

MIKI LISZT DANCE COMPANY

NEWS RELEASE

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Complexities of Islamic Veiling Explored Through Contemporary Dance Miki Liszt Dance Company to Stage “Under the Veil” at the Paramount Theater

Charlottesville, VA, December 15, 2008 – Miki Liszt Dance Company will perform “Under the Veil,” a contemporary dance that tackles the labyrinthine complexities of Islamic veiling, at the **Paramount Theater** in Charlottesville on **Sunday, January 18, at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m.** The evening performance is a fundraiser and will be followed by a reception to celebrate the company’s 25th anniversary.

In “Under the Veil,” Iranian-born choreographer Miki Birjandi Liszt explores the paradoxes and complexity of the Chador. The dance looks at how society reveals and conceals women using the veil as a metaphor to raise questions about women’s parameters and cultural boundaries.

The Chador, worn by Iranian women to comply with the dress code known as *hijab* (Arabic for “curtain”), is a full-length semicircle of fabric open down the front. With the veil always a presence, movements about physical limitations for the female cast. Slides of the body revealed despite the veil tempt audiences to discover hidden power and potential liberation in this mysterious symbol.

Set to classical and modern Persian music and poetry, the piece is drawn from the choreographer’s experiences in Iranian, American, and other cultures where veiling raises questions about options for women. Originally developed in 1999 as a solo with a project grant from the Virginia Commission for the Arts, Liszt expanded the work to encompass ten sections and multiple dancers. The new version had its premiere at the Helen Mills Theater in New York last December.

“Under the Veil” will be performed at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. on Sunday, January 18, 2009, at the Paramount Theater in downtown Charlottesville. Tickets are \$10 for the matinee and \$25 for the evening performance, a fundraiser to benefit programs that support dance in Central Virginia. A reception to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Miki Liszt Dance Company will follow the 8 p.m. performance. Tickets are available online at theparamount.net or by calling the box office at 434-979-1333. Proceeds will benefit MLDC programs that support dance in Central Virginia.

About the Choreographer: Miki Liszt, Artistic Director of Miki Liszt Dance Company, studied choreography at Sarah Lawrence College with Bessie Schonberg, for whom the Bessie Schonberg Theater in New York and the “Bessie” awards in Dance and Performance are named. Her work has been praised by *The New York Times* for “finding deep reality in ordinary movement.” In 2007, the Piedmont Council of the Arts presented her with its Individual Artist Award.

About Miki Liszt Dance Company: MLDC is a nonprofit organization based at McGuffey Art Center in Charlottesville, Virginia. Its mission is to expose audiences to new currents in dance performance while giving regional dancers the opportunity to create and perform new work. In addition to the annual Community Children’s Dance Festival, the company sponsors the First Friday Series, recently showcased in *Dance Magazine*. For more information about the company and its programs, visit mikilisztdance.org or call 434-973-3744.