

Event Combines Story, Dance, Music

MARGARET GARNER (mgarner@uwyo.edu)

"In the beginning, the earth was completely covered with water," the storyteller began. All eyes were riveted on him as he stood amidst a large rock formation and towering pine trees. "The giant Rainbow Serpent came up from the core of the earth," he continued, and viewers heard the haunting sound of a didgeridoo.

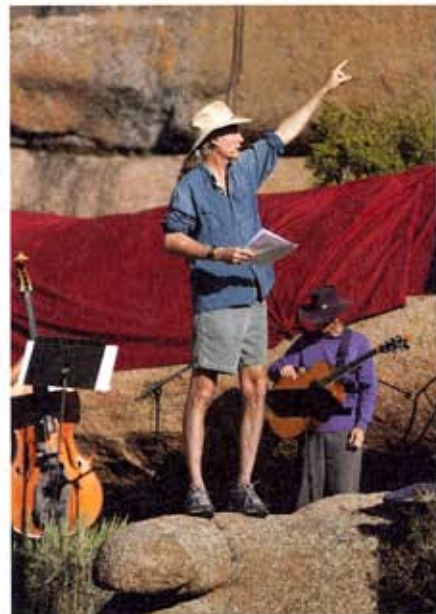
In the midst of the Vedauwoo rock formations of southeastern Wyoming, storyteller Paul Taylor recounted the creation of the very area where the audience was sitting. As they listened, dancers dressed in bright unitards and fitted with climbing harnesses moved through the air at the end of ropes dangling from the rock formations. Musicians played flute, didgeridoo, bass, guitar,



On location

trombone, and accordion.

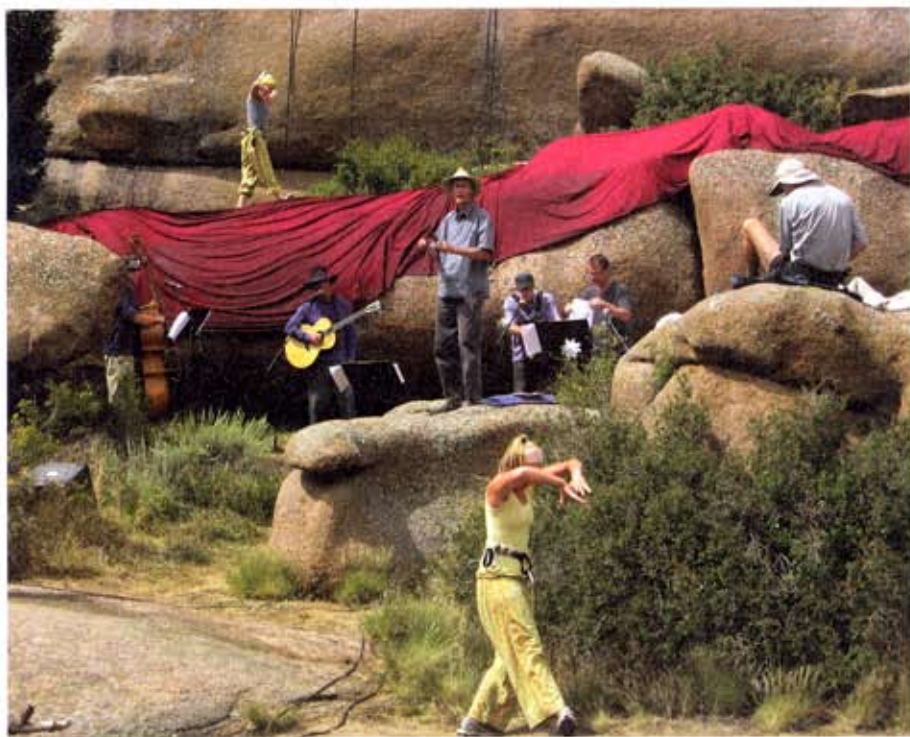
This innovative integration of storytelling with other art forms was the collaborative effort of Taylor, choreographers Margaret Wilson and Neil Humphrey from the University of Wyoming, and the dancers and musicians. Taylor contributed the main vision and the music and dance grew out of that vision.



Paul Taylor

Taylor used aspects of Aboriginal and Native American stories. He integrated musical interludes and directed the music. The dance pieces were choreographed on location using the story and rock formations as inspiration. Each musician composed music for a specific section of the story. Coordinating the story, the music, and the dance was challenging for all involved. The audience was mesmerized as they watched the dancers high above the musicians and narrator.

Paul Taylor is a storyteller and didgeridoo player who takes his programs about his native Australia to all parts of the United States. He has been an Teller in Residence at the International Storytelling Center, and was featured in the Exchange Place program at the National Storytelling Festival. ❖



Rehearsal