

# I Ain't Afraid of No Ghosts!

## Actors' Theatre returns with *The Thin Place*

By **DNA**    October 11, 2023

Where do we go when we die? Is it a magical plane of existence located in the wisps of clouds? Or is it lurking just outside our visible senses? Are we able to communicate with the dead and can psychics get answers to questions we were never able to ask? Can the dead try to get our attention with whispers and things that go bump in the dark? This Halloween season, get ready for your skin to crawl up and down your neck, while watching *The Thin Place*.



Where do we go when we die? This cast speculates. Photo DNA

The Actors' Theatre, downtown's charming black box performance space, is premiering its first full-length play of the season, *The Thin Place*. Written by Obie Award-winner Lucas Hnath, this spooky production opens, eerily enough, on October Friday the 13th and closes on Halloween.

Not only is this the first full-length play of the Actors' Theatre since 2019, this run is also only the second production of *The Thin Place* in California. Directed by horror aficionado and MCT member Miguel Reyna.

"I wanted to direct this play by Lucas Hnath because it is a simple, yet unconventional piece of theater," says Reyna in between directing scenes at rehearsal. "It's a play that can challenge the audience to think about what is real and what is an illusion."

*The Thin Place* asks us to examine our beliefs and whether there is life beyond this life that we know. And while you might not leave with any definite answers, you're guaranteed an ethereal time.

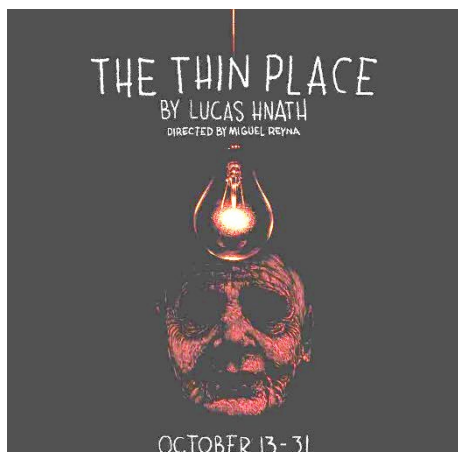
The stage set is minimal, but the emotional range of the actors draws you in so closely, that anything else would be a distraction. There's a reason ghost stories are told around campfires, but in this case it's the stage lights that cause the goose bumps. "It's an intimate play that asks for an intimate setting and Actors' Theatre is perfect for this type of performance," says Reyna.

*The Thin Place* stars Jennifer Galvin as Hilda, a woman who is haunted by her own familial scars. Galvin's voice draws you into the realm where things may not be what they appear. Her counterpoint is Tara McMilin as Linda, who recently moved from England to the states and is a psychic, or perhaps she's more (or less) than that. Linda is confident, brash, and empathetic. Hilda is demure, with a story to tell. Rounding out the cast is Sarah Michael as Sylvia and Ward Willits as Jerry. Together, their chemistry is palpable and electric.

Hilda has been experimenting with ESP and other "demonic activity" as her grandmother calls it, since she was a child. Linda's loud gregarious arrival is seemingly off-putting. Yet, her candor and honesty make her character sympathetic as the occult ripples through the room.

Live theater is unlike any other medium, far surpassing mere spectator entertainment like TV or cinema. While being surrounded by like-minded souls in a darkened room, actors create magic onstage that can be life changing. In the case of *The Thin Place*, it can also be frightening.

"I love horror because horror is a device that examines and exposes the limits of the human condition. Horror is the boldest form of storytelling, it takes risks," says Reyna.



Speaking of risks, closing night, Oct. 31, is the Gaelic festival Samhain, the night when the veil between this world and "the other" is thinnest. Will you take a chance and head to the Actors' Theatre that night? Will you allow the spirits to envelop you? Will you ever be the same?

Actors' Theatre is located 1001 Center Street and tickets can be bought online at [www.santacruzactorstheatre.org](http://www.santacruzactorstheatre.org)