

**ARCOS on *The Julia Goldberg Show*  
Audio Transcript**

Announcer: You are listening to the Julia Goldberg Show: local talk about Santa Fe politics, and whatever's on Julia's mind, on the new KVSF 101.5, The Voice of Santa Fe, streaming on santafe.com.

Julia Goldberg: Hey there folks, 11:32 AM here on Fiesta Friday, and Fiesta tends to bring old friends back to town. And that is certainly the case for my next guests, although they haven't been gone that long. So I don't get carried away here, but Eliot Fisher and Erica Gionfriddo from ARCOS Dance company, which was founded here in Santa Fe, spent seven years here, entertaining and training dancers and audiences, and then relocated to Austin last year and were dead to me. But I forgot that I was mad at them and I invited them on the show, and now they're back. Their show *The Warriors: A Love Story* just premiered in Europe. It was at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Did I have that right, Eliot and Erica? And welcome, by the way. I know that's not the most welcoming introduction.

Erica Gionfriddo: We'll take it.

Eliot Gray Fisher: Thanks. Yeah. Actually over there they say Edin-burra.

Julia Goldberg: Edin-burra, yeah. Oh, do you have a Scottish accent you can do now?

Eliot Gray Fisher: Uh, no. I can't really, although we had

Erica Gionfriddo: That's the extent.

Eliot Gray Fisher: Our tech guy had the most incredible Scottish accent you can imagine.

Julia Goldberg: I love that. It sounds like someone's talking while simultaneously tying things into knots with their tongue. It's amazing about, right. Yeah.

Erica Gionfriddo: That's about right.

Julia Goldberg: I can't imitate that one. All right, folks. So you were just there and you actually ended up winning Pick of the Fringe award in that festival with ARCOS Dance's original. That must have been exciting.

Eliot Gray Fisher: Yeah, it was really cool. There's this guy, Mervin Stutter, who's been coming to the Fringe—at first as a performer—he's been there for about 25 years now in a row. And a couple years after he started coming, he realized he wanted to give performers a better chance of getting their work shown than having to go out and pound the pavement and hand out fliers, which we also did. But, so he has a showcase show. He bring—he sends out people to go see some of the hot shows, or, you know, a bunch of people, scouts, to see things, and then brings in what he thinks is good, what they think is good.

Julia Goldberg: And I was reading that the award you got is one of the oldest awards at the festivals, and it is to celebrate the “talent, hard work, pluck, and sheer doggedness demanded of performers.”

Eliot Gray Fisher: Yeah, they talk funny over there.

Julia Goldberg: I was like, well, actually just trying to read about the festival itself. I was like, I must be getting really dumb, because I kept getting very confused. It sounds like a gigantic—there's a lot going on with that festival, huh?

Erica Gionfriddo; It's enormous now. It's, similar to South by Southwest, it's almost too big to function at this point. It's gotten super commercialized, but there are some nice pockets of still quote unquote fringe things happening. And this spirit of the Fringe Award is kind of representative of that. So it was nice to get that in the spirit of, you know, what the Fringe was created for.

Julia Goldberg: So moved to Austin where South by Southwest happens, but then went to Scotland for its so by Southwest Festival. How did you guys pick this particular festival to kind of as your European?

Eliot Gray Fisher: Well, it was actually a friend here in town in Santa Fe, who was in our original production of the show at CCA last year. Justin Golding, who played my grandfather was one of the actors in the show, and he had a friend who was, ended up being our producer at Edinburgh. He said, "I think this might be really good. It's multimedia theater and dance, all the mix. They, they might really like it there."

Julia Goldberg: Well, for those who were not at the CCA show, they missed out. But we'll just give a little bit of background. because that is one of the ways in which this is an amazing dramatic event, is that it's not just the incredible sort of athletic choreography of ARCOS Dance, which is really fun to watch, but it's a multimedia show and you two collaborated on it, and it's sort of a memoir piece for you, Elliot.

Eliot Gray Fisher: Yeah, right. It's inspired by the stories of my grandparents, their lives. My grandfather was a, a philosophy professor, grew up in Pennsylvania and actually taught up in Colorado Springs at Colorado College. And then my grandmother was a Dresden dancer, and danced with some of the early modern dance pioneers, and survived the bombing there. So the show recounts sort of parts of their individual stories before they met and then looks at how they met and fell in love and created a relationship from as former enemies.

Julia Goldberg: And you have a lot of that multimedia. I didn't realize this when I saw this show, actually, initially. I only read—realized this when I started reading about it, that a lot of the multimedia components are artifacts. They're the act—they're not recreated from, they're the actual artifacts.

Eliot Gray Fisher: Yeah. We actually, there's found footage and archival footage from, you know, all the way back to the 1890s in the new version of the show. Dresden, old footage of Dresden, and then all the way up to home movie footage from my family. And some footage from a documentary that my grandparents were in, that was a BBC documentary. They were in it for about 30 seconds total. But I had all this audio. Um, so yeah, there's a lot of documentary elements, but it's definitely artistic. It's definitely a kind of a non-fiction-inspired piece of art.

Julia Goldberg: When you were first sort of doing that research and learning your grandparents' story, were you thinking at that time, because that was before you even knew your now wife, the dancer, Erica, right? Would you ever have thought this is going to be a dance performance?

Eliot Gray Fisher: Not at all. No, no. It started—I wanted to do something with it because my grandfather's book about his time in the war and sort of his philosophical reflections about it was the only connection I had to him. He died before I was born. So I thought initially I wanted to make it a film. I wanted to write a screenplay that sort of took this incredible story of these two lives and did something with it. And it was actually meeting Erica and seeing a lot more dance and marrying her and seeing a lot more that got me thinking about how fitting it was. And in fact, my grandmother got to meet Erica shortly before she died and was delighted that I was, you know, in a relationship with a dancer.

Julia Goldberg: That you answered my next question, which was going to be, do you think that the two of you or your grandparents reincarnated? So—but I guess not because, yeah...well, because if your grandmother died before you were born, and then if that was the same for your grandmother, suddenly there was this like possibility, but

Eliot Gray Fisher: Not quite. No.

Julia Goldberg: All right. Well that's...

Eliot Gray Fisher: Not quite, but, but we do have similarities. You know, I'm kind of in my head, and sort of all about words and the kind of things that my grandfather was, and Erica's very much in her body and, and as a dancer very, you know—I think understands where my grandmother as part of the story came from.

Julia Goldberg: Well, Erica, in terms of ARCOS and you're—both of you are directors, but you're the Executive and Associate Artistic director—did I get, is that right?

Erica Gionfriddo: Very fancy, yes.

Julia Goldberg: Okay. Is this the kind of project that normally ARCOS would want to take on? Or was it because it's such a personal connection to it?

Erica Gionfriddo: Yeah, you know, at some point during our first season, towards the end we started experimenting more with multimedia. And Curtis Uhlemann, the artistic director, has really embraced that as part of the ongoing vision of what we want to do moving forward. And it's really where performing arts is heading in general. I mean, people aren't interested as much anymore in sitting down for a rep show where dancers come out for four different pieces in different costumes and dance around on the stage and that's it. So this kind of all inclusive, immersive, different genres, different media, is really where things are heading, and it's been a huge challenge for us to figure out how to do it well. And when we were in Scotland actually we saw a lot of it done very not well. So there's a lot of bad stuff out there as there is in any genre of art. And this story in particular, when Eliot had brought it to the table to Curtis and I, we—it was a struggle for sure. It was a struggle to respectfully adapt an actual story and take people's actual lives and art and interpret them artistically in a way that is true to us, but also, obviously, respectful of living family members and the legacy that they left behind. So I think we really struck a great balance with this second version of it that we took to Scotland. So that has been a huge learning curve as well.

Julia Goldberg: So for those who saw it in Santa Fe, it has changed, the performance, it's...

Erica Gionfriddo: Yeah, it's completely different. We would love to bring it back here at some point in the coming seasons, because it's a very different beast at this point.

Eliot Gray Fisher: And one of the things that sort of forced that was our producer said, "Well, you know, you can't bring 12 people. You can't bring 12 people to Edinburgh, and you can't bring them on tour..."

Erica Gionfriddo: ...on the road in general...

Eliot Gray Fisher: ...if you wanted to tour the show afterwards, which is what we're hoping to do. So the cast got smaller. So we had to figure out, okay,

if we're not going to have two actors playing my grandparents, those—that idea went out the window. How are we—have to reimagine what the show's going to look like if an ensemble of dancers that kind of switches back and forth, at different times throughout the show playing my grandparents.

Julia Goldberg: I see. And for ARCOS dance, is it an unusual thing to have sort of a company sort of hone in on one show that you'll now be doing what for two years?

Erica Gionfriddo: Hopefully, if we're lucky.

Julia Goldberg: Yeah. Is that unusual, rather than having a bunch of different projects or...

Erica Gionfriddo: It's really—I think we consider ourselves very lucky to be able to do that. It's something that because of time and financial constraints a lot of groups don't get to do. It was incredible to perform this particular show 24 times in a row, and get it really tight and to a point where, you know, you don't even think about it. You go out every show is good and it's a matter of fine tuning. I think for bigger companies, when you're more "successful" and you get those tours, you are doing the same show for the better part of a year. So, we're considering it a, you know, step in the right direction.

Julia Goldberg: Can you talk a little bit about the show itself and why you think it's having resonance? Because it's, aside from just, you know, the arti—the aesthetic pleasure of seeing great dancing or just seeing a great show, there's a kind of strong message in it that seems pretty relevant to the world we're living in today. I mean, your grandparents literally—you don't hear too many stories about, you know, people on opposite sides in World War II coming together Successfully.

Eliot Gray Fisher: Yeah, well, I mean, I think, you know, that was what we saw was powerful. And I think talking about what kind of thematic content or, you know, what would inspire us for another show, it would have to be something as powerful as that. You know, the message in my grandfather's book, which he wrote in 1959, was all about, you know, partly about America's culpability in World War II, which, you know, was not

talked about by almost anyone at that time. And even today, I mean, today, you know, you've got, presidents and everyone trying to use World War II as this, it's an easy metaphor for what war can be when it's good. It's the "good war," right? Um, and there is no good war. That's the reality. And that's what my grandparents said at the time, which was definitely not in fashion at the time and still not in fashion today. I mean, maybe it's a little bit easier for them, but there's still these polarized sides. And to see these two former enemies figure out that, you know, all that stuff didn't matter and that it was put on us—it's put on all of us culturally. It's a pretty powerful message. And another reason that I think it works, right now, and is resonant right now, is that we're losing that generation. And part of it's—the story was inspired by the fact that my grandmother died five years ago. And that generation is, is leaving, and yet we're still, you know, haunted and there are still wounds. And when we were over there in Edinburgh, it was really apparent how much more deeply affected, obviously all of Europe still is. We met this woman in a pub the first week we were there who was pretty drunk Scottish woman, and she was telling us about her work and she said she'd just gotten transferred to this German account. And she was not sure what she was going to do about that, you know, and she—they, you know—she still felt that. And we realized, I mean, even last year, they're, they're digging up in Germany to, to build a new building and they dig up a bomb in downtown Munich, or, you know, Berlin.

Julia Goldberg: And yes. So you are actually hoping to have the show tour more in Europe?

Eliot Gray Fisher: I mean, that, that would be ideal. We actually had some people come and see the show at the Fringe who were interested in helping us do that. Who are sort of philosophically aligned and have organizations that are interested in promoting the idea of reconciliation after war, reconciliation of enemies, searching for peace and using arts as a way to do that.

Julia Goldberg: So is that an evolving part of the mission of ARCOS Dance? I mean, did you set out thinking we want to do art that has sort of this social conscience or has it happened by accident? Erica's like, "social conscience?"

Erica Gionfriddo: Social conscience? We just go out and dance. No, it's definitely something that has arisen out of this show and it's an interesting byproduct of doing a true story like this. I think it's something that we couldn't have foreseen in the beginning when we set out to do it. But it is a very interesting and a powerful tool to, you know, make our lives as artists more fulfilling. Yes, we want to create great work and be flashy and get applause and stuff like that, but it goes beyond that. If we're going to be doing this for the rest of our lives, we want to do something meaningful that's going to have an impact. And this has been a really unforeseen way to do that.

Julia Goldberg: I'm in the studio, if you just tuned in, with Eliot Fisher and Erica Gionfriddo, whose name I've probably been mispronouncing for a long time.

Erica Gionfriddo: It's perfect. You pronounce it perfectly every time and say that.

Julia Goldberg: Don't I do it differently every time? From ARCOS Dance. They are here with me in the studio. We're going to take a quick break and we'll be right back here live on KVSF 101.5 FM, The Voice of Santa Fe.

Announcer: She's back, she's back! The Julia Goldberg Show on KVSF 101.5, The Voice of Santa Fe, and streaming on santafe.com. Friday 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM. You are now a hostage of the Julia Goldberg Show.

Julia Goldberg: Hey there folks, 11:50 AM you've got 10 minutes to make it to city hall or the county buildings because they are closing at noon for Fiesta. Joining me on Fiesta Friday morning, my friends Erica Gionfriddo and Eliot Fisher from ARCOS Dance company. It was founded here in Santa Fe. You probably got to see them, but now you don't get to see them anymore because they relocated to Austin. Why did that happen again? What was that? I can't remember. At the time I was like, "You young people!" And now I don't remember why that seemed reasonable.

Eliot Gray Fisher: That's a pretty good excuse right there.



Julia Goldberg: Was it, you just felt like there's going to be more opportunity to there.

Erica Gionfriddo: We needed a slightly bigger city, you know, to be pulling dancers from and support and all of that. And you know, we had been here for seven years with another company before we started ARCOS.

Julia Goldberg: Yeah.

Erica Gionfriddo: And that's always tough, I think to, you know, try to make a switch in the middle of a community. But, you know...

Julia Goldberg: And Eliot, you're back in town, staying at your folks' house?

Eliot Gray Fisher: Uh huh. Yep.

Erica Gionfriddo: We both are.

Julia Goldberg: Really? Well, you're married, so they probably let you be in the same room or they would've anyway.

Eliot Gray Fisher: They do.

Julia Goldberg: I think I might have been sitting behind your parents at the CCA show, and I couldn't really tell if they were weeping or not, but were they moved by this, given the sort of family history?

Eliot Gray Fisher: Yeah, they were moved. I mean, like Erica mentioned earlier, it was a really fascinating and difficult process to try to take these people—like, for instance, my grandfather, who I didn't know, but who, you know, raised my mom and aunt who both live here in town. My aunt teaches at St. John's, and mom teaches at Santa Fe Prep. And you know, this was their father and I was interpreting him as best I could, you know, and then working with my, my collaborators to try to, you know, communicate what I got out of what he was—what he left me, I thought, you know. But yeah, they've been very supportive throughout, incredibly

supportive and all the way through Scotland. And we're really excited to see us and, you know, have us come back as an award-winning company.

Julia Goldberg: You are, you're an award-winning dance company. Yeah. So what is, I know that the plan is to keep, *The Warriors: A Love Story* on the road, but what else is coming up next?

Erica Gionfriddo: So we have—we were very lucky this year not only to go to the UK for the first time, we received a small grant for *The Warriors* production, which was very exciting. And we also got awarded several artistic residencies for the fall. So in just a couple weeks here, we're going to be making our way out to Northern Oregon for a few weeks for an artistic residency that will cut us off from the world completely. No cell service, no internet, no googling anything. But some uninterrupted time to be developing a new work. And from there we head out to Sheridan, Wyoming for about four weeks. So we've got six weeks this fall to be creating a new work, uninterrupted time where like, we can't even, obviously you can't see my face, but I'm very, very excited about that.

Julia Goldberg: I was trying to interpret your face. I was like, first it made it seem like you thought Northern Oregon was a made-up place. You were like, "Northern Oregon..."

Erica Gionfriddo: Northern Oregon...

Eliot Gray Fisher: ...in quotes, right?

Erica Gionfriddo: Maybe reindeer or something.

Julia Goldberg: That's really exciting. And is there a piece or that you have in mind or what?

Erica Gionfriddo: We have a new piece that we had started workshopping last year and then shifted focus, obviously, over to the Edinburgh tour. It's a new piece called *Domain*, and it'll be another evening length, full-length multimedia production with a narrative, lyrical interpretation. But we're kind of just heading back to the drawing board with it. So it'll be really exciting to take some time to not be working on making the company

work operations-wise, but get back to the actual work that we do, the artistic work. So we're really lucky to have been awarded these.

Julia Goldberg: Yeah, that sounds fantastic. And where does this new show come from? Does it come from your brain, or is it

Eliot Gray Fisher: Yeah, it's coming from our brain. I mean, one of the things we've talked about just sort of generally at this point is thinking about the, the phases that we all—the stages of our lives, all of us, and kind of using rooms of a house as a metaphor for that, walking into, you know, through different doors at different times and leaving some stuff behind, taking some stuff with us. One of the things I'm interested in for the media stuff is thinking a lot about more found footage. Have seen some interesting work at Currents this last summer...

Julia Goldberg: Mm.

Eliot Gray Fisher: ...that used found footage in an interesting way. And there's just so much of it out there. Like I said, we incorporated a lot into this newest version of *The Warriors* that spanned the last a hundred years or a little bit more. And now it's just all out there and accessible to us, you know? So I'm interested in seeing what that can provide a new piece.

Julia Goldberg: I guess for some reason I have not thought of you—as multimedia being like your main thing. Is that sort of a shift, or has it always been that way and I just thought you did other things?

Eliot Gray Fisher: Well, like growing up here in Santa Fe, I was playing around—because both my parents are artistic, my dad's a sculptor and a printmaker and a painter and my mom is a writer—I kind of, I adopted their interests and their passions. So I've been playing around with my dad's video camera since I was young, doing theater at Atalaya Elementary, you know, and studying piano.

Julia Goldberg: Mm-hmm.

Eliot Gray Fisher: And doing and composing for a long time. So I've been trying to figure out how to do all of those to this day. In different ways,

either individually and, increasingly, with ARCOS what's cool is that we can do them all at the same time in a single production.

Julia Goldberg: So, multimedia: here to stay?

Eliot Gray Fisher: Here to stay here to stay, mix them all together...

Erica Gionfriddo: Like it or not.

Eliot Gray Fisher: ...mix them all together.

Julia Goldberg: Not a passing phase. Well, I'm becoming, more and more like I'm kind of hoping for Armageddon and to just sit in a dark room.

Julia Goldberg: Although Eliot's like, "You've been hoping for that for a long time."

Eliot Gray Fisher: For a while. Increasingly.

Julia Goldberg: I just want quiet and if the world has to end for me to have it, so be it. How can people keep up with ARCOS? You guys are pretty good with the newsletters and such.

Eliot Gray Fisher: Yeah.

Erica Gionfriddo: Newsletters. We've got a newsletter, you can find us at [arcosdance.com](http://arcosdance.com) our website. And we're also pretty active on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and our website says the other things, Google Plus and all that. But you know,

Eliot Gray Fisher: Google Plus...

Erica Gionfriddo: Who's on Google Plus?

Eliot Gray Fisher: ...Tumblr, Twitter...

Erica Gionfriddo: What's a tumbling around?

Eliot Gray Fisher: We're on all of the social media, but...

Julia Goldberg: Again, Armageddon. Sounds better and better doesn't it?

Eliot Gray Fisher: They told us that we had to be on Twitter...

Julia Goldberg: Yeah.

Eliot Gray Fisher: ...in a major way at the Edinburgh Festival. Yeah.

Erica Gionfriddo: And we forced our—it took me about six months to get the learning curve on Twitter.

Julia Goldberg: It's really easy...

Eliot Gray Fisher: People were looking for us on Twitter.

Julia Goldberg: Yeah. It's easier to ignore that stuff in Santa Fe. I mean I've been on Twitter a long time here, but I'm kind of,

Erica Gionfriddo: You're a good example.

Julia Goldberg: I'm not, like, joined by millions. It's like media more.

Eliot Gray Fisher: Yeah.

Julia Goldberg: So, and I think you go anywhere else and everybody's using it.

Erica Gionfriddo: It's crazy. Yeah.

Eliot Gray Fisher: All the reviewers and everything.

Julia Goldberg: Yeah.

Eliot Gray Fisher: They were all on Twitter.

Julia Goldberg: Was it exciting to get reviews from Broadway...?

Erica Gionfriddo: Hello?

Julia Goldberg: Yeah.

Erica Gionfriddo: Yeah, it was pretty exciting.

Julia Goldberg: Yeah.

Eliot Gray Fisher: Yeah, it was great. We'd only been reviewed, you know, by the *Pasatiempo* and a couple blogs here in Santa Fe.

Julia Goldberg: Mm-hmm.

Eliot Gray Fisher: So it was great to see the range and we got a number of reviewers in, which was really cool.

Julia Goldberg: Yeah. People overall really seemed to respond to the show.

Eliot Gray Fisher: Mm-hmm.

Julia Goldberg: Quite a lot.

Eliot Gray Fisher: Yeah. You know, they—the only thing a lot of them had to critique was that it's really busy. Which it is, because—that's intentional, you know, mix of multimedia like we're doing.

Julia Goldberg: Yeah. Multimedia.

Eliot Gray Fisher: Multimedia. Armageddon.

Julia Goldberg: And you left Scotland with an addiction for haggis, I hear?

Erica Gionfriddo: We did and we brought you something back.

Eliot Gray Fisher: We brought you a gift.

Erica Gionfriddo: You have to hold it very close to the microphone.

Eliot Gray Fisher: It's a good gift for the radio. We'll give this to you

Julia Goldberg: Oh my god. And I was joking. Haggis and cracked black pepper potato crisps.

Erica Gionfriddo: Crisps, yes.

Julia Goldberg: Wow.

Eliot Gray Fisher: Yeah. So, so you have to open that bag on the radio and, and eat some of them.

Erica Gionfriddo: Take at least one.

Julia Goldberg: Well...

Eliot Gray Fisher: Taste what haggis is like.

Julia Goldberg: Well is haggis meat?

Erica Gionfriddo: It's spray-on flavored meat. We had this conversation with another vegetarian yesterday, and we decided it was in the realm.

Julia Goldberg: Yeah.

Erica Gionfriddo: of acceptable.

Julia Goldberg: I mean, not that, not that I don't trust you, but I am pretty sure.

Erica Gionfriddo: What about Gino? Gino, would you try a haggis-flavored crisp?

Julia Goldberg: Pretty sure haggis is meat. Here, Gino. Gino will eat anything. That's what's great about him.

Erica Gionfriddo: Here we go.

Gino: I don't trust these.

Erica Gionfriddo: What?

Julia Goldberg: You're not a vegetarian.

Eliot Gray Fisher: We were suspicious of haggis at first, too, when we arrived, because they told us what was in it.

Julia Goldberg: Yeah.

Eliot Gray Fisher: But by the end, I mean...

Julia Goldberg: What is in it?

Erica Gionfriddo: You've had a hot dog, right?

Julia Goldberg: No, I'm a vegetarian.

Eliot Gray Fisher: You've heard what goes in hot dogs, yeah?

Julia Goldberg: I've heard of hot dog—I've heard of these things called hot dogs.

Eliot Gray Fisher: Well haggis is just all of the leftover sort of [laughter] and they—it's supposedly, served—we realized it's kind of like menudo, I think.

Julia Goldberg: Oh yeah. I don't eat that either.

Eliot Gray Fisher: But it's kind of coagulated or hard.

Julia Goldberg: Well it is a very thoughtful gift.

Erica Gionfriddo: Beer-battered and deep fried, it's delicious.

Julia Goldberg: No, it's very thoughtful gift. And lucky for you Zane Fischer's on his way into the studio, and he literally will eat anything. So.



Erica Gionfriddo: Excellent. Well, we'll be listening for his reaction.

Julia Goldberg: Yes. Listen for it. Erica and Eliot, it's really awesome to see you. This is how I get to reunite with my friends. I'm like, "You can come and be on the radio," but you have a lot of great news. So it's—I'm glad ARCOS Dance is thriving.

Eliot Gray Fisher: Thanks for having us on.

Julia Goldberg: Someday you'll come back having to Santa Fe, right?

Erica Gionfriddo: Absolutely.

Eliot Gray Fisher: Yeah, exactly.

Julia Goldberg: Okay.

Eliot Gray Fisher: Really soon. All right, folks, we're going to take a quick break and when we return as promised, Mr. Zane Fischer is going to come into the studio. He's a regular contributor, and we're going to talk about how that #howtosantafe campaign's been going. Maybe we'll talk about Governor Martinez taking some heat for losing out on the Tesla Motor Factory and so much more. I am Julia Goldberg and I want to thank you for tuning in. You're listening to KVSF 101.5, The Voice of Santa Fe.