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Contact: Emily Macel
301.270.6700 ext. 13
emilym@danceexchange.org

***Liz Lerman Dance Exchange welcomes
David Bauer, first-ever Rabbi-in-Residence***

Takoma Park, MD, February 5, 2010— Rabbi David Bauer joins Liz Lerman Dance Exchange as the first ever Rabbinic Fellow in Residence through the month of February. With an extensive background arts, scholarship, and spirituality, Rabbi Bauer is pursuing his study of the intersection of faith and dance. Based on the Dance Exchange’s long experience teaching and creating in Jewish settings, this pilot program is intended to explore the value of direct exchange between a practicing rabbi and an inquiry-driven dance company.

During his fellowship, Rabbi Bauer will take classes with the dance company and plans to learn about creating rituals and telling stories in dance and movement within communities. His work with the Dance Exchange will examine ways to fuse movement and theater with Torah study and Jewish worship. As part of his fellowship with the Dance Exchange, David is writing a blog with his reflections on his experiences: <http://www.rabbidanceexchange.blogspot.com/>

Rabbi Bauer comes to the Dance Exchange from Amherst, Massachusetts, where he has served as the rabbi of the Jewish Community of Amherst since graduating from the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in 2003. He is an alumnus of the Rabbinic Leadership Program of the Institute for Jewish Spirituality and served as a chaplaincy intern at the Jewish Geriatric Center in Philadelphia. An activist in the field of queer spirituality, he has also taught and led workshops in various contexts about Judaism and eroticism, LGBTQ theology, and the body.

Prior to his rabbinical studies, he directed and stage managed for theatre and opera companies around the USA and Europe, including: the Washington Opera, New York City Opera, New Israeli Opera (Tel Aviv), Prague State Opera (Czech Republic), Oper der Stadt Köln, Stadttheater Hildesheim (Germany), Houston Grand Opera, the Metropolitan Opera, the Bolshoi Ballet United States Tour, and Ten Ten Players, New York City’s oldest off-off Broadway theatre company.

“I came to the rabbinate after a 20-year career in the performing arts, and I don't really see them as distinct,” says Rabbi Bauer. “I tell people that I left theatre to go into show business.”

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Liz Lerman Dance Exchange is piloting the Rabbinic Fellowship based on its long history of Jewish-oriented work, which is one dimension of its larger mission into real-life subject matter and interdisciplinary partnership. Jewish learning, lore and identity have been subjects of the company's theatrical dance works, and Jewish institutions have been the setting for intensive collaborations focused on the integration of the arts into prayer, study and worship. The Rabbinic Fellowship offers a new path by which the company can share its unique tools with professionals in another field of practice, as well as a way to enrich and coalesce its own methods and learning.

About Liz Lerman Dance Exchange

Liz Lerman founded Liz Lerman Dance Exchange in 1976. Its unique brand of dance/theatre breaks boundaries between stage and audience, theater and community, movement and language, tradition and the unexplored. Through explosive dancing, personal stories, humor, and a company of performers whose ages span six decades, Liz Lerman Dance Exchange stretches the expressive range of contemporary dance. Its work consists of formal concerts, interactive performances, specialized community residencies, and professional training in the art of community-based dance. An artist-driven organization, Liz Lerman Dance Exchange employs a collaborative approach to dance making, administration, and implementation. Representing the multiple artistic voices of Liz Lerman Dance Exchange, current choreographic projects include explorations of coal mining, genetic research, radical prayer, human rights, particle physics and geology.

For more information, please visit www.danceexchange.org.