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Warner Center News

Theatre



Walk on the Wild Side at Back Alley

By Theda Reichman

"A Walk on the Wild Side", written by Will Holt, is a musical with dark undertones. Based on a novel by Nelson Algren, the story takes place during the Depression. It begins in Texas, then moves on to the sleazy brothels of New Orleans as our young hero, Dove Linkhorn (Jeb Brown) leaves to find fame and fortune.

Dove is an illiterate youth who falls in love with a young Mexican cafe owner (Talya Ferro). He offers to do odd jobs for her in exchange for reading lessons. After a quarrel he leaves Texas on a freight train, heading for New Orleans. He works hard, but soon falls into the clutches of two brothel owners (Hamilton Camp and James Dybas) who lead him into a lucrative life of sin, which is far more lucrative for them than young Dove.

The cast is uniformly good. They not only sing well, they can also dance.

Special credit should be given to Don Gruber for his sparse, yet highly imaginative set design and to Lawrence Oberman for his sensitive lighting effects.

There is room for some changes, nips and tucks and darker shadings in Act II. The ending, following the traumatic fight scene, is just too upbeat, especially the finale number. A somber song would have been more appropriate and could still have underscored Dove's indomitable spirit.

"Fancy Night Time

Woman" has a special mood that works well, and two songs that stand out for their vitality and humor are "A Walk on the Wild Side" at the end of Act I and the song and dance tribute to the power of the movies entitled "Loew's State and Orpheum."

The Back Alley Theatre (located in Van Nuys at 15321 Burbank Blvd (East of the San Diego Freeway) is air conditioned and wheel chair accessible.

For ticket information, call 818-780-2240.