

# THE KITCHEN

VIDEO

MUSIC

DANCE

PERFORMANCE FILM

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

Reservations: 255-5793

## Private Kingdoms

I was testing cantaloupe. You were jogging." David Cale tells us. He lets himself be followed, then dawdles on a corner. The beautiful stranger approaches and makes a date to meet him in an hour. It's not until they get to Cale's apartment that he notices the pacemaker. They have fabulous sex. "We rolled around like tongues. Afterwards, while you slept, I made sure you were plugged in."

David Cale is at that precious moment in the life of a downtown performer. He's showing signs of impending fame: a feature article in the *Times*, a cameo in the new Woody Allen movie. Soon *Entertainment Tonight* will be knocking at his door, and there will be a David Cale backlash. Cynics will attribute his success to triteness and sentimentality.

Line by line, *Smooch Music*, Cale's hour-long riff about romance and sex, does seem thin. Beyond his personal experience and fantasies, most of the allusions are to pop lyrics. After describing one unrequited passion after another, he ends upbeat: "Here I go again, taking a chance on love. . . ." Yet Cale's elliptical collage style steers him clear of *nawks*. His easy sentiments are undercut by bizarre, evocative details. Cale is a tease. He'll set us up with a raw admission of vulnerability, then bring us

enough to go hopping around stage during a euphoric moment, yet his gestures and expressions are even more finely honed than his writing.

Cale doesn't have Eric Bogosian's manic energy and dazzling skill at impersonation, but his perceptions are less mainstream. In fact, most of his first-person characters are gay, though usually it seems—how refreshing!—just incidental. Yet it remains a mystery that anyone gay or straight can riff about love torments nowadays without even a passing reference to AIDS. (*The Kitchen*; closed)

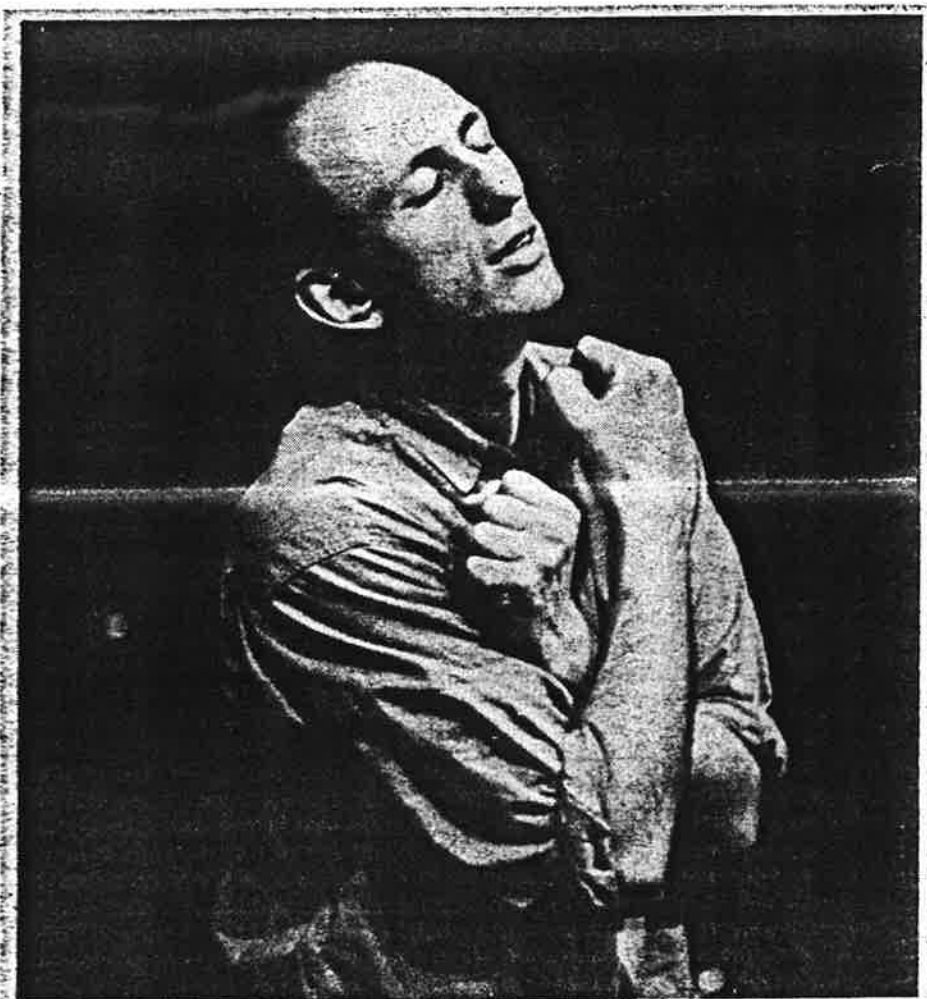
VOICE

## BITS

BY ROBERT MASSA

down to earth with deadpan: "I wanted him but he didn't want me, and when you get older you're less tolerant of that sort of thing."

The 24 vignettes in *Smooch Music*—written alternately in first and third person—range from a young boy making hickeys on his neck with a vacuum cleaner, to lovers whose relationship consists entirely of intimate messages on each other's phone machine. Some segments are obsessive rap song rants, others are hushed and intricate. It's all melded together seamlessly by Lounge Lizard Roy Nathanson's live sax, percussion, and double bass score and by Cale's amiable presence. He's loose



David Cale, away from the mainstream and long before the backlash