



The Back Alley Theatre
15231 Burbank Boulevard
Van Nuys, California
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Producing Directors
Laura Zucker
Allan Miller

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----PHOTOS AVAILABLE----

"JACQUES BREL IS..." EXTENDS ENGAGEMENT

JACQUES BREL IS...will extend performances at the Back Alley Theatre for six weeks. There will be a two week hiatus after the scheduled close on May 31st; performances will resume on June 18th and run through July 26th. In JACQUES BREL IS..., five singers perform 24 songs about love and youth, sailors and whores, soldiers and politicians, old age and hope.

The L.A. Times in their recent review raises the interesting question, "Why a revival of JACQUES BREL one might well ask? Perhaps the answer is why not?"

"After all, he was the demigod of the mid- to late '60's, a Belgian troubadour who took the world-- and especially America-- by storm and died entirely too young (he was only 49). His verve, romance and spirit captured the mood of the generations to follow-- generations that reveled in his every note and word. So why JACQUES BREL now?"

"Panache is panache and there's always a place for it. Brel's lilting music and super-romantic lyrics are a rousing antidote for Heavy Metal and the dull prevailing pragmatism. The surprise at the Back Alley...is how alive and how well Brel manages to be in the 80's..."

According to Laura Zucker, Producing Director, the Back Alley was interested in reviving BREL (which has not been seen in the Los Angeles area for over ten years) because "we need to learn to reinterpret classic musicals, just as we reinterpret classic and modern plays. Director Allan

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Back Alley 2...2...2...2

Miller had a compelling vision of what the songs could reveal if we could free ourselves of the idea that Brel should always be performed in the typical 60's cabaret manner-- by deadly serious performers dressed in black and perched on stools. Allan has found vibrant, kicky, original interpretations for these songs-- instilling lots of movement, passion and fun. Some Brel devotees are shocked by these changes, but most are delighted!"

Laura Zucker adds, "Theatres everywhere need to focus more energy on learning to develop small musicals if we want musical theatre in America to survive. Brel is particularly important because there is a direct evolutionary line between his work and many of our important contemporary songwriters such as Stephen Sondheim."

Steven Bernstein oversees the musical direction. The cast features Joseph Cardinale, Melissa Converse, Michael G. Hawkins, Geraldine Joyce, and Thom Keeling.

The Herald Examiner calls Rich Rose's excellent set design a "techno-pop collection of building materials borrowed from the conventions of postmodern architecture, a three-dimensional collage." Lighting design is by Leslie Rose, and costume design by Sylvia Moss-- "lovely and tres Melrose Avenue in burnished greens, blues and browns." -- The L.A. Times.

JACQUES BREL IS... will play Thursday and Friday at 8 pm with two performances on Saturday at 7 pm and 9:30 pm, and on Sunday at 7 pm. Ticket prices are \$13.50 Thursdays & Sundays, \$15.50 Fridays, and \$17.50 for both shows Saturdays.

Talkback, a chance for the audience and artistic staff to exchange views, will follow Thursday performances.

The Back Alley Theatre is located in Van Nuys at 15231 Burbank Blvd. (east of the San Diego Freeway). Call 818/780-2240 for more information.