

# Theatre

by Michael Reubens

"...Hope and survival rule the day..."

It is so very refreshing when a home grown musical makes its debut on the Southern California fringe circuit. The musical in question is *A Walk On The Wild Side*, which the Back Alley Theatre in association with Laura Zucker and Allan Miller are currently presenting to enthusiastic houses.

Best described as a poor-man's Best Little Whorehouse in Texas with a touch of *Huckleberry Finn*, *Las Miserables* and *Nicholas Nickleby*, *A Walk...* is set in the depression of 1931 America when hope and survival rule the

eral low life and assortment of hookers, deviates and murderers.

Jeb Brown plays Dove Linkhorn, the wandering opportunist, as he drifts from Texas to New Orleans and back to Texas and Talya Ferro plays Terazina, his first employer with whom he has a brief and emotional affair.

Hamilton Camp, Alex Daniels, James Dybas, Mary Pat Gleason, Lauren Sterling, Diane Vincent, Richard Ryder, Luise Heath and Adrienne Barbeau play the various characters that feature so prominently in Linkhorn's life.

"Play changes course live some out of control drunken driver..."



Adrienne Barbeau and Jeb Brown in "A Walk On The Wild Side"

wise brilliant stage director, is wasted with this production. The play can't seem to make up its mind whether it should be taken seriously as a farce, comedy, or drama. It has pieces of all three, which, after some two hours is terribly boring.

The other theme of this piece is Nihilism (the rejection of all moral principles as the only means of obtaining social progress a non believer), and deceit and openness (a contradiction in terms) plus the irony that 'perestroika' and 'glasnost' have in the Soviet Union of today versus the Russia of yesteryear, are inherent qualities in the play.

Corey Parker underplays his role of Arkady, the result being, his diction and mannerisms on stage is superfluous. Ford Rainey as Piotr as the manservant has an uncanny resemblance to the late Ralph Richardson and delivers some comedic lines. Raye Birk as Nikolai displays weakness and vulnerability and Franklyn Seales as Pavel is brilliant in his interpretation of an english 'fop' with all the gesticulations and mannerisms of an Oscar Wilde character. Margaret Gibson and May Kohren play the two concubines. A 'Much Ado About Nothing' without Shakespeare's wit and magic.



(L. to R.) Margaret Gibson and Tom Hulce in the United States premiere "Nothing Sacred" day.

The story unfolds, as narrated by various members of the company, when a young good looking but illiterate fellow passes through Texas searching for life and the American Dream. What he finds in his search is the gen-

Based on the novel by Nelson Algren, *Walk on The Wild Side* has a score by Will Holt, who incidentally wrote the play. Patricia Birch directed and choreographed the piece. The songs have a country and western lilt with a touch of jazz reminiscent of the New Orleans french quarter.

Luise Heath as Lucille brings charm and personality to her role and sings to perfection 'Cawfee Man' and 'That Boy Can Read'. An ensemble piece of fringe theatre that, with some work, could and should transfer to a larger house...and go far.

Not getting anywhere at the Mark Taper Forum is the United States premiere of George F. Walker's 'Nothing Sacred' which the playwright uses Ivan Turgenev's classic Russian masterpiece "Fathers and Sons" as an instrument of inspiration (perhaps fascination?) to entertain the theatre going public.

Starring Tom Hulce as Bazarov an impudent yet radical individual who views life impatiently and seems always to have an answer ready for anything, is introduced by his friend, Arkady (Corey Parker) to his father, Nikolai (Raye Birk) and his ec-

centric brother, Pavel (Franklyn Seales). What transpires, and what seems to be the center piece of the play, is the relationship between the father and son, which takes on a decidedly different tone, due, largely in part to the sons deep influence and hypnotic hold by Bazarov.

Set in the summer of 1859 Russia, Walker's play starts with a central theme (relationships) but unfortunately changes course like some out of control drunken driver and uses metaphores and one dimensional character interpretation to get its points across. Michael Lindsay-Llogg, an other-

## Struthers Guest Stars on Tea With Michael Raye

Struthers, a two-time Emmy winner from CBS's "All in the Family", and most recently starring in Fox's "9 to 5" appears as a modern day Cinderella who is suing her Fairy Godmother for gross misrepresentation.

Featured in the pilot as the brunette bimbo Irma, is their versatile actress Joanne Lora. Born in Georgia she graduated from the University of South Florida with a Fine Arts degree in dance. Joanne hopes her appear-



Seated (L to r.) Sharon Traki, Michaelangelo Kawalki, Amy Weinstein, Michael Raye. Standing (L to r.) Jeff Wright, Alex Sellar, Linda Nolan, Brenda Mattox, Joanne Lora, Mauricio S1 and Larry Luntsford.

ance in "Tea With Michael Raye" will promote the successful acting career she's been preparing for since college.

Tea With Michael Raye is a sitcom/talk show spoof featuring madcap interviews with wacky characters. Created by Michael Raye, an Englishman from Bristol, and Tom Porterhouse, an American from Indiana, it's a perfect blend of British and

American comedy.

American Cablesystems decided to produce a pilot of Tea because of the show's popularity and success (it has run regularly every Saturday night for over a year on Century Cable's Ch. 3.). This show, "International Piece," will be broadcast Oct. 1 at 8:00 p.m. on American Cablesystems and on Oct. 1 10:30 p.m. on Century Cable Ch. 3.

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Joanne Lora