

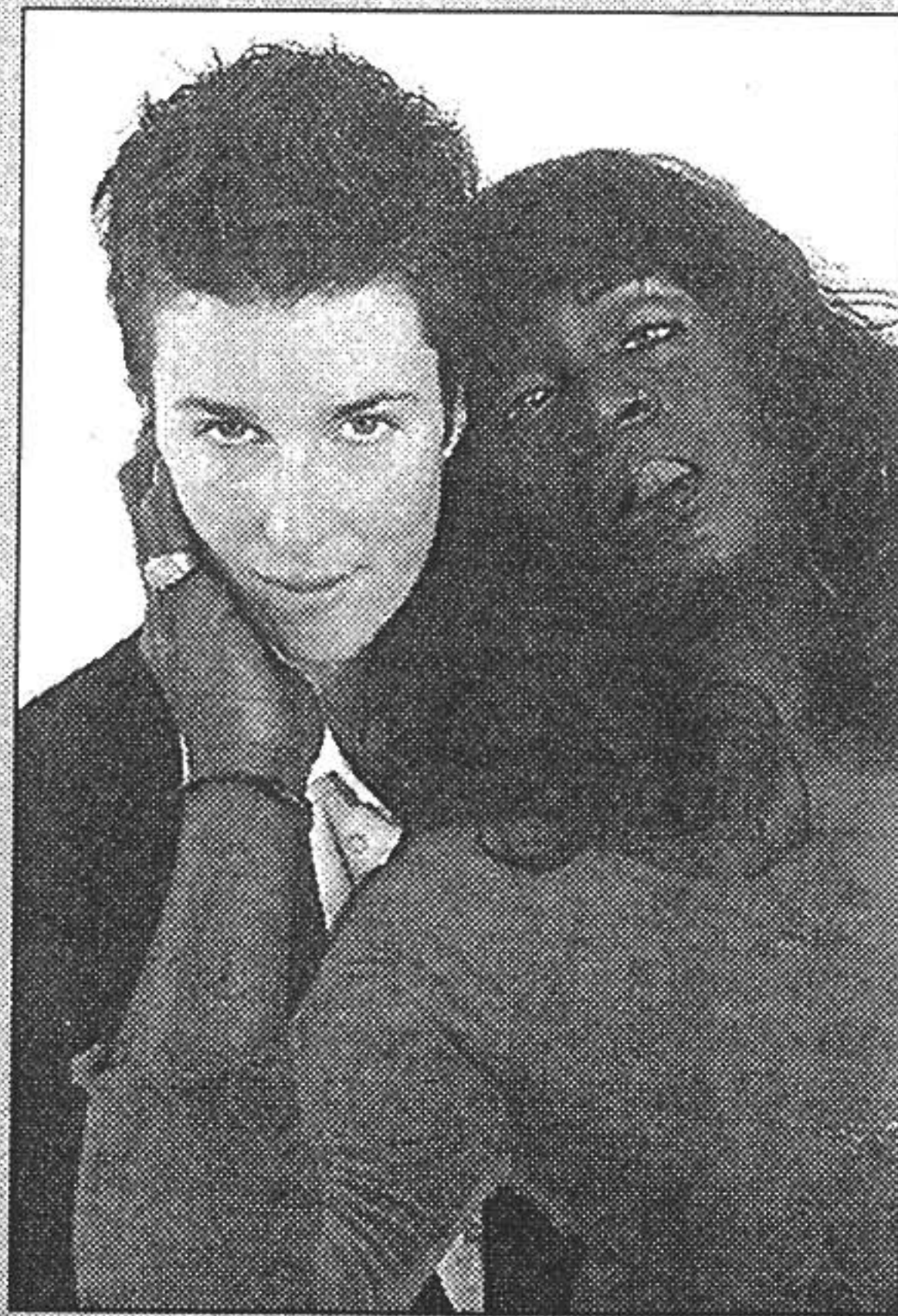
OUT & ABOUT

Calendare by Mark Mardon

Fresh Meat, Ruby's Clay, etc.

Now comes the mad rush. This 2005 Pride season, as always at this time of year, the City is bursting with wild, multicolored creativity. Despite — or perhaps because of — the hardening and harshening of the economy locally as well as nationally, artists are making a bigger push than ever to make the best of things. And the best is yet to come. Last weekend saw the kickoff of the **National Queer Arts Festival**, with “QBall,” a big preview of events and art staged in the theater and galleries of The LGBT Community Center, organized as always by the goddess of the festival, Pamela Peniston, NQAF Artistic Director, who was looking regal among the throngs of enthusiastic attendees, undoubtedly filled with pride at the enormous accomplishments of the many outstanding crews operating under the NQAF umbrella.

For those who love to sample from diverse cultures — and what queer hasn't harbored aspirations of milling in marketplaces in colorful out-of-the-way nations? — the NQAF is an exotic, bustling, topsy-turvy marketplace of TBLG talent, with a special emphasis on the T, as in “**Fresh Meat 2005**,” for instance. Fresh Meat's Artistic Director, Sean Dorsey, a powerhouse performer with a lively spirit and devastating sexy looks, has a unique knack for showcasing his hip-hop generation's finest queer artists, all in an evening's work. Dorsey is a transgender modern dance choreographer and head honcho for this



Fresh Meat delivers the goods.

showcase of dancers, spoken-word artists and others who will blow your mind. At Fresh Meat you get homo hip hop, gender-bending trapeze, tranny glam rock, queer burlesque, genderqueer modern dance, all-girl breakdance and the world's first transgender barber-shop quartet. Sean and partner Mair Culbreth will dance and be brilliant. Plus you get Shawna Virago, one of my faves, a tranny rocker who deftly tackles issues including police abuse, transphobia and the myth of democracy. Check the Thursday listing for details.