

# Daily News

DAILY NEWS / TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1991 / L.A. LIFE — 9

## 'Lies' tells truth about old age

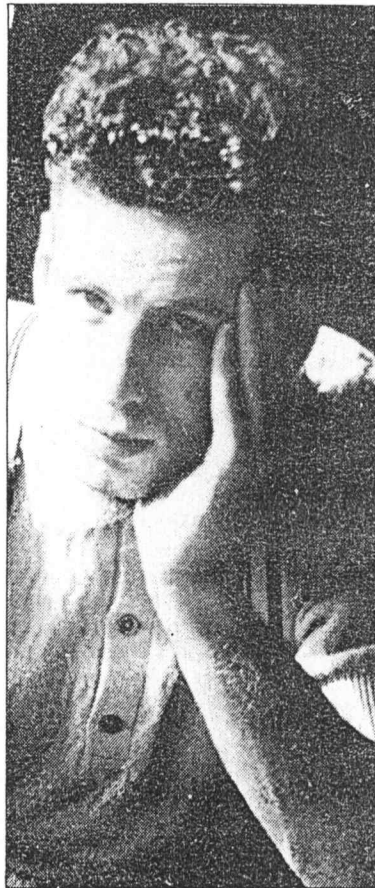
By Jody Leader  
*Daily News Dance Critic*

Carlos Wegener, whose presence permeates his friend Wim Vandekeybus' new dance work "Always the Same Lies," is old (88) and wise but starting to lose his faculties.

**REVIEW** In interviews, Vandekeybus — a young, talented Flemish choreographer — has said his friend keeps losing his door key. He can't make coffee anymore. And he once covered the floor of his small, dingy apartment with his late wife's colorful dresses "to have something to look at."

It is these images that add life and whimsy to "Always the Same Lies," given its American premiere Friday at Occidental College's Keck Theater by Vandekeybus and his eight-member company *Ultima Vez*. The event was sponsored by the Dance Gallery and AT&T.

The dancers spin in midair and fall into each other's arms on a carpet of hundreds of dresses stitched together. (The carpet is later raised upstage and, when lighted from behind, becomes a vibrant, stained-glass window.) A frustrated dancer tries to make coffee in her coat pocket. Another scrambles eggs on the seat of a metal chair with a propane torch un-



**Wim Vandekeybus**  
Flemish choreographer  
derneath.

But the evening-length dance-theater work is about much more than an old man's mental lapses. It

is about living in the moment and rebelling against growing old. We hear Wegener's voice crying out in German — "Sad! Sad! You're not allowed to become old." We see short, jumpy films of him singing, dancing and blowing a dandelion puff.

In "Always," a dancer sits bolt upright in a chair hanging upside down from the ceiling, his fingers gripping the seat to keep from falling. Three female dancers roll on the carpet, struggle to an upright kneeling position and fall over again. Later, they swing back and forth on hammocks, trying to grab and trip up the men who are gingerly making their way across the stage carrying open cartons of eggs.

A bizarre, non-sequitur image? Perhaps. But eggs represent life, or the potential for life, and in "Always," the eggs are always in danger. Two men lay on a bed of eggs, breaking few, if any. Dancers eat hard-boiled eggs and toss raw ones.

The dancing is electric and engrossing, with none of the gentility of ballet, modern or even jazz dance. It is raw, without being pedestrian. It is athletic and virtuosic, without being gymnastic or showy. Its closest cousin is the dancing in the opening frames of the movie "West Side Story": loose, wild, free but never out of control.