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STAGE WATCH

FLEDGLING GROUP WORKS FOR ACTORS

By SYLVIE DRAKE, Times Staff Writer

The Alliance Actors Trust isn't. Yet. It is in the process of trying to become. What? A society of peers with one predominant concern: Finding ways to see that actors working in Equity Waiver theater get paid something.

Prime mover of this new organization is Carl Sautter, national job development coordinator for the Labor Institute for Human Enrichment Inc., an advisory group to the six performing arts unions that belong to the AFL-CIO. The institute is familiar with Equity Waiver, having done an extensive study of it in 1980.

"What we want to start impressing upon actors," Sautter said Tuesday, "is that it is possible for theaters to share resources with performers. Many (Waiver) theaters in Los Angeles have already taken it upon themselves to do that. We're essentially forming to find new ways of generating funds for actors, ways that might be replicable in other theaters."

It all started about a year ago when the cast of "My Fair Lady," then at the Pantages, informed the Los Angeles Theater Alliance that it wanted to do a benefit for Equity Waiver actors. That sparked the so-called SRO benefit at the Variety Arts Center in March, 1981, and the money raised (about \$7,000) went to create the Alliance Actors Trust.

Two thousand of those dollars have now been set aside in grant units of \$200 each to go to theaters that come up with new ideas for generating funds for actors. (Existing ideas: actor-managed concession stands, ticket surcharges earmarked for performers, special performances whose proceeds go to the actors.)

The fledgling organization seems to be rallying support. So far, it has drawn up guidelines, a steering committee and specific boundaries. (Only nonprofit theaters can be involved and, at this point, only theaters that are members of the L.A. Theater Alliance.) They've held a few meetings, polled the theaters for suggestions and invited David Westberg, the Equity representative in charge of Waiver, to sit in on the discourse. The steering committee gets together Saturday (10 a.m. to noon) at the L.A. Stage Co. with Actors who work in Waiver.

Is the Alliance Actors Trust designed to fill the void created by Equity's waiving of rules in the theaters of

Reveen and magician Stan Kramien are a sampling, not necessarily in that order, of the performers to be seen on Larsen's "Saturday Variety Concerts" in the main theater at 940 S. Figueroa. Larsen also believes nostalgic shows should be sold at old-fashioned prices. His range from \$5 to \$8.

Designer John Shrum is doing all the sets which, Larsen said, should supply some "glitzen and gloss." If this kind of show at good, clean prices is your trip, call 623-9100. But the call will still cost you a dime.

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Speaking of golden oldies and their prices, the "Fiddler" opening under the Pantages roof Friday is already on discounted tickets. "The show was here before, not too long ago, and we want to make it more accessible," explained the Pantages' Stan Seiden. This "Fiddler," the very same, played the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion last September when "Sweeney Todd" failed to extend its run and Civic Light Opera had four dark weeks to fill up. It's playing now because "Barnum," which preceded it at the Pantages, closed early because of a lack of business. Moral? When in debt, do "Fiddler". . . "Indians" at Theater Exchange has extended to April 25. . . The newest wrinkle in grantsmanship is a do-it-yourself instructional cassette. For \$65 you get two hours of audio-taped lectures, charts, diagrams, worksheets and a copy of "Grant Proposals: A Practical Guide to Planning, Funding and Managing" by Lawrence Blaine, the fellow who masterminded this whole thing. This is not an endorsement or rejection of it (we haven't seen, heard or read any part of this plan), just an expression of continuing amazement at the money to be made from people without money in search of other people's. . . And after six months, 13 visits to City Hall, four visits to the Van Nuys district office, four sets of blueprints, five work permits, eight inspections, a new door, an extra power line, fittings for the handicapped and permission to use 14 parking spaces from a neighbor, the Back Alley Theater has reopened in Van Nuys. First production, opening May 28, will be Miguel Mihura's "Three Top Hats" in a translation by Marcia Wellwarth and directed by Allan Miller. Miller and Laura Zucker are producing co-directors of the Back Alley and to be congratulated on pulling this off.

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