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## REBECCA'S GAMBLE

### **The Theatrecraft Playhouse**

Reviewed by Robert  
Axelrod

In REBECCA'S GAMBLE, Cryonics, the freezing of a terminally ill patient with the hope of reviving him at some future date when a cure is available, goes to court. On trial for murder is Doctor Rebecca Adler, a somewhat renowned Cryonics Researcher at a facility called Omega Terrace, who is accused of putting one terminally ill from AIDS patient, Kent Eastman, to death by overdosing him with anesthetic, then freezing him.



Randy Vasquez - Diane Linder - Jerry Weil

The fact that he paid three million dollars for this "service" casts suspicion of fraud and swindle. Pressing charges are Eastman's distraught mother Susan and D.A. Scott Novak. Defending Adler is high powered Attorney Joe Purcell. At the top of the show, five audience members are chosen to be the jury and the verdict they render at the end of the show, sticks!

This is a Trial show. Both sides call a series of witnesses; first the prosecution calls mother Susan Eastman, effectively and realistically portrayed by the dependable Diane Frank. Under Novak's questioning, Susan laments that the whole procedure is against the will of God. Under Purcell's cross, she admits her son looked forward to the procedure. Further testimony comes from doctors, technicians, the Omega Terrace accountant, the insurance adjuster, and religious leaders. It's revealed that Dr. Adler owned 15% of Omega's stock, yet her salary was well below what she could have made in private practice.

These roles are effectively covered by an excellent ensemble cast, each member taking on two roles. D.A. Novak and Attorney Purcell are covered quite well by Jerry Weil and Randy Vasquez respectively. Weil is excitable and relentless, Vasquez cool and logical, provide a contrast in character that is riveting. Henry Holden and Steve Shaw portray Judge Dale Fox and the Bailiff. At issue is whether Adler acted irresponsibly by killing and freezing an already dying man, without any concrete hope of being able to revive and cure him. Judge Fox makes it clear very early that he's not going to leave any room for hijinks from both prosecutor and defense.

That leaves us with Diane Linder as Dr. Rebecca Adler. Ms. Linder is stiff and wooden in the role. She seems uncomfortable. Admittedly, sometimes her staging, compliments of veteran director Rick Walters, is awkward, but it's up to the actress to make it work. For the most part, Walter's staging on the Theatrecraft Playhouse's  $\frac{3}{4}$  in-the-round (square actually) stage is spot on, so I must fault the actress. Walter's use of background music puzzles me. It comes off more like a glitch than a planned insert. The set, by the always dependable Chris Winfield, fits the bill. The writing, by Robert Begam (a nationally recognized attorney) and the prolific Art Shulman is hard hitting and accurate to a trial of this caliber. By the end of the play, both sides of the case are very well presented, leaving quite a dilemma for the jurors and the entire audience.

REBECCA'S GAMBLE plays now through September 1st, 2013, Fridays and Saturdays at 8PM, Sundays at 2PM. The Theatrecraft Playhouse is located at 7445 'A' Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles, 90046. Enter the driveway just a hair east of Gardner and proceed to the parking lot, or find street parking. Visit [www.rebeccasgamble.com](http://www.rebeccasgamble.com) or call (818) 465-3213 for tickets and information.

Comments? Write to us at: [Letters@ReviewPlays.Com](mailto:Letters@ReviewPlays.Com)

Photo: Rick Walters

