

ENT

On Stage

By JACK MATCHA

Several new productions of interest have opened in this area in the last couple of weeks but perhaps the most interesting, because of its scope, is the gigantic effort at the Back Alley Theater to tell the whole exciting story of the major Greek myths surrounding the Trojan War.

This is a cycle of nine short plays, each based on the works of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripedes and Homer and done over a three evening span.

Directed masterfully by Allan Miller and featuring some 35 fine actors, the play afford the viewer a rich treasure of both entertainment and enlightenment. Remember, these are the legends that have fascinated our greatest poets and playwrights — such men as Shakespeare, Goethe, Giradoux, O'Neill — for centuries.

Many of our most famous poems and plays and novels are based on these stories. To emphasize the educational experience, the Back Alley has invited classical scholars from nearby universities to discuss the legends after some performances.

The plays are not without flaws. Some run through the legends too quickly and at times the mixture of accents, ranging from European to New Yorkese, is a bit disconcerting. No matter. You will enjoy the stories and the way they are done and if you have children of school age, take

them. It may be their only chance to see these legends in action.

This is not the kind of thing that profit-conscious theater producers put on often. The Back Alley's enormous effort in putting them on deserves your attention and support.

It's hard to point out the work of individuals in the big cast, but special attention must go to the excellence of Arelene Golonka as Helen, Fran Bennet as Hecuba, Andrew Robinson as Achilles, Joan Crosby as Myrrhine and Judyann Elder as Andromache.

The plays, by turns funny, tragic or melodramatic, were adapted by John Barton and Kenneth Cavander and performed originally in London by the Royal Shakespeare Company.

A piece of advice: Try to see the three segments in order, so you can appreciate and enjoy the developing stories. A little study of the legends in the library or the books of Robert Graves will help make them richer.

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"Zorba," the delightful musical starring Anthony Quinn and Lila Kedrova at the Pantages. Both are marvelous in this tuneful show by Kander and Ebb who did "Cabaret" and a book by Joe Stein who did "Fiddler On The Roof." Quinn is enchanting as the eccentric Zorba, who dispenses philosophy, advice on love, life and everything else.