

# THE KITCHEN

CENTER FOR  
VIDEO, MUSIC,  
DANCE AND  
PERFORMANCE

## *Mixed-Media:*

### *Tim Miller*

**A**T its worst, Tim Miller's performance work "Cost of Living" impresses a listener as a sort of "A Chorus Line" for the fashionably disaffected. Saturday night at the Kitchen, flickering television sets were lugged across the stage, with deliberately dated 1950's images projected on the backdrop.

A row of bright-young-things stood before self-consciously arty slides, reciting banal autobiographical platitudes in bored voices, with the occasional angry reference to El Salvador or nuclear power infusing a spurious contemporaneity. At such moments, "Cost of Living" seemed little more than an apotheosis of the New Wave, a movement that is growing very old indeed.

Yet "Cost of Living" adds up to a convincing, often harrowing meditation on despair. Mr. Miller's simple songs have an undeniable urgency; his understanding evocations of anxiety are smashingly vivid, and, one suspects, hard-earned. The dissonant opening to the finale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, transformed into an eerie tape-loop, was repeated incessantly, at ear-splitting volume, hammering home its point with terrifying power.

The evening's apocalyptic climax, which features immobile bodies suspended from the ceiling, an insistent strobe light and hysterical yowling from Mr. Miller was followed by an evangelical affirmation of life; a reassuring pat on the head after a long nightmare.

Tim Page

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