

By SYLVIE DRAKE
TIMES THEATER WRITER

LOS ANGELES TIMES

F10

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1989

THEATER YEAR: Few Standouts on the L.A. Scene

Continued from F2

The most serious loss on the smaller theater front, after 10 distinguished years, was the Back Alley Theatre. The wide-stage house on Burbank Boulevard in Van Nuys closed its doors in October with a stylish production of Matthew Wliten's "The Deal."

Producing co-director Allan Miller would not say if the Back Alley will be back. "We're maintaining the organization and several board members and will be discussing things in the coming months." A talked-about move to a larger space is off for now, he said, "but it's still a dream we have."

The Back Alley had given us

another of the year's best memories: a deliciously giddy production of John Olive's "Voice of the Prairie," about the early days of radio and the telling of tall tales, that relished the spoken word.

We didn't lose the Odyssey Theatre Ensemble. It lost its home of 16 years and was forced to move from the corner of Bundy Avenue and Santa Monica Boulevard to temporary quarters at 2055 S. Sepulveda Blvd.

Temporary is the keyword here. Production continues, but the move was twice as expensive as originally anticipated (up to \$140,000 and still counting). Artistic director Ron Sossi, who has

been trying to make the leap to a union house for several years, insists this won't delay him.

For the rest, here's a bag of random thoughts:

■ The Westwood Playhouse had a lackluster year that ended in a change of management. The new team of Eric Krebs and Howard Pechet didn't give it the hoped-for lift with their inaugural show ("The Eighties"), but at least they produced it and aren't dedicated to just booking the house.

■ After 25 years, East-West Players replaced its founding artis-

tic director Mako with Nobu McCarthy. It's too soon to tell how the change will affect this theater. Its recent revival of, of all things, "Company" was well received, but we still haven't seen a new drama there from Thailand or Vietnam.

■ The Inner City Cultural Center acquired the Ivar Theatre in Hollywood as a place to move shows with long-run potential. But the Ivar, which housed porno stage shows for the past 10 years, needs some major refurbishing (for which money has yet to be raised).