



Trans led dance company debuts new season

NEWS

by Sari Staver

Published 05/04/2017



Sean Dorsey Dance will premiere its new works in May. Photo: Lydia Daniller

ARTICLE TOOLS

- [Print this Page](#)
- [Send to a Friend](#)
- [Share on Facebook](#)
- [Share on Twitter](#)
- [Share on MySpace!](#)



The award-winning Sean Dorsey Dance kicks off its 2017 home season next week at Z Space with a world premier of short works and a sneak peek of the San Francisco-based company's 2018 full-length show.

The 60-minute show also features two musical guests, the Singing Bois, a "queer retro quartet that is part boy band and part rat pack," and Amir Rabiya, "a brilliant trans, queer, mixed-race poet," said Sean Dorsey, 44, a transgender choreographer who was named in Dance Magazine's "25 to Watch."

In a phone interview with the Bay Area Reporter, Dorsey commented on the timeliness of his company's new production, whose short works program is called "Boys Bite Back." The longer production he has planned for next year is called "Boys In Trouble."

"At a time when the LGBTQ communities across the U.S. are dealing with the Trump administration, we are biting back with full-throttle dance, luscious queer partnering, and highly physical theater and storytelling about navigating queer and trans masculinity, trouble, and resistance," he said.

The new show, taking place Friday, May 12 and Saturday, May 13, is "in turns explosive, powerful, playful, vulnerable and sexy," said Dorsey, adding that his goal with the short works is to "move audiences to examine their own assumptions and experiences of gender."

Performing the short works with Dorsey will be four other dancers - Brian Fisher, ArVejon Jones, Nol Simonse, and Will Woodward - with original music composed by Alex Kelly, Ben Kessler and Grey Reverend.

Dorsey said he began the "creative process" to develop the new work more than a year ago. By presenting the short works now, "it gives me the opportunity to begin with short works that I then weave together," he said. "I am looking forward to seeing how they work in front of a live audience. I won't really know until the premier how it is working and what people are feeling."

He is "really thrilled" to feature the two special guests. The Singing Bois have performed several times at Dorsey's annual production, the Fresh Meat Festival. They offer "gorgeous harmonies in a totally fantastic boy band way," he said.

Rabiya, the second guest artist, is a "gifted storyteller and that really, really rare poet with a capital P," said Dorsey.

The dance company has sold out all of its recent performances in San Francisco, Dorsey said.

"Despite the continuing glass ceiling facing trans and queer dance artists, we've been very blessed to be able to continue to grow and see the demand for our tour skyrocket," he said.

Dorsey has many long-time followers in the Bay Area. Among his fans is Luis Gutierrez-Mock, a Latino transgender man who has been attending the dance company's performances since 2002.

"After attending 15 years of Sean Dorsey's performances, I feel that his work is still incredibly relevant and more important than ever," Gutierrez-Mock wrote in an emailed reply. "I have witnessed my communities struggle to maintain arts spaces where we are able to celebrate our resilience. Sean Dorsey Dance continues to tell our stories and hold these spaces. His performances are deeply personal, well-researched, and continually prioritize the most marginalized of our communities."

5/11/2017

The Bay Area Reporter Online | Trans led dance company debuts new season

Another fan, Annalise Ophelian, who identifies as queer, said in an email to the B.A.R. that she first saw Sean Dorsey Dance in 2007 and hasn't missed a show since.

"What amazes me about his work is how he takes modern dance, which is not always the most accessible art form, and blends it with oral history and storytelling to create these pieces that bring queer and trans life into center stage," wrote Ophelian. "I've never left the theater after seeing his work without feeling transformed, really deeply moved. And I think it's incredibly vital right now, as the city is changing so much, that artists like Sean and his company have such strong roots here, because he is telling our stories and preserving our histories in completely beautiful and innovative ways."

The new show will be performed at 8 p.m. May 12 at Z Space, 450 Florida Street at 17th Street. There will be two performances, at 4 and 8 p.m., May 13, with the latter a gala celebration. Tickets are priced on a sliding scale \$15-30 and \$20-\$50 for the Saturday night gala.

Advanced reservations are recommended, but there will be some tickets for sale at the door. For tickets and further information, visit the company's website at <http://seandorseydance.com>.