

Theatre Spotlight

BY MIKE SCOTT

JACQUES BREL IS . . .

It's always a pleasure to hear beautiful songs sung by talented singers, and this production of **Jacques Brel Is . . .**, directed by Allan Miller, is one of the highlights of the '87 theatre season!

The Back Alley Theatre is not known for musicals, but it sure has a flair for *this* type of show! A combo under the musical direction of Steven Bernstein sets the pace and takes us to Paris and then on the trail of Jacques' travels. His songs tell the tales of life's sleazier side, but he also sings of hope and joy. At the height of his fame, Brel dramatically announced, to a shocked world, his retirement from the concert stage, saying, "I'll have to starve, really, before I set foot on a stage again . . ." His opposition to the war in Viet Nam prevented him from allowing himself to ever again perform in the United States. Brel died in 1978 at the young age of 49. "If We Only Have Love," one of his most famous compositions, caps the ending of this fine, fine show!

Thom Keeling gets a special hand for this exceptional cast, which includes Joseph Cardinale, Melissa Converse, Michael G. Hawkins and Geraldine Joyce. **Jacques Brel Is . . .** a musical treat!

At the Back Alley Theatre, 15231 Burbank Boulevard, Van Nuys. (818) 780-2240, limited run.



JACQUES BREL IS

Photo by Ed Krieger