

The Secret History of Love Premieres in San Francisco

March 9, 2012 by [Justin Ocean](#)



Sean Dorsey; photo by Lydia Daniller

Despite what our grandparents and old Hollywood romances try to convince, finding a soulmate wasn't all soft lighting and sharing milkshakes at soda fountains. If you were gay or lesbian in the first half of the century, dating, let alone *marriage*, was all but a pipe dream. So as the recent victories in Washington and Maryland bolster our spirits, comes the perfect reminder what it's all about: love. From the award-winning Sean Dorsey Dance comes *The Secret History of Love* at the Dance Mission Theater in San Francisco, March 29-April 1. A national tour follows later in the year.

Combining his signature combination of modern dance, theater, and storytelling – in other words, even if you think of dance as “cryptic,” as I do, you’ll get it – Dorsey explores the real-life way that queer and transgender people managed to find (and love!) each other in decades past, from 1920s speakeasies to wartime love affairs and steamy underground cabarets, even as it “dared not speak its name.”

The culmination of a two-year community research and national “LGBT Elders Oral History Project” with queer and trans elders in San Francisco and Boston, additional archival research at the [SF GLBT Historical Society](#) turned up such gems as a 1940s queer personal ad and love letters from '20s. All this is translated by a cast of five into full-bodied, luscious dancing. The result: first-hand tales of tremendous risk, passion and courage, heart-breaking loss, and bold resistance – lessons for our own time, and something that should not be forgot.

And if it's anything like his critically lauded *Uncovered: The Diary Project* which similarly used the personal writings and musings of pioneering transman Lou Sullivan to explore his life, actualization, and death (ironically as a “full-fledged gay man” via AIDS), expect a powerful, if not emotional, event. Tour continues to Miami and Boston in May, Los Angeles in August, and Chicago and Wisconsin in October. Exact dates and venues TBD. Additional shows in Chico and Santa Cruz, California, and New York City expected in 2013.

“There is a real urgency to undertaking this project now: We are rapidly losing our community’s stories as our elders pass on,” explains Dorsey. “I am passionate about capturing these stories – of trailblazing entertainers, bold transpeople and drag queens who fought the police, people who fell in love or raised families. Imagine: Despite your body, desire and gender expression being named illegal, and facing daily threats of violence . . . still managing to find love!”



The *Secret History of Love* world premiere runs March 29-April 1. Visit [SeanDorseyDance.com](#) for more info and tickets (\$15-25 sliding scale or \$10 Saturday matinee) and use our [San Francisco](#) destination guide to make a trip out of it.

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