

Play Reveiw

Max and Zoey, Zoey and Max

by Rod Frederick

Max and Zoey, Zoey and Max at The Back Alley Theater is a delightful musical. Though written for children aged 2 to 8, parents will also enjoy following four year-olds Max and Zoey (portrayed by young adult actors Ken Hoyt and Teri Girvin) romp through the two musical adventures that comprise the play. Lisa Gates also stars as the Mom/Narrator.

Zoey and Max are first cousins as well as the best of friends. What Max gets to have, Zoey wants — and vice versa. In their first adventure, *Zoey and the Red Dots*, Max gets the chicken pox. Of course, Zoey wants to get them too. Mom cleverly explains to Zoey how chicken pox germs invade the body by having kids from the audience engage in a tug-of-war; good germs versus the evil chicken pox germs.

In *Max and the Night Noises*, Zoey bids Max goodnight and mischievously adds "...sleep tight. Don't let the pookies bite!" This sets Max's mind reeling, as he imagines harmless night noises to be everything from ghosts to monsters. Parents will recognize the old bedtime stalling techniques (*another story, another drink of water*) that kids have always used to put off the inevitable.

The theater was filled with kids, most of them appearing to be younger than four. (You undoubtedly know how difficult it is to keep a four-year-olds' interest for even a short period of time.) Yet the play's catchy tunes and clever lyrics, fine acting, and audience participation unflinching held their attention for the duration of the 45 minute perform-



logo design by Lisa Garner

ance. It's definitely fun-filled family theater.

Max and Zoey, Zoey and Max. Starring Lisa Gates, Ken Hoyt and Terri Girvin. Musical adaptation by Will Holt. Based on the stories by Dion Alden Holt. At The Back Alley Theater, 15231 Burbank Boulevard, Van Nuys - Through August 6. Performances resume August 26 and continue through September 17. Admission is \$6.50. For further information, phone (818) 780-2240.