

The Rabbi and the Shiksa Ponders Romance

By [Mary Mallory](#) on October 11th, 2012 [Printer-Friendly](#)



Theresa Genovese (Rebecca Westberg) and Rabbi Persky (Art Shulman) dance a hora in “The Rabbi and the Shiksa.”

A dramady combining romantic comedy and serious discussion of the Jewish religion, *The Rabbi and the Shiksa* contains some fine acting as well as deep philosophical questions to ponder.

The production tells the story of Rabbi Jacob Persky (Art Shulman), comfortably ensconced at his temple for 29 years. Theresa Genovese (Rebecca Westberg) comes to the temple to bid on replacing the carpet, and sparks fly. How will possible romance affect the Rabbi’s leadership of his flock?

After a few bobbles and tentative line readings, the cast settles down to fine performances. Westberg brings vivacious, charming energy to the Italian carpet layer, and possesses some nice chemistry and timing with Shulman. Shulman’s rabbi possesses pleasing warmth and confidence. Sam Aaron radiates infectious charm and loud personality. He also sings a few hilarious Jewish cowboy songs along the way.

Shulman’s story has its moments, but focuses too much on the serious aspects of what it means to be Jewish and running a congregation instead of what possible romance could bring the two lovers. This occasionally slows down proceedings, as the stories don’t quite blend as well as they could.

Director Mike Rademaekers brings energy and intimacy to the romantic part of the story, keeping the couple off-kilter and unsure, but the rest of the production is too static and declamatory, with the actors stopping and reciting their lines.

Production design, sound, and lighting enhance the production.

The Rabbi and the Shiksa takes a bittersweet look at combining love and opposite religious beliefs.

The Rabbi and the Shiksa plays Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights at 8 p.m., and Sundays at 2 p.m. through Nov. 18 at the Secret Rose Theatre located at 11246 Magnolia Blvd. in North Hollywood. Tickets cost \$22, \$17 for seniors, \$10 for students under 26 with ID, and \$16 for groups of 10 or more. For information or reservations, call (818) 782-4254 or visit www.SecretRose.com.