

# THE KITCHEN

CENTER FOR  
VIDEO, MUSIC,  
DANCE AND  
PERFORMANCE

Ton Simons and Dancers performed three pieces at The Kitchen January 28-31. Like *Houses* and *She Perched*, Simons's *Tally* is a duet built around entrances and exits, many changes of costume, and meetings and divergences. Danced by a man and a woman (Simons and Ellen van Schuylenburch), it also utilizes traditions of classical partnering. During the course of the dance, solo phrases of abstract movements match up so that when the two dance together, narrative meaning begins to be made. Simons sits at a table, bangs a soup can rhythmically on its surface, sticks an arm out stiffly, bends back, and repeats his gestures like an automaton. But later, when van Schuylenburch sits on the table beside him, the phrase becomes part of an embrace of sorts. In a series of motions that are coolly articulate, the dancers first set out their individual actions, then coordinate them to lift, carry, push, pull, and support one another. And layers of clothing are stripped away as the physical intimacy increases.

*The Knife Sharpener* is a brief surrealistic tableau by William Katz and Simons, based on a scenario by Bruce Chatwin. To the sound of hurdy-gurdy music (by Gerald Busby), Rick Merrill mimes sharpening a knife on the wheel of an upside-down bicycle. In his black suit and slicked hair he looks like a nineteenth-century waxwork figure; behind him stands Simons, naked except for bikini briefs. The latter stands still for a moment, then wanders away to pull aside a curtain and reveal a new setting: a forest of cages, some empty, some housing green and blue singing parrots.

The gentle eroticism of the first two dances was transformed into a sunny, child-like playfulness in *Spread*. The floor is marked by a large nine-square grid. The dance opens with van Schuylenburch lying in the center square, one hand on her head and one on her hip, assuming various positions, an antic odalisque. She gets up, and the dancing spreads among eight other dancers and through the eight other spatial zones. The voices of Mexican children shout out winning lottery numbers (recorded by Andrew Lord). The movements are sprightly: neat, quick, and unexpected, as if Simons were not only jumbling steps and phrases, according to the strategy explained in the program note, but also playing with the rules of the dancing body. The leg is rotated inward with great care, and yet seems to surprise its owner; a scooping arm pulls the back down while the entire body revolves. In both *Tally* and *Spread* there is a mixture of spare elegance and awkwardness that implies both wit and intelligence. Yet Simons and van Schuylenburch are such vivacious and honest dancers that in *Spread* the disparity between them and their fellows mars the dance.

(Sally Banes)  
Dancemagazine, June 1982

#### Board of Directors

Robert Ashley  
Paula Cooper  
Suzanne Deléhanty  
Philip Glass  
Eric Larrabee  
Barbara London  
Mary MacArthur  
Meredith Monk  
Barbara Pine  
Carlota Schoolman  
Robert Stearns  
Peter Stern  
John Stewart  
Caroline Thorne  
Paul Walter

HALEAKALA, INC.  
59 WOOSTER  
NEW YORK,  
NEW YORK  
10012  
(212) 925-3615