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Paul Taylor (1930-2018), one of the most accomplished artists this nation has ever produced, helped shape and define America’s homegrown art of modern dance from the earliest days of his career as a choreographer in 1954 until his death in 2018. Having performed with Martha Graham’s company for several years, Mr. Taylor uniquely bridged the legendary founders of modern dance - Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis, Ted Shawn, Doris Humphrey and Ms. Graham - and the creative voices of the 20th and 21st centuries with whom he later worked.

Through his initiative at Lincoln Center begun in 2015 – Paul Taylor American Modern Dance – he presented great modern works of the past and outstanding works by today’s leading choreographers alongside his own vast and growing repertoire. He also commissioned a new generation of dance makers to work with his renowned Company, thereby helping to ensure the future of the art form.

Mr. Taylor continued to win public and critical acclaim for the vibrancy, relevance, and power of his dances into his eighties, offering cogent observations on life’s complexities while tackling some of society’s thorniest issues. While he often propelled his dancers through space for the sheer beauty of it, he more frequently used them to comment on such profound issues as war, piety, spirituality, sexuality, morality and mortality. If, as George Balanchine said, there are no mothers-in-law in ballet, there certainly are dysfunctional families, disillusioned idealists, imperfect religious leaders, angels and insects in Mr. Taylor’s dances. His repertoire of 147 works covers a breathtaking range of topics, but recurring themes include the natural world and man’s place within it; love and sexuality in all gender combinations; and iconic moments in American history. His poignant looks at soldiers, those who send them into battle and those they leave behind prompted The New York Times to hail him as “among the great war poets” – high praise indeed for an artist in a wordless medium. While some of his dances have been termed “dark” and others “light,” the majority of his works are dualistic, mixing elements of both extremes. And while some of his work was iconoclastic, he also made some of the most purely romantic, astonishingly athletic, and downright funniest dances ever put on stage.
Paul Taylor was born on July 29, 1930 – exactly nine months after the stock market crash that ushered in the Great Depression – and grew up in and around Washington, DC. He attended Syracuse University to study painting and wound up getting a swimming scholarship in the late 1940s until he discovered dance through books at the University library. He then transferred to The Juilliard School and began his career in New York City. In 1954, he assembled a small company of dancers and began to choreograph. A commanding performer despite his late start in dance, he joined the Martha Graham Dance Company in 1955 for the first of seven seasons while continuing to choreograph on his own troupe. In 1959, George Balanchine created the “Episodes” solo for him, and he was invited to be a guest artist with New York City Ballet. He respectfully declined, citing an interest to focus on his own work.

Mr. Taylor first gained notoriety as a dance maker in 1957 with “Seven New Dances;” its study in non-movement famously earned it a newspaper review made up of 3 inches of black dance space. In 1962, with his first major success – the sunny “Aureole” – he set his trailblazing modern movement not to contemporary music but to baroque works composed two centuries earlier, and then went to the opposite extreme a year later with a view of purgatory in “Scudorama,” using a commissioned, modern score. He inflamed the establishment in 1965 by lampooning some of America’s most treasured icons in “From Sea To Shining Sea,” and created more controversy in 1970 by putting incest and spousal abuse center stage in “Big Bertha.”

After retiring as a performer in 1974, Mr. Taylor turned exclusively to choreography, resulting in a flood of masterful creativity. The exuberant “Esplanade” (1975), one of several Taylor dances set to music by Bach, was dubbed an instant classic, and has come to be regarded as among the greatest dances ever made. In “Cloven Kingdom” (1976) Mr. Taylor examined the primitive nature that lurks just below man’s veneer of sophistication and gentility. With “Arden Court” (1981) he depicted relationships both platonic and romantic. He looked at intimacy among men at war in “Sunset” (1983); pictured Armageddon in “Last Look” (1985); and peered unflinchingly at religious hypocrisy and marital rape in “Speaking In Tongues” (1988). In “Company B” (1991) he used popular songs of the 1940s to reveal the propaganda of the war effort to keep optimism of our nation while Americans were sacrificing their lives overseas. In “Eventide” (1997) he portrayed the budding and fading of romance. In “The Word” (1998), he railed against religious zealotry and blind conformity to authority. In the first decade of the new millennium he reminded us of humanity’s ability to overcome destruction in “Promethean Fire” (2002); condemned American imperialism in “Banquet of Vultures” (2008); and stared death square in the face in the Walt Whitman...
...inspired Beloved Renegade* (2008). "Brief Encounters" (2009) examined the inability of many people in contemporary society to form meaningful and lasting relationships. In this decade he turned a frightening short story into a searing drama in "To Make Crops Grow" (2012) and compared the mating rituals of the insect world to that of humans in the comedic "Gossamer Gallants" (2011). Mr. Taylor’s final work, "Concertiana," made when he was 87, premiered at Lincoln Center in 2018.

Hailed for uncommon musicality and catholic taste, Mr. Taylor set movement to music so memorably that for many people it is impossible to hear certain orchestral works and popular songs and not think of his dances. He set works to an eclectic mix that includes Medieval masses, Renaissance dances, baroque concertos, classical warhorses, and scores by Debussy, Cage, Feldman, Ligeti and Pärt; Ragtime, Tango, Tin Pan Alley and Barbershop Quartets; Harry Nilsson, The Mamas and The Papas, and Burl Ives; telephone time announcements, loon calls and laughter. Mr. Taylor influenced dozens of dancers who have gone on to choreograph – many on their own troupes – while others have gone on to become important teachers at colleges and universities. And he worked closely with such outstanding artists as James F. Ingalls, Jasper Johns, Alex Katz, Ellsworth Kelly, William Ivey Long, Santo Loquasto, Gene Moore, Tharon Musser, Robert Rauschenberg, John Rawlings, Thomas Skelton, Rouben Ter Arutunian, and Jennifer Tipton. Mr. Taylor’s dances are performed by the Paul Taylor Dance Company and companies throughout the world including the Royal Danish Ballet, Rambert Dance Company, American Ballet Theatre, San Francisco Ballet, Miami City Ballet, and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.

As the subject of the documentary films "Dancemaker" and "Creative Domain," and author of the autobiography "Private Domain" and The Wall Street Journal essay "Why I Make Dances," Mr. Taylor shed light on the mysteries of the creative process as few artists have. "Dancemaker," which received an Oscar nomination in 1999, was hailed by Time Magazine as "perhaps the best dance documentary ever," while "Private Domain," originally published by Alfred A. Knopf, was nominated by the National Book Critics Circle as the most distinguished biography of 1987. A collection of Mr. Taylor’s essays, "Facts and Fancies," was published by Delphinium Press in 2013.

Mr. Taylor received nearly every important honor given to artists in the United States. In 1992, he was a recipient of the Kennedy Center Honors and received an Emmy Award for "Speaking in Tongues," produced by WNET/New York the previous year. He was awarded the National Medal of Arts by President Clinton in 1993. In 1995, he received the Algur H. Meadows Award for Excellence in the Arts and was named one of 50 prominent Americans
honored in recognition of their outstanding achievement by the Library of Congress’s Office of Scholarly Programs. He is the recipient of three Guggenheim Fellowships, and honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degrees from California Institute of the Arts, Connecticut College, Duke University, The Juilliard School, Skidmore College, the State University of New York at Purchase, Syracuse University and Adelphi University. Awards for lifetime achievement include a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship – often called the “genius award” – and the Samuel H. Scripps American Dance Festival Award. Other awards include the New York State Governor’s Arts Award and the New York City Mayor’s Award of Honor for Art and Culture. In 1989 Mr. Taylor was elected one of ten honorary members of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. Having been elected to knighthood by the French government as Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in 1969 and elevated to Officier in 1984 and Commandeur in 1990, Mr. Taylor was awarded France’s highest honor, the Légion d’Honneur, in 2000 for exceptional contributions to French culture.

Mr. Taylor died in Manhattan on August 29, 2018, leaving an extraordinary legacy of creativity and vision not only to American modern dance but to the entire world.
Michael Novak became the second Artistic Director in the history of the Paul Taylor Dance Foundation in September 2018, after being personally selected by Founder Paul Taylor to be the official successor of the title upon his passing. A critically-acclaimed dancer of the Company from 2010 – 2019, Novak earned a nomination for the Clive Barnes Foundation Dance Award for his debut Season, and by the time of retirement had performed 56 roles in 50 Taylor dances, as well as new roles in several works by today’s contemporary choreographers.

Under Novak’s direction, the Paul Taylor Dance Company continues its place as one of the world’s premiere modern dance companies – with a robust international touring program, dynamic online presence, and ever-expanding repertory drawing from the Taylor canon, important historical masterpieces, and the foundation’s contemporary commissioning program. He partnered with Orchestra of St. Luke’s Bach Festival, curating the first-ever presentation of Paul Taylor’s six iconic dances to baroque composer Bach. And, in 2019, in honor of the death of Paul Taylor, launched “The Celebration Tour,” a multi-year international touring retrospective of Taylor’s expansive repertoire. His first season as Artistic Director at the David H. Koch Theater at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts was hailed by the New York Times as “groundbreaking” and “inspirational” and received significant critical acclaim.

Raised in Rolling Meadows, IL, Novak began studying dance at age ten. At 12 he developed a severe speech impediment that required intensive therapy. Dance became a liberating and vital force for self-expression. “I wanted nothing more than to achieve in dancing that sense of effortlessness and grace that were so difficult for me to find while speaking aloud,” he said. “With dancing, there were no limits to what I could express.” In 2001, Novak was offered a Presidential Scholarship to attend The University of the Arts in Philadelphia to pursue training in jazz and ballet. The following year, he undertook an apprenticeship at the Pennsylvania Academy of Ballet Society, where he remained until 2004.
Novak was admitted to Columbia University's School of General Studies where he was awarded scholarships for academic excellence. He became a member of the Columbia Ballet Collaborative, the University’s critically acclaimed resident company, and was named Artistic Associate responsible for advising on the curation of resident choreographers and directing the group’s branding and promotion. At Columbia, Novak became immersed in the study of dance history, which ignited his passionate devotion to modern dance. He developed a keen interest in the work of François Delsarte, the 19th Century French movement theorist who codified the system linking emotion and gesture that would inspire the first generation of American modern dancers. A highlight of his studies at Columbia was performing Mr. Taylor’s solo in “Aureole,” which led him to embrace the Taylor repertoire. In a 2009 program celebrating Diaghilev at Columbia’s Miller Theatre, Novak embodied Vaslav Nijinsky’s role in “L’Après-midi d’un faune” with an authenticity that brought him to the attention of dance critics and scholars. Upon graduation, Novak received his BA in Dance magna cum laude with Departmental Honors, and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa, and in 2020, he was invited back as distinguished alumni to be the Keynote Speaker for the Class of 2020.
The genesis of the Paul Taylor Dance Company occurred on May 30, 1954 in Manhattan, when dancemaker Paul Taylor first presented his choreography with five other dancers on the Lower East Side. That performance marked the beginning of 64 years of unrivaled creativity, and in the decades that followed, Mr. Taylor became a cultural icon and one of American history’s most celebrated artists, and was part of the pantheon that created American modern dance. Leading the Company that bears his name until his death in 2018, Mr. Taylor molded it into one of the preeminent performing ensembles in the world. Under the artistic direction of Taylor dancer Michael Novak the Company continues to perform throughout the world as well as at its New York City home, the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts – where it appears under the aegis of Paul Taylor American Modern Dance.

The hallmark of the Company is its ever-expanding repertory. Over 170 dances exist within the Foundation’s canon, 147 of which were choreographed by Mr. Taylor. The body of Mr. Taylor’ work is titled the Taylor Collection, and is home to dances that cover a breathtaking range of topics, themes, and moods. These dances speak to the natural world and man’s place within it; display love and sexuality in all gender combinations; contemplate iconic moments in American history; and study to the spectrum of life’s beauties, complexities, and society’s thorniest issues. While some of these dances are termed “dark” and other “light,” the majority are dualistic, mixing elements of both extremes. In addition to the Collection, the Company also commissions dance works from established and emerging choreographers, resulting in a repertory hailed as, “America’s most communicative and wildly theatrical modern dance.”

The Company currently resides in the Lower East Side of Manhattan, but sustains a global presence through its robust touring programs. Since its first European tour in 1960, the...
...Company has performed in more than 520 cities in 64 countries, representing the United States at arts festivals in more than 40 countries and touring extensively under the aegis of the U.S. Department of State. Dedicated to sharing modern dance with the broadest possible audience, the Company tours annually, both domestically and internationally, with performances and a variety of educational programs and engagement offerings. Recent tours have brought the Company to Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Ecuador, Germany, Italy, Oman, Peru, Switzerland, Taiwan, and Turkey, as well as scores of cities within the United States.
NEW VOICES

Visceral Expression.
Dynamic Physicality.
Expansive Repertory.

In 2014, after 60 years of choreographic exclusivity, Paul Taylor Dance Company began commissioning diverse and vibrant contemporary choreographers to make new dances on our renowned company. These "New Voices" are ushering modern dance into the 21st century with innovation, representation, and excellence.
BETTIE DE JONG was born in Sumatra, Indonesia, and in 1946 moved to Holland, where she continued her early training in dance and mime. Her first professional engagement was with the Netherlands Pantomime Company. After coming to New York City to study at the Martha Graham School, she performed with the Graham Company, the Pearl Lang Company, John Butler and Lucas Hoving, and was seen on CBS-TV with Rudolf Nureyev in a duet choreographed by Paul Taylor. Ms. de Jong joined the Taylor Company in 1962. Noted for her strong stage presence and long line, she was Mr. Taylor's favorite dancing partner and, as Rehearsal Director, continued to be his surrogate in the studio and on tour for more than 40 years. In 2019, she received the 2019 Balasaraswati/Joy Anne Dewey Beinecke Endowed Chair for Distinguished Teaching Award from American Dance Festival for her substantial contributions to the sustainment of the Taylor legacy.

ANDY LEBEAU was raised in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. He graduated from the Boston Conservatory of Music with a B.F.A. in dance in 1993. He then moved to New York City to be one of the original members of Taylor 2. Two years later he was invited to join Paul Taylor Dance Company. After retiring from the stage in 2005, Andy served as Director of The Taylor School, then Director of Taylor 2, Company Manager, and Rehearsal Assistant to Mr. Taylor. He was appointed Rehearsal Director in Winter 2018.

CATHY MCCANN was a member of the Paul Taylor Dance Company for 13 years. Among the 18 dances Mr. Taylor made on her were "Mercuric Tidings," "Brandenburgs," "Musical Offering" and "Sunset." She was featured in five Taylor television specials, including the 1991 Emmy Award-winning "Speaking in Tongues." In 1991, Mikhail Baryshnikov invited her to join the White Oak Dance Project, where she performed works by Mark Morris and Lar Lubovitch. Ms. McCann has staged Taylor dances for American Ballet Theatre, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, San Francisco Ballet, Paris Opera Ballet, and Houston Ballet, among others, and her own choreography has been presented at New York City Center. She has been a faculty member of Adelphi University, Barnard College and Hofstra University, and has taught at the American Dance Festival and Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival. She was Director of Taylor 2 from 2019 - 2020, and was appointed Rehearsal Director in Summer 2020.
ERAN BUGGE

Eran Bugge is from Oviedo, Florida, where she began her dance training at the Orlando Ballet School, and went on to study at the Hartt School at the University of Hartford under the direction of Peggy Lyman, graduating Summa Cum Laude with a B.F.A. in Ballet Pedagogy in 2005. She attended the Taylor School and the 2004 and 2005 Taylor Summer Intensives. Ms. Bugge has performed in works by Amy Marshall, Katie Stevinson-Nollet, and Jean Grand-Maitre. She was also a member of Full Force Dance Theatre and the Adam Miller Dance Project. In 2012, Ms. Bugge was the recipient of the Hartt Alumni Award. In 2018, she danced in the feature film The Chaperone choreographed by John Carrafa. She joined the Paul Taylor Dance Company in Fall 2005.

MICHAEL APUZZO

Michael Apuzzo grew up in North Haven, Connecticut. He studied Economics and Theater at Yale University, graduating Magna Cum Laude in 2005. Growing up in musical theater, he began his formal dance training in high school, then danced and choreographed in undergraduate companies. After being dance captain for an original production of Miss Julie choreographed by Peter Pucci, Mr. Apuzzo debuted professionally at the Yale Repertory Theater. He has since performed in numerous musicals at equity theaters across the country and in the National Tour of Twyla Tharp’s Broadway show, Movin’ Out. He is a second-degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do, author of Flying Through Yellow, certified personal trainer, and co-producer of the new Hamptons charity event Dancers For Good. He joined Paul Taylor Dance Company in Fall 2008.

HEATHER McGINLEY

Heather McGinley grew up in St. Louis, Missouri. There, she studied the Cecchetti Method of Classical Ballet for 10 years, ultimately earning a Diploma from the Cecchetti Council of America. Heather attended Butler University and graduated with a BFA in dance performance in 2005. She was a member of Graham II for two seasons and danced with the Martha Graham Dance Company from 2008 to 2011, performing in masterworks Appalachian Spring, Acts of Light, Chronicle, Clytemnestra, Diversion of Angels, Night Journey, and Maple Leaf Rag, among others. She also toured Italy in the original cast of Antonio Calenda’s Looking for Picasso, featuring adapted Graham ballets staged by Janet Eilber. In 2018, Heather danced in the feature film The Chaperone with choreography by John Carrafa. She participated in the 2010 Taylor Intensives before joining Paul Taylor Dance Company in Spring 2011.
DANCERS

CHRISTINA LYNCH MARKHAM

Christina Lynch Markham grew up in Westbury, New York and began dancing with Lori Shaw, and continued at Holy Trinity High School under the direction of Catherine Murphy. She attended Hofstra University on scholarship and performed works by Cathy McCann, Karla Wolfangle, Rachel List, Robin Becker, and Lance Westergard. During college she also trained at the Taylor School, and attended the School’s Summer Intensive Program. After graduating Summa Cum Laude in 2004, she danced with the Amy Marshall Dance Company, Stacie Nelson, and The Dance Theater Company. She joined Taylor 2 in Summer 2008, and made her debut with the Paul Taylor Dance Company in Summer 2013.

MADELYN HO, M.D.

Madelyn Ho, M.D. is from Sugar Land, Texas where she began dancing at Kinard Dance School with Shirley McMillan and later trained with BalletForte under the artistic direction of Michael Banigan. She graduated from Harvard College with a B.A. in Chemical and Physical Biology. While there, she was awarded the Artist Development Fellowship and attended the Taylor School Winter Intensive. She was a member of Taylor 2 from 2008 to 2012 and left to attend Harvard Medical School, during which time she was a guest artist for Alison Cook Beatty Dance and performed with Urbanity Dance. She joined the Paul Taylor Dance Company in Spring 2015 and completed her Doctorate of Medicine in May 2018.

KRISTIN DRAUCKER

Kristin Draucker was born in Washington D.C. and grew up in York, Pennsylvania. She began her training at the Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet under Marcia Dale Weary. In 2005, she was awarded a fellowship to study Horton and Graham at The Ailey School. Since moving to New York City she has danced with Michael Mao Dance, ArmitageGone!Dance, New Chamber Ballet, and at Bard’s Summerscape in Les Huguenots. In 2009, she joined the 50th Anniversary International Tour of West Side Story and, in 2010, performed in Tino Sehgal’s KISS at The Guggenheim Museum. Ms. Draucker began creating dances in 2014 and has shown her work in New York, Philadelphia and as part of the LaMAMA Umbria Festival in Spoleto, Italy. She joined the Paul Taylor Dance Company in Winter 2017.

Portraits by Bill Wadman.
LEE DUVENECK

Lee Duveneck grew up in Arlington, Texas, where he trained with Anne Oswalt and Gwen Price. In 2010, he earned his B.F.A. in Dance Performance from Southern Methodist University, where he studied with Taylor alumna Ruth Andrien and jazz dance icon Danny Buraczeski. While in New York, he has danced for Annmaria Mazzini, Mari Meade and Jessica Gaynor. Mr. Duveneck joined Taylor 2 in 2012, and joined the Paul Taylor Dance Company in Summer 2017.

ALEX CLAYTON

Alex Clayton grew up in Louisville, Kentucky, and he received his B.F.A. in Dance with a Minor in Visual Arts from Stephens College in 2013. He was a Graham 2 company member from 2014 to 2015. He also performed with companies including 10 Hairy Legs, Abarukas Project, Curet Performance Project and Performa15. He served as Rehearsal Assistant for Paul Taylor American Modern Dance ‘Taylor Company Commissions’ choreographer Lila York when she created Continuum in 2016. He joined the Paul Taylor Dance Company in Summer 2017.

DEVON LOUIS

Devon Louis hails from Washington, D.C., and is a graduate of Duke Ellington School of the Arts. He attended the Ailey School as a recipient of the Oprah Winfrey Scholarship, and furthered his dance education at Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival under the direction of Milton Myers. Mr. Louis has performed works by Alvin Ailey, Matthew Rushing, Christopher Huggins, Nathan Trice, Ronald K. Brown and Annabelle Lopez Ochoa. He has also performed as a member of Ballet Hispanico’s junior company, BHdos, The Metropolitan Opera, and Nimbus Dance Works. Mr. Louis joined the Paul Taylor Dance Company in Summer 2018.

Portraits by Bill Wadman.
JOHN HARNAGE

John Harnage is a native of Miami, Florida, and studied dance at the Miami City Ballet School and New World School of the Arts. He was a Modern Dance Finalist in the 2010 National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts YoungArts competition. In 2014, he graduated from The Juilliard School, where he performed works by Pina Bausch, Alexander Ekman, Jose Limon, and Lar Lubovitch, among others. He then began working with Jessica Lang Dance, and joined the company in 2015, performing and teaching around the world. He also performed as a principal dancer in Washington National Opera’s 2017 production of Aida at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Mr. Harnage joined the Paul Taylor Dance Company in Fall 2018.

MARIA AMBROSE

Maria Ambrose grew up in Meredith, New Hampshire and began her dance training at age four under the direction of Sally Downs. She furthered her training with Edra Toth and performed with the Boston Dance Company. She attended George Mason University on an academic graduated Magna Cum Laude with a BFA in Dance Performance in 2011. While at Mason, she was awarded the Harriet Mattusch Special Recognition in Dance. She has performed with Elisa Monte Dance, The Classical Theatre of Harlem, LEVYdance, AThomasProject, and Earl Mosley’s Diversity of Dance. In 2018, she traveled to China as an ambassador for Parsons Dance to teach dance to young musicians, and then to Japan as part of the Dance International Program. She began studying at The Taylor School in 2012, and joined the Paul Taylor Dance Company in Spring 2019.

LISA BORRES

Lisa Borres, a native of Staten Island, New York, is a graduate of LaGuardia High School of Music and Art and Performing Arts. At the Hart School of the University of Hartford, from which she graduated in 2011, she studied with Stephen Pick and Katie Stevenson-Nollet and danced in works by Martha Graham and Pascal Rioult. She participated in Summer Intensives at the Joffrey Ballet School, Martha Graham Dance Company, Alvin Alley American Dance Theatre and Parsons Dance. Since 2012, Lisa has been part of the selection process for Ballet Tech, Eliot Feld’s tuition-free school that draws its students from the NYC public school system, whose diversity reflects the full American spectrum. She has performed with Amy Marshall Dance Company, Elisa Monte Dance, DAMAGEdance, and Lydia Johnson Dance. She joined the Paul Taylor Dance Company in Spring 2019.
JADA PEARMAN

Jada Pearman began dancing at the Motion School of Dance in Hamilton, Bermuda where she trained extensively in all styles of dance. In 2013, Jada attended The Grier School in Pennsylvania, as a pre-professional dancer under the direction of Jocelyn Hrizic. Whilst at The Grier School, she worked with choreographers such as Jon Lehrer, Melissa Rector, Kiki Lucas, Phil Orsano and many more. As a member of Grier Dance, she performed at the Palm Springs Choreography Festival, Steps on Broadway Choreography Festival and Koresh Artists Showcase. She attended summer intensives including Alvin Ailey, Point Park, University of North Carolina School of the Arts and Hubbard Street. She earned her BFA from the University of Arizona in Spring of 2019 where she performed works by Martha Graham, Larry Keigwin and others. She joined the Paul Taylor Dance Company in Summer 2019.

SHAWN LESNIAK

Shawn Lesniak, from New Haven, Connecticut, began dancing at the age of seven. For most of his youth, Shawn trained in various dance techniques such as ballet, jazz, modern and tap, and he danced competitively for more than a decade. He continued his training at The Ailey School and Point Park University. He has toured both internationally and domestically as a member of Parsons Dance, and has worked with choreographers such as Trey McIntyre, Matthew Neenan, Matthew Powell and Emery LeCrone. Mr. Lesniak joined the Paul Taylor Dance Company in Winter 2019.

ADAM DICKERSON

Adam Dickerson was raised in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and began his formal dance training after graduating high school with the Colorado Jazz Dance Company under the direction of Zetta Alderman and Holly Jones. He continued dancing at Colorado College and was mentored by Patrizia Herminjard and Debbie Mercer. During Adam's college career he performed works by Anna Sokolow, Trisha Lai and attended three consecutive Summer Intensives at the Martha Graham School of Contemporary Dance. In 2013, after graduating with a B.A. in Studio Art, he moved to New York City to dance with Graham 2, Amanda Selwyn Dance Theatre, Amy Marshall Dance Company, H.T. Chen & Dancers, Lisa Fagan Dance Problems and Fooju Dance Collaborative, and he performed as a guest artist with Dark Circles Contemporary Dance in Dallas, Texas. He joined the Paul Taylor Dance Company in Winter 2019.

Portraits by Bill Wadman.
JAKE VINCENT

Jake Vincent was born in Atlantic City and grew up in Flemington, New Jersey. He attended the Taylor School Summer Intensive in 2012 while studying for his B.F.A. in Dance and Dance Education from Montclair State University. After graduating in 2014, he continued his training on scholarship at Perry-Mansfield under the direction of Linda Kent and Earl Mosley’s Institute of the Arts. Following the program, he performed both internationally and domestically with companies including: Rioult Dance NY, Von Howard Project, 10 Hairy Legs, Douglas Dunn and Dancers and Earl Mosley’s Diversity of Dance. Jake joined Taylor 2 in 2017, and joined the Paul Taylor Dance Company in Summer 2020.

JESSICA FERRETTI

Jessica Ferretti is originally from Port Chester, New York, and started her dance training at Westchester Dance Academy. She graduated magna cum laude in 2019 from Marymount Manhattan College, where she performed works by Larry Keigwin, Jessica Lang, Michael Thomas, Loni Landon, Nancy Lushington, Pedro Ruiz, Chase Brock and Tito Del Saz. She attended the Paul Taylor Summer Intensives in 2016 and 2018 and the Martha Graham Intensive in 2017. She joined Taylor 2 in fall 2019. She joined the Paul Taylor Dance Company in Summer 2021.

Portraits by Bill Wadman.
1954  Paul Taylor presents his first professional work and his first collaboration with artist Robert Rauschenberg: "Jack and the Beanstalk."

1956  Mr. Taylor choreographs "3 Epitaphs" and Rauschenberg designs its iconic costumes. The dance prompts Martha Graham to call Taylor a "Naughty Boy."

1957  Mr. Taylor presents his first full evening of his own choreography titled “Seven New Dances by Paul Taylor,” at Kaufmann Concert Hall in New York City. "Seven New Dances" provokes Louis Horst’s to write a review published in the Dance Observer consisting entirely of 3 inches of blank space.

1960  In Mr. Taylor’s first European tour, Meridian, Tablet, 3 Epitaphs, Rebus and Circus Polka are danced at Italy’s Spoleto Festival after Lincoln Kirstein recommended Mr. Taylor to director Gian Carlo Menotti. While at Spoleto, Mr. Taylor is invited to create The White Salamander for The Netherlands Ballet. This is the first time he uses the pseudonym George H. Tacet, Ph.D. as the designer.

1961  The Company has its first performance at the American Dance Festival, Connecticut College, New London and premiere Insects and Heroes, with sets and costumes by Rouben Ter-Arutunian. Mr. Taylor choreographs Junction, the first work in a long-term collaboration with designer Alex Katz, and the first time Mr. Taylor uses a Baroque score, a rarity in modern dance.

1962  The Company performs in Paris as part of the Festival of Nations. Although most of the 23 participating countries are represented by larger and essentially classical companies, Mr. Taylor wins an award for Best Choreographer. Sold-out performances and an invitation to be involved in a TV performance in Turin in four weeks' time leads to Mr. Taylor extending his Paris performances into a season at the Théâtre des Artes. As with many American artists, the recognition and glowing compliments bestowed on Taylor in Europe open doors for him in the U.S. While the Company is based in Paris, Taylor begins choreographing "Aureole."

Charles Reinhart becomes the first executive director. He is one of only six people to head the managerial side of the Company, the others being Judith Daykin, Robert Yesselman, Ross Kramberg, Wallace Chappell, and John Tomlinson (current Executive Director).
1963  The Company marks its first Broadway season, at the Little Theater, produced by Richard Barr, Edward Albee and Clinton Wilder. The Company would subsequently have eight seasons housed in traditional Broadway theaters.

1964  The Company has its first London season, at the Shaftsbury Theatre in the West End.

1965  Mr. Taylor choreographs From Sea to Shining Sea, thus initiating a series of works based upon Americana themes, as well as a long-time collaboration with designer John Rawlings.

A tour of South America is the first of 11 tours as goodwill ambassadors under the auspices of the Department of State. The Company begins to be presented on a larger scale, and performs more often and in larger theaters, often with live music. Resident orchestras are rehearsed and conducted by Simon Sadoff, the company’s first Music Director.

1966  The Paul Taylor Dance Foundation is established.

Mr. Taylor choreographs Orbs, a two-act dance set to Beethoven’s final string quartets. The Company begins a collaboration with lighting designer Jennifer Tipton that continues to this day.

1967  Mr. Taylor wins 16th Annual Capezio Dance Award. The citation reads as follows: “To Paul Taylor, for training a company of brilliant young dancers in a style which complements his own inimitable dance technique, and with them building a repertoire which has immeasurably enriched American modern dance and has brought prestige to that unique native art form wherever he has shown it all over the world on behalf of the Cultural Presentations Program of the U.S. Department of State.”

1968  The Taylor Company returns to Paris to represent the U.S. at the Paris Festival.

The Royal Danish Ballet performs Aureole. This is the first time a ballet company licenses a Taylor work.

1969  Taylor is elected Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in France.
1970  Mr. Taylor creates one of his more controversial works, Big Bertha, and during its first few seasons it is one of the dances most requested by tour theaters.

The Taylor Company tours Europe and Lebanon under a new relationship with impresario Thomas Erdos, who remains its international agent and ardent champion of the Company for more than three decades.

1971  Book of Beasts is created. Later Rudolf Nureyev licenses this work and performs the roles of all the beasts in his Nureyev & Friends performances on Broadway.

1973  Mr. Taylor premieres his first full-evening work, American Genesis.

1974  After the New York premiere of American Genesis at the Brooklyn Academy of Music on March 14, Mr. Taylor retires from dancing.

1975  Esplanade premieres and is immediately acknowledged by many critics and dance professionals as one of the greatest dance works ever created.

1976  John Holmes becomes Board President and brings on new Board member Walter Scheuer, a longtime Director who later produces the documentary, Dancemaker.

Mr. Taylor creates Polaris, with an original score composed by Donald York, who becomes the Company’s longtime Conductor and Music Director.

Cloven Kingdom is created, and the section of the dance titled “Men’s Quartet” becomes emblematic of one aspect of Taylor’s style.

1978  The Company appears for the first time on PBS Television’s Dance in America series (“Paul Taylor Dance Company – Esplanade and Runes”). The Company would subsequently appear ten times on this program.

Mr. Taylor choreographs Airs, which soon becomes a mainstay in the repertoire of American Ballet Theatre.

1980  Taylor receives the Dance Magazine Award.
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Mr. Taylor creates his Le Sacre du Printemps (The Rehearsal) which is seen by many as a landmark approach to the renowned Stravinsky score.</td>
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<td>1981</td>
<td>A benefit performance of From Sea to Shining Sea is offered to audiences, featuring Gwen Verdon, Hermione Gingold, Betty Comden, Adolph Green, and, in their first appearance on stage together, Mikhail Baryshnikov and Rudolf Nureyev. Mr. Taylor choreographs Arden Court, an instant hit with audiences and critics.</td>
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<td>1984</td>
<td>Mr. Taylor is elected Officier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in France.</td>
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<td>1985</td>
<td>Roses and Last Look are made in the same year, confirming Taylor’s position as the choreographic “Master of the Light and the Dark.” Mr. Taylor receives a MacArthur “Genius” Award. Bettie de Jong, who had danced with the Company since 1962, retires from dancing and remains Rehearsal Director.</td>
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<td>1986</td>
<td>Musical Offering premieres and is considered by many to be one of Taylor’s most profound works.</td>
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<td>1987</td>
<td>Mr. Taylor’s autobiography, Private Domain, is published and is nominated for the National Book Critics Circle Award in Biography, and is now in its third edition.</td>
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<td>1988</td>
<td>With Counterswarm, Mr. Taylor begins a collaboration with set and costume designer Santo Loquasto. Speaking in Tongues premieres and is hailed by critics as another landmark for the dance world.</td>
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<td>1989</td>
<td>Mr. Taylor is elected Honorary Member of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Mr. Taylor is elected Commandeur de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in France.</td>
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1991  The Kennedy Center and Houston Ballet commission Company B.

1992  Mr. Taylor receives an Emmy Award for Speaking in Tongues, produced by WNET/13, and also receives Kennedy Center Honors "for enhancing the lives of people around the world and enriching the culture of our nation."

1993  Mr. Taylor is awarded a National Medal of Arts by President Clinton at the White House.

Taylor 2, a second company of Paul Taylor dancers, is formed, with Linda Hodes as Director.

1994  Sponsored by the U.S. government, Taylor 2 tours six countries in Africa.

1995  Mr. Taylor receives the Algur H. Meadows Award for Excellence in the Arts, for work that "endures as some of the most innovative and important the world has ever seen" and is also named one of 50 prominent Americans honored in recognition of their outstanding achievement by the Library of Congress's Office of Scholarly Programs.

Danmarks Radio in Aarhus, Denmark produces a television program featuring Syzygy and Spindrift.

1996  The Company and Taylor 2 complete the largest-ever statewide tour produced by Wisconsin Dance On Tour, reaching over 22 Wisconsin communities in five weeks.

The Company performs for the first time in the People's Republic of China.

1997  The Company and Taylor 2 are invited by American Ambassador in India, Frank G. Wisner, to be a “gift of culture” to the people of India to celebrate 50 years of Indian independence from Great Britain. Both companies perform in a month-long tour throughout India.

Mr. Taylor choreographs Piazzolla Caldera, a runaway hit that has its creative process documented in the film Dancemaker, which plays in movie theaters throughout the U.S. and abroad. The film is executive produced by Walter Scheuer and produced and directed by Matthew Diamond.
1999  Dancemaker is nominated for an Academy Award for best documentary feature film of 1998.

The Company presents a four-week residency in San Francisco with San Francisco Performances at the inauguration of the Chase Celebration of American Dance.

2000  Mr. Taylor is inducted as Chevalier in France’s Légion d’Honneur for exceptional contributions to French culture.

Dancemaker appears on the PBS series, “American Masters.”

2001  The Company returns to the People’s Republic of China for a four-week, six-city tour.

2002  Mr. Taylor choreographs Promethean Fire, and The New York Times says it may be his greatest work yet.


2004  Promethean Fire is nominated for London’s Olivier Award in the category of Best New Dance. Mr. Taylor wins the Manchester Evening News Award for Dance 2003, for the Company’s engagement at the Lowry, part of a four-week, six-city tour of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Taylor is awarded the 10th Annual American Choreography Awards for Outstanding Achievement in Choreography for the television special Acts of Ardor, which includes Black Tuesday and Promethean Fire.

The Taylor Foundation celebrates the 50th Anniversary of the Company. This celebration includes a record-breaking tour that tours Mr. Taylor’s work to all 50 of the United States.

2005  Mr. Taylor is presented with the Association of Performing Arts Presenters (APAP) Award of Merit for Achievement in the Performing Arts, and the Americans for the Arts Lifetime Achievement Award. In its “Best of the Best 2004” article, Vanity Fair magazine hails him as “the greatest choreographer in the world.”
2005 The Company celebrates its 50th Anniversary with a three-week season at City Center that draws more than 25,000 people. Following the season’s final performance, more than 70 Taylor dancers from past and present join Mr. Taylor for a bow on stage.

Mr. Taylor again finds inspiration on the front pages of the daily newspaper, this time denouncing imperialism in Banquet of Vultures.

2007 The Company returns to the People’s Republic of China for performances and master classes with local students and professional dancers.

2008 The Company and Taylor 2 complete an 18-city tour of Pennsylvania in April. Mr. Taylor is awarded an honorary doctorate by Adelphi University; previous doctorates were awarded by California Institute of the Arts, Connecticut College, Duke University, The Juilliard School, Skidmore College, the State University of New York at Purchase, and Syracuse University. After losing its long-time Soho home, the Taylor Foundation leases space for a new home on Manhattan’s Lower East Side.

2009 The New York Times, having called the Walt Whitman-inspired Beloved Renegade “the best new choreography of 2008,” says Mr. Taylor “ranks among the great war poets.”

2010 The Foundation celebrates Mr. Taylor’s 80th birthday.

2011 Penn State’s Institute for the Arts and Humanities presents Mr. Taylor with its Medal for Distinguished Achievement, given annually to “individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the arts and humanities and whose work has furthered public awareness of the importance of scholarship, literature and the arts.” Further demonstrating the choreographer’s wide appeal, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and American Ballet Theatre both include a Taylor work in their New York seasons: Arden Court and Black Tuesday, respectively.

2012 Mr. Taylor moves his Company’s New York performances to Lincoln Center, where it triumphs in a three-week engagement that shatters its previous box office record. The season celebrates the 50th Anniversary of Aureole bringing the original cast onstage to share the bow with the current cast.
The New York Dance and Performance Awards (the “Bessies”) bestow a Lifetime Achievement Award on Mr. Taylor.

The Company celebrates its 60th Anniversary, featuring a revival of From Sea to Shining Sea performed at Lincoln Center by nearly 50 past and current members of the Company in a version specially staged by alumna Sharon Kinney. Mr. Taylor announces the creation of Paul Taylor American Modern Dance (PTAMD), which will curate and present great modern dances of the past and present alongside Mr. Taylor’s own works at Lincoln Center and commission a new generation of choreographers so modern dance flourishes long into the future.

Along with 17 of his classics and two premieres performed by the Company, Mr. Taylor presents two dances that represent the best of American Modern Dance in both the distant and recent past. Doris Humphrey’s influential work from the 1930s, Passacaglia, is performed by the venerable Limón Dance Company, and Shen Wei Dance Arts performs Rite of Spring. Orchestra of St. Luke’s, conducted by Mr. Taylor’s long-time collaborator, Donald York, provides live music.

Legendary choreographer Donald McKayle oversees rehearsals of his famed work from 1959, Rainbow 'Round My Shoulder, performed by Dayton Contemporary Dance Company at Lincoln Center with live vocal accompaniment, and Mr. McKayle is awarded a Bessie in October for the production. Fulfilling the final part of Mr. Taylor’s vision for PTAMD, Doug Elkins and Larry Keigwin create dances (The Weight of Smoke and Rush Hour) on the Taylor Company through Taylor Company Commissions. The dances, which both pay homage to Mr. Taylor’s influence, are enthusiastically received by audiences.

Continuum is created by Lila York, the first alumna to return to the Taylor Company and choreograph a work through Taylor Company Commissions.

PTAMD produces an historic evening - ICONS: Graham Cunningham Taylor, a performance including dances by the three great founders of American modern dance. The event is the first co-production between the Foundation and the American Dance Festival.
2018

Half Life is choreographed by Doug Varone and The Beauty in Gray is created by Bryan Arias as part of Taylor Company Commissions. New York City Ballet star Sara Mearns performs Dances of Isadora at the PTAMD Lincoln Center Season.

A second ICONS performance is produced with works by Mr. Taylor, Isadora Duncan, and Trisha Brown.

In May, Mr. Taylor names Taylor dancer Michael Novak as Artistic Director Designate.

In August, Mr. Taylor dies at age 88, his obituary is printed on the front page of The New York Times.

In September, Novak is named Artistic Director by the Board of the Paul Taylor Dance and becomes the second Artistic Director in the history of the Company.

2019

Novak launches “Paul Taylor: Celebrate the Dancemaker,” a multi-year international celebration of Mr. Taylor’s legacy and vision for the future for modern dance.

The PTAMD Lincoln Center Season receives rave reviews under Novak’s stewardship, and is marked by free memorial performances in honor of Paul Taylor; world premieres of Only the Lonely by Kyle Abraham; Rewilding by Margie Gillis; and all at once by Pam Tanowitz; a free memorial performance celebrating the legendary choreographer Donald McKayle; and a special ICONS Event celebrating the collaboration between Mr. Taylor and American Painter Alex Katz.

2020

COVID-19 causes the Foundation to suspended all in-person activities, but the Foundation innovates, launching PTDF Digital - sharing and generating unique digital content for audiences and patrons around the world: Larry Keigwin premieres 22 Rooms, the Company’s first digitally created work made during quarantine; and the Taylor School begins streaming all classes virtually and reaches new students at an unprecedented rate.

The Company’s first-ever virtual live-streamed benefit, “Modern is Now: Stories of our Future”is hailed by many as the new high bar for digital dance benefits. The global presence and engagement of the company only continues to grow.
WHAT CRITICS SAY
Quotes about Paul Taylor Dance Company

San Francisco Chronicle  “The American spirit soars whenever Taylor’s dancers dance.”

The New York Times  “One of the most exciting, innovative, and delightful dance companies in the entire world.”

New York Magazine  “One of the most intelligent, stylish and physically magnificent dance troupes we have.”

Village Voice  “Go see them. This mélange is, for the most part, modern dance at its best; even jaded audiences may find their faith in the medium renewed.”

Time Out New York  “A sure slice of heaven.”

TheaterScene.com  “The Paul Taylor dancers are at the top of their form, particularly when dancing his repertory which demands speed, strength and style.”

DanceViewTimes.com  “The dancers were uniformly terrific, fluid, musical, and strong.”

CriticalDance.com  “If visitors from another solar system wanted an example of the best of modern dance, I’d take them to see Esplanade.”

AboutLastNight withTerryTeachout.com  “Dance on Broadway can be and often is wonderful in its own way, but it rarely aspires to the richness and subtlety that are constantly on display whenever you spend an evening looking at the Paul Taylor Dance Company, and it’s been far too long since I challenged my eye and elevated my spirits by doing just that.”

Bradenton Herald  “The dancers in Taylor’s company are remarkably versatile, performing an impressive stylistic variety and dancing with tenderness, emotion and force, often at the same time.”

Oberon’sGrove.com  “In fact, the entire Taylor company’s looking pretty extraordinary these days.”

Ephemeralist.com  “The dancers are heroic—obviously in a physical sense, performing 20 dances—but mentally, keeping all that repertory fresh and at the ready.”