

# the kitchen

center for video and music

THE SOHO WEEKLY NEWS

Thursday, April 17, 1975



Gwenn Thomas



Movements, Steve Paxton and partner.

It was a fascinating puzzle to see which of any two dancers was initiating movement. Sometimes it was uncanny how they seemed to know each other's minds. You see that also in good classical *pas de deux*.

Some of the dancers enjoyed taking hands and doing elementary jitterbug steps when warming up. The work does contain a comment on social dance forms and manners. No doubt the jitterbug and the waltz and other contact couple dances are about the pleasure in holding and plying one's weight against another person. Even though these contact improvisers are much more familiar with each others' bodies than people are on most social dance floors, they observe greater

decorum in other ways. No acknowledgement is ever made of any sexual innuendo, even in positions that would cause a porn-monger to blush. No one lets his attention deviate from the other person and what they are doing. It's absolutely necessary when people are that interdependent.

One of the main attractions in this work is good old trapeze - artist - sky - diver - Evil Kneivel - danger. But unpoluted by hocus, the dangers of contact improvisation seem more real, and the way Paxton & dancers deal with them seem more honest than jumping into a canyon in front of TV cameras.