

## And the Winner Is?

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With the Academy Awards looming, 'tis the season for red carpets and sealed envelopes. Similarly, the 2010 Big Easy Award Show is poised to honor local talent, including John Allen, an assistant professor in the Tulane Department of Theatre and Dance who is nominated (Best Choreographyâ€“New Work) for "Without a Fight," a piece he directed with performances by members of the Newcomb Dance Company.



Tulane dance faculty member John Allen is nominated for his third classical arts honor in the Big Easy Awards. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

The five-minute piece started small. Allen gave the students a single dance movement and allowed them to creatively interpret it under his guidance. Choreography, says Allen, is often a collaborative process to which dancers are invited to bring their own ideas.

"I just start listening to them and to the impressions that come to me," Allen says.

While he is cautious about explaining the meaning of his work — interpretation is in the eye of the beholder, after all — Allen admits it is often biographical.

"I don't do this purposefully," Allen said. "But at the end of the choreographic process, I can look at it and I often recognize myself, or situations that I've found myself in recently, or maybe even things that are to come."

Allen's current project, *Waiting Room*, is his seventh with the Newcomb Dance Company, and the spirit of collaboration persists. The work will be part of the company's 25th anniversary performance, "An Evening of Dance" on March 12<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup>.

"I'm actually having one of the students, Bri Nowlin, be responsible for restaging and re-choreographing one section," he says.

Undergraduates Lina Belkin, Regina DeLaurentis and Natalie Gotter will perform *Without a Fight* at the Big Easy Award's 16th annual Tribute to the Classical Arts luncheon on Tuesday (March 9) at the Hotel Monteleone.

Allen received awards for Best Choreography<sup>®</sup>–New Work in 2008 as a co-choreographer and for Best Modern Dance Production in 2007 as a co-director.