

**A Walk on the Wild Side.** Will Holt's musical adaptation of the Nelson Algren novel proves problematic. An innocuous score and surface-level characterization weaken Algren's dark, seamy tale of Depression-era desperation. The action centers around Dove, an illiterate boy in pursuit of financial success. An ironic turn of events finds Dove making his fortune as a peep-show stud at a house of prostitution. This treatment delivers some of the novel's poetry, but none of its staying power. Characters lose their complexities for the sake of a simplified story, and Dove's redemption becomes another predictable plot point. (Reviewed by Allison Sloane.) Back Alley Theatre, 15231 Burbank Bl, Van Nuys, (818) 780-2240. Thurs at 8, Fri-Suns at 7, Sun mats at 2. Closes November 13.