

METRO WEEKLY

Sean Dorsey Dance takes on toxic masculinity in “Boys in Trouble”

Dorsey calls it "a really beautiful mix of the heartrending and the hilarious"

By [André Hereford](#) on May 17, 2018



Sean Dorsey Dance — Photo: Lydia Daniller

Anyone wrestling with the concept of “toxic masculinity” need look no further than the White House for an ongoing object lesson in male privilege. Or, for a more refreshing

exploration, they might check out *Boys in Trouble*, performed by San Francisco-based company Sean Dorsey Dance.

Boys in Trouble brings the dance company, led by Dorsey, who is transgender, back to D.C.'s Dance Place for a show the artist describes as “a really beautiful mix of the heartrending and the hilarious.”

“We are unpacking and talking about everything,” he says, “from toxic masculinity to trans peer pressure, to real talk about whiteness, to an unabashed love letter between queer black men, and a send up of all things macho.”

For Dorsey, the current climate of tension between activist social movements, and a locker room culture led by our pussy-grabber-in-chief, adds a sense of urgency to a program that he’s been developing for over three years.

“It’s such an emotional and intense time for many people in this country, given the violent racism and transphobia and homophobia and anti-immigrant, anti-people with disabilities agenda of the current administration. I couldn’t have known [when] I started researching and writing this project how profoundly timely it would become.”



Sean Dorsey Dance – Photo: Lydia Daniller

The choreographer put his own experience being trans into the center of the work, which is also informed by the lives of his all-male troupe of dancers and the experiences of community members he has encountered through teaching and workshops.

“That could be trans-guys, cisgender, gay or queer, or bi-men, butch, queer women, anybody who lives or identifies on that spectrum,” he says. “And then we brought a lot of those themes into the studio. It’s not a modern dance show where we all have vacant, glassy stares, skim across the stage in front of the audience. We are onstage as full, complex humans. Ultimately, we dance our butts off.”

Sean Dorsey Dance’s Boys in Trouble is Friday, May 19 and Saturday, May 20, at Dance Place, 3225 8th St. NE. Tickets are \$15 to \$30. Call 202-269-1600, or visit danceplace.org.