

## NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 17, 2020

**The Annenberg Center and NextMove Dance Present  
Paul Taylor Dance Company, January 24-25**

(Philadelphia – January 17, 2020) —Paul Taylor Dance Company returns to Philadelphia to celebrate the extraordinary legacy of dance icon Paul Taylor, presented by the **Annenberg Center** and **NextMove Dance**, **Friday, January 24 (8 PM)**, and **Saturday, January 25 (2 and 8 PM)**. In honor of Taylor’s wide-ranging and expressive repertoire, “one of the most exciting, innovative, and delightful dance companies in the entire world” (*The New York Times*) will perform a program of his masterpieces, including **Syzygy**, **Sunset** and **Piazzolla Caldera**. Visit [AnnenbergCenter.org](http://AnnenbergCenter.org) for tickets.

**Paul Taylor Dance Company**

**Paul Taylor Dance Company** has traveled the globe many times over, bringing Taylor’s ever-burgeoning repertoire to theatres and venues of every size and description in cultural capitals, on college campuses, in rural communities, and often to places where modern dance had never been seen before. The Taylor Company has performed in more than 500 cities in 64 countries, representing the U.S. at arts festivals in more than 40 countries and touring extensively under the aegis of the U.S. Department of State. In 1997, the company toured throughout India in celebration of that nation’s 50th anniversary. Its 1999 engagement in Chile was named the Best International Dance Event of 1999 by the country’s Art Critics’ Circle. In the summer of 2001, the company toured in the People’s Republic of China and performed in six cities, four of which had never seen American modern dance before. In the spring of 2003, the company mounted an award-winning four-week, seven-city tour of the United Kingdom. The company’s performances in China in 2018 marked its sixth tour there. The company regularly tours throughout North America, South America, Asia and Europe.

While continuing to garner international acclaim, the Paul Taylor Dance Company performs more than half of each touring season in cities throughout the U.S. In celebration of the company’s 50th anniversary and 50 years of creativity, the Taylor Foundation presented Taylor’s works in all 50 states between March 2004 and November 2005. That tour underscored the Taylor Company’s historic role as one of the early touring companies of American modern dance.

Beginning with its first television appearance for the Dance in America series in 1978, the Paul Taylor Dance Company has appeared on PBS in ten different programs, including the 1992 Emmy® Award-winning *Speaking in Tongues* and *The Wrecker’s Ball*, including *Company B*, *Funny Papers* and *A Field of Grass*, which was nominated for an Emmy® Award in 1997. In 1999, the PBS *American Masters* series aired *Dancemaker*, the Academy® Award nominated documentary about Taylor and his company. In 2013, PBS aired *Paul Taylor Dance Company in Paris*, featuring *Brandenburgs* and *Beloved Renegade*.

Company dancers appearing in the performances at the Annenberg Center are **Maria Ambrose, Michael Apuzzo, Lisa Borres, Eran Bugge, Alex Clayton, Adam Dickerson, Kristin Draucker, Lee Duveneck, John Harnage, Madelyn Ho, Shawn Lesniak, Devon Louis, Christina Lynch Markham, Heather McGinley, Jada Pearman, and George Smallwood**.

## **Paul Taylor**

**Paul Taylor**, 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, Taylor uniquely bridged the legendary founders of modern dance (Isadora Duncan, Ruth St Denis, Ted Shaw, Doris Humphrey and Graham) and the dance makers of the 21st century 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 repertoire. He also commissioned the next generation of dance makers to work with his renowned company, thereby helping to ensure the future of the art form. [Paul Taylor's full bio may be accessed in the program notes.](#)

## **Michael Novak (Artistic Director)**

**Michael Novak** became only the second Artistic Director in the history of the Paul Taylor Dance Foundation in September 2018, upon the death of Founding Artistic Director Paul Taylor the previous month. Novak has been a member of the Paul Taylor Dance Company since 2010.

Raised in Rolling Meadows, IL, Novak began studying dance at age 10. At 12, he developed a 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 effortless 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 attended Columbia University's School of General Studies where 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. A highlight of his studies at Columbia was performing Taylor's solo in Aureole, which led him to embrace the Taylor repertoire. Novak graduated magna cum laude in 2008, and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa.

"I am determined to further Paul Taylor's vision," Novak said upon assuming the role of Artistic Director, "and to bring his gems to every part of the globe...to honor past dance makers and encourage future artists...and to make sure modern dance remains a transformative force for good in our lives long into the future."

[Full bios and program notes are available here.](#)

[Photographs for Paul Taylor Dance Company are available here.](#)

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## **About the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts**

The Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts serves as a major cultural destination and crossroads connecting Penn and the greater Philadelphia region through innovative human expression in theatre, music, dance, and film, serving an annual audience of over 80,000. The Annenberg Center also serves as a key resource for the arts at Penn, connecting master artists with Penn students in support of and as an enhancement to the arts curriculum. Student performing arts groups are also key users of the Annenberg Center's multiple performance and rehearsal spaces, while also staffing many operational roles throughout the academic year. In reflection of Penn's core values as a world-respected academic institution, the Annenberg Center emphasizes artistic and intellectual excellence, diversity, and rigor in its presentations; prioritizes broad inclusiveness in the artists, audiences, and groups it serves; manages outstanding performance, conference, and meeting facilities; and stresses comprehensive event planning, production support, and customer service. The Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts is a major provider of performing arts access for school children and actively engages a broad range of primary, secondary, and post-secondary student audiences and inclusive constituencies from the campus, community, and greater Philadelphia region. Visit [AnnenbergCenter.org](http://AnnenbergCenter.org).

## **About NextMove Dance**

NextMove Dance Artistic Director Randy Swartz created the first annual dance series in Philadelphia at the Walnut Street Theatre in 1970. In 1983, he launched the Dance Celebration series at the Annenberg Center for a 32-year run and initiated a new annual series at the Prince Theater in October 2015. Dance Affiliates,

renamed NextMove Dance, is recognized as one of the nation's finest dance presenters. Known internationally for award-winning presentations for almost four decades, NextMove Dance provides a wealth of opportunities for the Delaware Valley community to interact with the artists through talk-backs, master classes, artistic collaborations, workshops, children's programs and much more. Visit [nextmovedance.org](http://nextmovedance.org).

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## CALENDAR LISTING

### **Paul Taylor Dance Company**

Friday, January 24, 8 PM \*\*

Saturday, January 25, 2 PM

Saturday, January 25, 8 PM

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*\*\* Annenberg Center Executive & Artistic Director Christopher A. Gruits and NextMove Dance Artistic Director Randy Swartz will lead a post-show talk following the January 24 performance.*

The 19/20 dance series is presented by the Annenberg Center and NextMove Dance.

Media support for this performance is provided by WHY?.

Visit [AnnenbergCenter.org](http://AnnenbergCenter.org) for ticket information.

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