



THE KENNEDY CENTER

# Performing Arts Series

ARTS-BASED PROGRAMMING VIA SATELLITE/WEB

presented in cooperation with PRINCE WILLIAM NETWORK

## Taylor 2 Dance Company

Friday, November 17, 2000

Grades 7 -12

When viewing *Taylor 2 Dance Company* and participating in this guide's suggested activities, the following National Standards for Dance will be addressed: **1,2,3.**

## Background Information

### The Dance Company

The Taylor 2 Dance Company was created in 1993 to perform modern dance works by choreographer Paul Taylor. The dance company has the name "Taylor 2" because it is the second of two dance companies that currently perform Mr. Taylor's choreography. The original company, called The Paul Taylor Dance Company, was created in 1954. Both companies are based in New York City.

With a total of six dancers, Taylor 2 is smaller than the original company. Its smaller size allows the company to tour, teach, and perform in schools and small towns across the United States. In addition, the company has traveled extensively in Africa, Eastern Europe, and India.

Repertory is the body of work that a dance company is able to perform. The repertory of Taylor 2 includes many early works as well as more recent dances created by Mr. Taylor. Dances he

created for the full company of 16 dancers have been altered and re-staged for the six Taylor 2 dancers. Because of this, the dancers in Taylor 2 often perform parts danced by two or three dancers in the original work.

### The Choreographer

Choreography is the art of creating dances. Choreographers carefully combine movements, gestures, music, lighting, costumes, and scenery to create the final work that is seen on stage. Paul Taylor has been dancing and creating dances for four decades. He was born in Pennsylvania and studied painting before moving to New York City to study dance. From 1955 until 1962, he was a soloist with the Martha Graham Dance Company while also presenting his own choreography.

Mr. Taylor is interested in creating dance from the movements and gestures people use in everyday life,

like walking or waving a hand. One of his most famous works, *Esplanade*, combines walks, runs, skips, and jumps in beautiful patterns through space. His choreography takes the ordinary and makes it extraordinary.

Paul Taylor is a modern dance choreographer. Modern dance, unlike ballet, does not always adhere to a specific codified vocabulary of movements. Modern dance involves a variety of movement choices, and can be performed in bare feet or shoes.

Paul Taylor has created over 100 dances since 1954, and has won many awards for his work including a Kennedy Center Honor. He is one of the most important choreographers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### About the Program

You will see dancers in the Taylor 2 company "warming up." To get their bodies ready for challenges of

## What to Watch for in the Program

- Identify some of the everyday movements or gestures (like skipping, walking, or running) Paul Taylor uses when making his dances.
- Look for repeated movements or gestures, and patterns of movement through space.
- Notice the costumes, music, lighting, and set. How do these elements enhance the choreography?

dancing, the dancers go through exercises that work each part of the body. A proper warm-up before performing helps dancers prevent injuries. As the warm-up progresses, the dancers begin to move across the dance floor, using movements from Paul Taylor's works.

You will also see segments from some of Paul Taylor's dances. Watch for the everyday movements and gestures, and see if they are repeated as the dance continues. Notice how the movement of the dancers creates patterns in the performance space.

### Instructional Activity Create a Movement Phrase

A movement phrase is created when individual movements are linked together in a sequence. Choreographers often divide their dances into movement phrases. This movement exercise will help you use gestures from everyday life to create a movement phrase.



1. Choose one gesture that you made this morning before coming to school. (Examples: brushing hair, pouring a glass of juice, buttoning a coat.) Perform your gesture while standing in one place.
2. While still standing in place, make the gesture take up lots of space.
3. Again performing it in place, make the gesture very small using hardly any space. You may notice that the movement now looks different, or has been abstracted from, the original gesture.
4. Perform all three versions of the gesture, one after the other. This is your movement phrase. Try performing it to music.

During the program, look for Paul Taylor's movement phrases. Notice how the look of the gesture changes by changing the amount of space used.

## Resources

### On the Web

[kennedy-center.org/pwtpv](http://kennedy-center.org/pwtpv)  
[ptdc.org](http://ptdc.org)  
[dancemaker.org](http://dancemaker.org)  
[artsedge.kennedy-center.org](http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org)

### Print

Taylor, Paul. *Private Domain*. NY: Knopf: Distributed by Random House, 1999.

Taylor, Paul. "Back to Basics." In Jean Morrison Brown, Naomi Mindlin and Charles H. Woodford, eds., *The Vision of Modern Dance*. NJ: Princeton Book Company, 1998.

### Video

The Paul Taylor Dance Company. NY: Nonesuch, VHS (58 min.) 1998. A production of WNET/13.

### Speaking in Tongues

NY: Elektra Nonesuch, VHS (54 min.) 1991. A production of WNET/14 with AMAYA distribution. (Both available from Paul Taylor Dance Company at 212-431-5562)