

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**PAUL TAYLOR CREATES A NEW ARTISTIC POSITION AT THE  
PAUL TAYLOR DANCE FOUNDATION**

**TAYLOR COMPANY DANCER MICHAEL NOVAK APPOINTED AS  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR DESIGNATE**

NEW YORK, May 18, 2018 – Paul Taylor announced today that he has created a new artistic position at the Paul Taylor Dance Foundation. Mr. Taylor has appointed Taylor Company Dancer Michael Novak to be the Artistic Director Designate effective July 1, 2018.

Mr. Taylor will continue as the Foundation Artistic Director. He will continue to choreograph new dances on his Company and prepare Mr. Novak to be the future Artistic Director of the Taylor organization.

“I am very happy to be making this announcement at this time,” said Mr. Taylor. “I know that Michael is the right person to lead my Company in the future. I look forward to working with him to continue my vision.”

“On behalf of the Board of Directors I can say that we are excited that Mr. Taylor has made this choice and that he is investing in the future of his organization,” said C. F. Stone III, Chairman, Paul Taylor Dance Foundation. “I enthusiastically welcome Mr. Novak to this position and am confident that his knowledge of dance and years of experience with the Company will serve as a solid foundation for his leadership to sustain Mr. Taylor’s legacy.”

Mr. Novak has an academic background in dance history. He graduated *magna cum laude* from Columbia University in 2008 with a B.A. in Dance and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. He has a background in classical, jazz, tap and contemporary dance forms. His passion for modern dance began during his studies at Columbia. Mr. Novak was invited to join the Taylor Company in 2010. His debut season earned him a nomination for the 2011 Clive Barnes Foundation Dance Award.

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“I am overjoyed with Mr. Taylor’s appointment of Mr. Novak as Artistic Director Designate,” said John Tomlinson, Executive Director, Paul Taylor Dance Foundation. “Michael Novak is passionate and articulate about the Taylor repertoire and its contribution to modern dance. There is no question that he will leverage this passion, along with sheer talent, dance knowledge and energy, in working with Mr. Taylor to build on the Taylor tradition of excellence. He will help us assure the future of the company and the art of modern dance.”

Michael Kaiser, Chairman of the DeVos Institute of Arts Management at the University of Maryland, who worked closely with the Taylor organization on strategic planning, said of Mr. Taylor’s decision: “It is thrilling to see Mr. Taylor as a Founding Artistic Director make an inspired decision that is instrumental in ensuring a secure future for his institution beyond himself.”

“Needless to say I am deeply honored and humbled that Mr. Taylor is entrusting me with his legacy,” said Mr. Novak. “I am a big, big believer in the power and range of the Taylor canon. To help Mr. Taylor move his company forward in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and to be given the gift of guidance from Mr. Taylor as I begin this new phase of my career is a dream come true.”

Mr. Novak will continue to perform with the Paul Taylor Dance Company while working with Mr. Taylor on his new duties as Artistic Director Designate.

For more information about Michael Novak, please see his biography attached to this email. For images of Michael Novak, please contact Lisa Labrado at [ll@ptamd.org](mailto:ll@ptamd.org) or 646.214.5812.

#### About Paul Taylor and PTAMD:

Paul Taylor is the greatest living pioneer of American modern dance, with 147 dances made since 1954 when he established the Paul Taylor Dance Company. He continues to offer cogent observations on life’s complexities and society’s thorniest issues through his dances. A virtuoso dancer for 20 years, Mr. Taylor turned exclusively to choreography in 1974; the dance that followed, *Esplanade*, was hailed an instant classic. Mr. Taylor continues to create new work annually for his Company. His works are performed by the Taylor Company, Taylor 2 and ballet and modern dance companies the world over. In 2015 he established PAUL TAYLOR AMERICAN MODERN DANCE to bring to New York’s Lincoln Center – in addition to his own repertoire – masterworks of the past by renowned artists, and works by the next generations of choreographers creating on his Company. Works are performed to live music whenever so intended by the choreographer. A Kennedy Center honoree, Mr. Taylor is the subject of the Oscar-nominated documentary, *Dancemaker*, and author of the acclaimed autobiography, *Private Domain*. A collection of Mr. Taylor essays, *Facts and Fancies*, as published in 2013. He

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has achieved countless accolades, including two of our nation's highest artistic distinctions: the Kennedy Center Honors and the National Medal of Arts.

About the Paul Taylor Dance Company:

The world-renowned Paul Taylor Dance Company sets the global standard for contemporary dance excellence. Since the company's founding in 1954, Mr. Taylor has choreographed 147 dances, many of which have attained iconic status and have been celebrated throughout the world. The Company has performed in some 524 cities in 64 countries. The 2018 Lincoln Center season marks the Company's 64<sup>th</sup> performing year.

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**Michael Novak** is the new Artistic Director Designate of Paul Taylor Dance Foundation.

He was appointed by company founder Paul Taylor, who said: “Over the past decade, Michael has mastered our repertory and steeped himself in dance history. He understands the need to nurture the past, present and future of modern dance. I look forward to working with him and preparing him to assume artistic leadership of my company.”

Mr. Novak has been a dancer with The Paul Taylor Dance Company since 2010. His performing debut, during the company's 2010/11 season, earned him a nomination for the Clive Barnes Foundation Dance Award.

Raised in Rolling Meadows, IL, Mr. Novak began studying dance at age ten. At age 12, he developed a severe speech impediment requiring 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. With dancing, there were no limits to what I could express.”

In 2001, Mr. 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.

After moving to New York City, Mr. 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 for directing the group's branding and promotion.

At Columbia, Mr. 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 19<sup>th</sup> century French movement theorist who codified the system linking emotion and gesture that would inspire the

first generation of American modern dancers. Mr. Novak undertook a multi-year training program to study and master the subtleties of the Delsarte Method.

His love of dance history also led him to Vaslav Nijinsky, the Ballets Russes dancer who radically reimagined ballet choreography and movement in such works as *L'Après-midi d'un faune* and *Le Sacre du printemps*. (Mr. Novak's fascination with Nijinsky is shared by Paul Taylor.) In a 2009 program celebrating Diaghilev at Columbia's Miller Theatre, Mr. Novak embodied Nijinsky's role in *L'Après-midi d'un faune* with an authenticity that brought him to the attention of dance critics and scholars.

The encounter with Nijinsky coincided with the beginnings of Mr. Novak's deep exploration of the Taylor repertory, including his performance at Columbia of a solo originated by Paul Taylor in *Aureole*. Enthralled with the experience of performing Taylor's masterpiece, Mr. Novak embarked on studies at the Taylor School while still at Columbia.

In 2008, Mr. Novak graduated *magna cum laude* from Columbia University, where he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. His senior thesis on the dance photography of George Platt Lynes was accepted with honors.

Mr. Novak has performed works by Bill T. Jones and Stephen Petronio and danced with Gibney Dance and the Daniel Gwirtzman Dance Company. He has also studied at Springboard Danse Montreal under Alexandra Wells and Coleman Lemieux & Compagnie.

In 2010, Paul Taylor invited Mr. Novak to join The Paul Taylor Dance Company.

"Mr. Taylor helped me decide what I was going to do for the rest of my life," says Mr. Novak. "What I have loved most about my job is being the member of a company where the repertoire is so vast and so varied. And we're very fortunate that such a large number of Taylor works are iconic. I have found that these masterpieces reward a thousandfold the time you spend digging into them."

"I am so honored and humbled that Mr. Taylor has elected to guide me toward the future artistic direction of his company. And I'm thrilled by his willingness to share his experience in leadership and vast knowledge of modern dance. It is an extraordinarily generous gift."