

**THE
BACK
ALLEY
THEATRE**

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Producing Directors
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 1/14/87
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THE BACK ALLEY THEATRE RECEIVES \$22,250 FROM
THE W. ALTON JONES FOUNDATION

The new year began with an unexpected gift for THE BACK ALLEY THEATRE in the shape of a \$22,250 check from the W. Alton Jones Foundation in Charlottesville, Virginia. The Back Alley, along with two other Los Angeles theatres, the Mark Taper Forum and Pipeline, were recipients of major grants from the Jones Foundation.

"The Best of Tomorrow," a pilot program for the Jones Foundation, is the inspiration and prodigy of David Speedie, its Director. The program nurtures the creation of new art, and new initiatives by existing arts organizations, within the traditional visual and performing arts.

The \$22,250 received by the Back Alley (the largest single grant ever awarded the theatre) will be used to augment artists' salaries for 1987 and expand its marketing program.

Laura Zucker, Producing Director of The Back Alley Theatre feels the Jones Foundation chose the Back Alley because of the consistent strength of its artistic product and strong fiscal growth over the past five years.

"David Speedie and the foundation saw the potential for the Back Alley to grow into the Valley's first regional professional theatre company," says Zucker. "They perceived a vacuum here that, with a boost, we could help fill."

Speedie, a former Director of Cultural Affairs for the city of Philadelphia, visited the Los Angeles area in October to speak personally with prospective grantees and to focus on those organizations that he felt fit the Foundation's criteria. The one-time grants are designed specifically to be awarded in large amounts with few restrictions, so that the money will make a significant impact on both the organization's immediate standing and future artistic product. Says Kelleher, "We found that there is a huge amount of energy [in arts organizations] devoted to fund-raising--- energy that is siphoned off from more creative uses." The Foundation hopes that their recognition will help leverage additional funds from the local funding community.

Says foundation director Jeffrey Kelleher, "The program is national in scope, but we've limited ourselves to a handful of cities and states. This year we're concentrating on Los Angeles, Baltimore, and Virginia." The program was established in March, 1986 and the first awards -- over \$1 million dollars total -- were made in September. At this time, the foundation prefers to research potential grantees on its own, encouraging them to submit proposals only after careful investigation; it is not open to solicitations.