

# Clock ticks on dance project's Web campaign

A dancer from Arcos Dance's new production, *The Warriors: A Love Story*. The dance company has launched an online campaign to raise funds for the show.

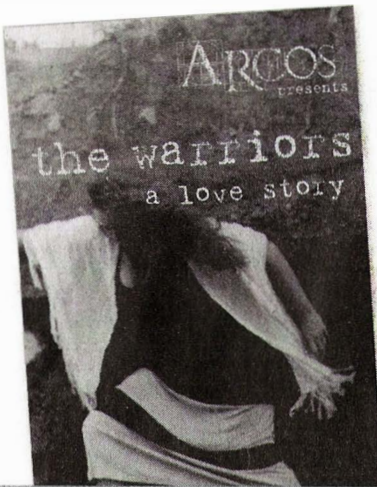


IMAGE COURTESY  
ARCOS DANCE

Local company Arcos Dance has until Jan. 13 to raise \$23,000 to bring World War II story to stage

By Adele Oliveira  
The New Mexican

Just 2 years old, local dance company Arcos Dance is already known for its visceral, elaborate performances.

In October, the group premiered *The March*, a dance piece set to orchestral drums. In that performance, dancers carried sabers and wore bold, military-style hats.

This February, Arcos will present a debut work, *The Warriors: A Love Story*, based on the

World War II experiences of multimedia director Eliot Fisher's grandparents. Together with his wife, Arcos associate artistic director Erica Gionfriddo, and company artistic director Curtis Uhlemann, Fisher has ambitious plans to bring his grandparents' story — and the broader story of World War II — to the stage.

Like any creative project, *The Warriors* requires funding. And artistic professionals,

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## ON THE WEB

◆ To learn more about Arcos Dance performances or its USA Projects fundraising, visit [www.usaprojects.org](http://www.usaprojects.org) and enter "The Warriors" into the search box.

## Dance: Multimedia production to hit local stage in February

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including Fisher and Gionfriddo, are no strangers to the grant-writing and pleading-for-money routine. But they went a different route for this show, signing on with the online funding platform USA Projects, a 501(c)(3) organization.

"We're trying to raise \$23,000 which sounds like a lot, but is pretty modest considering the amount of things we're trying to do," Gionfriddo said. Since launching last week, the project has raised \$7,015, about 25 percent of its goal. *The Warriors* has until midnight Jan. 13, 2013, to raise the full \$23,000.

USA Projects is similar to other online funding platforms like Kickstarter and Indiegogo, in that it allows users to set a goal for the amount of money they want to raise and solicit donations from anyone and everyone — grandmothers and best friends, sure, but also supporters from around the world who find out about projects through the funding website or social media.

In return, funders get rewards — in the case of *The Warriors*, handwritten thank-you notes, a Skype conversation with the directors and a sneak peek of the performance, depending on how much one gives.

There is a catch. Like Kickstarter and some Indiegogo projects, USA Project campaigns must raise their intended goal by a pre-determined date to see any funding at all. If the campaign falls short, whether by \$5 or \$500, all money raised is returned to the donors.

Unlike Kickstarter and other online funding platforms, USA Projects has a set of criteria: Applicants must have previously received a grant from a set of pre-approved sources. Once approved, USA Projects fundraising campaigns receive support from project managers, and

because USA Projects is a nonprofit, donations through the organization are tax-deductible.

"Another benefit is that USA Projects has matching funds available," Fisher said. "We received \$1,000 in matching funds from New Mexico Artists Match Fund, which doubles donors' gifts. It feels good to give \$25, and all of a sudden it's \$50."

Fisher noted that while major donors are important, the bulk of their USA Projects campaign is made up of smaller donations from funders who can afford to give \$20 or \$25. Similar to the 2008 Obama campaign's focus on more and smaller donations, Fisher said smaller pledges from many people help create community around the show. Because the piece itself is personal, it makes sense that the fundraising process is, too.

"My grandfather died a few years before I was born," Fisher said. His grandfather was J. Glenn Gray, "a Pennsylvania farm boy with a Ph.D. in philosophy." During the war, Gray went into towns recently retaken by the Allies, trying to root out Nazis and sympathizers. After the war, he did the same in the German university system. Gray later wrote a book (including diary excerpts) called *The Warriors: Reflections on Men in Battle*.

"I did an oral history project in high school where I interviewed my grandmother about her experience during the bombing of Dresden," Fisher said. His grandmother was Ursula Gray, an accomplished German dancer.

"I knew who these people were," he said, "but I didn't necessarily know who they were when they were our age, and that was the source material for the show. ... We realized when we started thinking about World War II that it was too broad to put

into one show, so we concentrated on figures who lived during that era and the concept of telling a broader story though individuals' stories."

*The Warriors* features three actors (including Fisher), six dancers (including Gionfriddo and Uhlemann) and a couple of musicians, also including Fisher.

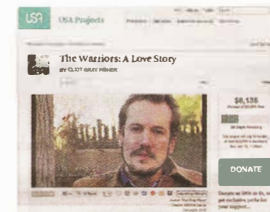
Multimedia is the very essence of *The Warriors*. "One of the concepts we're working with in the show is simultaneity: trying to blend different genres effectively," Fisher said. "There's always some element of theater, plus dance, video, sound design, all at varying degrees throughout the show."

"There's a real feeling of overlapping," Gionfriddo added. "The audience has to choose what to look at to a certain extent, and we hope this provokes some thought and encourages [the audience to] actively participate. We're not dictating, we're giving options."

Both Gionfriddo and Fisher see online fundraising as a primary avenue for raising money for future projects. A smaller Kickstarter campaign for their October show was successful as well. "It's grass-roots-oriented," Gionfriddo said. "It allows us to reach out to different people, and we get to talk about the project. It's having to get the word out there yourself — not talking in a conference room with one specific person or writing to a board, but talking to the people who are going to support you."

"It makes the work stronger to have eyes on it earlier in the process," Fisher added. "Fundraising and outreach are parts of creating the work we do. ... I have a feeling we'll do much more [online fundraising] in the years to come."

*The Warriors: A Love Story* will show at the Center for Contemporary Arts from Feb. 8 to Feb. 17, 2013.



Arcos Dance has already raised more than \$7,000 — about 25 percent of its funding goal — through USA Projects.