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Watch out for the 'Woman in Black'



Encore Theatre Company opens haunting version of classic

Donna Orozco
Special to Visalia Times-Delta

"The Woman in Black," which opens at Encore Theatre Friday, Sept. 12, is like a scary old black and white gothic horror movie. It starts off slowly, with only two characters, and gradually draws you in. By the second act, you'll definitely jump a few times—if not outright scream.

The play, adapted from a book by Susan Hill and filmed for the screen several times, follows a British man, Arthur Kipps, who is tormented by a traumatic past experience. He hires a young actor to reenact his life in a desperate attempt to exorcise the terror from his memory.

"The Woman in Black," the longest running non-musical in England, was chosen by Lisa Monteiro Crain for her first job of directing because she has always loved a scary story.

"I like the exploration of the macabre, but in a safe and controlled format, like a book, movie or play," she said. "A good scare, and the relief of safety after, is a lot of fun to me."

"This story has all of my favorite elements and perfectly exemplifies the gothic horror genre: foggy marshes, an old manor in the English countryside, a local legend and, of course, a haunting. Our imaginations begin to fill in the missing pieces, whether that be a dog, a glass of whiskey or a ghost."

That's the magic of this show. There are no blood and guts. It's a very minimalist stage. The scare tactics are the lighting shifts and sound effects—a clock ticking, a horse and trap clip clopping, someone running—that immerse the audience in the scene.

The two characters in the show are veteran South Valley actors, Isaac Hernandez, who acts out the part of the



Isaac Hernandez and James Sack are the two cast members in Encore Theatre's rendition of "Woman in Black." PHOTOS PROVIDED BY ENCORE THEATRE

EV drivers may lose carpool lane perks on Oct. 1

Paris Barraza
Palm Springs Desert Sun
USA TODAY NETWORK

A program that allowed thousands of California motorists to use carpool lane perks and reduced tolls is coming to an end.

The California Department of Motor Vehicles announced that all Clean Air Vehicle decals will no longer be valid in the state or elsewhere in the United States starting Oct. 1. These decals allowed California electric vehicle drivers and others to enjoy the carpool lane without needing a second person in the car and reduced toll rates in some areas.

Since 2022, over 435,000 Clean Air Vehicle decals have been issued, according to the California Air Resources Board.

However, federal regulations that allow states to issue these decals expire on Sept. 30, according to the California DMV. As a result, all motorists who have been previously benefiting from the perks of the decals must meet the vehicle occupancy for the carpool lane and pay required tolls or risk a citation, said the California DMV.

Vehicles that qualified for the program included fully electric vehicles or plug-in hybrid electric vehicles that met certain standards, according to the California Air Resources Board.

Carpool lane access for a single-occupant clean vehicle in California was first authorized in 1999, said the California DMV.

"This is a great program for climate-conscious Californians," said California DMV Director Steve Gordon in a statement. "We have issued over one million decals since this program was approved, which has helped to foster a change in how we drive. Californians are committed to lowering their carbon footprint and these decals helped drivers be good stewards of our highways and environment. By taking away this program, hundreds of thousands of California's drivers will pay the price. It's a lose-lose and we urge the federal government to retain this program."

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