

The New York Times

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, APRIL 26, 1992

THE NEW YORK TIMES **THE ARTS** SUNDAY, APRIL 26, 1992

Review/**Dance**

The Sounds Of Silence In New Piece

By JENNIFER DUNNING

Sara Pearson tackled a complex subject in "A History of Silence," presented by Sara Pearson-Patrik Widrig & Company on Thursday night at Performance Space 122. The new piece dealt with a variety of silences, from the mute eloquence of dance to the messages hidden between the lines of chatter, tantrums and clichés. If the parts added up to somewhat more than the whole, there were some very good parts among them.

A young woman speaks her mother's crude complaints about her father, wincing and then angry at them in retrospect, and finally turning them inside out. Men work on performing skills in several funny duets that drew sympathetic laughter from the dancers in the audience. Bodies fly against one another, crashing in air and on the floor and winding about one another.

A solitary performer loops through a recurring postmodernist version of a dervish dance. There is a breathing number for two women, and another duet in which women make funny faces. "A History of Silence" ends on a quiet, slightly darker note, as a couple cling lovingly and skitter across each other's bodies and the floor in a dance that ends with everyone side-stepping out in a solemn but easy ritualistic processional that looks like an Eastern European folk dance slowed down.



Dona Ann McAdams

Husa Adams, left, and Sara Pearson in "History of Silence."

The highlight of the evening is a number in which Jaime Ortega rehearses Philip Kain 3d exhaustively in a simple scene, tying him in emotional knots as he goes. Mr. Kain is a terrific comic, unassuming, hilariously earnest and even poignant. Good as the other performers are, it would be nice to see more of him with Ms. Pearson, who is funny in a slightly more soulful way.

Ms. Pearson clearly knows how to work effectively with performers, and she has assembled a fine cast that also includes Mr. Widrig, Husa Adams, Gerardo Delgado, Lisa Race, Nathan Whiting and Andrea Kleine, who looks as if she'd pull the boys' hair in a modern kindergarten. Tony Giovannetti designed the lighting. "A History of Silence" was set to music from Iran, Afghanistan and Turkey as well as to scores by Pura Fe, Bach, Fats Waller and Ms. Pearson.