NINA MOINI: If scary movies are a must for you this Halloween, TriLingua Cinema in Saint Paul may have what you need. They'll be hosting a Hmonglloween Friday in their brand new micro cinema. And it'll be a showcase of horror films made by local Hmong filmmakers.

Two of the people behind the event are here in studio now to give me all the gory details. [LAUGHS] Sorry, guys. We have filmmaker Lucky Cha who's making a film specifically for this event. Thanks for being here, Lucky.

LUCKY CHA: Yep, thank you very much. Also happy to have Kang Vang, who put the lineup together. Thank you very much for your time as well, Kang.

KANG VANG: Oh, absolutely. Kang, I'd love to start with you. Hmonglloween, my new favorite word to say, how did this idea come to be? Well, TriLingua just wanted to have a showcase of Hmong horror films.

And me, along with another member of TriLingua, we were trying to come up with interesting names for this event, like Hmong Horror Fest or something that incorporated the word "Hmong" into it. And so we're thinking that Hmong starts with H. Halloween starts with H. We put two together. And then we come up with Hmonglloween.

NINA MOINI: Boom. There it is. [LAUGHS]

KANG VANG: Absolutely, yep.

NINA MOINI: That is fun. But, Kang, like, truthfully, how exciting is it to put a lineup like this together. Like, what were you considering going into this?

KANG VANG: Oh, it's great. I think that in our community, we have quite a few stories that revolve around horror and fear and spirituality. And so it was trying to figure out the combination of that in these films.

And so we went through quite a few short films that are out there in the community, short horror films and spiritual films in the community. And so we came up with a pretty good list of short films that we're going to be showing.

NINA MOINI: That's always interesting, the connection between the horror genre and spirituality and the different layers of how all those things intersect. And, Lucky, I heard you made a new film specifically for the event. Can you give us a tease about what it's about, it's called?

LUCKY CHA: Yeah, sure. So my short horror film is called *Don't sleep.* And the logline is after finding a-- after bringing home a traditional Hmong silver necklace found in the woods, a teenage girl is-- now she is stuck in a supernatural loop in her house, stalked by a terrifying figure from an unknown past.

NINA MOINI: Ooh. So you just came up with that, I understand, some weeks ago, or how do you put these ideas together and in this matter of time?

LUCKY CHA: Oh, well, I think it stems from my past. I used to be a YouTube filmmaker, so I'm always pushing out content, but I think a lot of training, Yeah, I have slight ADHD, so I've learned how to hone that in and come up with ideas because I'm always thinking, even though I never put it down on paper, but something pops up.

NINA MOINI: I think people sometimes don't give the horror genre maybe it's props for how diverse it can be. And I know we touched a little bit, Kang, on that. But what are your thoughts about how this genre is a little bit deeper? What can people expect to take away from the experience of some of these films?

KANG VANG: Well, we have a film that's a love story and a mixture of horror and love. And then there's stories about tradition and spirituality and cultural practices. And then there's another film about just the unknown, just exploring the unknown, and maybe even the security of your own home. And so, yeah, we try to get horror films from different areas, different aspects. Yeah.

NINA MOINI: Your film, Kang, is called *The Storm.* Can you tell us about it?

KANG VANG: Yeah, *The Storm,* it's basically about a storm bringing in a horror into someone's home. And that's the basic gist. I don't want to give anything away. Yeah, but, yeah, it's about loss and then dealing with loss. I guess the storm is an allegory of loss and the chaos that you can bring into your home. Yeah.

NINA MOINI: Lucky, you make, and you obviously watch a lot of horror films. What do you think about the connection of a protagonist or a hero and how their roles can manifest within horror films. Is it different than other genres, do you think?

LUCKY CHA: No, compared to other genres, I believe that everyone has a story. It doesn't matter from horror to love or drama. They always have to overcome an obstacle, their past, their fears, or whatever flaws they have.

NINA MOINI: What about you, Kang? What do you love about this genre of horror?

KANG VANG: Obviously, the way it makes you feel exploring sort of taboo subjects that you sometimes don't want to think about or sit-- you don't want to sit in a room by yourself and think about death, or you don't want to sit and think about what's in the beyond.

And so having it portray in front of you on a big screen and sitting there with a group of people who are experiencing the same things as you, it's sort of comforting. And it allows you to think about these deeper things in a group setting.

NINA MOINI: Totally. It processed together the ups and the downs. Kang, it's four or five films that are being displayed, or tell us a little bit about what people can draw from the lineup.

KANG VANG: Yeah. So far, we've confirmed four films. We're hoping to get the fifth film by tonight.

NINA MOINI: Cool.

KANG VANG: But, yeah, like Lucky's film will be there, one of my short films. We have a filmmaker named Jeremiah from the Twin Cities here. We have a filmmaker actually from North Carolina.

NINA MOINI: Cool.

KANG VANG: So she submitted her film as well. And so there will be a variety of filmmakers and a variety of genres in the horror world. Yeah.

NINA MOINI: Lucky, I know you both have been making films for a long time and also uplifting other Hmong filmmakers while you're doing that or whenever you're able to do that. How have you seen that community grow? And what's your hopes for people being able to express even more of their creativity?

LUCKY CHA: Yeah, so it's growing, which is great. When me and Kang probably started way back in the early 2000s, there was only a handful of us. And then we inspired others, especially thank God for social media platforms that definitely inspired. I feel like we're the forefathers of paving roads of different filming styles. And so that's how I feel that this definitely is inspiring to them. And hopefully, they keep paving the roads for the future.

NINA MOINI: Kang, would you add anything to that, or what are your thoughts?

KANG VANG: Yeah, we're very fortunate here in the Twin Cities to have many organizations to help teach up-and-coming filmmakers. We are a very filth and-- I can't even say the word-- a very giving community here in Twin City.

NINA MOINI: Philanthropic, yeah.

KANG VANG: Philanthropic. Thank you. I myself am a media educator. So I've been teaching filmmaking for about 25 years through various nonprofit organizations. I myself, I gained a lot of my filmmaking education through these nonprofit organizations like In Progress, Asian Media Access, The Dial Group. And so we have a lot of resources here. And I'm just very happy to see that our filmmaking community is growing.

NINA MOINI: Yeah, and events like this one are a great way to inspire people too who may have not thought that they could maybe be a part of the genre or want to just explore their creativity or just be entertained. Kang, how can people get tickets and be part of the event? Will you just remind us?

KANG VANG: Yes, we have social media postings under TriLingua Cinema. And so you can get your tickets there free. We only have 50 seats available, and so please visit us on your social media-- your favorite social media platform and reserve your tickets.

NINA MOINI: Happening Friday. Lucky and Kang, thank you both so much for your time. I really appreciate you both.

BOTH: Thank you so much.

NINA MOINI: That's Lucky Cha and Kang Vang. Both of their films will be screened Friday at the TriLingua Cinema's Hmonglloween.