



Keeping it Clean with Paul Taylor at ADF

by Kate Dobbs Ariail

July 16, 2009, Durham, NC: After the *New York Times*' glowing [February review](#), [American Dance Festival](#)-goers had several months of delicious anticipation of Paul Taylor's new work, which we knew would be presented as part of the annual [Paul Taylor Dance Company](#) appearance at ADF. In *Beloved Renegade*, we would see Taylor do his magic, melding music with dance, adding to the force with — so we thought — the music of Walt Whitman's singing poetry, as well. Set to Francis Poulenc's *Gloria*, *Beloved Renegade* has its moments of perfection, but they don't seem to have a thing to do with Walt Whitman. Pretty as it is in places, the dance is formulaic Taylor and completely absent the wild muscularity and sticky fluids, the green and musky scents, the dark winds and hot breezes of Whitman. The renegade is absent from the stage; he's left only a pale trace among the white-clad dancers frolicking earnestly under Jennifer Tipton's emotionless lighting. The disappointment of this final work on the program was its only surprise.

The dancers, as always, are quite wonderful — Laura Halzack particularly stands out here, with her fluid shapemaking and beautiful extensions — but they are more interesting to watch in both the silver-blue *Mercuric Tidings* (1982) which opens the evening, and the long-unseen *Scudorama* from 1963, with its vivid coloring and ritualistic, almost tribal aspects. I wish we could have seen that in conjunction with *Three Epitaphs* from 1956, with which it has much in common, musically and attitudinally, despite the extreme difference in coloration.

Mercuric Tidings ([last seen here in 2004](#) as part of Taylor's 50th anniversary extravaganza) is a beauty of a dance that makes one feel freshly bathed in its swirling circling liquidity, as if joyously preparing for some sweatier exchange on the grass of life. But we left the theater still clean and calm, having gloried only in the spirit and not the body, and having to seek our earthly solace in the night's rank humidity.

This production continues through July 18. See our [calendar](#) for details.

[Home](#)[About Us](#)[Calendar](#)[Reviews](#)[News](#)[Links](#)[Support Us](#)[Search](#)

Copyright © CVNC

[Contact CVNC](#)[Web Design by Mandie Manning](#)