

# The Boston Globe

## Wolcott and Keigwin take us backstage in inventive ‘Places Please!’



Nicole Wolcott and Larry Keigwin in “Places Please!”

Photo by Whitney Browne

By **Jeffrey Gantz** GLOBE CORRESPONDENT | OCTOBER 20, 2018

“Places Please!” is the last phrase a show’s performers hear before the curtain goes up. “Places Please!” is also the name of the piece by Nicole Wolcott and Larry Keigwin that World Music/CRASHarts is presenting at the Institute of Contemporary Art this weekend. The title is a tease: The ICA’s Barbara Lee Family Foundation Theater doesn’t even have a curtain, and in any case “Places Please!” is already underway by the time you take your seat. Keigwin wants a shout-out for some friends who’ve come up from New York to see the show. Wolcott anguishes over whose mark is closer to center. (“Every centimeter matters.”) Keigwin does push-ups; Wolcott has to help him with his necktie. They’re backstage and onstage at the same time. By the time a voice calls out “Places Please!” and Weird Together’s “Ready for This” starts up, you should be ready for anything.

Keigwin and Wolcott founded Keigwin + Company back in 2003. “Places Please!,” which premiered at Joe’s Pub in Manhattan last year, looks back at their collaboration and their relationship. We see the costume changes (Wolcott gets audience help zipping up), the banter, the frustrations, the self-doubts. They’re in constant motion; every movement is a dance, whether it’s balletic, robotic, or Broadway. They’re also constantly talking; the rehearsal is the performance. They explore the difficulties of unison, but it’s when they’re not quite doing the same thing that you appreciate their chemistry.

The soundtrack tells its own story. “Are you ready for this?” is the question *Weird Together* poses. (So are Keigwin and Wolcott weird together?) Is Wolcott “Crazy” (Patsy Cline) for wanting to be a dancer? They might both think so when recalling the audition agony of “I Hope I Get It” (“A Chorus Line”). Depeche Mode’s “People Are People” reminds them to put aside their differences, but then they spoof difference in “You Are Woman, I Am Man” (“Funny Girl”), in which they sport matching glittery gold miniskirts. The highlight is their push-pull to Jacques Brel’s “Ne me quitte pas” (“Don’t Leave Me”), a duet about physical and emotional weight. At the end, of course, she does leave him.

Halfway through “Places Please!” we get guest appearances by local choreographers Lorraine Chapman, Alexander Davis, and Lynn Modell. The conceit is that they’re auditioning (Davis: “I see this as an evening-length”), and this is actually the zaniest part of the show. When Keigwin announces he needs a bathroom break and exits, Wolcott comes downstage and wonders who she’ll be when she’s too old to dance. Keigwin, after confessing that he didn’t get cast in “Cats,” treats himself to a brief turn as Rum Tum Tugger and also self-actualizes as “Something Wonderful” (“The King and I”). For her solo, Wolcott starts to boogie to Pat Benatar’s “Shadows of the Night,” then cuts to the austere yearning of Erik Satie’s first “Gymnopédie.” The evening ends with the guests returning to help gyrate to the “Love Boat” theme.

In a pre-“curtain” comment, Keigwin admits that he always wants to know how long a show will run. This one, he says, is 60 minutes, and it was. He also asked us not to look at our watches. I never felt the need.

## ‘PLACES PLEASE!’

Presented by World Music/CRASHarts. At Institute of Contemporary Art, Friday (repeats Saturday). Tickets \$32-\$36. 617-876-4275, [www.worldmusic.org](http://www.worldmusic.org)

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