



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**TOWN HALL THEATRE ANNOUNCES *IN THE WINGS* STAGED READING OF  
THOMAS GIBBONS' *UNCANNY VALLEY***

APRIL 3, 2019 – Next up in Town Hall Theatre's staged reading series *IN THE WINGS* is 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. ***UNCANNY VALLEY*** will have one performance only on Monday, April 29, 2019, at Town Hall Theatre Company, 3535 School Street, in Lafayette, CA. 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](http://www.TownHallTheatre.com).

"... complex, intriguing and frequently funny play about the interactions between a 'non-biological human' (a sentient robot) and the scientist who created him." - *LA Times*

Set 30 years in the future, ***UNCANNY VALLEY*** dissects the intense relationship between Claire, a neuroscientist, and her creation, Julian, a non-biological 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 ... how are we redefining what it is to be human in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

### **Performance History**

**UNCANNY VALLEY** was produced in a rolling world premiere as part of the National New Play Network's Continued Life of New Plays by the following theatres: Contemporary American Theater Festival in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, July 2014 (transferring to 69E69 Theatre off Broadway); InterAct Theatre Company in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and San Diego REPertory in San Diego, California, in April 2015; and Capital Stage in Sacramento, California, in June 2015. **UNCANNY VALLEY** was developed by TACT/The Actors Company Theatre, New York City.

### **ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT**

Thomas Gibbons has premiered nine of his plays at InterAct Theatre Company in Philadelphia: *Pretending to America*, *6221*, *Axis Sally*, *Black Russian*, *Bee-luther-hatchee*, *Permanent Collection*, *A House With No Walls*, *Silverhill*, and his most recent play, **UNCANNY VALLEY**. His plays have also been seen at the National Playwrights Conference at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center, off-off-Broadway at Blue Heron Theatre, Northlight Theatre, Florida Stage, Unicorn Theatre, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, New Repertory Theatre, Arizona Theatre Company, Center Stage, Ensemble Theatre of Cincinnati, Aurora Theatre, Roundhouse Theatre, and many others. He is the recipient of seven playwriting

fellowships from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts; awards include the NAACP Theatre Award, two Barrymore Awards for Outstanding New Play, and a Pew Fellowship in the Arts.

### **ABOUT THE DIRECTOR**

**Lana Palmer** is a Canadian-born, San Francisco-based theatre and film director. Recent credits include *The North Pool* (Rajiv Joseph) and *Red* (John Logan), both for Bread & Butter Theatre, and Will Eno's *Middletown* (Actors Ensemble of Berkeley). Up next, she will direct Sarah Treem's *The How and the Why*, opening July 12 at Dragon Theatre. Lana is a member of the Dramatists Guild and an associate member of the SDC. [www.lanapalmer.com](http://www.lanapalmer.com)

### **ABOUT TOWN HALL THEATRE COMPANY**

Established in 1944 as the Dramateurs, Town Hall Theatre turns 75 this year, making it the oldest continuously active theatre in Contra Costa County. Town Hall Theatre was awarded Best Theatre Troupe 2016 in *Diablo Magazines, Best of The East Bay*, and is the past recipient of numerous Shellie Awards, and regional Theatre Bay Area Awards. THT is also home to an extensive children's educational program, twice voted the "Best Children's Theatre Company" by *Bay Area Parent Magazine*. THT's 104-year old historical building is managed by the Lafayette Association (LIA). Town Hall Theatre Company is located at 3535 School Street, in Lafayette, CA 94549. The Box Office is open Tuesday through Friday, 4:00 to 6:00PM, and Saturday, 2:00-4:00 pm, and can be reached at 925.283.1557. Information is also available at [www.TownHallTheatre.com](http://www.TownHallTheatre.com).

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**CALENDAR Information on *IN THE WINGS* staged reading of *UNCANNY VALLEY*:**

**WHO: TOWN HALL THEATRE COMPANY presents**

**WHAT:** *UNCANNY VALLEY* by THOMAS GIBBONS, directed by Lana Palmer

**DATES:** Monday, April 29, 2019 @ 8:00 p.m.

**WHERE:** **Town Hall Theatre Company**, 3535 School Street, Lafayette, CA 94549

**TICKETS:** \$10 General Admission

FREE TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS

**BOX OFFICE:** (925) 283-1557; [www.townhalltheatre.com](http://www.townhalltheatre.com)

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