

“Of Good Stock” at South Coast Rep, silent serial “House of Mystery” on DVD

April 11, 2015

8:21 PM MST



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LA/OC Arts Examiner



Rob Nagle and Melanie Lora in “Of Good Stock.”

Photo by Debora Robinson/SCR.

Think maybe you can afford to skip a show at [South Coast Repertory](#) this month? Not “Of Good Stock”—it’s a must-see for any lover of theatre, though it has the makings of a worthwhile film as well. Playwright Melissa Ross has captured the way people really talk, and filled the stage with believable characters. And few plays have ever captured the sibling dynamic better than this one, set in a beach house on Cape Cod that is a wonder of verisimilitude.

The three sisters at the center of the play all have a lot happening—one’s fending off serious illness, one’s getting hitched and the third’s got a couple of things going on. Apart from a whisky-soaked scene that runs far too long (though the sibs ultimately give voice to their true feelings), this world premiere seriocomedy about love, death and family is nearly flawless. The theatre’s acoustics don’t do the play’s dialogue justice, though.

The cast has terrific chemistry: Melanie Lora and Rob Nagle (as the eldest sister Jess and her husband, Fred) deliver wonderfully nuanced performances that most actors could only envy; Kat Foster and Corey Brill (as middle sister Amy and fiancé Josh) and Andrea Syglowski and Todd Lowe (as

youngest sis Celia and boyfriend Hunter) round out the solid ensemble. It’s hard to imagine the play without Gaye Taylor Upchurch’s attentive, beautifully-paced direction and Tony Fanning’s scenic design.