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## **A very deep 'Hole' returns**

Let the grief sweepstakes begin: In "Rabbit Hole," mourning means keeping score -- who hurts more, who's shirking pain? Camelot Artists' solid new production of David Lindsay-Abaire's domestic tragedy, now at the Skylight Theater, offers another look at this Pulitzer Prize winner, seen at the Geffen two years ago.

The marriage of Becca (Courtney Cole, alternating with Kristina Kreyling) and Howie (Jay Huguley) fractures as they struggle to recover from the accidental death of their 4-year-old son, Danny. Meanwhile, Becca's freewheeling sister, Izzy (Samantha Sloyan, alternating with Kayla Radin), announces she's been knocked up, and Mom (Brynn Thayer) won't shut up about the Kennedy Curse.

Lindsay-Abaire anatomizes loss as a way of life: the urge to assign blame, unexpected forms of comfort, a household on eggshells. Months may have passed, but everyone relives his or her actions from That Day, caught in a time warp both suffocating and oddly consoling.

This intelligent, careful play is deceptively difficult to stage; "Hole" intentionally hides its true feelings, putting the onus on performers to mine its cracks for genuine emotional depth. Director Allen Barton's committed cast tends to stay aboveground, nailing the writing's humor and surface tensions, less so its restless soul. Some actors project too strenuously, giving their voices a forced feel, and the pacing can lag. But Huguley and Chadbourne Hamblin (alternating with Pete Stamos as the driver of the car that killed Danny) manage to dwell inside the play's contradictions. They connect us to its anguished, buoyant heart.

--Charlotte Stoudt

"Rabbit Hole," Skylight Theater, 1816 N. Vermont Ave., Hollywood. 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, 7 p.m. Sundays. Ends Aug 17. \$15-\$25. (310) 358-9936. Running time: 2 hours, 35 minutes.