

Written by Mike Schulz

Wednesday, 26 January 2011 06:00

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Since it's called *Love Stories*, you'd rightfully expect Ballet Quad Cities' latest presentation to be chockablock with stirring physicality and sensual *pas de deux*. And indeed, this Valentine's Day-inspired outing

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given the same title as
last

February's Ballet Quad Cities production, but boasting new vignettes by a quintet of choreographers — will find the company's professional dancers expressing, in thrillingly nonverbal fashion, what Executive Director Joedy Cook describes as "the many angles to love."

Yet for her contribution to *Love Stories*, 29-year-old choreographer and Ballet Quad Cities veteran Lynn Andrews appears to have been inspired less by romantic love than her sheer love of dance. That, and perhaps her love of a challenge.

"We did it in five days," said Andrews of the clever, exuberant piece that I watched, in rehearsal, during our early-January conversation. "And it was crazy. It was like, 'Eleven dancers! Five days! Seventeen minutes of music! Go!'"

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“So I haven’t been sleeping so well these past few nights,” she added with a laugh. “But now, I’m in a pretty good spot.”

As, I must say, are Ballet Quad Cities’ company members. *Love Stories* will be staged at Davenport North High School’s Holzworth Performing Arts Center on February 12 and 13, but at the rehearsal I attended, with more than a month before the first performance, Andrews’ vignette already looked to be in outstanding shape.

Titled “Delicatessan,” and borrowing music from the 1991 French film of the same name, Andrews’ *Love Stories* contribution is a tightly paced blend of mixed- and same-sex group routines and the inevitable romantic *pas de deux*, all underscored by a variety of songs with Latin, French, and 1920s-American stylings. And with Ballet Quad Cities’ company members not only tackling the demanding choreography, but doing so while also miming such activities as flattening dough with rolling pins, baking cakes, and flipping pizzas in the air, Andrews’ offering is a dynamically engaging yet down-to-earth piece of work – a showcase for both the dancers’ gifts and its creator’s obvious talent and imagination.

“I like people-watching,” said Andrews of the inspiration for her choreography. “I like *pedestrians*. And so I really like infusing everyday gestures with this kind of large, virtuosic movement.”

Though Andrews is now back home in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, the Bettendorf native’s *Love Stories* ten
ure served as a return to Ballet Quad Cities for the choreographer, who was a dance student with the company “for seven, eight years, all through middle and high school.

“I started pretty late,” said Andrews of her beginnings in ballet at age 12. But in the mid-’90s, “I saw *The Nutcracker* at the Capitol [Theatre in Davenport], and I fell in love. I wasn’t, like, ‘I want to be a fairy princess,’ but I was energized by the movement, and the excitement, and the energy – everything. And I wanted to be part of it. I was like, ‘I’ll pull the *curtain* *cur*
. I don’t care.”

Eleven Dancers! Five Days! Seventeen Minutes of Music! Go!: Ballet Quad Cities Veteran Lynn Andrews C

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