

BACKSTAGE

THE ACTOR'S RESOURCE

Play With A Knife

Reviewed by Jon Steely

May 06, 2009



Photo by Heather Demetrios

Just as existentialism is a philosophy concerned with finding the meaning of life through personal responsibility and free choice, playwright [Zach Fehst](#)'s heady, 75-minute romp is concerned with sorting out all of this business in a one-act performance. Twisted atheist Evan (Fehst) randomly stabs cynical working stiff Michael ([Dedalus Hyde](#)) as he stops into a coffeehouse dive for a cup of joe. From here, the murderer and the murdered are transported to an alternate reality—the same, only now different, greasy-spoon diner—where they verbally and sometimes physically battle each other, debating the existence of God and arguing over the meaning of life, as Michael slowly dies. An old man (John C. McLaughlin) and a couple of wide-eyed young lovers (Sean Richter and the finely tuned Laura Eichhorn) enter the mix to add their age-appropriate philosophical perspectives.

As Evan, Fehst's more-than-effective chops deliver the layered complexities the role demands. His clever concept and intelligent dialogue, coupled with director Heather Demetrios' knack for staging, create the right atmosphere for a rapid-fire tennis match between opposing ideologies. However, Hyde's nondescript efforts as the sardonic Michael press down on the play's brakes, causing the production to stumble over its own tightly wound pace. This production could be an interesting meditation on different versions of the meaning of life, but the uneven pairing of Fehst and Hyde weakens the necessary banter and doesn't do much to foster interest in the meaning of the play.

*Presented by Theatre Yawp at Stages
Theatre Center, 1540 N. McCadden Place, Hollywood.
April 25–May 31. Sat.–Sun., 8 p.m.
(323) 636-9661 or www.plays411.com/knife.*