

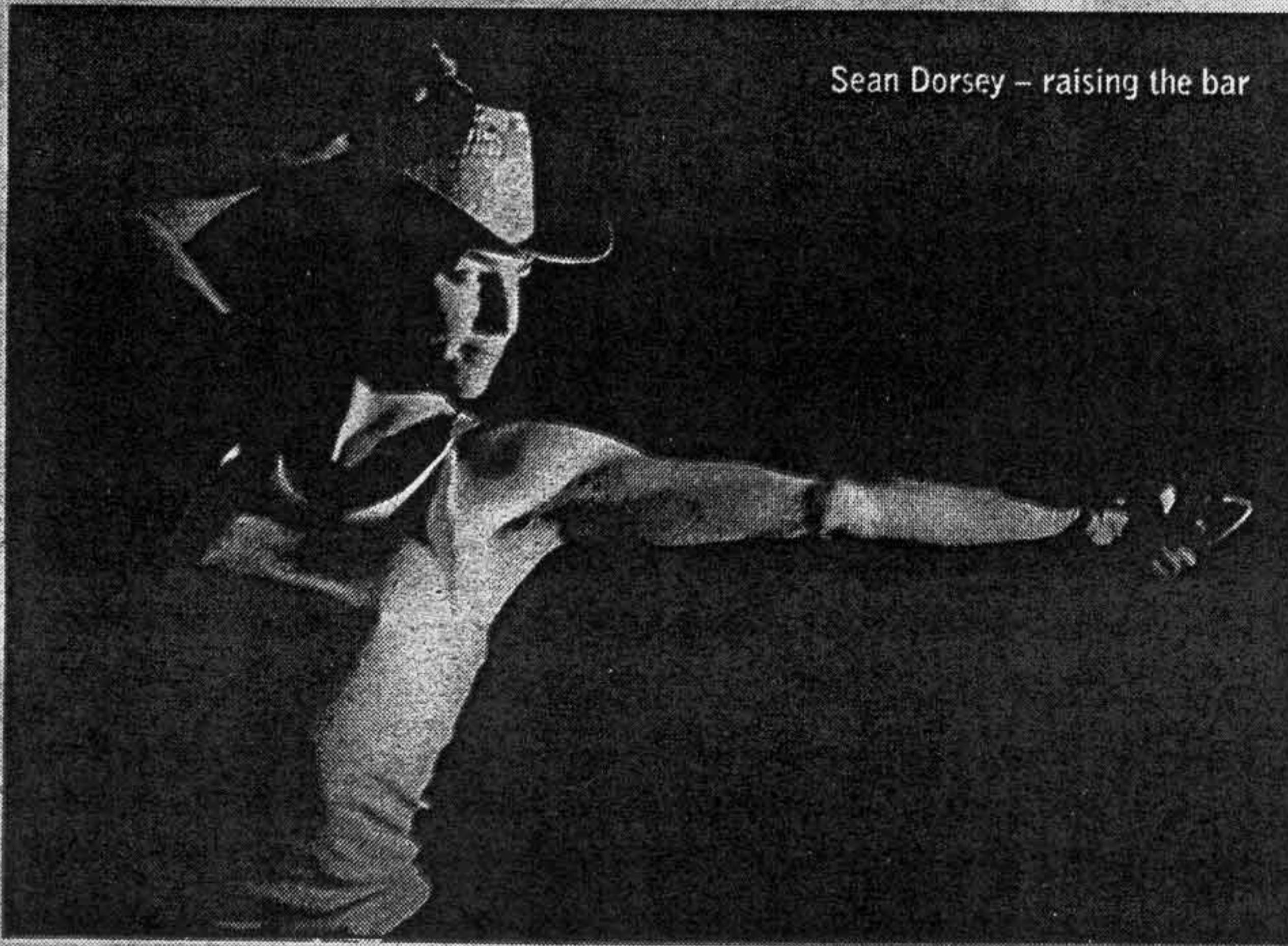
## ARTS &amp; ENTERTAINMENT

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Sean Dorsey pushes the boundaries at the ODC Theater

## Sassy genderqueer dance by Zak Szymanski

Sean Dorsey – raising the bar



**F**aggot cruising, the butch-femme dynamic, and the notion of living in a genderless skin are all about to hit the stage in ways not yet seen, even in San Francisco.

“Migrations,” new dances from San Francisco’s most promising choreographers, part of ODC Theater’s pilot program for emerging artists, runs this Friday and Saturday, April 25 and 26, at ODC’s Mission District venue at 3153 17th St.

The program highlights Amy Seiwert, who as a female choreographer is making ballet history, with her work touted as classical language with an awareness “of its potential absurdity.” It also features modern dancer and choreographer Sean Dorsey, whose Fresh Meat Productions last year at ODC Theater put on an intricately queer variety show that raised the bar for future LGBT performances.

Founded in 1976, ODC Theater is one of the oldest contemporary dance organizations in the city, consistently pushing the

envelope and imploding the forms of performance. Still, it’s a significant occurrence that one of ODC’s featured choreographers is a self-identified genderqueer/transny whose pieces challenge the very instrument upon which dancers depend.

“Mostly I feel blessed and honored to be one of the only genderqueer/trans voices in modern dance,” Dorsey says. “Blessed because I have the confidence and opportunity to tell my story from the vantage point of this body. Honored because I recognize the power of artists as culture-shapers, visionaries, revolutionaries. On a good day, I can muster up the motivation to go forward boldly, fiercely and do what no one else is doing.”

Dorsey himself has been carving out new space for queer bodies in modern dance for years, with his work shown at Dance Mission, the Lesbian and Gay Dance Festival, Jon Sims Center for the Art, the SF LGBT Community Center, and at LadyFest

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## Sean Dorsey

◀ Arts cover

and TransArt events.

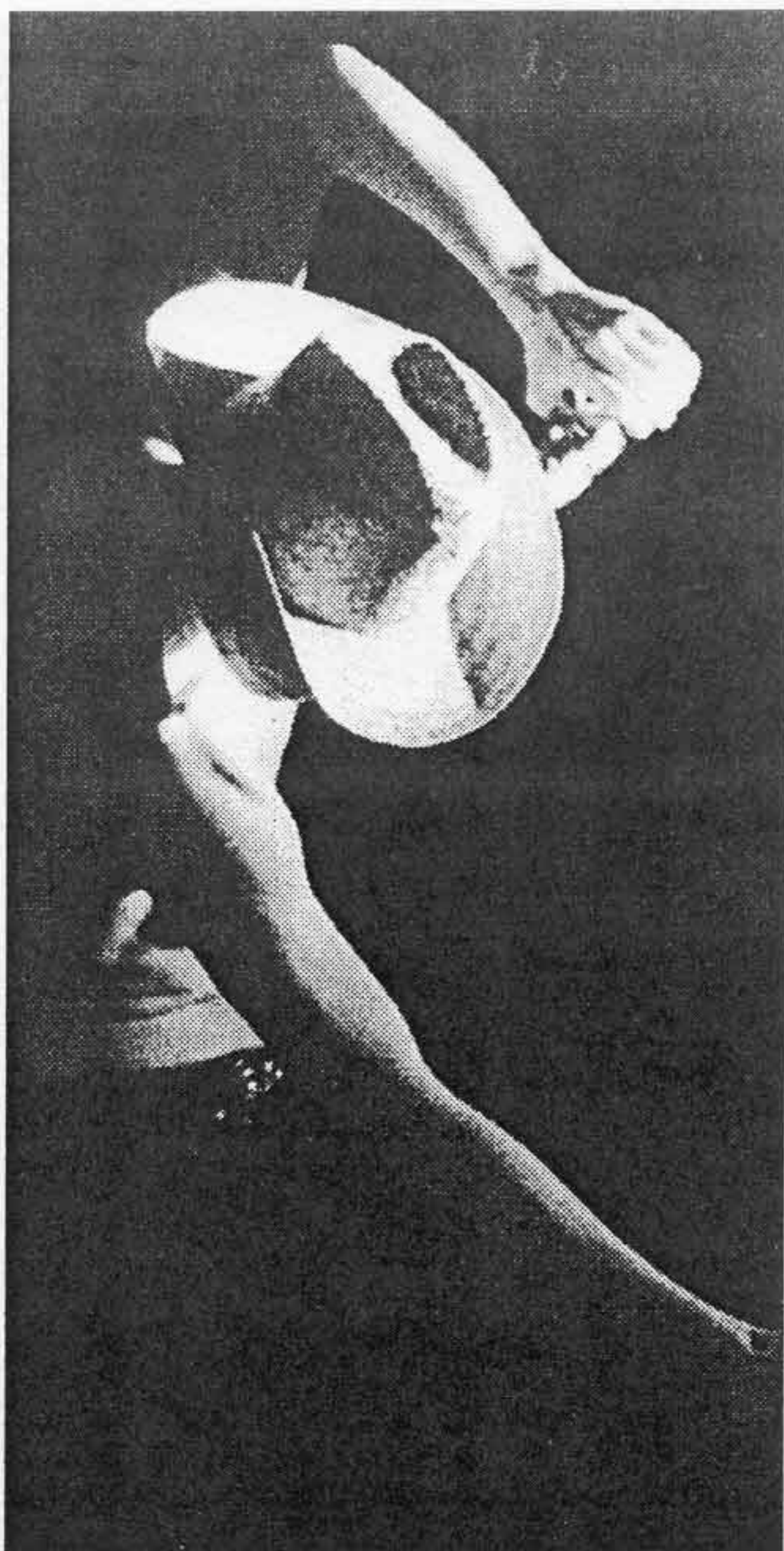
While building on his reputation and experience, his upcoming performance at ODC includes two pieces never before seen: "Red Tie, Red Lipstick," featuring Dorsey and dancer Linda Case portraying the vulnerability, honesty, and visibility issues of butch-femme relationships; and "Hero," with dancer Ami Student cruising through the adventures of gay personal ads, body image, and bio/tranny fag energies. "Red Tie, Red Lipstick" is set to the hip-hop poetry of transgender spoken-word artists Marcus Rene Van, while "Hero," according to Dorsey, is unabashedly sexual, sassy, and humorous, and is "probably the most explicit stuff to hit the ODC stage."

Dorsey's vision leaves no detail unexplored; sound design, original sound scores, and collaborations with poets, sound artists, and musicians are key elements to his dances.

"I hope to layer musicality or resonance to the audience's experience of my sound score," he says. "The text and sound I use are not secondary or accidental. I think of myself as a movement and sound artist."

Dorsey hopes San Francisco's LGBT community will take advantage of such outwardly queer representation at a premier dance facility to branch out from their more usual forms of weekend entertainment.

"Queer communities are not yet strongly invested in modern dance as an art form," says Dorsey. "I think they have found spoken word, slam poetry, hip-hop, and theater more authentically reflect



Dorsey carves out space for queer bodies.

their experiences as queer or trans, in contrast to modern dance, which tends toward the abstract and generally reflects mainstream experience."

Dorsey adds that "lots of folks are intimidated by modern dance. I feel strongly that audiences are not stupid — audiences are complex people with complicated lives and emotions, hungry to witness something that resonates with them. It's our responsibility as artists to make work that is relevant, provocative, and accessible. That's what motivates my work. That and a desire to insert trans and queer into the equation." ▼

**Friday and Saturday's performances are at the ODC Theater, 3153 17th Street, at Shotwell, at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$12-\$15 sliding scale. Call the Box Office at ; 415-863-9834.**