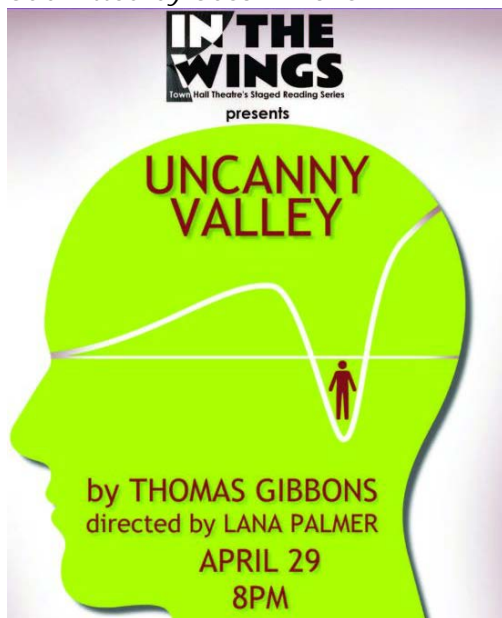


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THT's staged reading of Thomas Gibbons' 'Uncanny Valley,' April 29

Submitted by Susan Evans



Town Hall Theatre will present a one-night only reading of "Uncanny Valley" - a riveting new play about artificial intelligence and ethical quandaries by Thomas Gibbons, directed by Lana Palmer - as part of its staged reading series "In the Wings."

Set 30 years in the future, "Uncanny Valley" dissects the intense relationship between Claire, a neuroscientist, and her creation, Julian, a nonbiological human. As the play unfolds, we see Julian through various developmental stages, first just a head, neck and shoulders, next an armless torso, then with one arm, and another arm, and finally completed, as Claire mentors him through the process of becoming as human as possible. Claire is working to combat the uncanny valley phenomenon, by which people become creeped out by robots when they look too lifelike, almost - but not quite - human.

And then the scientist must reveal to Julian the specific purpose for which he has been designed: as a receptacle for the consciousness of a very wealthy man dying of pancreatic cancer, who has purchased the right to be immortal. After the man's identity file is downloaded, "Uncanny Valley" takes off in a different direction, and poses many provocative questions, such as how are we redefining what it is to be human in the 21st century?

The staged reading of "Uncanny Valley" will be at 8 p.m. Monday, April 29 at Town Hall Theatre Company, 3535 School Street, in Lafayette. Tickets are \$10 general admission and free to subscribers, and are available through the Box Office at (925) 283-1557 or online at www.TownHallTheatre.com.

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