

'Amazing Grace'—how sweet the sound

By Jack Matcha

"Amazing Grace", Sandra Deer's new play at the Back Alley Theatre, is an entertaining tale of a folksy psychic who helps police find a murderer. She does this by calling on a spirit called "Teacher" who naturally speaks in a very different voice and lends the drama a badly needed note of suspense.

The play, well directed by

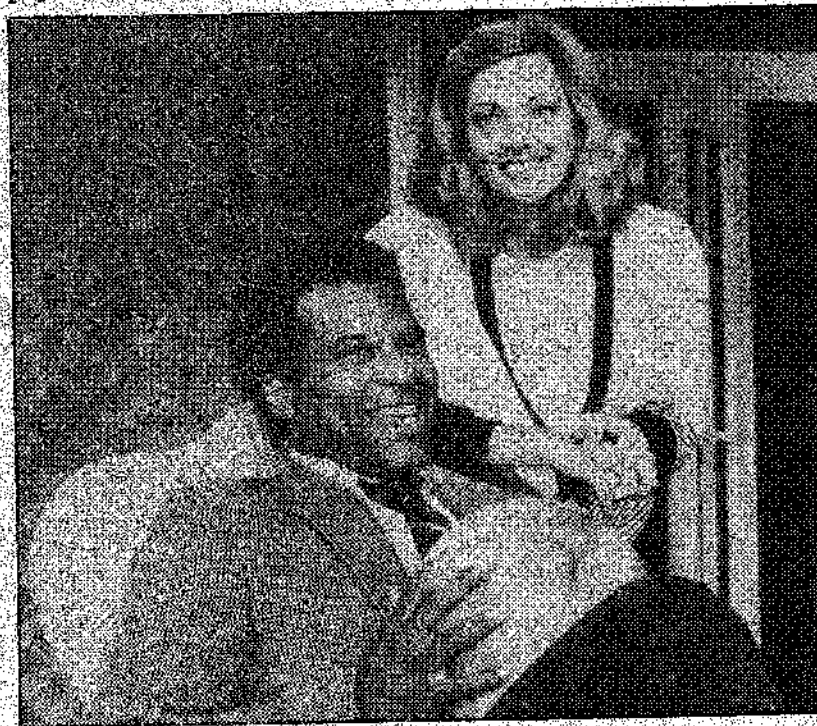
Allan Miller, moves briskly through the search for a killer who preys on kids. If there is a flaw, it lies in the meandering pace that dwells too much on Patricia Huston's undeniably attractive portrayal of the psychic. But Huston's ability

to captivate the audience overcomes this. Daryl Roach is effective as the cop who begins by distrusting Huston, then accepts her totally. Also fine are Carmen Duncan as an actress who wants to film Huston's story and Jim Hies-

tand as Huston's grandson. Cathy Crane's costumes and a clever sound design by Reid Woodbury are additional assets.

The play competes at the same theater with a really diverting musical revue called "Buttersuite", a collection of 26 songs by Elliot Weiss and Michael Champagne about people whose lives haven't worked out as hoped. "Amazing Grace" plays Thursdays through Sundays. "Buttersuite" plays Mondays through Wednesday and offers late shows (10:00 p.m.) Fridays and Saturdays.

The revue, expertly directed by Rick Roemer with excellent musical direction by Nelms McKelvain and choreography by Dana Landers, features five very talented singers: Mara Finerty, Carol Woodbury, Bettina Devin, Mark McGee and Roemer.



'AMAZING GRACE'—Daryl Roach and Carmen Duncan star in Back Alley Theatre's production of 'Amazing Grace.'