

## Dance review: “Warriors: A Love Story”

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🕒 September 17, 2015 | Filed in: **dance, reviews.**

Love and war and enemies and art-making and a trunk of items left by a recently deceased grandmother folded into a powerful mix of dance, film and narrative “The Warriors: A Love Story” conceived of and performed by ARCOS Dance.

Now relocated permanently to Austin, the formerly New Mexico-based ARCOS had something of its official Austin debut last weekend at the Long Center’s Rollins Studio Theatre with its two performances.

Last year, the company staged “Warriors” to acclaim at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.



“The Warriors: A Love Story.” Photo by Lynn Lane.

Post World War II, fraternizing between Germans and the American occupying troops was prohibited. All the more remarkable that Ursula, a German modern dancer who survived the Allied bombing of Dresden, and Glenn, an American soldier with PhD in philosophy, fell in love with each other and had a long marriage.

Decades later, their grandson, ARCOS cofounder Eliot Gray Fisher combed through Ursula’s trunk of mementos, discovering details of his grandparent’s love story and it is this unwinding of the past that forms the core of hour-long, emotionally potent mix of dance, expressive film work and Fisher’s own storytelling and piano playing. The athletically strong choreography of Erica Gionfriddo and Curtis Uhlemann had five dancers bringing different shades of the story to life, at one moment terrifying in gas masks, another moment poignantly and vulnerably dressed in undergarments. Vintage film clips of Ursula dancing and of Glenn discussing his philosophical ruminations on war mixed with handdrawn animations of people running from falling bombs. The screech of air raid sirens blasted in a particularly tense moment. Yet Fisher’s delicate piano compositions brought delicacy throughout.

Even with a very full mix of film, music, choreography, storytelling “Warriors” remained accessible and emotionally compelling never straying into the deliberate obscurity (and vagueness) so much contemporary performance art is guilty of.

With its kaleidoscopic artistry, “The Warriors” delivered a poignant and relevant story.