

# L.A. Life

## SUNDAY Daily News

November 4, 1984

14 L.A. Life, Daily News—November 4, 1984

### CURTAIN CALL

## 'Slab Boys' paint work-a-day world all bright, snappy colors

**O**n the surface, the slab boys are tough, cool, daring smart-alecks. They are cutups acting as though life is all fooling around, not to be taken too seriously. They are practiced at ridiculing and mimicking others.

They wear ducktail hairdos and tight pants and have a quick answer for everything. They can be nasty, but they are never too nasty or nasty enough to be judged mean and unlikable. Their speech and attitude are a cover-up.

In "Slab Boys," at the Back Alley Theatre, Phil, Spanky and Hector are working-class kids in a Scottish carpet dye factory in 1957. With spatulas they mix colors and other ingredients on their marble slabs. But the boys spend more time playing around than working, throwing the powdered hues around the room and at particular visitors.

Alan, the new boy, isn't accepted by his co-workers. Why should he be? He's inexperienced, but the university-educated young man is earthing more than the other three guys put together.

Besides, how can they accept somebody who mistakes James Dean for Marlon Brando?

There are some flaws in this production, but they are minor. The production has an excellent, authentic-looking set that makes you feel you're in a cold, closed-in workshop. The dialogue and action are fast.

Dennis Christopher proves once again that he is an exceptionally endearing actor. Christopher holds the play together, though he is backed up well by the other slab boys. John H. Fields as Curry, the boss, is another professional. Christopher Michael Moore tends to lose his accent, and Catherine Harper's Lucille, the boss' assistant, gets monotonous with her high-pitched twang and silly hip-walk.

"Slab Boys," at the Back Alley Theatre, plays Monday through Wednesday and Saturday at 8 p.m., Sunday at 3 p.m., at 15291 Burbank Blvd., Van Nuys. Tickets are \$12 to \$14. Call (818) 780-2240.

— Marilyn Zettlin



Clockwise from left: Michael Covert, Christopher Michael Moore, Dennis Christopher and James LeGros.