

THE KITCHEN

VIDEO

MUSIC

DANCE

PERFORMANCE FILM

512 West 19th St. (Btwn 10th & 11th Aves) New York, NY 10011

Reservations: 255-5793

British comic Cale delights N.Y. following

By Aly Sujo

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NEW YORK (Reuter) — David Cale has become New York's hottest "performance artist" with his racy monologues which are a hybrid of comedy, theater, and social outrage.

The son of a London hat and puppet maker, the "Luton Pinnochio" — the nickname refers to the town north of London where he used to live — made his film debut in Woody Allen's new "Radio Days" and pulls overflow crowds to his show at New York's trendy Kitchen Arts Center.

His performance begins in pitch darkness. Cale's smarmy voice, in a chilling imitation of an talent show master of ceremonies, announces he's "taking a chance on love."

Behind him, a jazz group blasts off, and in a series of discomfiting, unhinged comedy sketches, Cale leads his audience through a series of barely disguised autobiographical tableaux.

The 28-year-old actor leap-frogs from one character to another, leaving his audiences dangling between moods and providing little comfort or guidance.

His deadpan performances have been described as trance-like, and his concentration is palpable:

"Before I walk on the stage, every character and particle of information is reduced to its essentials," said Cale. "I squeeze all the elements, stuff them into my slingshot, and pull back. And when the lights go up, I let go. Whang."

A teen-age cale first stepped onstage at a talent contest in a London pub. A decade later, the quirky, bird-like comedian re-creates the experience nightly.

Cale is a superb mimic, and his American caricatures are remarkably accurate.

"It sounds so neurotic, but as a kid I

thought I could be more myself if I spoke in an American accent," he said in a recent interview. "I've always loved

America. I arrived in New York at age 20. To prepare for his trip, he sat repeatedly through Woody Allen's film "Manhattan." Packing a small hold-all and a cassette recorder, Cale arrived, and fell in love with the city.

Eight years later, he has appeared in a Woody Allen movie, and his romance

with New York continues.

"It still catches you, this city," said Cale. "Just today I was walking up by the (Hudson) River, and I saw the Statue of Liberty and it was very clear, and it had planes buzzing about it, and it was quite beautiful. You just can't be blase about it."

In two years, his rapid emergence from the avant-garde ghetto has landed him the part of a director of commercials in "Radio Days."

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