



## Sean Dorsey Dance to Celebrate 20th Anniversary Season

The season will feature award-winning works including *Lou*, *The Missing Generation*, and *The Secret History of Love*.

By: [Chloe Rabinowitz](#) Aug. 14, 2024



Photo: Lydia Daniller

Sean Dorsey Dance revealed its 20th Anniversary Season celebrating two decades of groundbreaking and award-winning artistry by trailblazing choreographer Sean Dorsey. The company will perform a powerful retrospective program featuring *Lou* (2009), based on the lifelong diaries of pioneering trans activist Lou Sullivan, and excerpts from *The Missing Generation* (2015) and *The Secret History of Love* (2012), both based on oral histories

Dorsey recorded with LGBTQI+ elders across the US. Performances are 8pm on Thursday, September 19, Friday, September 20 and Saturday, September 21 at Z Space in San Francisco.

For tickets and information, go to <https://seandorseydance.com/20thAnniversary>

These Dorsey dances are powerful explorations of the human experience, featuring his signature fusion of full-throttle dance, luscious queer partnering, theater and intimate storytelling. Highly physical, accessible, rooted in story, and danced with precision, guts and deep humanity, Dorsey's works have boldly created new space for trans and queer voices, bodies and stories in contemporary dance.

"This Home Season is about legacy, about sharing our history, about uplifting stunning beauty, heartache, resilience and love, especially at this brutal moment in America," says Dorsey.

"My work is embodied, joyous, righteous resistance to the massive, national anti-transgender backlash my community is enduring right now," adds Dorsey "There are 643 active anti-trans bills in 43 states this year alone. Our existence, our rights and our freedom of expression are under attack . This is an incredibly important time to uplift trans and queer history and artistry."

The 20th Anniversary Home Season features excerpts from a trilogy of SDD works that lift up previously buried, censored or forgotten trans and queer history that Dorsey created between 2009 and 2015. He says,"I wanted to ask: what happens to those stories, those lives that slip between the pages of recorded history and family albums? How do we uncover and reclaim the important stories of trans and queer people that history passes by? I worked with diaries, archives and oral histories as powerful ways to uncover and share our history."

Dorsey's voice provides the narration for the Lou soundscore in which Dorsey reads excerpts from Sullivan's diary entries. When Dorsey recorded the original score in 2009, he had been living openly as transgender for more than a decade, without taking testosterone. Like Lou Sullivan, however, Dorsey later decided to start taking testosterone and so this year, he re-recorded the entire soundscore in his current "post-T" voice.

"It's incredibly moving to be re-recording my own poetry/narration for the score, as well as these hundreds of diary entries Lou wrote, in my current voice," Dorsey shares, "Audiences actually still will hear my old voice during the early part of Lou's journey where he is aching for his body to align more with his spirit. I think this change is a powerful, powerful addition to the show."

These three works comprised an award-winning trilogy that the company performed and toured to more than 25 cities across the US. For the first time in Sean Dorsey Dance's history, the company will revisit and perform excerpts of audiences favorites from the last 20 years.

The 20th Anniversary lobby experience includes a retrospective photo exhibition of photos of Sean Dorsey Dance by Lydia Daniller and Kegan Marling, a gigantic love letter to Sean Dorsey Dance for audiences to sign, limited edition Sean Dorsey Dance merch, a photobooth and DJ. The Saturday September 21 performance includes a special post-show Gala reception and champagne toast with Dorsey.

## **ABOUT SEAN DORSEY**

[Sean Dorsey](#) is an Emmy award-winning choreographer, dancer, writer, educator and activist. Long recognized as the U.S.' first acclaimed transgender modern dance choreographer, Dorsey has toured his work to more than 35 cities across the U.S. and internationally, and taught with his explicitly trans-positive pedagogy in more than 40 cities.

Dorsey is a [Doris Duke Artist](#), a [United States Artists Fellow](#), and a [Dance/USA Artist Fellow](#). He has been awarded an Emmy Award, five [Isadora Duncan](#) Dance Awards, and the Goldie Award for Performance. In 2019, he became [the first openly-transgender person on the cover of Dance Magazine](#). Dorsey is the first openly-transgender US artist to be presented by [The Joyce Theater](#) (NYC), American Dance Festival, and many other major stages.

As a transgender, white, disabled/Hard-of-hearing and queer longtime social practice artist, Dorsey creates his works over 2-3 years in deep relationship with/in community. As an educator, Dorsey leads workshops, classes and DREAM LABS with a trans-positive pedagogy - and centers and celebrates gender non-conforming and trans bodies, voices and aesthetics.

## **20 YEARS OF TRANS ACTIVISM**

This 20th Anniversary milestone is also an opportunity to celebrate Sean Dorsey's indelible impact on the national dance field, through his two decades of trans activism and advocacy.

Dorsey has broken through many, many barriers facing Trans dance artists, as:

- The [first openly-transgender person on the cover of Dance Magazine](#) (2019)

- The first US transgender artist ever presented by [The Joyce Theater](#) (2018), American Dance Festival (2017) and Bates Dance Festival (2016)

- The first-ever US transgender keynote/plenary speaker at national convenings including: the Association of Performing Arts Conference (NYC), Dance/USA Conference Dance Forum (NYC), Grantmakers in the Arts Conference (Oakland), Arts Midwest Conference (Kansas City) and more.

- Winning an Emmy Award, a Doris Duke Artist Award, a USA Artist Fellowship and a Dance/USA Artist Fellowship.

Because Sean Dorsey Dance's Tour Tech Rider requires theaters to convert their lobby and backstage bathrooms to be all-gender while the company is in residence, dozens of theaters across the country have made permanent changes:

- [The Joyce Theater](#) (NYC) permanently converted ALL their backstage bathrooms to be all-gender, and converted a lobby bathroom to be all-gender;

- Other theaters that also did this include The Kelly Strayhorn (Pittsburgh PA), The Whitewater Auditorium (Whitewater WI) and many more.

Dorsey is also the founder and Artistic Director of [Fresh Meat Productions](#) - now in its 23rd season, FMP invests in the creative expression and cultural leadership of transgender and gender-nonconforming communities through its year-round programs including, the annual FRESH MEAT FESTIVAL of trans and queer performance, artist commissions, dance education, advocacy, and resident company Sean Dorsey Dance.

Fresh Meat Productions and Sean Dorsey Dance are supported by the California Arts Council, Ford Foundation, Grants for the Arts, National Endowment for the Arts, National Performance Network, New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project, Nicholas B. Ottaway Foundation, Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation, San Francisco Arts Commission, Walter and Elise Haas Fund, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Zellerbach Family Foundation, and generous individual donors.

WEBSITES: <https://seandorseydance.com/> and <https://seandorseydance.com/20thAnniversary>