

**PRESS RELEASE**

**EMBARGOED UNTIL: 12PM ON 26<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2016**

FORM Dance Projects and Sydney Festival present

## CHAMPIONS

Directed by Martin del Amo

*"Dancers are the cleverest with their feet, next are footballers," Johan Cruyff – soccer legend*

Hot on the heels of their 2015 Sydney Festival hit PUNCTURE, FORM Dance Projects and Sydney Festival present the world-premiere of 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.

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.

Under the direction of Martin del Amo, one of Australia's most innovative independent choreographers, CHAMPIONS celebrates the talents of elite performers and harnesses the energy and enthusiasm of sport fans. The production also combines pre-show analysis, backstage interviews and running commentary from Channel Seven sports presenter, Mel McLaughlin.

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

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

Del Amo said, “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 underpays and 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 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 PRODUCTION MANAGER MARK HASLAM**

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

**Where:** Bay 17, Carriageworks – 245 Wilson St, Eveleigh

**When:** 17 to 21 January at 8pm; 21 and 22 January at 2pm

**Tickets:** \$41 | Conc \$37 + transaction fees. Available from Sydney Festival on 1300 856 876

**ENDS**

**For further information contact**

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