

The New York Times

April 18, 2010

Dance Review



Dancers from Taylor 2 performing Paul Taylor's "3 Epitaphs" (with costumes by Robert Rauschenberg).

Andrea Mohin/The New York Times

By Gia Kourlas

For young dancers, a junior troupe is many things: a place to be noticed and to hone stagecraft and, barring irritating complications — like other, even better dancers — a steppingstone to a company contract. The 1.2.3. Festival at the Joyce Theater features three such groups in alternating performances: Ailey II, ABT II and Taylor 2.

On Wednesday evening Ailey II, led by the artistic director Sylvia Waters, offered a program typical of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater: full of talented dancers and weak on choreography. The 12 performers, appearing first in "Echoes," loosely based on the choreographer Thang Dao's family journey to the United States

from Vietnam, do a fine job of giving a watery dance a greater sense of importance than it deserves. They could join the company tomorrow. Mr. Dao's choreography is predictable, beginning with its faintly militaristic opening.

Dancers stand in silhouette, their bodies quivering before they flick a flexed foot and crouch to the floor. The most beguiling presence is Ghrai DeVore, a nimble, androgynous creature — she looks a bit like Grace Jones — whose strength is tempered by suppleness.

Ms. DeVore appears again in Christopher L. Huggins's "Essence," a sappy solo that involves — sigh — a chair, as well as in Judith Jamison's "Divining." The lighter side of Ailey II is evident in Carlos dos

Santos Jr.'s one-note "Proximity..." a hectic look at relationships.

Of the three companies the greenest is ABT II, directed by Wes Chapman. On Thursday evening the troupe opened with "Interplay," Jerome Robbins's delightful 1945 ballet that can look dated when certain requirements — including a strong technique diffused by a jazzy playfulness — aren't met. Despite affording glimpses of promising dancers like Colby Parsons, Brittany DeGrofft and Calvin Royal III, it seems stuck in the past.

That *passé* sensibility continues in new ballets by Roger VanFleteren ("Pavlovsk," featuring a string score by Karen LeFrak) and Edwaard Liang ("Ballo Per Sei," set to Vivaldi). In "Pavlovsk," a widow visits the statue of her husband, an assassinated Russian general who comes to life. "Ballo Per Sei," though conventional, shows a shift for Mr. Liang, whose ballets tend to mirror sharp gestures with broadly drawn emotional angularity. Here he creates a work the dancers can perform with a certain ease, but that doesn't make up for his ambiguous artistic voice.

When ABT II was the ABT Studio Company and directed by John Meehan, there was a sense that it might be just as gratifying to be in the junior company as the main one; he nurtured choreographers as

well as dancers. Now the group's daring rigor has faded, and ABT II is just another junior company.

Taylor 2, however, is a kind of a miracle. This second company, led by Paul Taylor and the rehearsal director Ruth Andrien, features half the number of dancers of the Ailey and American Ballet Theater offshoots — six — yet performs with more gumption. On Friday night the troupe presented a parade of Taylor classics: "Aureole," "3 Epitaphs" (costumes by Robert Rauschenberg), "Company B" and "Esplanade."

Nic Ceynowa is a marvel in the difficult "Aureole" solo that Mr. Taylor created for himself: using the breadth of his back and spine to shift in shape, he possesses a feline fluidity that is nailed to the floor with purposeful weight. The tiny Madelyn Ho, delicate and soulful in "I Can Dream, Can't I?" from "Company B," becomes a daredevil of momentum in "Esplanade."

But all of the dancers are considerable talents. Performing a restaged version of "Esplanade" pared down to six dancers from the usual nine, they unite fearlessness with skill, proving that Taylor 2 is the anomaly of the festival: the only thing junior about it is the willingness to do anything for a part, no matter how big or small.

The 1.2.3. Festival continues through April 25 at the Joyce Theater, 175 Eighth Avenue, at 19th Street, Chelsea; (212) 242-0800, joyce.org.

DANCEVIEWTIMES

"Aureole", "3 Epitaphs", "Company B", "Esplanade"

Taylor2

Joyce Theater

New York, NY

April 16, 2010

By Mary Cargill

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Taylor 2, a group of six young dancers established by Paul Taylor in 1993 to bring his works to broader audiences, is in residence at the Joyce, sharing a season with other Two's, Ailey and ABT. Taylor2 has provided many dancers to the larger company, but this is no sense a student venture; the dancing was spectacular, warm, gracious, and daring. The repertoire is one to make a Taylor fan salivate, four great and very different works in one evening. The ones choreographed for larger casts ("Company B" and "Esplanade") were reworked for the smaller group, but there was no sense of a Reader's Digest version. In fact, the more intimate Joyce stage enhanced many of the more dramatic moments.

The evening opened with "Aureole", one of Taylor's

heavenly excursions, set to Handel. The dancers are gracious sprites, and the cast showed a complete commitment to the music, to each other, and thus to the audience. Nic Ceynowa danced the difficult male solo; he gave it an air of a lesson well-learned, but as yet wasn't able to convey all its secrets.



There are a number of secrets in "3 Epitaphs", a dance for five set to, as the program describes it, an early form of jazz. The dancers are covered head to foot in grey body suits with bits of mirrors which

catch the light. There is something primeval about their movements, as they lope around, arms almost touching the ground. At times the movements, keyed so closely to the music, generate laughter, and at times almost fear, as these mysterious creatures try to be human.



The dancers in "Company B" don't have to try to be human; this is one of Taylor's most vibrant works. Set to gloriously danceable songs by the Andrews Sisters, it is an homage to the Americans of World War II, with their youth, their innocence, their joy and their losses. The smaller cast meant that some of the roles had to be doubled up, and Justin Kahan was both the comic glasses-wearing Johnny, irresistible to women, and the dynamo Bugle Boy. All six dancers were terrific, but Madelyn Ho, as the dreamer whose soul

mate was overseas (or killed in combat), was a piquant powerhouse. Latra Wilson gave a sly and knowing edge to "Rum and Coca-Cola", and Christina Lynch Markham a powerful stillness to the final moments of "Another you".

And then we got "Esplanade", a technical tour de force to Bach, where all six dancers walked, ran, jumped, and rolled. Taylor choreographed to the warm undercurrents of the music, ignoring the obvious formality, and it is one of his most musically imaginative works. But life is never relentlessly sunny, and in the adagio, he has his dancers try but fail to connect, both physically and emotionally, until all is released in the bounding finale. The dancers glowed, and their enthusiasm was all the more impressive considering the workout they had already been through; the main company's dancers certainly do not dance as many times in a single evening. By anyone's standards, this company is schön.

Photos by Tom Caravaglia:
Top: John Ehrlich in "Company B"
Bottom: Company in "Esplanade"

The Star - Ledger

The Voice of New Jersey

Thursday, March 4, 2010

Young performers light up the stage at '1,2,3 Festival'

By Robert Johnson/The Star-Ledger
April 16, 2010



Nic Ceynowa and Christina Lynch Markham of Taylor 2 in "Company B."

NEW YORK — Dance is a renewable resource, whose passions will never run dry. To sample this abundant energy, audiences need only visit the "1, 2, 3 Festival", and greet the next generation of youngsters discovering an irrepressible urge to soar.

Now an annual event at the Joyce Theater, where it returned on Tuesday, the "1, 2, 3

Festival" showcases just-born talents in the feeder companies of three prestigious dance troupes: Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, American Ballet Theatre, and the Paul Taylor Dance Company. In these "junior" ensembles, young artists polish their skills, smoothing the transition from the classroom to a professional career.

Ailey II, ABT II, and Taylor 2 alternate during most of the festival, but a special atmosphere prevails at the opening, when they bring their fans together for a shared night of whooping excitement. This year, the modern groups presented old favorites — Paul Taylor’s “Company B,” a poignant recollection of WWII dancehalls set to music by the Andrews Sisters, and Judith Jamison’s more abstract and sinuous “Divining.”

The ballet dancers took a risk, offering a premiere by emerging choreographer Edwaard Liang.

Taylor 2’s version of “Company B” is not identical to what the main company performs, and a major interest is in seeing how ingeniously Taylor has edited his work for a six-person ensemble — half the size of the original. Only one section has been omitted, but by changing the direction of exits and doubling roles, the thrifty choreographer achieves a model of efficiency. This version of “Company B” is not a patched hand-me-down, but a lighter and more intimate creation that delivers the same emotional knockout.

In “Company B,” vignettes dramatize the characters’ romantic illusions or sheer randomness, while jitterbugging tunes sound a wake-up call for young people just opening their eyes to life’s experiences. Meanwhile,

behind the revelers, shadowy silhouettes point to unspoken realities; soldiers take aim and shield their faces, and some men are more than comrades in arms. Just beyond the lights and music, a slaughter is taking place, intruding upon the party when dancers crumple to the floor.

Wonderfully resilient Justin Kahan danced two exhausting roles, the “Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy” and “Oh Johnny,” without seeming to tire. On the spot Christina Lynch Markham is brisk and always ready to move, yet this performer also makes the most of soulful stillness in “There Will Never Be Another You.” Latra Wilson brings delicious intrigue to “Rum and Coca-Cola.” Remember those names!

Set in a stylized rainforest, “Divining” has a single featured role. In this quietly spiritual solo, Ghrai DeVore struck her wrists loosely and made her hands quiver to illustrate the twang of the berimbau. A nearly frictionless performer, she seems exceptionally mature. The depth of Ailey II was also evident, however, in ensemble dancing filled with dynamic contrast. After sustaining a balance or a smooth turn, a dancer may be snatched away. Yet the members of this group never lose their poise.

Although Liang’s serviceable new piece, “Ballo Per Sei,” offers a pleasant contrast between crisp pointework and a languorous upper body, ABT II has looked better.

1, 2, 3 Festival

Where: The Joyce Theater, 175 Eighth Ave. at 19th Street

When: Friday-April 25 (Tuesday-Wednesday and Sunday at 7:30 p.m., Thursday-Saturday at 8 p.m., Saturday-Sunday at 2 p.m.)

How Much: Tickets are \$10-\$59. Call (212) 242-0800 or visit joyce.org

Seeing Things

Tobi Tobias on Dance et al.

Three for the Show

1.2.3 Festival / Joyce Theater, NYC / April 13 - 25, 2010

Opening night of the 1.2.3 Festival at the Joyce was the tasting menu. The three (count 'em) companies involved in this yearly event--ABT II, AILEY II, and Taylor 2--contributed one substantial, and revealing, dance to the program. Each little troupe is an offshoot of a top-notch, grand-scale company: American Ballet Theatre, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, and the Paul Taylor Dance Company. The junior groups serve as ambassadors of dance, touring to venues that lack the space, budget, and sizable audience needed to host the grander companies, all the while increasing their professional aplomb. The young members of the second companies are, for the most part, on their way to the big time, and the evening at the Joyce displayed both the style that distinguishes the parent company of each and the dancers' individual gifts.

Taylor 2 opened the program and won the day with its rendition of *Company B*, engagingly set to bubbly or yearning songs popular in the Forties, sung by the Andrews Sisters. Taylor's choreography shadows the moods of the music with images of World War II, in which many a lighthearted boyfriend or cut-up suddenly found himself an armed soldier facing the enemy and, often, death.

In this way, "There Will Never Be Another You" becomes not just an ex-sweetheart's lament over a romance that has gone awry, from which both parties are likely to recover eventually, but rather for a romance cut off in one fell swoop by a visit to the young man's parents from a pair of somber emissaries of the United States Armed Forces.

Similarly, Taylor gives an extra dimension to the lyrics of "I Can

Dream, Can't I?" by having a young woman's wistful query about the unresponsive object of her affections answered by images in silhouette of two fellows who only have eyes for each other. Elsewhere, in "Pennsylvania Polka" and "Oh Johnny, Oh Johnny, Oh!," the impulse is chiefly one of ebullient cavorting, something, it seems nowadays, that America will never retrieve.

The Taylor 2 dancers embodied the unfettered feelings of youth required for *Company B*, yet their skills and assurance are utterly professional. The combination is irresistible. Two of the three men in the company are, understandably, throwbacks to the beefy types Taylor often commandeers for his main company; this may be part of the "blast at ballet" that choreographers of his generation needed to make as they carved their own, idiosyncratic, path.

As a group, the guys are irrepressible; the sun seems to shine on their innocent rowdiness. The three women are very individual and capable, bless them, of conveying mood

and emotion through dancing rather than add-on histrionics. Latra Wilson was my favorite--juicy and teasing in "Rum and Coca-Cola" as a Trinidad native exhibiting her charms to a trio of American soldiers who lie lazily on the ground, ogling the object of their generic desires. She is, deliciously, "working for the Yankee dollar," and she's worth a million.

ABT II's contribution to the program was the evening's weakest entry, but this was not primarily the dancers' fault. The choreography of Edwaard Liang's *Ballo per Seide* defeats them, being both physically illogical (hardly a step in it segues into a move that the body would instinctively do next) and unmusical (an untenable response to its Vivaldi score). What's more (or, rather, less), for long stretches the piece is intolerably boring. ABT II has, for some time now, prided itself on commissioning new works to be made on its dancers, who would then be part of the "creative" endeavor, as if dancing itself were not creative. I've felt all along that an

emphasis on performing the classics might serve them better.

Still, Liang's choreography wasn't entirely to blame for the not-so-hot performance of the dancers. The current company members are nowhere near such able practitioners of their trade as, for instance, the members of Taylor 2. Comparing them, more aptly, to a classical group, their technique lacks the sharp edge and brilliant footwork on view at the annual performances given by the School of American Ballet, which grooms dancers for the New York City Ballet.

The young women of ABT II are more capable technically than the men who, moreover, do not always make reliable partners. And yet all the performers gave the audience glimpses of talent that just needs time and guidance to mature. The one passage of fully fledged dancing came from Brittany DeGrofft in the long adagio duet at the heart of Liang's piece. DeGrofft had evidently convinced herself that her role was expressive, and expressive she was in her rendition. Her

performance wasn't profound--she's probably too young in experience for that--but she obviously knew what it should be like. In time, with better material, she may be wonderful.

The denizens of Judith Jamison's *Divining*, presented by Ailey II, seem to be an ancient nomadic tribe given to mystical rituals. A small group of them that opens the piece and an expanded one that appears at the end move together, suggesting a powerful collective consciousness. For the all-important middle section of the dance, these strong-bodied, strong-minded people conjure up a female goddess--to protect them and lead them, it would seem; perhaps to inspire them. Danced by the remarkable Ghrai DeVore, this central figure is one you're not likely to forget.

DeVore rivets your eyes the moment she sets a foot, delicate but sure, on the stage. Just physically, she's stunning. Her arms have the fragile beauty of a slender pre-adolescent child's; her thighs are those of a mature athletic woman, full and vigorous. Her head, exquisitely

shaped, is perfectly poised; her neck might be its pedestal. Large eyes, emphasized by ebony makeup. A luscious mouth. The cut of her black hair must have been designed by a sculptor: close-cropped but thick from crown to earlobes, then shaved away below. Granted, beauty is as beauty does, but here it does fantastically.

In action, DeVore is vehemently expressive, yet subtle in detail. She can shift, with no visible transitions, from tiny vibrations to steady extended balances, from staccato thrusts to soaring leaps. At one point she jackknifes over, one palm slapping the floor, while the opposite leg reaches straight skyward, the foot seeming to pierce the atmosphere like a fatal arrow. For DeVore, an

action like this is not a feat; it's business as usual. No, she's not on her way to stardom. She is already a star.

Subsequent performances in the 123 Festival will be devoted to full programs by a single one of the three participating companies. Taylor 2 is offering the most captivating show-- *Aureole*, *3 Epitaphs*, *Company B*, and *Esplanade*--four masterworks by the choreographer in which joy or fun has the upper hand, not one of them suggesting, as a good part of Taylor's complete repertory does, that life is nothing but an amalgam of evil, madness, violence, and despair. (Think of *Last Look*). What better way to lure prospective fans than the combination of excellence and pleasure?

The New York Times

Monday, August 5, 2002

To Leap and Soar, Flying Past the Bustle

By JENNIFER DUNNING

The performing would have been impressive enough on its own in the outdoor program by Taylor 2, presented on Thursday afternoon by Dancing in the Streets. But the dancers' aplomb and artistry were even more remarkable in view of the stiflingly hot sun that beat down on the little rectangle of a stage floor at Foley Square in Lower Manhattan. Give those dancers a raise.

Taylor 2, the junior ensemble of the Paul Taylor Dance Company, has long been one of the most vital and accomplished of second troupes in New York City. In "Airs," set to Handel, the six performers made clear each momentary pattern in the flowing whole and each gracious shift in tone in the music. Arms pushing up into the air echoed the vaunting lines of the august courthouses on one side of the plaza.

Chattering feet and brief encounters captured the intimacy of the soft green enclosure in which they danced, ringed closely by clusters of office workers, casual strollers and schoolchildren who paused to watch. Shanti Guirao and Sean Patrick Mahoney stood out for the way they caught every fine detail and nuance in the slow duet

in "Airs," giving it an extra tender, playful spin.

The larger-scaled movements and music of "Airs" worked better in this setting than the character-driven "Company B," set to wartime songs of the Andrews Sisters. Mr. Taylor's subtle but potent allusions to the tragedy of war were harder to catch here. But the characters shone through in most of the numbers.

Wild anguish burst through the sad lyricism of "I Can Dream, Can't I?" in a stunning performance by Alison Cook. Jared Wootan was delicious as the spectacle-wearing hero in the "Oh Johnny, Oh Johnny, Oh!" solo, an apparently irresistible nerd who drives the girls crazy. John Byrne danced a heroic "Tico-Tico" solo, and Ms. Guirao brought a nicely suspect charm to "Rum and Coca-Cola." Mr. Mahoney was quietly haunting as the remembered lover in "There Will Never Be Another You," danced with Michelle Fleet, who will soon join the Taylor first company.

Directed by Susan McGuire, the Taylor 2 company also includes Dara Adler.

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DAILY HAMPSHIRE GAZETTE

Thursday, October 24, 2002

NHS dancers share stage with stars



Jared Wootan, a member of Taylor II dance company of New York, leads a group of NHS students in a master class on the Paul Taylor technique of dance Wednesday afternoon at Northampton High School.



Dara Adler, a member of Taylor II dance company of New York, leads a group of NHS students in a master class on the Paul Taylor technique of dance.

By Kathleen Mellen

NORTHAMPTON - Freshman Carolyn Reckhow, 14, said it was a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity" that brought her to the Northampton High School auditorium after school Wednesday: the chance to take a class taught by members of the world-famous Taylor 2 Dance Company.

After performing three works by modern-dance great Paul Taylor before a standing-room-only crowd, the six Taylor 2 dancers invited students to join them on stage to learn more about Taylor's unique style - and even try a few steps from one of his most famous dances, "Aureole," performed that afternoon. As most of the audience filed out, nine students and one teacher came on stage to take the class.

"The Paul Taylor Company is really famous," said Reckhow, who has studied dance for five years. "I decided to grab it." For the next hour-and-a-half, company members led the students through warmups and movement that was quintessential Taylor. Taylor, 71, a former soloist with Martha Graham Dance Company, has long devoted himself to creating dances that reflect daily life, said Francie Huber Mourad, a former Taylor Company star and now director of the touring Taylor 2 Company.

Mourad said Taylor draws from his experience as a swimmer to give his dances an athletic, "underwater" quality. He is "a great observer of people," she added, and has based dances on activities as mundane as a woman running to catch a bus. His works use everyday postures and gestures extensively, Mourad said.

Leading the warmups, company dancer Jared Wootan explained that they are integral to Taylor's style.

"Think about your back," he told the students. "The movement will almost always initiate from the back."

One student, sophomore Anastasia Hulley, 16, who has studied ballroom dance, concentrated on achieving the Taylor-style moves. She said she was inspired to try the class after seeing the performance.

"I looked at the performance," she said, "and I felt like, 'let's dance.'"

Hulley's reaction is precisely what company members say they hope for as they travel the country - and the world - performing and teaching.

Taylor formed the troupe in 1993 to ensure that his works would be accessible to audiences worldwide.

"We try to promote Paul Taylor's work," said company member John Byrne. "We're not trying to make dancers. We try to inspire kids and give them a new experience in movement."

Byrne, who was still in high school when Taylor selected him to join Taylor 2, said the teaching and performing he now does go hand-in-hand. "I learn more by teaching than by being a student," said the dancer.

In the class, the local dancers progressed quickly from simple foot warmups to grand movements across the stage, led by Taylor dancers Dara Adler and Shanti Guirao.

"It's no big deal. It's just movement," Adler said, urging them to dance boldly. "I know I'm throwing all this at you, but it's just so you can get a sense of Taylor movement."

Senior Brie Nicol, 17, and sophomore Alex Friedlander Moore, 15, said the class was a challenge because the style was unfamiliar. Both have studied dance for years, but neither had studied modern dance.

"It was neat to try a different style," said Moore. No stranger to creative movement, she performs each summer as a contortionist and acrobat with Circus Smirkus. "But, it was hard, she said, because it was different."

While Newsweek magazine has called Taylor "the world's greatest living choreographer," his work was new to most of the students.

But Elaine Finkowski, a special education teacher at the high school and the only adult to take the class, had no doubt about the day's significance. At Rhode Island College in the '70s, she had danced in a piece choreographed by Taylor for the school's modern dance company.

"This was a great experience," she said. "It was such an honor to do this class."

Kathleen Mellen can be reached at kmellen@gazettenet.com

The Berkshire Eagle

July 29, 2000

Taylor 2 offers intimate look at Paul Taylor's work

By Allison Tracy
Dance Review

BECKET -- Taylor 2, an outreach and touring "second" company of six professionals augmenting the Paul Taylor Dance Company, performs through tomorrow on Jacob's Pillow's so-called experimental stage, the Doris Duke Studio Theatre. Don't think of it as a farm team. Think of it as Taylor Too.

Their program figures as a splendid chamber evening of Paul Taylor genius, a reprise of his 45-year development that complements the full company works shown this Taylor birthday week on the Ted Shawn Theatre stage.

First, Taylor 2 is wonderfully intimate. Watching only six dancers perform Taylor works clearly reveals both structure and movement for an eye-opening appreciation of the master's approach. The sense of close encounters is especially felt in the presentation of "Images," originally set in 1977 to selections from Debussy's piano score, "Images-Book 1, Children's Corner Suite." For this concert, Debussy is played live by young Daniel Schlosberg, a fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center who received his BFA from Johns Hopkins and Peabody Conservatory in May.

Second, these are early Taylor efforts we see, and favorites we no longer see often: "Airs," "Images," and "Esplanade."

Taylor launched his company in 1954 with only six or so dancers, such that his early works are perfectly suited to T2 with little modification. It's like hearing Mozart played on original instruments, or birds in the woods without traffic noise. There's an authenticity about them that also speaks with the voice of authority: It's easy to see why Taylor's work stood out from the crowd right from the start.

Third, these dancers are every bit as skilled and delightful as the senior company and so eager, so ready to captivate, they can't fail. Remember their names: Susan Dodge, Michelle Fleet, Joseph Gallerizzo, Robert Kleinendorst, Julie Tice, and Jared Wootan.

Against the tide, Taylor formed this second company to meet the crushing demand for touring in a shrinking economic environment. In 1993, the Paul Taylor Dance Company performed in 37 cities over four continents and posted a record touring income. Demand has continued, for both performance and outreach, but at reduced rates, the backlash of government funding cuts and proliferating competition for cultural support. To meet both needs, this smaller company was founded to carry the

Taylor message where the big company can't afford to go, due to size, budget, or union constraints.

Taylor 2 was never considered a training ground. But, in fact, two members of Taylor 2 have been absorbed by Taylor 1, and the reverse is also true: Some main company members join in T2 outreach and teaching activities. What's significant is that growing the troupe in these directions has astonishingly proven more than fiscally viable. Think of Taylor 2 as Taylor squared, or maybe to the nth power. Who knows how big this thing might get.

In the meantime, enjoy the view. There is perhaps no work in the repertory that so exudes the joy of moving, company camaraderie, and psychological probing than "Esplanade," choreographed in 1975 to Bach's Violin Concerto in E major and Double Concerto for two Violins in D Minor. Made up entirely of pedestrian movement -- running, patterned walking, sliding, cradling, hunching and crawling -- the piece establishes the pure grace of all of it as material for dance, with an inventiveness that sometimes makes us laugh out loud.

Shaping Taylor's style were two outstanding lights in the dance world of that time: George Balanchine and Martha Graham.

"Airs" (1978) is a flowing balletic tribute to the circle in all its infinity, replete with royalty and cavaliers. It bears a dance vocabulary that Balanchine's guide, Petipa, would not quite accept but definitely recognize, one that is fully incorporated in dance circles today.

"Images" is a Greek or, more likely, Etruscan fantasy a la Graham, all two-dimensional friezes, human endeavor frozen in time, and oracular obsolescence. It carries the feel of pottery shards, the dust of the British Museum, the surprise of a fall through the shaft of a buried grave site in Tuscany where the flashlight reveals a brilliantly hued mural left by an unknown people.

In short, with the Taylor 2 touring company, we become unsuspecting time travelers through our own and other worlds. It's one more unveiling of rich Taylor treasures at the Pillow this birthday week.

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THE SOUTHAMPTON PRESS

Thursday, April 23, 1998

2 Dozen Dancers Take a Lesson

By Erica-Lynn Gambino

For many dancers, the thrill of seeing a live performance of dance pieces created by famed choreographer Paul Taylor is inspiration enough. But this past Saturday, local dancers were given even more than inspiration – instruction by a member of Mr. Taylor’s regional dance company based in New York City, Taylor2.

On Saturday night, Taylor2, a six-member ensemble established to accommodate the demands on the Paul Taylor Dance Company for increased teaching and community outreach, performed to an enthusiastic audience at the Southampton High School. Before the performance, at noon, roughly 25 dancers – all women, ages 10 to 35 or so – were lined up in the hall outside the auditorium in tights and leotards, stretching and waiting for a unique master class to begin. The dancers, most of whom were at an intermediate level, attended the free class through the sponsorship of the East End Arts Council, which also presented the evening event.

Teaching the Class were Annmaria Mazzini, a petite and athletic ensemble member who later performed in all four strenuous dances that evening. Ms. Mazzini is originally from Pennsylvania, birthplace of Mr. Taylor, and came to dance with Taylor2 in 1995. All six of the Taylor2 members teach classes like the one Ms. Mazzini presided over.

“We usually come in never knowing quite what to expect, which means a lot of thinking on

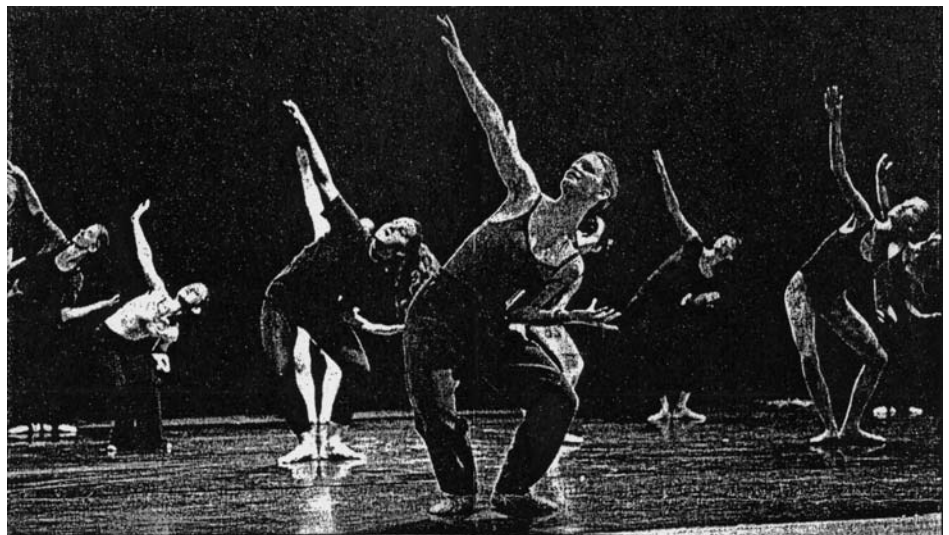
our feet,” said Ms. Mazzini just before the class began. Ms. Mazzini said she found teaching the hour-and-a-half master class “very challenging, and also more interesting and exciting because of that. Also, I always learn from the different groups of students, too. That’s rewarding.”

At 12:30 p.m., the dancers were led onto the state in the auditorium. The class began with a series of upper and lower body exercises led by Ms. Mazzini, aimed at stretching and flexing the muscles. The exercises were carefully chosen – a combination of classical ballet exercises with distinct movements that appeared later in choreographic segments the class was to learn, essentially setting the specific language of movement in exercise for the choreography to come.

Ms. Mazzini’s class was

accompanied by John Eyre, a Riverhead pianist who often accompanies other musicians and singers. Before each exercise or dance segment, Ms. Mazzini would describe to Mr. Eyre, by snapping her fingers and showing him the steps, what tempo or meter she preferred, and he would quickly choose a piece which fit her description.

After about 40 minutes of exercises, Ms. Mazzini began to create segments made up of a series of movements which were indicative of the unique style of Mr. Taylor’s brand of modern dance. By the end of the class, students took away with them an invaluable dance experience – if not some sore muscles – one they could only receive from such a well-versed dancer and instructor as Ms. Mazzini.



Taylor 2 dancer Annmaria Mazzini led the Master Class at Southampton High School last Saturday afternoon.

DANCE

M A G A Z I N E

November 1995

QUALITY COMES FIRST IN SECOND COMPANIES

BY CAMILLE HARDY

Taylor 2 was established in 1993 under the direction of Linda Hodes to accommodate the demands on the Paul Taylor Dance Company for increased teaching and community outreach, as well as for the restaging of some of Taylor's early works. Like the original Taylor ensemble of 1954, Taylor 2 is made up of six professionals with a particular gift for the choreographer's style, now given additional polish at the Taylor school. The small group usually does not perform with the parent company. "We're jokingly referred to as the pizza element in the Taylor organization," Hodes says with a laugh. "We deliver and we'll go anywhere." Engagements are completely flexible and are customized to an individual community, with a mix-and-match approach to performances, master classes, and lecture-demonstrations. She states proudly, "We can run three classes simultaneously."

Appearing in classrooms, auditoriums, movie theaters, and even a school cafeteria, Taylor 2 has already shared some colorful aesthetic adventures. A five-borough tour of public schools in New York City put them in touch with students at all levels, elementary through high school. In March 1994 the dancers performed in six African nations under the sponsorship of the United States Information Agency. Last June, a four-week residency was completed at Skidmore College, sponsored by its dance department, with what Hodes described as "luxurious" conditions. During the first week, the dancers rehearsed the restaging of the 1961 *Junction*, part of the Repertory Preservation Project, with access to two studios and a small theater. In the remaining period, twenty-five classes a week were given, along with performances at the beginning and end.

In two years the ensemble has built a repertoire of eight dances. *Aureole*, *3 Epitaphs*, *Profiles*, *Arden*

Court, *Duet*, *Airs*, *Junction*, and a special version of *Company B*. In Taylor's earlier works, the casting fit perfectly. Later dances pose special challenges. Made for thirteen, *Company B* is essentially a series of solos and duets. "We simply double all the roles and have fewer people in the background," reveals Hodes. "In *Arden Court* Paul has the women join the men for the all-male section. It works beautifully and everybody has a great deal to dance." Current plans limit the number of Taylor 2 members to a maximum of six, "perfect for fitting into a van or performing in a lunchroom." In April 1996, Taylor 2 will complete a month long tour of Wisconsin in conjunction with the parent company. Teaching and residency activities will be the assignment, with some public appearances at community sites, while the senior ensemble fulfills engagements at the state's larger theaters.

Taylor 2 was specifically designed to carry the choreographer's repertoire into venues that are unsuitable – due to size, budget, and union restrictions – for the senior company. While this quintessential grass roots experience was not conceived as a training opportunity for its members, two dancers have already been promoted into the parent troupe, and the rigorous teaching and performance schedule is excellent preparation to join any other modern dance company as well. Hodes reports that all the Taylor dancers have been extremely generous about coaching the junior members, which has added sizzle to the general family well-being of the organization and spread an appreciation of the Taylor oeuvre among a variety of new constituencies. "We started with nothing but talent, willingness, and a name," she observes. But that name just happens to belong to the man whom *Newsweek* called "the world's greatest living choreographer."

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DANCE

M A G A Z I N E

June 2001

TAYLOR 2 IS LITMUS TEST

Four years ago, the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds awarded Dance St. Louis a grant to develop "Audiences of Our Future." The Missouri project brings four major American dance companies to the region: Dayton Contemporary Dance Theatre, which focuses on the African American community; STREB, which works with a

local circus to improve public access; the Miami City Ballet, which tours rural communities in south-eastern Missouri; and the Paul Taylor Dance Company and Taylor 2, which target university populations.

For the Paul Taylor segment, known as "Big Man on Campus," dance students are chosen from Lindenwood, Webster, and Washington Universities to be coached intensively in a work from the Taylor repertoire. This year, the dance was a signature Taylor company piece, *Esplanade*. Taylor 2, a second company



Sally Bliss, executive director of Dance St. Louis

formed in 1993 to expand the Taylor residency potential, did the staging. (Susan McGuire directs the company, and Ken Tosti directs rehearsals.) The value to the six students drawn from each school is enormous. These pre-professionals develop as performers by learning this masterwork, and Taylor's genius is experienced by a new generation of dancers.

Taylor 2 taught and performed in the St. Louis area April 16 through May 6. So that the maximum number of students could benefit, sections of *Esplanade* were taught during regular class time on each of the campuses. The eighteen selected students had additional evening rehearsals, and the dance was performed on the spring concerts of Webster and Lindenwood Universities. Audience had the pleasure of seeing the entire dance because Taylor 2 performed sections of the work not being done by the students.

For dance programs directors Rob Scoggins from Lindenwood, Mary Jean Cowell from Washington University, and Gary Hubler from Webster, the program was an unprecedented opportunity. For Hubler, it was the students' chance to interact with the Taylor 2 dancers, who

are close to them in age and succeeding in the competitive world of professional dance. Cowell appreciated the project's convergence with her program's commitment to students' understanding of choreography by doing it, in addition to reading and viewing assignments. The residency was a litmus test for measuring student achievement for Scoggins's program, which is the newest in the area.

The project culminated with a major event for Dance St. Louis, the company premiere of a new Taylor work, presented on May 11 and 12, which was co-commissioned by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts for American Ballet Theatre.

According to Sally Bliss, Dance St. Louis's executive director, the result was, "one of the most successful education and outreach programs we have ever done. It was brilliantly conceived by the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds because it brings great dance to the whole community. This excellence is what generates the enthusiasm that builds future audiences. And education is an essential component."

- Alice Bloch

THE VALUE TO THE SIX STUDENTS DRAWN FROM EACH SCHOOL IS ENORMOUS. THESE PRE-PROFESSIONALS DEVELOP AS PERFORMERS BY LEARNING THIS MASTERWORK, AND TAYLOR'S GENIUS IS EXPERIENCED BY A NEW GENERATION OF DANCERS.



Esplanade has become a signature work for the Paul Taylor Dance Company and for Taylor 2 (above).