

Stage Raw

## Theater to See in L.A. This Week, Including a Play About a Teacher Versus a Parent

By Steven Leigh Morris

### **PICK OF THE WEEK: GIDION'S KNOT**



Anthony Masters Photography

Paula Cale Lisbe and Vonessa Martin star in the Los Angeles Premiere of the Furious Theatre Company production of *Gidion's Knot*, written by Johnna Adams and directed by Darin Anthony.

Aaron Francis' bold scenic design has the audience seated in school desks for *Gidion's Knot*, getting you into the right frame of mind for Johnna Adams' intense one-act showdown between a fifth-grade teacher and a parent. Corryn (Vonessa Martin) shows up for a teacher-parent conference, having been summoned a few days earlier by Miss Clark (Paula Cale Lisbe) after she inexplicably suspended Corryn's son, Gidion. The 11-year-old child has since committed suicide, so Miss Clark assumed the meeting wasn't going to happen, and she's ill prepared when Corryn shows up anyway, wanting answers. The bereft mother becomes increasingly incensed by the teacher's evasive behavior. Throughout the play, certain details are clawed into the open, such as Miss Clark's scant two years of experience as a teacher -- something that Corryn, a graduate professor of literature, pounces on -- as well as some unexpected common ground. Adams' short (barely 80-minute) play is a well-crafted and powerful experience, tackling heavy subject matter including bullying, suicide and schoolyard homophobia. A scathing indictment of the incompetency of school officials, Adams' script is confrontational and thought-provoking. Furious Theatre Company at the Pasadena Playhouse/Carrie