

THE KITCHEN VIDEO MUSIC DANCE PERFORMANCE FILM

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

Reservations: 255-5793

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Review/Dance

Twins' Secret World

Fred Holland has put together an evening of absorbing, highly imaginative theater-dance in "What I Like About Us . . ." which will be presented at the Kitchen through Sunday. Mr. Holland has promising material to work with in the story of June and Jennifer Gibson, English twin sisters who remained silent to the outside world but created a separate reality for themselves that was depicted in "The Silent Twins," a recent book, and a television special of the same name. And with one or two very small exceptions, there is not an unnecessary or wrong-seeming moment in this eerie reconstruction of the twins' world.

The excitement and great pleasure of "What I Like About Us . . ." is the way character, environment and communication are explored through movement and gesture alone. The uncompromising and rigorous explorations of Peter Handke's "Kaspar" and the Simone Benmussa adaptation of Nathalie Sarraute's "Childhood" come most readily to mind in comparison, although those work primarily with words. No words are

spoken live here, and the strangely perky taped readings from the twins' own writings are a slight distraction.

All that needs to be expressed is said in the shuffling, awkward bodies and watchful glances. There are small self-assertions and jostlings for authority by these two very distinct personalities. They sleep, they play and they act private scenarios for each other in a world full of perfectly chosen little objects that have a votive quality. It is a slumbrously dark world, lit imaginatively by Carol McDowell. In one of the piece's most memorable sequences, the twins set fire to a small toy house. Each touches her adolescent torso almost exploringly. A tumultuously brooding film by Cathy Weis adds a third dimension of inner truth.

Dressed in sweetly gawky school-girls' uniforms designed by Mona Bancer, Mr. Holland and Ms. McCauley work so closely and so well they seem to inhabit the stage by some secret pact. And Lawrence D. Morris's murmuring musical score is as extraordinarily sensitive an evocation of a private world.

JENNIFER DUNNING