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Fresh Meat Festival: The Very Best Transgender and Queer Performers

Posted By Laura Jaye Cramer on Fri, Jun 19, 2015 at 1:45 PM



Kegan Marling

Sean Dorsey Dance

In an ever-changing San Francisco, **Fresh Meat Productions** stands out like some glorious, rainbow striped beacon of hope. Now in its 14th year, Fresh Meat Productions presents its annual **Fresh Meat Festival**, an absolutely essential performance platform for transgender and queer performance artists. It's one of those events that reminds us that there still exists that old-school San Francisco spirit that makes our city unique in the world.

During last night's opening performance on **Z Space's** main stage, *Fresh Meat* boasted one of the most diverse lineups in recent memory — and not only in terms of gender identity. This year's performers included Hindu comic Manish Vaidya; Filipina-Ashkenazi storyteller, Elena Rose; and the Colombian folk dance group, Columbian Soul. The evening is MC'd — or "FemmeC'd", as the Fresh Meat crowd calls it — by the lovely and sultry Annalise Ophelian.

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Some of the strongest acts included a killer stand-up set by the hilarious **Natasha Muse**, and music by **The Singing Bois**, a band that blends doo-wop, contemporary pop, and Latin music. The group is made up of Rhonda Kinard on the guitar, Erin Raber on percussion, and vocals by Terezia Orosz and Tamara Robert. (Pro tip: Sit close to the front. At one point they call on audience members to dance. Common courtesy is the only thing that kept *certain patrons* from plowing down rows of people to get a chance to get their groove on, and those *certain patrons* are now kicking themselves over the missed opportunity.)



Melissa Reyes

The Singing Bois

The real standout of the evening was **Sean Dorsey Dance**. Dorsey — who choreographs and dances with his company while simultaneously acting as founder and Artistic Director of Fresh Meat Productions — is one of the most exciting artists working in San Francisco today. Lovable personality aside (his is the type that made a short call-for-donations segment not only painless, but fun), Dorsey's work deserves a spotlight. For the festival, his company presented an excerpt of *The Missing Generation*, a new piece that has been in the works for several years. Set to a score by various composers and sound bites from interviews of the survivors of the AIDS epidemic of the '80s and '90s, Dorsey's choreography sheds a light on the transgender and queer people who were affected by the illness — without resorting to an obvious mime-style of dance. It's a powerful blend of utterly gut-wrenching storytelling and sophisticated movement. When you think about the kind of art that needs to be made, this is it.

Across the board, the quality of the work shown is palpable. You'd be hard-pressed to find a more engaged audience, or a grouping of artists who seem to have such a great time performing. Once again, *Fresh Meat* has proven that it's possible to address important topics in a way that's interesting and entertaining. And when a production company can round up some of the most unique and underappreciated artists in the community without compromising the quality of the show, it's a pretty special thing.

Fresh Meat Festival, through June 20 at Z Space, 450 Florida. \$15 and up, on a sliding scale.



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