

REBECCA'S GAMBLE WEIGHS OPTIONS

By Mary Mallory

Combining excellent acting and thoughtful writing, "Rebecca's Gamble" presents arguments for and against cryonics through extremely realistic courtroom action. In a dramatic twist, selected audience members render a final verdict, giving the production a sense of immediacy.

Writers Art Shulman and Robert Begam delve thoughtfully into the subject of cryonics, the freezing of bodies after death with the hope of future revival, presented through naturalistic legal arguments, as they consider the actions of Dr. Rebecca Adler. The passionate courtroom sequences highlight the strong script.

Superb acting reinforces the dramatic tension, particularly Randy Vasquez and Jerry Weil's knockout performances as opposing attorneys. Their yin-yang – Vasquez's Purcell, easy-going, pragmatic, Weil's Novak argumentative, intense – enhance the competitive proceedings. Dominick Morra (Dr. Thatcher/Rabbi Weiss) and Duane Taniguchi (Horlick/St. Steglitz) provide nice contrast between their double roles. However, Diane Linder's Rebecca occasionally seems too flighty and flirtatious.

Director Rick Walters gets high energy, fine timing, and intensity from his cast. Walters employs every inch of the intimate space, allowing actors to pace as they would in a courtroom, which effectively makes the audience part of the show. His choreography for Linder seems slightly off key at times, with strange movements out of the witness box.

Spot-on production work adds realistic touches, especially costume designer Emily Doyle's sleek suits and detailed accessories and wigs. Some melodramatic music cues more appropriate for reality television occasionally seem odd and out of place.

"Rebecca's Gamble" articulately argues the pros and cons of cryonics through fine acting and writing.

"Rebecca's Gamble" plays Fridays and Saturdays at 8 pm, and Sunday matinees at 2 pm through September 1 at Theatrecraft Playhouse, 7445 "A" Sunset Blvd. in Hollywood. Tickets cost \$22, with discounts for students, seniors, and groups. Please visit www.rebeccasgamble.com or call 818/465-3213 to make reservations.