

Sean Dorsey Dance to Perform Special 20th Anniversary Home Season

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Sean Dorsey Dance 20th Anniversary Home Season
PHOTO BY LYDIA DANILLER

Transgender trailblazer Sean Dorsey will celebrate two decades of his award-winning artistry September 19–21 at Z Space in San Francisco.

Sean Dorsey Dance will perform a powerful retrospective program of audience favorites from the last 20 years including *Lou* (2009) based on the diaries of pioneering trans activist Lou Sullivan; and excerpts from *The Secret History of Love* (2012), *The Missing Generation* (2015), and more.

This will be the first time in the company's storied 20-year history that they will be performing and restaging works from their groundbreaking repertoire. The program will be choreographed, written, and directed by Sean Dorsey and performed by Dorsey, Brandon Graham, Héctor Jaime, David Le, Nol Simonse, and Becca Dean.

The dances that will be presented are powerful explorations of the human experience, and will feature Dorsey's signature fusion of full-throttle dance, luscious queer partnering, theater, and intimate storytelling. Highly physical, accessible, and 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.

Bay Area favorite Sean Dorsey Dance has made its mark upon—and literally changed—the national landscape for dance, touring to more than 35 cities across the country, racking up accolades and awards (including an Emmy for Dorsey last year), and performing to loyal audiences from San Francisco to New York City.



Sean Dorsey
PHOTO BY LYDIA DANILLER

Long celebrated as the nation's first acclaimed transgender contemporary dance choreographer, Dorsey directs and dances with his all-queer, nonbinary, gender-expansive, and trans ensemble.

“My work is embodied, joyous, righteous resistance to the massive, national anti-transgender backlash my community is enduring right now,” Dorsey told the San Francisco Bay Times. “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.”

Dorsey added, “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.”

About the Program

The 20th Anniversary Home Season will feature excerpts from a trilogy of works, created by Dorsey between 2009 and 2015, which lift up previously buried, censored, and forgotten trans and queer history.

Dorsey shared, “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.”

To create his 2009 piece, *Lou*, Dorsey researched the lifelong journals of Lou Sullivan (1951–1991), a gay transman who lived and died in San Francisco and was a trailblazing activist, organizer, and writer. Sullivan broke down countless barriers for transpeople and was literally a friend to hundreds and inspiration to thousands.

Before his death from AIDS complications, Sullivan bequeathed 30 years of his journals, letters, and papers to the GLBT Historical Society. To create *Lou*, Dorsey spent a year reading and hand-transcribing Sullivan's diaries, compiled and distilled 30 years of Sullivan's journal writings into an original soundscore, and choreographed a suite of dances based on Sullivan's remarkable journey.

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 Sullivan, however, Dorsey later decided to start taking testosterone and so, this year, he rerecorded the entire soundscore in his current “post-T” voice.

“It’s incredibly moving to be rerecording my own poetry/narration for the score, as well as these hundreds of diary entries Lou wrote, in my current voice,” Dorsey said, “Audiences will hear my old (pre-T) 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.”



Sean Dorsey Dance, The Missing Generation
PHOTO BY KEGAN MARLING

Dorsey created The Missing Generation in 2015 after recording a whopping 75 hours of oral history interviews with LGBTQI+ longtime survivors of the early AIDS epidemic. “The show is a love letter to a forgotten generation of survivors,” he said.

Dorsey created The Secret History of Love in 2012 after recording oral history interviews with LGBTQI+ elders across the U.S., asking them how on earth they found love decades ago, when there were countless barriers, laws, and violence facing them.

“As a longtime activist and a history nerd, I’ve always studied our histories of struggle and resistance,” explained Dorsey. “But for that project, I was like, but what about our love? I was curious to hear and learn about our history of love, of how we met in underground bars and speakeasies, how we connected when it was literally illegal to dance together or wear the clothes of your own chosen gender expression.”

Blazing a New Path in Dance

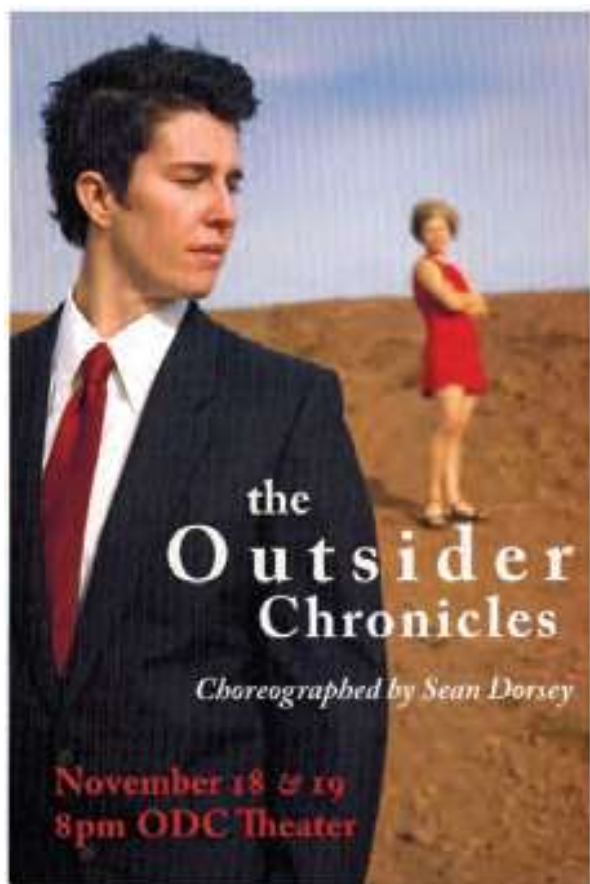
Dorsey is a Doris Duke Artist, a United States Artists Fellow, and a Dance /USA Artist Fellow. He has been awarded an Emmy Award, five Isadora Duncan Dance Awards, and the Goldie Award for Performance. In 2019, he became the first openly-transgender person on the cover of Dance Magazine. Dorsey is the first openly-transgender U.S. artist to be

presented by The Joyce Theater (NYC), American Dance Festival, and dozens of 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. Dorsey’s dances are powerful explorations of human experience—a fusion of full-throttle dance, luscious partnering, intimate storytelling, and theater. These works are highly physical, accessible, rooted in story, and danced with precision and guts, and deep humanity.

“Sean was the first transgender artist to ever present a Home Season at ODC Theater,” said Dorsey’s partner, trans singer-songwriter Shawna Virago. “His first full-evening concert there in 2005 was absolutely historic; there had been nothing like it before.”

Dorsey is also the Founder and Artistic Director of Fresh Meat Productions (FMP), 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



Sean Dorsey: Making History for 20 Years

2005 – Sean Dorsey Dance performed their first annual Home Season, *The Outsider Chronicles*, at ODC Theater (San Francisco).

It was the first season presented by a trans-led company at ODC. The works performed broke new ground by uplifting transgender and queer stories and bodies in modern dance.



PHOTO BY LYDIA DANILLER

2010 – *BalletTanz*, one of Europe's leading dance magazines, named Dorsey as one of the international dance scene's most important choreographers.

The publication called Dorsey's work "exquisite ... poignant and important."

2014 – Dorsey was awarded an Isadora Duncan Dance Special Achievement Award.

Dorsey was honored for his full-evening work, *The Secret History of Love*, which he created after recording oral history interviews with LGBTQI+ elders across the U.S. The show toured to almost 20 cities.



Sean Dorsey Dance, *The Secret History of Love*
PHOTO BY LYDIA DANILLER

2018 – Dorsey was the first U.S. transgender artist presented by The Joyce Theater (NYC).

The company performed *The Missing Generation*.



PHOTO BY JAYME THORNTON

2019 – Dorsey was the first openly transgender person on the cover of Dance Magazine (image courtesy of Dance Magazine).

The prestigious publication gave Dorsey this great honor.



Sean Dorsey Dance, The Lost Art of Dreaming
PHOTO BY KEGAN MARLING

2022 – Sean Dorsey Dance premiered The Lost Art of Dreaming. The company toured the highly-acclaimed show to Stockholm, Sweden; Maui; Los Angeles; Washington,

D.C.; Seattle; Reston, VA; at the American Dance Festival (Durham, NC); Atlanta; Middlebury, VT; at the Bates Dance Festival (Lewiston, ME); Salt Lake City; and more.

2023 – Dorsey won an Emmy.

Dorsey was awarded an Emmy for his choreography and collaboration on the KQED-produced film, *Sean Dorsey Dance: Dreaming Trans and Queer Futures*, directed by Lindsay Gauthier.

2024 – Dorsey was named a United States Artist Fellow.

This prestigious national honor was awarded to Dorsey as he celebrates his company's 20th Anniversary Home Season.

Sean Dorsey Dance's 20th Anniversary Home Season

September 19–21, 2024:

Thursday, September 19 @ 8 pm;

Friday, September 20 @ 8 pm (with ASL interpretation);

Saturday, September 21 @ 8 pm (with post-show Gala Reception and champagne toast with Dorsey).

Z Space

450 Florida Street, San Francisco

Tickets/Info: <https://seandorseydance.com/>

(Please note: KN95 masks will be provided & required for all performances and in the post-show lobby; masking will be optional for the Saturday night champagne toast.)

To view a video trailer for Sean Dorsey Dance's 20th Anniversary Season, please visit: <https://bit.ly/47ab58Z>

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