

## *AU partners with nationally acclaimed dance company*

The Liz Lerman Dance Exchange graced the Greenberg Theatre last weekend with "Scores for Salt and Snow: Dances Since 2002," which Washington Post dance critic Barbara Allen praised as "possessing a depth and maturity of vision." The performance was the culmination of a year-long "groundbreaking relationship" between AU and Lerman's troupe, said Sherrie Barr, director of AU's dance program. "Typically [a company] comes, they do a piece or teach a class, and they leave. [The Lerman Dance Exchange] really got to know the students; they advised thesis projects, they came and watched rehearsals."



This year's partnership formalized a long-standing informal relationship between AU and Lerman by bringing Dance Exchange members to AU to teach an advanced modern dance class, choreograph and direct student performances, and dance in AU pieces. Over the last few years, Dance Exchange artistic director DiMurio taught courses and choreographed performances at AU as a guest artist. The 2003-2004 more intensive program is designed to feed AU students educationally and philosophically, while also benefitting local dance patrons and the Dance Exchange itself.

"The Lerman Dance Exchange has an inclusive notion about dance," said Barr. Their collaborative approach to dance that takes into account community impact resulted in "Scores for Salt and Snow," which incorporated spoken lines, props, audience interaction, personal stories, humor, and two pieces commissioned by the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center for their Age of Anxiety Festival, which took place shortly after the Sept. 11 tragedy. By seeking to expand the boundaries of dance and explore social issues, "Everyone's voice can be taken into account in the making of dance," said Barr.

Lerman's approaches complement those of the AU dance program, which Barr described as also interested in stretching traditional notions of dance performance. The primarily graduate level program offers a master's degree in a liberal arts context, designed to help students perfect technique and understand the world from new cultural, social, and political points of view. "Dancers are no longer silent, whether it be on the classroom or on the stage," said Barr.

—Emily D. Johnson