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**COMING OF AGE IN THE DIGITAL ERA: ARCOS DANCE
FIRST MULTI-MEDIA PROJECT '500 WORDS OR LESS'
TEAMS WITH LOCAL ACTORS, ARTISTS**



SANTA FE, NM. **ARCOS Dance presents its first annual Multi-Media Project, entitled '500 Words or Less,' at the MPD Performance Space at 1583 Pacheco Street in Santa Fe February 3-5 and 10-12, 2012, at 7:30pm Fridays and Saturdays and 2:00pm Sundays.** The company will host an invitation-only VIP and press **Opening Night Preview Thursday, February 2nd**, also at 7:30pm. As part of its annual four-concert home season, ARCOS "focused this new work on the concept of integration and bridging mediums. We want to give dancers and other artists opportunities they can't get elsewhere, something unique and truly professional—a platform to help them excel," said ARCOS **Associate Artistic Director Erica Gionfriddo**. "The idea of technology and how it influences our lives is an underlying theme, which really opened the door for collaboration with a variety of artists." ARCOS Dance World Premiere performances were one hundred percent sold out in October 2011, and the company's presentation of new work is eagerly anticipated by media and public alike.



'500 Words or Less' will highlight use of space with photographs and video art leading into the studio, a museum-like display of older communication devices, and dancing already in progress when the audience arrives. The focus of the Project continually changes location in the performance space throughout the evening, adding to the layered effect of its acts. "It's fun! The format allows us vignettes with a wrapper to tie them all together," **Artistic Director Curtis Uhlemann** said. "We can't wait to keep designing more sound medleys and brainstorming. I love this!" Evoking the 'disjointed coherence' of dream, memory, and consciousness, the atmosphere is further enhanced by writing on the floor, a stack of old televisions above, trees extending perpendicular to the wall, an umbrella chandelier, and a grand piano. "It's not purely narrative," Gionfriddo said of the evening. "It's an experience tied together by dancers, music, and characters; it requires mental participation from the viewers."

Acts include a teen-parent argument in which the teen dons headphones as a means of escape. Dancers, embodiments of the teen character's emotions, perform an athletic sequence with headphones pulled on and off throughout, and fast-paced music starting and stopping in tempo. A giant iPhone/Facebook App touchscreen projection leads into a humorous chair dance at the movies, set to 1930's theater etiquette instructions, cheeky dialogue, and Santa Fe poet and actor **Matt Sanford's** 'Unfinished Love Poem' (eight years in the making). Laptops serve as the sole light source in a dance to eerie audio by **Meredith Monk**, where the dancers appear in nude leotards and nylon face masks. There is a sarcastic vaudeville moment of chorus girls and cabaret darkness juxtaposed with jazzy live piano and tapping; a Skype event involving a bathtub; and a poignant

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childhood memory-dream of best friends burying treasure in the woods and playing pirates, elucidated by a high-energy gypsy dance and colorful silk tent. “The story and the dances touch on how technology makes us define ourselves, anonymity, singularity, and loneliness. The plot is centered around memory, love, distance and time—humanity versus technology,” said Gionfriddo.

The storyline is infused with signature ARCOS wit, high-energy, fast pace, and deep thinking in equal measures. Plotted with topics relevant to viewers, as well as significant and meaningful to the young adult performers, ARCOS’s ‘500 Words or Less’ tackles ideas of family, responsibility, loyalty versus self-discovery, and a coming-out scene. “We see how today’s technology affects these concepts, and how that technology is part of the main character and his journey,” said Uhlemann. Gionfriddo echoed the thought: “We look at ways in which technology changes how we remember or memorize events and information. There is a now generation of young people whose existence has been documented on the Internet since childhood. It’s part of how they breathe. What does it mean?” Speaking to the Project’s coming-out scene, Uhlemann emphasized, “It is so important to explore this topic of sexuality with this age group. In the story, we see the main character’s best friend coming out to him. We see the events play out on Facebook, and communications there. Technology has a haunting, omniscient presence that makes people think, and ask the question about its effect.” Like a classic coming-of-age story, the scenario is “about self-reflection and self-discovery; love for and acceptance of self amidst questions, distractions, and expectations—and realizing that life is still a search for self, despite all that’s imperfect,” said Uhlemann.

An evening-length original work by Uhlemann and Gionfriddo, the program is 70 minutes in length, with no intermission, and is comprised of eight dances occurring throughout the production. Santa Fe director and film artist **Eliot Fisher** has taken the helm on the theater and multi-media portions of the show. ‘500 Words or Less’ features 19 ARCOS Dance members ranging in age from 13 to 27, as well as local professional and pre-professional artists in lighting, photography, film, sound, and videography. **Local actors Tommy Roman, 16, and Gabriel Lenetsky, 18, both of New Mexico School for the Arts, also take center stage.** Roman has acted with **Southwest Children’s Theatre** for eleven years, appeared in four Santa Fe **Fiesta Melodramas**, and in 2011 wrote and directed an original one-act play for **Teatro Paraguas**. He has performed with Paraguas for five years—including for the prince and princess of Spain!—and in ‘Bless Me, Ultima,’ sponsored by the **National Hispanic Cultural Center**. Lenetsky has participated in the **Eastern New Mexico University Drama Festival at Portales**, in ‘Our Town’ by Wally Webb, and written, directed, and acted in an original one-act play for his senior

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Photos by ARCOS Collaborator Mark Garrett

thesis. Other Multi-Media collaborators include: **Lydia Abernathy, Ansley DeDomenico, Mark Garrett, George Loftin, Antonia Reiter, and Rob Weiner.** “The idea to do a Multi-Media show stemmed from how to involve other young artists outside of dance in ARCOS—photographers, actors, singers, videographers—to experience what we do as a company,” Uhlemann explained. “Our goal was also to allow the ARCOS dancers this kind of interaction with other collaborators, and participation in an entire evening-length performance rather than the more typical dance format of numerous shorter pieces. This production broadens our range, music, style of choreography, use of space, placement of audience (on 3 sides for this work), lighting, everything.”

ARCOS Dance is comprised of 21 professional and pre-professional performers from **Columbia University, University of California Irvine, University of New Mexico, National Dance Institute of New Mexico, Belisama School of Contemporary Dance, Moving People Dance, and New Mexico School for the Arts,** and includes college dance majors and graduates as well as young local artists. The company’s mission is to offer year-round professional level performance opportunities in Santa Fe and an annual international tour for professional and pre-professional dancers. ARCOS provides a bridge between scholastic training and professional dance careers.

‘500 WORDS OR LESS’ CALENDAR LISTING:

ARCOS Dance First Annual Multi-Media Project! See ‘500 Words or Less’ at the MPD Performance Space at 1583 Pacheco Street in Santa Fe, February 3-5 and 10-12, 2012, at 7:30pm Fridays and Saturdays and 2:00pm on Sundays. The storyline is infused with signature ARCOS wit, high-energy, fast pace, and deep thinking in equal measures. Plotted with topics relevant to viewers and meaningful to the young adult performers, ‘500 Words’ tackles ideas of family, responsibility, loyalty, and sexuality. Like a classic coming-of-age story, the scenario involves self-reflection and self-discovery, set in today’s technology-saturated environs. An evening-length original work by Curtis Uhlemann, Erica Gionfriddo, and Eliot Fisher, the program is comprised of eight dances featuring 19 ARCOS members age 13 to 27, as well as local professional and pre-professional artists in lighting, photography, film, sound, and videography. And, the show highlights local favorite NMSA actors Tommy Roman and Gabriel Lenetsky. Mature language and content. Tickets \$20. For reservations, contact info@arcosdance.com or call 505-473-7434. Visit www.arcosdance.com for more information.

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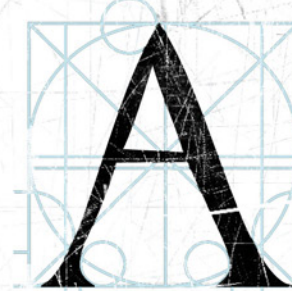


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Upcoming Performance Calendar

2/03-05, 10-12/12: ARCOS Dance Multi-Media Project

3/23-25, 30-04/01/12: ARCOS Dance Repertoire Concert

6/8/12 - 6/10/12: ARCOS Dance Live Musician Collaboration

June-July 2012: International Tour, Dates TBA

October 2012: Repertoire Concert, Dates TBA

Performance Descriptions:

ARCOS Dance Repertoire Concert: ARCOS Dance presents two different repertoire concerts in Santa Fe annually. These concerts include existing company repertoire as well as world premiere works created specifically for ARCOS dancers.

ARCOS Dance Multi-Media Project: As part of its annual season, ARCOS Dance presents a mixed media showcase highlighting local professional and pre-professional artists in photography, film, music, and theater. For this performance created around a central theme, the performers and choreographers of ARCOS Dance collaborate closely with multi-media artists and students to present an evening-length world premiere work.

ARCOS Dance Live Musician Collaboration: Once a year, ARCOS Dance invites professional and pre-professional musicians to take part in the creation and development of an original live music dance concert. The choreographers of ARCOS Dance and the musicians involved create world premiere works for this performance.

International Tour: During June and July, the annual ARCOS Dance International Tour takes place. 2012 dates include performances in Spain, France, and Germany.

Auditions:

ARCOS welcomes new company members year-round. Dancers interested in joining ARCOS should have a strong background in ballet and modern technique, be at least 14 years of age, bring a head shot and resume if available, and be prepared for ballet, modern, repertory, and improvisation components in the audition. Contact info@arcosdance.com or call 505-473-7434 to apply.

ARCOS Dance Staff:

Curtis Uhlemann, Artistic Director
Erica Gionfriddo, Associate Artistic Director
Dave Jansen, Executive Director
Tracie Jansen, Operations Director

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