

L.A. review/september 21-october 4, 1988

A Walk On The Wild Side

By Kimberly Jones

Will Holt's musical adaptation of Nelson Algren's **A Walk On The Wild Side** is an exciting and thoroughly enjoyable theatrical experience.

An overly ambitious (though illiterate) young Texan sets out for New Orleans to find fame and fortune, only to stumble into a world of thievery, violence, and prostitution. Although the story line is based on this seemingly dark premise, it is the

delicate interweaving of both comedy and tragedy (evident in musical numbers ranging from soul-searching soliloquies to sheer mad-capped zaniness) that make this production strong and appealing. Will Holt's Country/New Orleans Blues score also compliments the play's spectacular choreography (staged and directed by Patricia Birch and Allan Miller).

The technical and successful balance also exists between the tech-

nical and creative aspects of the play, serving not only to enhance the action but to convey the smooth, concise storyline. The minimalistic stage setting along with the dramatically effective use of sparse spotlighting and deep shadowing, create a moody and provocative environmental playground for the colorful array of characters.

There are so many noteworthy performers in this production! Hamilton Camp as Fort, a devilish yet endear-

ing panhandler/con-artist, and Adrienne Barbeau as Hallie, a sentimental and compassionate "lady of the evening" are striking. Yet, it is the ability to mesh the very diverse and talented ensemble of actors together which makes "A Walk On The Wild Side" ultimately successful.

"A Walk On The Wild Side" runs Thurs.-Sun. until Nov. 13 at the Back Alley Theatre, 15231 Burbank Blvd., Van Nuys (818) 780-2240. Tickets \$14.50-18.50. 