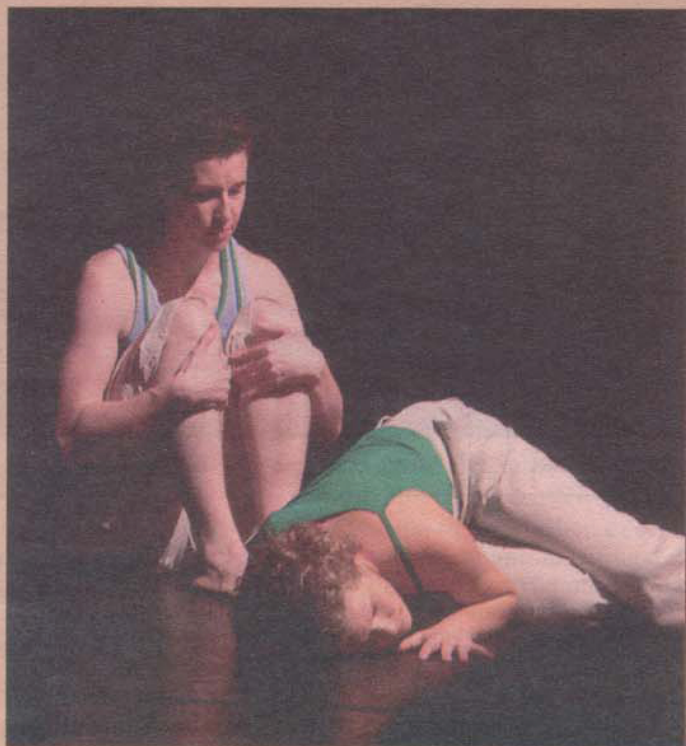


Calendare by Mark Mardon



Max Fermin.

Sean Dorsey and Mair Culbreth in *The Outsider Chronicles*.

Outsider moves

When a dance production comes along that involves beauty and imagination to the nth degree, and I'm lucky enough to be there to witness it, I feel incalculably grateful. In the midst of fractured times, for a choreographer/dancer to pull together a full-length evening of flawless dance and storytelling is immeasurably wonderful and healing. The boundlessly gifted Sean Dorsey and his Fresh Meat crew performed perfectly this past Friday, November 18, at that jewel of a dance space, ODC Theater, and when it was over, a packed house gave the dancers, musicians and tech crew a much deserved, prolonged standing ovation. No one wanted to leave. Everyone was smitten.

"The Outsider Chronicles", billed as "a dance theater journey into the world of the gender outsider," stripped off layers of confusion surrounding the transgender experience, baring a simple, spare, sublime representation of otherness, while retaining that certain mysteriousness that makes transgendered people so alluring. Five dances encompassed a lifetime of experience, mostly told in duets with super handsome Sean and exquisitely beautiful Mair Culbreth, or by Sean solo. In the opening piece "Second Kiss," Sean and Mair represented two school girls, nine year olds, exploring romance and reeling from confusion. Mair was the cute, pushy girly girl who wanted her first taste of boy lips. She looked over her options, and mistaking Sean for a boy, chose him. Sean, realizing he'd be taking part in a deception, dragged Mair away from his playmates, who knew his true gender, to indulge in the desire he and Mair both shared, albeit with different levels of awareness. They kissed, just once, and rolled around, and found their limbs entwined; then they were lying side by side, breathless. Her passion aroused, Mair then wanted to have a look "down there," and Sean knew the gig was up. "Oh gross!" reeled Mair, confronted with the evidence. She fled, but soon edged back, taking Sean's hand. There would be no second kiss. The first kiss, however, was unforgettable.

By the second dance, Sean was all man, androgynous to be sure, but male without a doubt. There was no question he had transitioned. "Red Tie, Red Lipstick" opened with him dressing at a sink, fixing his pressed, starched white shirt and dark suit jacket, arranging his red tie, as Mair, the seductive woman in a red cocktail dress, circled slowly around him, dancing to swank electronic lounge music, closing in on her man, the two of them preparing to embark on a night on the town. In a voice-over by hip-hop poet/writer Marcus Van, we heard of the couple's brutal queer-bashing by thugs posing as cops. It was a gritty, gut-wrenching urban tale. The faux-cops spat out the word lesbian as a slur, and dragged the one with the red dress and red lipstick into the shadows. Sean and Mair danced exquisitely, reflecting the punches and insults, yet retaining their connection even as the red dress became irreparably soiled. The dance continued after the physical violence ceased, but the saga of the red dress would always haunt them.

Dorsey's other dances were equally affecting. "Six Hours" involved a road trip by car to meet Sean's dad, who didn't know Sean now identified as a man. Mair and Sean in the car bickered endlessly, employing passive aggression and other manipulative tricks to work out some of their relationship kinks. In "Creative," Sean solo danced a hilarious piece about a teenager in school sent to a Guidance Counselor to discuss gender inappropriateness. That piece was about courage, how a teenager wants it and needs it, and how it can fail at crucial times. ▼