

CITY LIFE

Halloween thrills, audio theater: Santa Cruz County theater stages a fall comeback

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After all the summer excitement with Santa Cruz Shakespeare and Cabrillo Stage, live theater is back, in a big way. From performances to unique workshops to other opportunities for audiences to engage, local theater companies are coming in heavy for the fall season.



Tara McMillin (left) and Jennifer Galvin star in Actors' Theatre's new production of the chilling "The Thin Place," opening Friday and closing on Halloween night.

First up, Actors' Theatre in Santa Cruz, which endured [a near-death experience](#) in 2022, is back with its first play of the season. [Opening Friday](#) will be Lucas Hnath's "The Thin Place," a chilling story ideal for the spooky season of Halloween.

The play centers on a young woman (Jennifer Galvin) trying to communicate with her dead grandmother, and the psychic (Tara McMillin) trying to connect the two. It's a story that toys with ideas about life after death and the realms beyond the material world. And, in a canny marketing move, Actors' Theatre is opening the play on Friday the 13th and closing it on Halloween.

Actors' Theatre, of course, gives us the [delightful 10-minute play festival](#) known as "8 Tens @ 8" every January. But "The Thin Place" is the first non-"8 Tens" production that the theater company has staged since the pandemic. The company [will bring back](#) "8 Tens" in January, and in April, it will present "White Sky, Falling Dragon," [written by Watsonville playwright Spike Wong](#), from a story inspired by his World War II veteran father.



More immediately, however, Actors' Theatre will offer an eight-week [workshop](#) on the art of radio acting, or "audio theater," conducted by longtime theater arts professor Bill Peters. The course, which begins Monday, is designed for those interested in acting or theater who might be looking for some insights in voice acting.