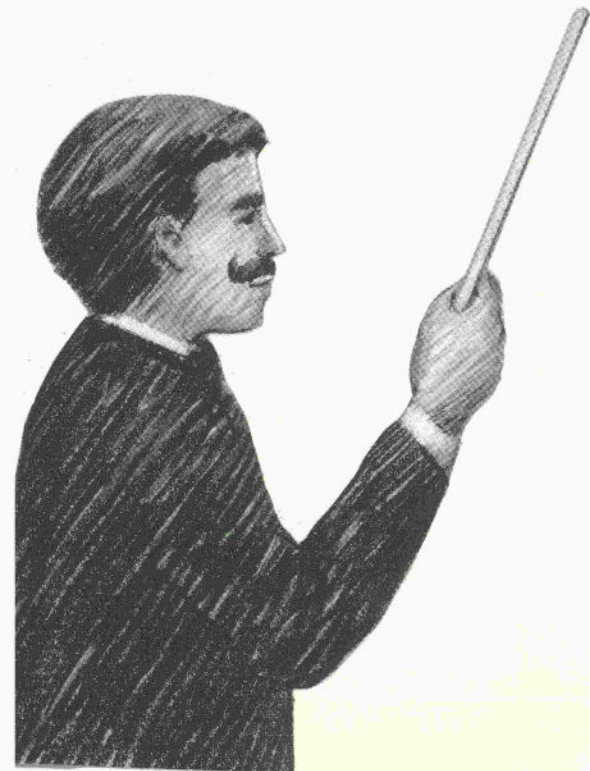


Culture Clubs

Step right up and get involved in any one of the Valley's myriad cultural organizations.

What ever happened to culture? These days, culture means spending time watching MTV, hitting local video stores and finding the best happy hours. Symphony-going and theatre-going seem almost passé, and people seem to have lost their interest in art galleries and museums. Well, here in the Valley you can find all of these activities to get you back to culture! There are concerts in the park, great jazz bands and even new arts facilities in the making in Warner Center and the Sepulveda Basin. Acquaint yourself with the many arts-related groups and organizations here; take in an opera or a play once in a while. Turn off your TV, put down the movie listings and get involved in the Valley's thriving, diverse cultural scene.

By Shelly Loranger



the women and children do the painting and carving. The village is located between Mexico City and Acapulco, and every few months, the men of the village load up a bunch of the fish on their burros and head for the nearest main road where they catch a bus. They sell their carvings in the city, buy supplies, then head back to produce another batch.

"Finally, I found someone who took me to these people. We got some burros and headed off for the mountains. It took us two days to get there. These people are so removed from civilization that our Polaroid camera was magic to the children. I must have given out dozens of Polaroid pictures to the little ones. About a year-and-a-half later, I returned, and as we approached, a little girl of about six came running up to us. In her hand, she had the Polaroid I'd snapped of her on my first trip. It was, to her, the most important treasure in the world."

Stoffers says that the men no longer have to sell their carvings in the big city. Arte de Mexico is able to sell all that they can produce. Twice a year, Stoffers sends a truck to meet the men on the highway, where they've brought the latest group of carvings. By burro, of course.

A museum may be a source for art if it is trying to update its collections and needs the money for new acquisitions. Such an institution may sell some of its lesser works to raise that money. Or, if it becomes weighted with the works of one particular artist, either through donations or through purchases, it may want to diversify, so it will sell some of the artist's lesser works. Sometimes when a collection is donated, only one or two works are museum quality, but the museum must accept the entire collection in order to acquire the better works. Galleries may have an opportunity to pick up pieces if a buyer is in the right place at the right time.

Of course, when you decide to fill that blank wall over the sofa, most of your work will have been done for you. There'll be no dusty attics for you to prowl about in, no icy street corners to hunt for art. All you have to do is say "Charge it." **WM**

Valley-based freelancer Judy Wade has been a contributing editor of Valley Magazine for more than three years. She also writes for Southwest Cycling, The World & I, Caribbean Travel and Life, Antique Week, and others.



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Valleyaires Men's Group

P.O. Box 8356
Van Nuys, CA 91406
994-SING

The Valleyaires Men's Group has a lot to boast about. A 28-year-old chapter of the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America, it won its district contest for the first time last fall. It's now one of the top 16 barbershop quartet choruses in the country (there are 16 regions nationwide), and it will compete in the international championship on the Fourth of July. The 100-member Valleyaires chapter occasionally performs in the evenings, or on weekends, and members compete in barbershop quartet-style singing contests. Guests and new members are invited to attend the Wednesday-night meetings at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Van Nuys.

Will Geer Theatricum Botanicum

1419 N. Topanga Canyon Blvd.
P.O. Box 1222
Topanga, CA 90290
(213) 455-2322

The Pied Piper in the nuclear age? The subject sounds unusual, but the play promises to be interesting, according to Ellen Geer. She's the daughter of the late actor Will Geer and artistic director for the Will Geer Theatricum Botanicum, Topanga Canyon's answer to experiencing nature and enjoying theatre. The 400-seat amphitheatre is located in the midst of tall trees and beautiful shrubbery. This is a place where actors, musicians and artists band together to present classic and new theatrical works in repertory. Musical and educational programs are presented, too.

One of the main programs here is the Academy of the Classics, which provides actors and young people with the opportunity to learn and refine techniques for presenting the classics. The workshops include: an Intensive Shakespeare Seminar, July 28-Aug. 28; Master Scene Study, July 7-Aug. 25; and youth Drama Camp (currently in session). Another program offered is the School Days Educational Program where students, teachers and parents experience theatre games, improvisation, stage fighting, scansion and more at the botanicum itself. **WM**

Shelly Loranger is associate editor of Valley Magazine.

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heading in a new direction. There is more in this symphony's repertoire, however, than show tunes. There are children's concerts, and the symphony was the featured orchestra this year at the Easter Sunrise Service at the Hollywood Bowl. Look for a performance of *Beethoven's Ninth Symphony* in October and a Mervyn's Family Christmas Concert during the holiday season. This month, the symphony is part of the Fourth of July celebration at North Campus of California State University, Northridge.

Valley Contemporary Poets Series
(Sponsored by the Valley Cultural Center)
P.O. Box 6010-475
Sherman Oaks, CA 91413
506-5998

What's a poetry-lover to do in the Valley? There are a multitude of general music groups, dance clubs and art classes to join, but the pickin's are slim if your interest is reading and writing poetry. Well, look again. The Valley Contemporary Poets Series organization meets on the third Friday of each month (except July and August) at 8 p.m. Two featured poets, like Wanda Coleman, Jack Grapes or Anne Stanford (all are National Endowment for the Arts recipients) are invited to read; open readings take place as well. The gatherings give established and new poets plus local and out-of-state poets the opportunity to meet and exchange ideas in an informal setting. They take place in the Breeze Lounge of the Woodland Hills Community Church.

Valley Cultural Center
21600 Oxnard St., Suite 530
Woodland Hills, CA 91367
704-1358

Warner Center is the Valley's mecca of up-and-coming people, businesses and social organizations. But, never let it be said that the people of Warner Center don't know how to relax. The Valley Cultural Center presents the Summer Concerts in the Park series from June through September. And you can bet your bottom dollar that the locals slow their pace for these highly popular events. Groups and big-name performers are featured, and the entertainment ranges from big band sounds to chamber music to jazz. In addition to the concert series, the Valley Cultural Center sponsors the Valley Contemporary Poets Series (see separate listing) and may soon begin a scholar-

ship program for gifted high school seniors. It's an organization that, for years, has promoted the cultural arts in the West San Fernando Valley.

Valley Dixieland Jazz Society
For information and mailing address, call 340-1516

Although the bulk of the crowd at the meetings is in their 50s, Dixieland jazz, and jazz in general, is becoming more and more popular with the younger set, says Margaret Teagarden of the Valley Dixieland Jazz Society. Meetings are held on the first Sunday of every month from 1-5:30 p.m.; they're chock full of energetic jazz enthusiasts and some jazz greats. Names like Wild Bill Davison, Bob Havens of the "Lawrence Welk Show" and Abe Most, among others, show up regularly. And, usually, one professional band is featured each month. Benny Goodman-type jazz, Dixieland and the jazz of the '30s and '40s is offered. Visitors are always welcome, and food and beverages are served.

Valley Master Chorale
5085 Gaynor Ave.
Encino, CA 91436
789-1335

Your ears are sure to notice the difference! The Valley Master Chorale has reached an agreement with the California State University, Northridge, Masterworks Chorale: the two groups are merging. So from now on, when you go to their concerts, you'll hear a whopping 150-200 voices, instead of the previous 120. The chorale belts out choral music ranging from classical to modern, as well as sacred works, jazz and pop. Guest artists are featured too. There are 3-4 regularly scheduled concerts per season plus a number of special appearances.

Valley Opera, Inc.
P.O. Box 3292
Van Nuys, CA 91407
501-5508

Whether you are an opera fancier or just a bit curious about what an opera is, you'll enjoy seeing the Valley Opera in action. Performing 25 operas in the last 8 years, this organization has featured such productions as Puccini's *La Boheme*, plus the *Marriage of Figaro*, the *Magic Flute* and *Alice in Wonderland*. There are two productions per year. Auditions are held for specific operas.

Megaw Theatre

17601 Saticoy St.
Northridge, CA 91325
881-8166

Performers at the Megaw Theatre take their craft, and their audience, very seriously. In addition to performing, they believe in educating the public about their productions. A discussion program is offered where people in or involved with the cast are invited to talk to groups like high school students or senior citizens. When reservations are made for a group, a discussion session following a performance can be booked. The play, its relevance to society, theatre production and design are all subjects that might be covered. The musical revue "Through the Years" opens at the Megaw July 10 and runs through the end of August.

Room for Theatre

12745 Ventura Blvd.
Studio City, CA 91604
509-0459

You've heard of "Make Room for Daddy"? Well, Room for Theatre believes in making room for children, too. On Saturday mornings, Room for Kids is offered. It's a children's theatre program in which imagination, concentration, acting, communication and fun are combined to intrigue kids. For adults, a Shakespearean course is offered in which voice, text and the acting out of Shakespeare's plays are featured. Scene Study classes give a concrete approach to acting by focusing on straightforward techniques of scene study. And, whenever requested, artistic directors of the theatre go out to speak to high school students.

San Fernando Valley Arts Council

5955 De Soto Avenue, Suite 241
Woodland Hills, CA 91367
884-ARTS

How much are the tickets? When is the play running? For these and any other arts-related questions, a quick call to the San Fernando Valley Arts Council will do the trick. This programming organization provides up-to-date information on many local arts organizations, and offers three hotlines: one for news on local theatre arts (884-2405); one for music and dance (884-8347); and one for the visual arts and cultural heritage (884-3049). There are also programs

sponsored by the council for audiences of all ages. The family concert series provides fun for children and adults, and there's also an Art Referral Scholarship Program benefiting disadvantaged youngsters. The Musical Chairs program, reviving a tradition of long ago, enables musicians to gather in private homes to perform chamber music, enjoy food, drink and socializing with others. And, the Warner Center Gallery, sponsored by the Arts Council, enables local residents to see rotating exhibits that cover the latest trends in the contemporary Los Angeles art scene.

San Fernando Valley Banjo Band

885-8004

There's a whole lot of music being made these days at the Shakey's in North Hollywood—and it's not rock either. The San Fernando Valley Banjo Band strums it up on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month, from 1-4 p.m. Founded in 1970, the 28-member group welcomes new banjo players, plus those just hungry for pizza accompanied by some foot-stompin' tunes.

San Fernando Valley Chapter of the Sweet Adelines

368-8722

All you need to join this group is the ability to carry a tune and lots of enthusiasm. The San Fernando Valley Chapter of the Sweet Adelines brings out the best in barbershop quartet-style singing every Tuesday night at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Van Nuys. Chartered nearly 26 years ago, the group now has 46 female members who have mastered the art of singing in four-part harmony. Older songs—dating from World War I—plus spirituals and modern songs are all part of the program. Some favorites include "Danny Boy," "Toot, Toot, Tootsie" and "Heart of My Heart." New members are welcome.

San Fernando Valley Symphony

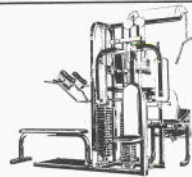
5955 De Soto Avenue, Suite 241
Woodland Hills, CA 91367
884-0650

"Hello, Dolly" and "E.T."—everyone loves the soundtracks from these hits, but you've missed out if you haven't heard them played by the San Fernando Valley Symphony. The 40-year-old symphony was reorganized in 1985 and is now

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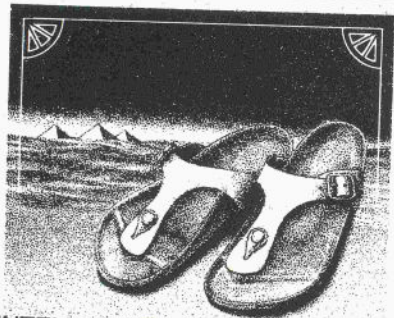
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at the Hollywood Bowl, the L.A. Solo Repertory orchestra offers sounds that will enchant virtually any music lover. For 18 seasons, works by Brahms, Rossini, Mozart and Ravel have been presented by this full-scale orchestra, comprised of nearly 70 professional and amateur musicians. Soloists from the symphony as well as other guest artists are featured regularly, and renowned conductor/violinist James A. Swift is the musical director. There are at least four concerts per season and the orchestra's Monday night rehearsals are open to new members.

Lankershim Art Center

5108 Lankershim Blvd.

North Hollywood, CA 91601

(213) 485-2437

This is not a joke: DWP buildings can be made to look attractive. One, in North Hollywood, has been purchased by the city of Los Angeles for renovation by the Cultural Affairs Department. Its doors will reopen later this year as the Lankershim Art Center. The fully operational cultural arts facility will house about 3,000 square feet of exhibition space plus a theatre that holds 70-80 people and can be used for drama, music and dance performances. Films will be shown at the facility, lectures will be given and an array of classes will be offered.

The Learning Tree University

20920 Knapp St.

Chatsworth, CA 91311

(Second location in Thousand Oaks)

882-5599

Rooms here are done in light lavender, pink and blue. The walls are angular and curved. And the ceilings are different levels. Although the environment at the Learning Tree University may seem a bit out of the ordinary, this organization has proven itself to be a unique learning institution. Whether you're one of those artistically inclined individuals, or just someone who likes to be creative, there's an extensive selection of art, theatre and music classes (plus business and vocational classes) to choose from. The Learning Tree brings in quality instructors to facilitate the learning process, and emphasizes professional and personal development. Here, you can get into travel photography, take up the piano or learn Chinese brush painting. There are "Sing-

ing for the Fun of It," "Acting for the Fun of It" and "Improv for the Fun of It" classes plus certificate programs in graphic and interior design. Your biggest problem at the Learning Tree University will be deciding which classes to take.

Little Broadway Productions

P.O. Box 15068

North Hollywood, CA 91615

509-0963

If the concept of children's theatre brings to mind visions of 4-to-6-year-olds dressed up as tomatoes and tooth fairies, then you're overdue for a performance of Little Broadway Productions. Committed to developing quality theatre for children, this professional children's theatre company—featuring adult actors—presents musicals like "Aesop's Fabulous Fable Factory," "Beauty and the Beast" and "Cinderella." The plays are fun to watch, and they try to offer guidelines for children to follow when they face the problems of growing up. All productions are professionally lit, designed and costumed. Students from public and private schools attend week-day performances and receive study guides for each play. Weekend audiences include just about everyone.

McGroarty Arts Center

7570 McGroarty Terrace

Tujunga, CA 91042

352-5285

Sure, we know—you've been meaning to dust off that old set of paints you have lying around somewhere. And you say you still regret that you never took that ceramics class in college—just for the fun of it. Well, now you can stop procrastinating and sign up for a class at McGroarty Arts Center—just for the fun of it. Operated by the Cultural Affairs Department of the city of Los Angeles, the center functions as a place for community meetings, musicals, fine art instruction and tours of the historic grounds. The home, "Rancho Chupa Rosa," was built in 1923 by John Steven McGroarty, a poet, historian, dramatist, journalist and congressman. In 1953, the city of Los Angeles purchased it, restored the library and now runs it as a cultural arts center. You'll find more than 50 classes in the arts offered here—everything from T'ai Chi Ch'uan to oil painting to ballet, and more.

special performances, The Great Pacific Jazz Band plays at the Beef 'N Barrel Co. restaurant in Northridge on Sunday evenings at 7 p.m.

Israeli International Art Center

at the Canoga Mission Gallery
23130 Sherman Way
Canoga Park, CA 91307
883-1085

If there was a sign in front of this Alamo-style building, it might read "Ronald Reagan's horse slept here." And that he did. About 40-50 years ago, the Canoga Mission Gallery was a stable that housed the horses of many a movie star. Well, the times have changed; the building looks the same but you won't find too many horses here anymore. What you will find, however, are some classic and priceless works of art. The Israeli International Art Center is now located at the Canoga Mission Gallery. This unique museum houses a collection unlike any other. The works of Chagall, Picasso, Miro and Dali are on exhibit here, as are numerous paintings, sculptures and antiques from the Holy Land.

L.A. Music Theatre

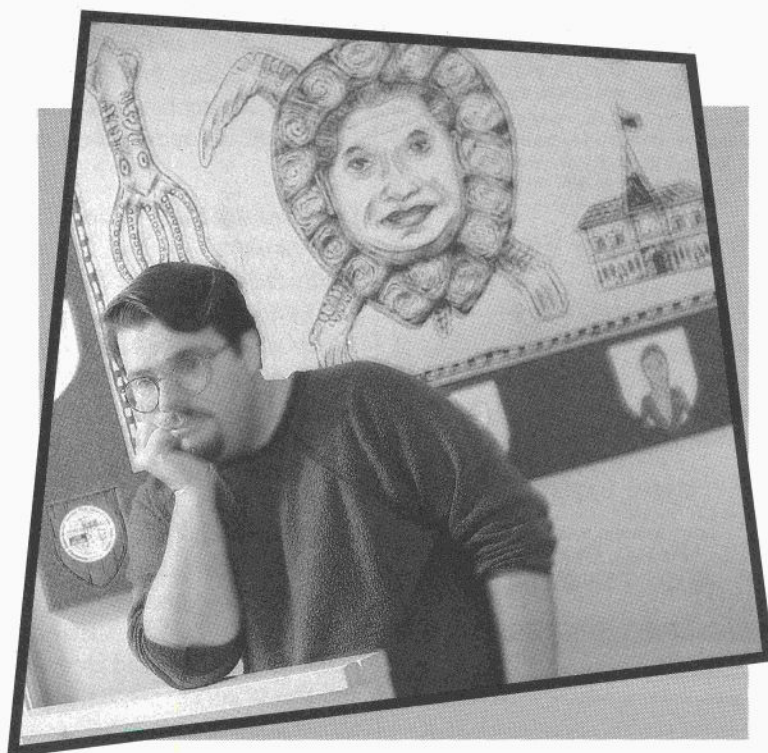
P.O. Box 4723
North Hollywood, CA 91607
509-1392

This Valley-based opera company is ideal for performers right out of college—before they become affiliated with larger professional companies. Two fully staged, fully costumed operas are presented per year, one in spring and the other in fall. Werther's *Massenet*, Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* and *Hansel and Gretel* are some of the projects that have been undertaken by the L.A. Music Theatre recently. All productions run for three weekends at the First Presbyterian Church of North Hollywood.

L.A. Solo Repertory Orchestra

7242 Louise Avenue
Van Nuys, CA 91406
342-8400

From its holiday program last December—featuring Handel's *Hallelujah Chorus* and Humperdinck's *Prelude to Hansel and Gretel*—to its performance in the most recent Easter Sunrise Service



GOING NATIVE

What's a turtle with the King of Tonga's face doing on the same canvas with a 7-11 sign and a BMW insignia? Ask artist Jeffrey Vallance, a Canoga Park resident who juxtaposes the symbols of Western and island cultures in his paintings. There's a definite contrast between the warm and naive images of Tonga, rendered on a background made to resemble the native tapa cloth, and the bright enamel colors and contemporary images that frame them. Long a student of island culture, Vallance recently traveled to Tonga and had an audience with the king himself. As to why the monarch's smiling face adorns the turtle's back, Vallance explains that, just as the ancient Greeks believed a turtle holds up the world, Tongans believe that their king holds up the island. Does this mean that our civilization is held up by BMWs and 7-11s?

in accordance with the schedules of the main stage productions.

Conejo Symphony Orchestra

3625 Thousand Oaks Blvd., Suite 100A
Thousand Oaks, CA 91362
(805) 495-7582

For 27 years, the Conejo Symphony Orchestra has been bringing the sounds of Beethoven, Mozart, Rossini and Tchaikovsky to residents of Thousand Oaks and neighboring communities. Beginning as a small community orchestra, today this 85-member urban symphony presents five concerts per season. Conductor Elmer Ramsey has been with the Conejo Symphony for 25 years and welcomes a variety of guest artists and performers. Concerts are held at the California Lutheran University in Thousand Oaks.

Everywoman's Village

5650 Sepulveda Blvd.
Van Nuys, CA 91411
787-5100

You'll feel like a kid in a candy shop as you browse through the catalog

of courses offered by Everywoman's Village. This nonprofit organization features classes in everything from tango and tap to calligraphy and doll-making. Providing a learning environment that's fun plus programs that encourage intellectual and creative artistic development are the goals here. You can take Tahitian and Polynesian dancing, Hatha Yoga and even marble carving. Classes are available for women, men and children and there are six sessions per year ranging in length from six to nine weeks.

Glendale Symphony Orchestra

401 N. Brand Blvd., Suite 520
Glendale, CA 91203
500-8720

When you've got the likes of Henry Mancini, John Williams, Lalo Schifrin and Anshel Brusilow hanging around—you know you've got to be good. And the Glendale Symphony Orchestra is. It's been bringing music to the ears of locals for 63 continuous seasons. The symphony presents six concerts per year at the Music Center's Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. Musicians from all levels of the

industry comprise the 95-member orchestra. A variety of special guest conductors and artists are featured each season. Concerts offer light familiar sounds like Weill's *The Threepenny Opera*, Bizet's *Carmen Suite No. 2*, and Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*.

The Great Pacific Jazz Band

P.O. Box 4021
North Hollywood, CA 91607
506-5387

"Bursting with energy, but never out of control." Although this statement could conceivably describe anything from a new puppy to a high school senior, it applies here to the Great Pacific Jazz Band. This is an upbeat Dixieland jazz band that features seven musicians including trumpet man Zeke Zachary, trombonist Bob Havens, and Bob Ringwald—leader, banjoist, pianist and vocalist (and, yes, he's Molly's dad). The band is "faithful to tradition, but never old-fashioned." It features great tunes like Louis Armstrong's "Potato Head Blues" and "Hotter than That" plus others like "Mississippi Moan" and "Little Rock Getaway." In addition to

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wood Hills, you've got the makings for an enjoyable symphonic experience. The 60-year-old symphony performs classics by Bach, Beethoven, Mahler and Schubert as well as lighter pieces. Four concerts are presented each year; the next takes place in September at the Starlight Amphitheatre and honors the bicentennial of the Constitution of the United States.

California Handcrafters

7829 Royer Avenue
Canoga Park, CA 91304
884-8284

The next time you're watching "Dallas" and you see J.R. in his office causing havoc, take a good look at the iron sculpture sitting behind his desk. It was made by a member of California Handcrafters, an organization comprised of about 1,000 people who create unique pieces of art and handcrafted items. These artists are known throughout the state for their original works in photography, watercolors, sculpting, woodcrafting, pottery, jewelry, toy-making and other creative areas. California Handcrafters sponsors 10 shows per year in the Los Angeles area. On July 18-19, a show is being presented in cooperation with the Fine Arts Federation of Burbank at the George Izay Park in Burbank.

The Conejo Players

351 S. Moorpark Road
P.O. Box 1695
Thousand Oaks, CA 91360
(805) 495-3715

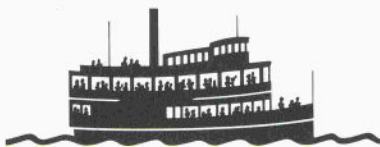
You say you've always dreamt of getting up on stage and performing before an audience? Well, here's your chance to quit imagining and actually do it. Auditions for the main stage productions of The Conejo Players are open to the public. The players present one comedy, one drama, one mystery and two musicals each year and, as a community theatre, welcome newcomers. If, however, you're not quite ready for one of their main stage productions, try one of the workshops this group offers. The Conejo Afternoon Theatre workshops (CAT Productions) train actors, producers and directors. The goal of the workshops is to enable individuals to learn all aspects of putting on an actual production—some participants even get to do so. Workshop days and times vary



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Actor's Alley Repertory Theatre

4334 Van Nuys Blvd.
Sherman Oaks, CA 91403
986-AART

Tired of *watching* videos and *sitting* in the same old movie theatres? Well, suppose you could actually do a little of the acting and less watching? Take the plunge and visit Actor's Alley Repertory Theatre. Members of Actor's Alley present a number of programs that involve the community with theatre. Actor's Alley assists the Jewish Family Service Valley Store Front with its weekly Improv group for senior citizens, and teaches classes, running 8-10 weeks, for high school students. Members of the troupe are also involved in programs for teaching theatre to runaways and homeless teens. Staged readings of new plays take place 2-3 times per month and are open to the public. And, in May, a subscription series began featuring open discussions following the Sunday matinee performances. Acting classes for the public have begun recently as well, and will expand in the fall.

Arts Council of Conejo Valley

Arts Council Center
482 Greenmeadow Drive
Thousand Oaks, CA 91361
(805) 499-4355

The Arts Council of Conejo Valley can tell you almost anything you've ever wanted to know about artistic and cultural

groups in the Conejo Valley. It provides information on art-related activities and develops programs that encourage interest and participation by local residents. Art programs, classes, exhibits, performances and other activities are presented at the Arts Council Center itself. And referrals to theatre, music, dance, garden and newcomer clubs are available too.

Back Alley Theatre

15231 Burbank Blvd.
Van Nuys, CA 91411
780-2240

You've seen a number of shows and read the reviews. You know that the Back Alley Theatre continues to present quality theatre to its patrons. But, the Back Alley Theatre also presents a number of quality programs, which you may not know about, to involve its guests in the theatre. There is a discussion period after various performances, usually on Thursday nights, in which key people are brought in to shed some thematic light on subjects relating to significant plays. There's also a community outreach program in which disadvantaged and disabled people as well as senior citizens receive tickets to the Back Alley at discounted rates (through connections with certain nonprofit organizations). Members of the Back Alley frequently visit community organizations and schools with slide show presentations about their

theatre, and theatre in general. Plus, group tours of the Back Alley Theatre itself can be arranged. Singles are invited to take part in the new "singles-only nights" that are offered when new shows are previewing.

Burbank Civic Light Opera

P.O. Box 201
Burbank, CA 91503
845-6851

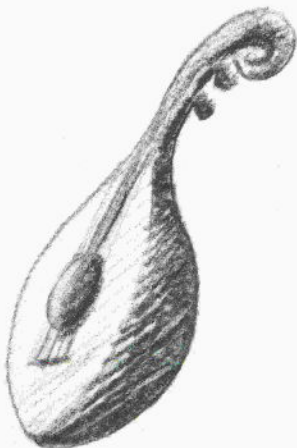
They say there's a first time for everything—even taking in an opera. If you've ever wondered what one is like, you might try seeing the Burbank Civic Light Opera in action. Founded 40 years ago, this group has continually contributed to Burbank's cultural life throughout the years. Guests are treated to great moments in musical comedy, the sounds of the '30s and '40s and assemblages of "showbiz" tunes. You're sure to go home humming when you take in a performance of the Burbank Civic Light Opera.

Burbank Symphony Orchestra

P.O. Box 4141
Burbank, CA 91503
846-7168

Whether you take in the Burbank Symphony Orchestra in the pleasant surroundings of the Starlight Amphitheatre in Burbank or in Forest Lawn's picturesque Hall of Liberty in the Holly-

The Cultural Foundation



Dedicated to making the quality of life in the Valley even better, The Cultural Foundation, a major nonprofit organization, has perhaps the biggest plans of all in the making. Current projects include the development of Warner Performing Arts Square in Woodland Hills, a complex housing a theatre district and a concert hall; plus Arts Park L.A. in the Sepulveda Basin, a 60-acre project with an outdoor amphitheatre, a 2,500-seat theatre and indoor-outdoor recreational areas for the public to enjoy. A lush park, a 40-acre lake, exhibit spaces and classrooms are also to be built at this location.

Most recently, the Foundation's ARTSPACE Gallery at 21800 Oxnard Street in Woodland Hills was officially opened. Donated by the Voit Companies, the 4,000-square-foot gallery offers exhibits and programs for the public. Currently on display are exhibits featuring the works of Chinese contemporary artists.

The Cultural Foundation is located at 21600 Oxnard Street, Woodland Hills, 716-2787.

