

a rousing musical score

By T. E. FOREMAN
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Theater Reviews

tion of a story about Dove Linkhorn, a young man from Texas, illiterate but full of self-assurance, who goes to New Orleans in 1931 confident that he is destined for great things.

He falls in with a motley group of prostitutes, pimps, confidence men and a legless beggar who was once a carnival strong man. Hunger drives him to a job performing sexual acts in a peep show. He makes good money and all but loses his early natural goodness, but he has come to terms with himself and is ready to go home again when he is blinded in a fight.

Back home with the woman he has loved all along, he can say defiantly, "Yeah, but they couldn't kill me."

Holt's songs, rousingly sung by the 12 cast members, range from blues to honky-tonk to country-western, with other elements as well, and tunefully depict the feelings of joy, anger, despair, cynicism, hope and love felt by the people the Great Depression battered around but never quite conquered.

The production is staged and directed by Patricia Birch and Allan Miller on a stage where a few rolling set pieces serve admirably as the generally squalid areas where the show takes place.

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Nelson Algren's Depression-era novel "**A Walk on the Wild Side**" seems an unusual choice for a musical, but as presented at the Back Alley Theatre in Van Nuys it makes for a rousing, attention-holding show.

Will Holt has written the music and lyrics for this dramatiza-