as a great opportunity to playfully challenge audience expectations of what dance is and how it can be presented,"* says Annette McLernon, executive producer, FORM Dance Projects.

Choreographic inspiration for CHAMPIONS has been derived from a highly physical set of soccer drills, tactics studies, pre-game warm up rituals, on-field victory dances and the performative experience of triumph and defeat.

As part of their research for the work, del Amo and the dancers attended a series of training sessions of The Western Sydney Wanderers Women's FC and consulted with coaches, physiotherapists and athletes. Regular training sessions were held by footballer/performer Ahilan Ratnamohan to fuel a strongly football-inspired movement vocabulary.

Martin del Amo says, "I've always been surprised about the rift that seems to exist between the football camp on one side and the dance camp on the other. Do the similarities between the two not outweigh their differences? After all, both strongly rely on physical skills, rigorous training, a sense of rhythm and an understanding of performance, strategy and team spirit."

The powerful all-female cast of CHAMPIONS challenges long-held expectations of who qualifies as dance/sports 'champions' in a culture that generally underappreciates the achievements of female performers both in sports and in the arts.

Del Amo and the dancers are joined in the creation of this this new large-scale dance work by an impressive team of artistic collaborators, all of whom are acclaimed in their respective fields.

CHAMPIONS is testament to the adventurous, risk-taking and open-minded approach to collaboration that characterises the independent dance sector making work in Australia today. It promises audiences an exciting, unusual, and ultimately unforgettable, viewing experience.

DIRECTOR **MARTIN DEL AMO** ASSOCIATE ARTIST **MIRANDA WHEEN** DANCERS: **SARA BLACK, KRISTINA CHAN, CLOÉ FOURNIER, CARLEE MELLOW, SOPHIA NDABA, RHIANNON NEWTON, KATINA OLSEN, MARNIE PALOMARES, MELANIE PALOMARES, KATHRYN PUIE, MIRANDA WHEEN**  
COMMENTATOR **MEL McLAUGHLIN**

DRAMATURG **JULIE-ANNE LONG** COMPOSER **GAIL PRIEST** VIDEO DESIGN **SAMUEL JAMES**  
LIGHTING DESIGN **KAREN NORRIS** SET & COSTUME DESIGN **CLARE BRITTON**  
TRAINING CONSULTANT **AHILAN RATNAMOHAN**

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER **ANNETTE McLERNON** PRODUCER **FORM DANCE PROJECTS**

## **CARRIAGEWORKS**

### **BAY 17**

17 JAN – 20 JAN 8PM

21 JAN 2PM + 8PM

22 JAN 2PM

### **TICKETS**

FULL PRICE: \$41 CONCESSION: \$37

+ TRANSACTION FEES

**LOGOS:** SYDNEY FESTIVAL, FORM DANCE PROJECTS, ARTS NSW, CATALYST – AUSTRALIAN ARTS AND CULTURE FUND, CITY OF PARRAMATTA COUNCIL, RIVERSIDE, SPONSOR (TBC)