

Modern Dance at Lincoln Center: What I Saw, Felt, and Learned from the Paul Taylor Performance

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Introduction

Seeing the Paul Taylor Dance Company perform at the David H. Koch Theater was one of those experiences that hit a little harder than expected. I arrived about twenty minutes early, meeting my peers by the fountain at Lincoln Center, which was lit up against the cold air. The sound of the water, the crowd moving in waves, and the yellow glow of the theater windows already made the whole thing feel more “New York” than anything I’ve done for class. Even the lobby felt grandly designed with marble walls, gold accents, and a huge chandelier that looked like it belonged in a movie. By the time I took my seat, the buzz of people settling in made it clear that this wasn’t just a dance show; it was an experience.

First impressions

This type of event was completely unknown to me; I have never been to any dances, Broadway shows, or live performances for that matter. When the curtain rose on the first performance, I immediately understood why so many people attended this event. The choreography flowed in a way that felt intentional but unpredictable. The choice of outfits of the dancers was very unique. What I can only describe as eye-catching and attention-worthy would still be an understatement.

One moment, the dancers moved as one body, crossing the stage in perfect unison, and in the next moment, they broke off into solos or duos that showed how different their individual styles were. I kept noticing how one movement seemed to trigger the next, almost like a chain reaction, and how the dancers used angles, tension, and release to communicate emotion without saying anything at all.

Overall Experience

One of the moments that resonated most with me was the section of the performance where the entire group crossed the stage in repeated patterns. It sounds simple, but with repetition, I could feel the rhythm of the movement more deeply. It reminded me very strongly of how disciplined and expressive dance may be at the same time. Walking out into the plaza after the theater, it looked different: the fountain seemed brighter, the city felt louder, and together, it made me think about the way art transforms the way you see everything around you. I went in expecting to just watch a dance show for extra credit, but left feeling like I'd seen something meaningful about expression, precision, and the way people communicate wordlessly. The show was two hours long, and after leaving the theater, I found myself replaying those moments during the train ride home: an unexpected lift, a sharp turn, and a slow backward fall that looked almost weightless.

Conclusion

The Paul Taylor Dance Company's performance opened my eyes to a world I had overlooked. The choreography, music, lighting, costumes, and energy blended into a powerful and artistic experience. It was truly worthwhile and deepened my appreciation for the impact of purposeful and skillful movement.

