

LEGIT REVIEWS

**Are You Now Or
Have You Ever Been**

(Back Alley Theater; \$14 top)

Ten years after it originally opened at the CAST theater in Los Angeles, "Are You Now Or Have You Ever Been," producing directors Laura Zucker and Allan Miller's revival of the Eric Bentley docu-drama now playing at the Back Alley Theater, is a vibrant, riveting work that leaves you breathless. Here is clearly a piece of theater from which time has taken nothing away.

Bentley took the dialog for "Are You Now" directly from transcripts of "The Hollywood 10" hearings before the House Committee on Un-American Activities, during the days when the witchhunts seeking to uncover communist infiltration in Hollywood raged in full force.

The subject matter is fascinating in itself, but when combined with an excellent cast and the sure-handed direction of Allan Miller, the story that unfolds on stage is sharp, captivating and compelling in every way.

The strong, 15-member cast features many standout performances overall. Most notable are Joe George with his powerful portrayal of an outraged Lionel Stander, Allan Miller as the comical Abe Burrows (the role he played in the original production) and Thalmus Rasulala as the haughty Paul Robeson.

Martin E. Brooks' committee chairman and Michael Cavanaugh's committee counsel/chief investi-

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gator are wonderfully menacing as Brooks warns to the task of haranguing the parade of witnesses and Cavanaugh sets a relentless pace with his rapid-fire questioning. Reprising his role in the original production, Byron Murrow does a fine job rounding out the committee trio.

Other joys are George De La Pena as the crumbling Larry Parks, Toni Sawyer's brief appearance as the fiery Lillian Hellman and John Medici as Jose Ferrer and Ring Lardner Jr.

The balance of the cast all put in competent performances and are: Frank Aletter, Howard Honig, J.M. Jackson, Rick Manheim, Cameron Thor and Sam Vincent.

Committee room set design by George Becket is crisp and neat, providing an apt environ for the action. Dawn Hollingsworth's lighting is superb.

Dani.