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Run . . . don't walk . . . to the Back Alley Theater where two superb (and completely different) productions are alternating in repertory. On Monday through Wednesday nights the incredible Burke Byrnes presents a performance that's much more than a monologue. Standing alone on an almost-bare stage, this versatile actor uses blown-up photographs of his friends and family to tell the story of his life. It's poignant, dramatic and altogether wonderful. A unique theatrical experience!

On Thursday through Saturday, the Back Alley features the musical production of "Jacques Brel is . . .", translations of the songs of this incomparable French composer/performer, whose compositions (like those of Edith Piaf) run the gamut of all human emotions and experiences. An extremely talented cast of five sing (and act) Brel's songs.

BACK ALLEY THEATER 15231 BURBANK BLVD., VAN NUYS, CA (818) 780-2240

Also well worth seeing . . . The Pasadena Playhouse production of the New York hit play "The House of Blue Leaves". A versatile cast including "Golden Girls" star Rue McLanahan and frequent Saturday Night Live host Buck Henry make the most of John Guare's bittersweet comedy-drama.

PASADENA PLAYHOUSE 39 S. EL MOLINO, PASADENA (818) 356-PLAY

compiled by Dina Adler