

May 1, 1987 READER 9

**Jacques Brel Is Alive and Well and Living in**

**Paris.** Almost 20 years after its original Greenwich Village staging, this tuneful divertissement retains its piquant flavor. Some dated references remain, but the show's lyrical spigot turns on such enduring emotions as love, death, loneliness and, of course, girls and dogs. Voila. The setting of the show is a Paris bistro, a background long identified with Brel, who was the reigning star of the French bistros in the '50's. The revival here of the musical long associated with him offers a welcome retrospective of some of his best-known compositions, sung with verve and passion by Michael G. Hawkins, Melissa Converse, Thom Keeling, Joseph Cardinale, and Geraldine Joyce, under the knowing direction of Allan Miller. (Reviewed by Larry Jonas.) Back Alley Theatre, 15231 Burbank Bl., Van Nuys, (800) 780-2240. Thurs-Sats at 8, Suns at 2 and 7. Closes May 31.