

STAGE NEWS & NOTES

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'Brel' and 'Chapin': dark, light sides of life at Pasadena Playhouse



The Pasadena Playhouse will conclude its 1988 season with two small-scale musicals running in repertory: "Jacques

Brel Is Alive and Well and Living in Paris" and "Harry Chapin: Lies and Legends."

The two shows will have the same director — Sam Weisman — and stars, Amanda McBroom and George Ball. They will run from July 28 through Sept. 11.

"Brel" opened in New York 20 years ago. The revue of the late folk singer and hunger activist Harry Chapin's songs originated in Chicago approximately three years ago in a production starring Ball and McBroom, who are married.

"I've been wanting to do a production of 'Brel,' because I adore it," producing director Susan Dietz said this week. "And Steve and I have been wanting to do a thematic rep, where seeing one show enhances the experience of seeing the other.

"I like the juxtaposition of Brel's and Chapin's sensibilities," Dietz added. "Each told stories in their songs. Each of their songs is a mini-drama. But their outlook on life was very different. Brel's was very dark, Chapin's very uplifting."

But why do "Brel" so soon after the Back Alley Theatre's production, which ran this past summer?

"I'm sure nobody from Pasadena went to the Back Alley," Dietz said. Besides, she added, "That was an innovative produc-

tion. This will be a traditional production. We're trying to recreate the feeling of the original production."