



Jake Manabat sinks his teeth into his role as the Eater in "Milk 'N' Honey."

## Dinner theater that's all-consuming

Theater always gives food for thought. "Milk 'N' Honey," a show about why we eat what we eat in America, goes further: It serves one actor in the cast a full meal at every performance.

"I have no lines, my text is my chicken leg," says Jake Manabat. He plays the Eater in the multimedia production, opening Sunday at 3LD Art and Technology Center (80 Greenwich St.). Besides the bird, he devours a tomato-and-cucumber salad, green beans and dessert. An overhead camera captures each bite Manabat takes. The chow comes from delis near the theater.

"Through Dec. 2, this is my dinner," he says, adding that he's doing more cardio at the gym to avoid what befell Jane Krakowski's character, Jenna, on "30 Rock."

Jenna blimped out while eating and acting in "Mystic Pizza: The Musical."

"Milk 'N' Honey" weaves together several stories and mixes fiction and real-life interviews with farmers, hunters, waiters, ad men, immigrant workers and Dumpster divers.

"Everything the Eater eats has a story behind it," notes director Ellen Beckerman, the head of LightBox, an issue-oriented theater company co-presenting the production. "It's as if every character and scene emerges from [his] meal."

"I have to eat really slow to make it last an hour and a half," Manabat says. But slo-mo dining has perks. "The cannoli the other day was [bleeping] fantastic. If you take your time, you can taste the butter, the chocolate, everything." *Joe Dziemianowicz*