

The New York Times

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 1996

Forever Hold Your Piece, Review, NY Times 1996

DANCE

When an Interracial Gay Couple Decide to Get Married

'Forever Hold Your Piece'
Dance Theater Workshop

The recorded music for this wedding was thoroughly conventional. The Wedding March from Wagner's "Lohengrin" began it. The Wedding March from Mendelssohn's "Midsummer Night's Dream" served as postlude.

But no ordinary wedding was depicted on Thursday night. Even though people often sing "Here Comes the Bride" to Wagner's tune, this wedding had no bride. "Forever Hold Your Piece" concerned an interracial gay couple, and Djola Branner and Patrick Scully, the performance artists from Minneapolis who created the work, based it on their own experiences. Text and choreography were deftly woven together under the direction of Kim Konikow.

A gay marriage ceremony lacks legal validity, yet it can be a complex event. Mr. Branner and Mr. Scully fussed over such matters as what they should wear and how they should behave. They even debated whether they should pose for photographs with their legs open or closed.

More serious issues were raised. Although both men consider themselves radicals, they soon realized that they come from totally different cultural traditions. Sexual, racial and political problems were debated. In addition to expressing their own ideas, Mr. Branner and Mr. Scully proved nimble mimics as they portrayed friends bombarding them with all sorts of advice, good and bad.

Occasionally, they turned preachy. But their sermons were short. Good cheer prevailed, and the presentation concluded with slides of the wedding festivities. Everyone at the celebration seemed to have a good time.

The production continues tonight and tomorrow afternoon at Dance Theater Workshop, 219 West 19th Street, Chelsea.

JACK ANDERSON