

# Paul Taylor 2 comes to Windhover to recreate lost modern dance piece

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**By Keith Powers / Correspondent**

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With modern dance, a choreographer's work can be lost even while the choreographer is still living. Take Paul Taylor's early '60s work "Tracer," part of an extended collaboration Taylor had at the time with the artist Robert Rauschenberg. The work was last performed in 1964, just as Taylor was moving in a new artistic direction, setting dances to more traditional music.

If you go...

**WHAT:** Paul Taylor 2 Dance Company residency

**WHERE:** Windhover Performing Arts Center, 257 Granite St., Rockport

**WHEN:** June 27 through July 2

**TICKETS:** Free. Visit [www.windhover.org](http://www.windhover.org) or call 978-546-3611.

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That shift made Taylor somewhat of an outcast in modern dance circles — choreography set to the music of Handel and Bach went against prevalent ideas. So “Tracer” disappeared from the repertory, only to be “re-discovered” last year by Paul Taylor 2, the innovative studio adjunct to Taylor’s main troupe.

PT2 brings “Tracer,” along with other works, to the Windhover Performing Arts Center during a weeklong residency there, which begins June 27. Performances of “Tracer” will be accompanied by recreations from the works of the late Ina Hahn, Windhover founder, who passed away in January 2016.

It’s the second year PT2 has been in residence at Windhover, and like last summer the troupe will offer master classes for all levels, as well as give three performances. The highlight of the performances certainly is the inclusion of “Tracer,” programmed along with two works set to Bach: Hahn’s “Fragments of Six” and Taylor’s “Junction.”

Robert Mattison, professor of art history at Lafayette College, will speak during the residency about the “Tracer” reconstruction. He will delve into Taylor’s relationship with Rauschenberg, which started with the artist designing sets, but deepened, as Rauschenberg was also intimately involved with the company and the performances.

“Paul and Bob (Rauschenberg) had been very close, since 1954,” Mattison says. “They had done many pieces together, but by the ’60s Paul was evolving in a different way. And Rauschenberg was beginning to do his own choreography.”

The resulting artistic split relegated “Tracer” to the archives. The dance was not notated, and no video existed. Flash forward 50 years, to the creation of Paul Taylor 2.

“About five years ago Paul decided he was going to have to come up with some creative ideas to take his company into the future,” says Tim Robinson, director of tour engagements for PT2. “And not just to preserve his own works, but to bring back the early modern works by others that he had experienced.”

And so PT2 was formed. A smaller troupe — “specifically designed to bring dance into unconventional spaces,” Robinson says — PT2 takes residence in universities and at performance centers like Windhover. And does research, not just into Taylor’s own early works, but the works of other modern dance pioneers like Ina Hahn.

“In doing research I stumbled on to the documentary Ina did on Doris Humphrey,” Robinson says, referring to the 2010 film, “A New Dance for America,” which Hahn created to honor her own choreographic mentor. “I am especially interested in women in modern dance. I reached out to get more information about Windhover, and looked into how we could work together.”

About the same time, “Tracer” was being recreated at another PT2 resident location, the University of North Carolina/Charlotte.

“Paul was the only one who had seen the work, and that was 50 years ago,” Robinson says. “But it was like finding a beautiful piece of art in the closet.” Choreographer Kim Jones worked on the recreation, and “Tracer” was staged again, including a performance last year at New York’s 92nd Street YMCA.

Those who follow Rauschenberg’s work will relate to his contributions to “Tracer”: a single bicycle wheel, placed onstage, that revolves as part of the dance.

“Rauschenberg presented the bicycle wheel to Paul before he created the dance,” Mattison says. “Paul said he did the dance around it. It’s coordinated so that once it starts to rotate, it’s an active participant. Paul has seen the recreation and approved it, and is happy to have it back as part of the repertoire.”

And now it comes to Windhover, part of an historically elegant program, which also matches works by Taylor and Hahn set to Bach’s cello suites. “This program is unique to Windhover,” Robinson says. “It’s almost like we’re doing a laboratory test, to see what Ina and Paul did in the exploration of Bach. They were both inspired by the same composer, and exploring the same genre.

“It’s what PT2 was created for — to give people a look inside the art form, under the radar.”

Paul Taylor 2 will be in residence at Windhover Performing Arts Center from June 27 through July 2. The troupe will give master classes for all levels during the day, and performances June 29 through July 1 in the evening. The evening performances are free; \$20 donation is suggested. For complete schedule information visit [www.windhover.org](http://www.windhover.org) or call 978-546-3611.

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Keith Powers covers music and the arts for GateHouse Media and WBUR’s ARTery. Follow @PowersKeith; email to [keithmichaelpowers@gmail.com](mailto:keithmichaelpowers@gmail.com)

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