

The Fresh Meat Festival: Serving Up Spectacular Transgender & Queer Performance



Transgender opera stars, international gay ballroom champions, a gender-bending boy band, vogue superstars, and queer Colombian Folkloric dance? All this and more hit the stage at San Francisco's annual June treasure, the Fresh Meat Festival, June 18–20, at Z Space theater.

The Fresh Meat Festival is an award-winning festival of transgender and queer performance—and the only event of its kind in North America. This year, the Festival celebrates its 14th incarnation with a stunning lineup of artists who are making history in their fields. Founder and Artistic Director Sean Dorsey says, “This year, we’re presenting world-class artists who are trailblazers, pioneers and really on the cutting edge of American performance.”

The 2015 Fresh Meat Festival will feature: gender-bending boy band The Singing Bois, Same-Sex Ballroom champions Robbie Tristan & Ernesto Palma, transwoman opera singer Breanna Sinclairé, acclaimed humorist Natasha Muse, Colombian Folkloric dance by Colombian Soul, brilliant singer-songwriter Shawna Virago, powerful wordsmith Elena Rose, vogue superstars Joeque Whitfield and Saturn Rising, trans/queer powerhouse Sean Dorsey Dance, and revolutionary stand-up by Peacock Rebellion director Manish Vaidya.

And every year really is fresh, according to both audiences and critics alike: “Attending the Fresh Meat Festival is a little like opening a bedazzled queer treasure chest: you never know what you’ll find inside, but you know it will be fantastic, unique, moving and unforgettable” says singer-songwriter StormMiguel Florez, who has performed at or attended all 14

Festivals.

“This is like our community’s symphony or opera, something people look forward to all year long,” says 2015 Festival emcee, filmmaker Annalise Ophelian. “The Fresh Meat Festival gives us the opportunity to dress up, join together in community and experience truly phenomenal dance, theater and music by trans and queer artists.”

audiences!”

Breanna Sinclairé has been making waves and making history as the first transgender woman to receive a Master’s Degree in Opera from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. She will hit the Fresh Meat Festival stage only one day after singing the national anthem for the Oakland A’s on June 17. Sinclairé says, “I love the Fresh Meat Festival because it celebrates the diverse lives and unique talents of our community!”

Sean Dorsey Dance will be performing excerpts from their new show, *The Missing Generation*, a powerful work that gives voice to longtime survivors of the early AIDS epidemic through full-throttle dancing, luscious partnering, storytelling and oral histories. Heartbreakingly beautiful, the work is a danced portrait of contemporary LGBT history that is profoundly relevant to all generations.

2015 Festival artist Shawna Virago is known for her evocative, powerful songwriting—a modern-day transgender troubadour who sings her razor-sharp lyrics over her singular folk-punk guitar playing. Virago says, “The Fresh Meat Festival is my favorite Pride event—because of the amazing caliber of artistry, and because of our gorgeous filled-to-the-rafters



2015 Festival performer Manish Vaidya is a sixteenth-generation storyteller and a stand-up comedian who writes on social justice issues like “global warming and Beyoncé albums.” Vaidya is a nationally-acclaimed writer-performer who has been featured at the National Queer Arts Festival, the United States of Asian America Festival, the United States Social Forum, APAture, LitCrawl and Mangoes with Chili.

Dorsey says, “We’re out to break the so-called rules this year. Who says you can’t have world-class transgender opera? Who said transsexuals aren’t funny? Who insists that traditional Colombian Folkloric dance can’t be queer? Who said boy bands can’t be gender-bending heartthrobs? Who dares to insist that championship-level ballroom can only be between a man and a woman?”

Much has changed in the 14 years since award-winning transgender choreographer Sean Dorsey founded the annual Fresh Meat Festival. “Fourteen years ago,” says Dorsey, “absolutely nobody was putting transgender people on stage. It was impossible to get support of any kind or positive media coverage.”

The Fresh Meat Festival is produced by Fresh Meat Productions—the first and only organization of its kind in North America. “Fresh Meat Productions creates, presents and tours year-round transgender arts programs.” says Dorsey, “and our starring event is the annual Fresh Meat Festival. It’s an incredible experience to bring together so many communities and artists. There’s absolutely nothing like it!”

Dorsey adds, “Rapid City-sanctioned gentrification and the displacement of trans and queer people, immigrants, working class families and communities of color is devastating our City’s cultural heart and

displacing our artists and cultural workers. But once again, we’ve worked hard and have gathered artists from all across the Bay and the nation to declare that our art and our stories matter. And are worth celebrating!”

The Fresh Meat Festival runs June 18–20, and advance tickets are recommended. Every show is followed by a lobby after-party with DJ Miz Rowdy, go-go dancers, photo booth, drinks & dancing.

Fresh Meat Festival of transgender and queer performance:

Z Space

Thursday–Saturday June 18–20 (8pm)

ASL interpretation:

Friday June 19 performance

TICKETS: \$15+ sliding scale

(advance tix recommended)

www.freshmeatproductions.org