

# Stage Watch

## Counting Down at the Back Alley Theatre

By SYLVIE DRAKE,  
*Times Theater Writer*

co-director of the Back Alley with her husband, Allan Miller. "We built the end of the lease into the contract ourselves. We knew we didn't want to stay in this theater indefinitely. We've outgrown it.

"We're producing some high-quality children's theater and touring the state with our adult productions. In our touring, we play much larger theaters. We feel the Valley deserves a bigger theater."

Will it get it? Zucker isn't sure. She said she and Miller will be moving the Back Alley offices to one of two locations in Van Nuys that she's "nailing down."

Beyond that, they'll be taking a hiatus from adult programming, "for about six months," but plan to resume their acclaimed children's show, Will and Dion Alden Holt's "Max & Zoey, Zoey & Max" at the current facility Oct. 7-29, before moving it to another theater (as yet undetermined). They'll also be producing another children's show—David Pinto's "Be-Bop Sizzle Pop!"—and, in 1990-91, will do an extensive state tour of their runaway hit, "The Voice of the Prairie."

"The problem," Zucker said, "is that there is no professional theater in the [San Fernando] Valley of more than 100 seats. To build or modify an existing building is a very expensive proposition. One of the things this community needs to decide is how important theater, and the Back Alley in particular, is to them.

"There are 15 people on the board of directors who care a great deal about what happens to this theater. We view ourselves as custodians of their trust. Ultimately, it's that group of people who will have to decide what happens."

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BACKING AWAY. The count-down has started for the closure of the Back Alley Theatre in Van Nuys—not the organization, but the 99-seat facility. It will be vacated Oct. 31 when the lease is up, but this is not necessarily bad news.

"We bought this theater three years ago and sold it two years ago," said Laura Zucker, producing