

IMPRESSIONS: KEIGWIN + COMPANY'S "PLACES PLEASE!" WITH LARRY KEIGWIN AND NICOLE WOLCOTT AS PART OF DANCE NOW AT JOE'S PUB

By: Erin Bomboy
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Performance and Choreography: Larry Keigwin and Nicole Wolcott

Conceived: Larry Keigwin

Sound Design: Omar Zubair

Costumes: Fritz Masten, Liz Prince, and Karen Young

When someone steps onstage, we, the audience, expect his or her best. But what's that person like before the curtain goes up?

Larry Keigwin and Nicole Wolcott take a sledgehammer to the real and symbolic structures of the stage in *Places Please!*, which premiered as part of Dance Now at Joe's Pub. Cycling through personal confessions, on-the-nose quips, and exuberant dancing, the two turn theatrical razzle dazzle inside out.

The show starts before the show should start. As people take their seats and sip cocktails, Keigwin and Wolcott mark through movement phrases, banter with show-goers, and chit chat with each other. Keigwin profanely checks the number of minutes until show time. Normally, these actions take place backstage where spectators remain oblivious to dancers' nerves and pre-performance rituals.

Larry Keigwin and Nicole Wolcott in a blond wig sit on the floor and change costumes. A garment rack filled with colorful outfits is in the background.

Larry Keigwin and Nicole Wolcott in *Places Please!*; Photo: Whitney Browne

The two provide other glimpses of backstage. Keigwin and Wolcott invite audience members to clear the tiny wedge-shaped performing space of confetti, and they escort their helpers through the stage door as Wolcott relates a story about meeting Paul Newman. Former Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater executive director Sharon Gersten Luckman is pressed into doing the robot. Wolcott turns a dark corner of the house into a dressing room, swapping out wigs that range from a platinum blonde bob to a fluffy dark one.

In addition to bringing backstage to center stage, the two gleefully break the fourth wall. After changing costumes onstage, they chuck just-worn articles into the audience with Wolcott gifting someone with her flesh-colored bra. The applause bubbles over, and Keigwin admonishes us to "stop clapping." During a tricky gestural sequence, Wolcott curses after she flubs. At one point, Keigwin answers his phone, hoping for an update on his dog's hernia. He even leaves to "take a leak."

For all the chatter, the dancing hogs the spotlight. Keigwin and Wolcott boast well-maintained technique, which they flaunt in everything from Matrix-like posturing to what Keigwin refers to as the American folk dance — step-touch. An exquisite duet of weight sharing and bearing reveals the vulnerability beneath the big smiles and bigger attitudes.

Nicole Wolcott in rose-colored light gestures with her right hand, her fingers splayed, in front of her Nicole Wolcott in Places Please!; Photo: Whitney Browne
While the hijinks are hilarious, pathos grounds Places Please!. Wolcott opines about the terror she feels as a dancer in her forties. "I love to dance," she says. But she wonders if and when she'll have to quit. Keigwin discusses his brief foray to Broadway where the tedium (performing eight shows a week in Dance of the Vampires) is only overshadowed by the heartbreak (not making the cut for his dream show, Cats).

Places Please! acts like a love letter to the stage. By basking in the artifice and then taking it to task, Keigwin and Wolcott highlight the absurdity and sublimity that put the show in show business.

Source: <https://www.dance-enthusiast.com/features/view/Impressions-Keigwin-Places-Pleas-Larry-Keigwin-Nicole-Wolcott-Dance-Now-Joes-Pub>