

The Annenberg Center Presents Paul Taylor Dance Company Performance, Livestreamed Thursday, February 18

(Philadelphia – February 1, 2021) — The **Paul Taylor Dance Company** returns to the **Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts** on **Thursday, February 18 at 7 PM**, its first public performance since the pandemic shut down performance venues in March 2020. The company's live performance on the Annenberg Center stage will be streamed online and includes an interactive Q&A with Artistic Director Michael Novak and Annenberg Center Executive and Artistic Director Christopher Gruits. Visit AnnenbergCenter.org for details.

The intimate program contains two works that carry on the dance icon Paul Taylor's legacy. Set to music by William Boyce, the sentimental masterpiece *Arden Court* explores love and relationships, and was called "stunningly great" by *The New York Times* at its premiere in 1981. The Philadelphia premiere of *A Field of Grass* offers a humorous and exuberant ode to the 1960s against a backdrop of songs by Harry Nilsson. Company dancers appearing in the performance at the Annenberg Center are **Eran Bugge, Michael Apuzzo, Christina Lynch Markham, Madelyn Ho, Lee Duvenceck, Alex Clayton, John Harnage** and **Jada Pearman** (listed in order of seniority).

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Paul Taylor Dance Company

Dance maker Paul Taylor first presented his choreography with five other dancers in Manhattan on May 30, 1954. That modest performance marked the beginning of 64 years of unrivaled creativity, and in the decades that followed, Taylor became a cultural icon and one of American history's most celebrated artists, hailed as part of the pantheon that created American modern dance.

The 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 and in rural communities, often to places modern dance had never been seen before. The Taylor Company has performed in more than 500 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. 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 and has since returned on four separate multi-week tours. 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 of 2004 and November of 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 1997 Emmy®-nominated *The Wrecker's Ball* (including *Company B*, *Funny Papers* and *A Field of Grass*). 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* which featured *Brandenburgs* and *Beloved Renegade*. The 2014 documentary *Paul Taylor Creative Domain* won critical and public acclaim for its revelation of Taylor's creative process, following the famously private choreographer and his Company through the entire process of creating a new work from initial concept to opening night. ptamd.org

Paul Taylor American Modern Dance

As a pioneering dance maker, Paul Taylor blazed new trails throughout his 64-year career. Remarkably, he was in his 80s when he made two decisions that changed the future of his Company and the art form he helped create. The first of these occurred in 2012 when Taylor moved the Paul Taylor Dance Company's annual New York City season to Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, one of the world's leading cultural venues. The Taylor Company thereby became the first modern dance troupe to call Lincoln Center home and attracted larger audiences than ever before. In 2015, to ensure that both the Taylor legacy and the art of modern dance itself would survive well into the future, Taylor established Paul Taylor American Modern Dance (PTAMD). In addition to presenting the Paul Taylor Dance Company in dances from Taylor's collection of nearly 150 works, PTAMD presents great modern dance works by choreographers of the past, performed by contemporary masters of those styles. Since these dances have seldom, if ever, been performed at Lincoln Center, vast new audiences have a rare opportunity to experience the formative works of modern dance. PTAMD also brings to Lincoln Center outstanding works by leading choreographers of our own time.

Paul Taylor (Founding Artistic Director)

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 Shawn, Doris Humphrey and Graham) and the dance makers of the 21st Century with whom he later worked. Through his initiative at Lincoln Center which began 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.

Michael Novak (Artistic Director)

Michael Novak became only the second Artistic Director in the history of the Paul Taylor Dance Foundation in September of 2018, upon the death of Founding Artistic Director Paul Taylor the previous month. Novak was a member of the Paul Taylor Dance Company from 2010-2019.

Raised in Rolling Meadows, IL, Novak began studying dance at age 10. 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 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 Paul 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.”

Eran Bugge (Dancer)

Bugge is from Oviedo, Florida where she began her dance training at the Orlando Ballet School. She 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 BFA in ballet pedagogy in 2005. She attended The Taylor School and the 2004 and 2005 Taylor Summer Intensives. Bugge has performed in works by Amy Marshall, Katie Stevinson-Nollet and Jean Grand-Maître. She was also a member of Full Force Dance Theatre and the Adam Miller Dance Project. In 2012, 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 (Dancer)

Apuzzo grew up in North Haven, Connecticut. He studied economics and theatre at Yale University, graduating magna cum laude in 2005. Growing up in musical theatre, he began his formal dance training in high school and then danced and choreographed in undergraduate companies. After being dance captain for an original production of *Miss Julie* choreographed by Peter Pucci, Apuzzo debuted professionally at the Yale Repertory Theater. He has since performed in numerous musicals at equity theatres 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.

Christina Lynch Markham (Dancer)

Markham grew up in Westbury, New York where she 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 Company’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. Markham joined Taylor 2 in summer 2008 and made her debut with the Paul Taylor Dance Company in summer 2013.

Madelyn Ho, M.D. (Dancer)

Ho is from Sugar Land, Texas where she began dancing at Kinard Dance School and later trained with BalletForte under the artistic direction of Michael Banigan. She graduated from Harvard College with a BA 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 Doctor of Medicine in May 2018.

Lee Duveneck (Dancer)

Duveneck grew up in Arlington, Texas, where he trained with Anne Oswalt and Gwen Price. In 2010, he earned his BFA 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. Duveneck joined Taylor 2 in 2012 and joined the Paul Taylor Dance Company in summer 2017.

Alex Clayton (Dancer)

Clayton grew up in Louisville, Kentucky. He received his BFA in dance with a minor in visual arts from Stephens College in 2013. He was a Graham 2 company member from 2014 to 2015. Clayton also performed with companies including 10 Hairy Legs, Abarukas Project, Curet Performance Project and Performa15. He served

as Rehearsal Assistant for Taylor Company Commissions choreographer Lila York when she created *Continuum* in 2016. Clayton joined the Paul Taylor Dance Company in summer 2017.

John Harnage (Dancer)

A native of Miami, Florida, Harnage 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 Jose Limón, Alexander Ekman, Pina Bausch 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. Harnage joined the Paul Taylor Dance Company in fall 2018.

Jada Pearman (Dancer)

Pearman began dancing at the Motion School of Dance in Hamilton, Bermuda where she trained extensively in all styles of dance. In 2013, Pearman attended The Grier School in Pennsylvania as a pre-professional dancer under the direction of Jocelyn Hrzic. Whilst at The Grier School, she worked with choreographers 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 2019 where she performed works by Martha Graham, Larry Keigwin and others. She joined the Paul Taylor Dance Company in summer 2019.

About the Annenberg Center's 2020-21 Digital Season

The Annenberg Center's 2021 spring digital season comprises livestreamed performances featuring world premieres and Philadelphia debuts by top dance companies, outstanding jazz artists, and collaborative music performances, in addition to screenings of recently released independent films (to be announced soon). Designed specifically for the digital stage, the live performances are broadcast using state-of-the-art digital technology from the Prince or Zellerbach Theatre, integrating live chat, and concluding with interactive discussions with the creators and performers. Livestreamed performances are available online for 48 hours after the start time for those who purchased access. Full season calendar can be accessed [here](#).

About the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts

The Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts serves as a major cultural destination and crossroads connecting the University of Pennsylvania 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 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 surrounding region. Visit AnnenbergCenter.org.

LIVESTREAM

Paul Taylor Dance Company

Thursday, February 18, 7 PM

One of the most intelligent, stylish and physically magnificent dance troupes,” (*New York Magazine*) the Paul Taylor Dance Company beautifully carries on the dance icon’s legacy in this intimate program. Set to William Boyce’s sumptuous baroque score, *Arden Court* is a sentimental masterpiece exploring love and relationships, while the Philadelphia premiere of *A Field of Grass* offers an ode to the 1960s with exuberant technique and wicked humor. Danced by a cast of eight, get ready to be captivated by “one of the most singular and searching imaginations of our time.” (*The New York Times*)

This is an original, live event, performed on the Annenberg Center stage and streamed online, and includes an interactive Q&A with Artistic Director Michael Novak.

Access Information for Paul Taylor Dance Company

Visit [AnnenbergCenter.org](https://www.annenbergcenter.org) to purchase access to this show until 7:30 PM on February 18. The performance may be watched live at 7 PM on February 18 to participate in the chat and artist Q&A. It will be available on-demand to ticketholders through February 20. Visit the Annenberg Center’s digital streaming [FAQs](#) for additional details.

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