

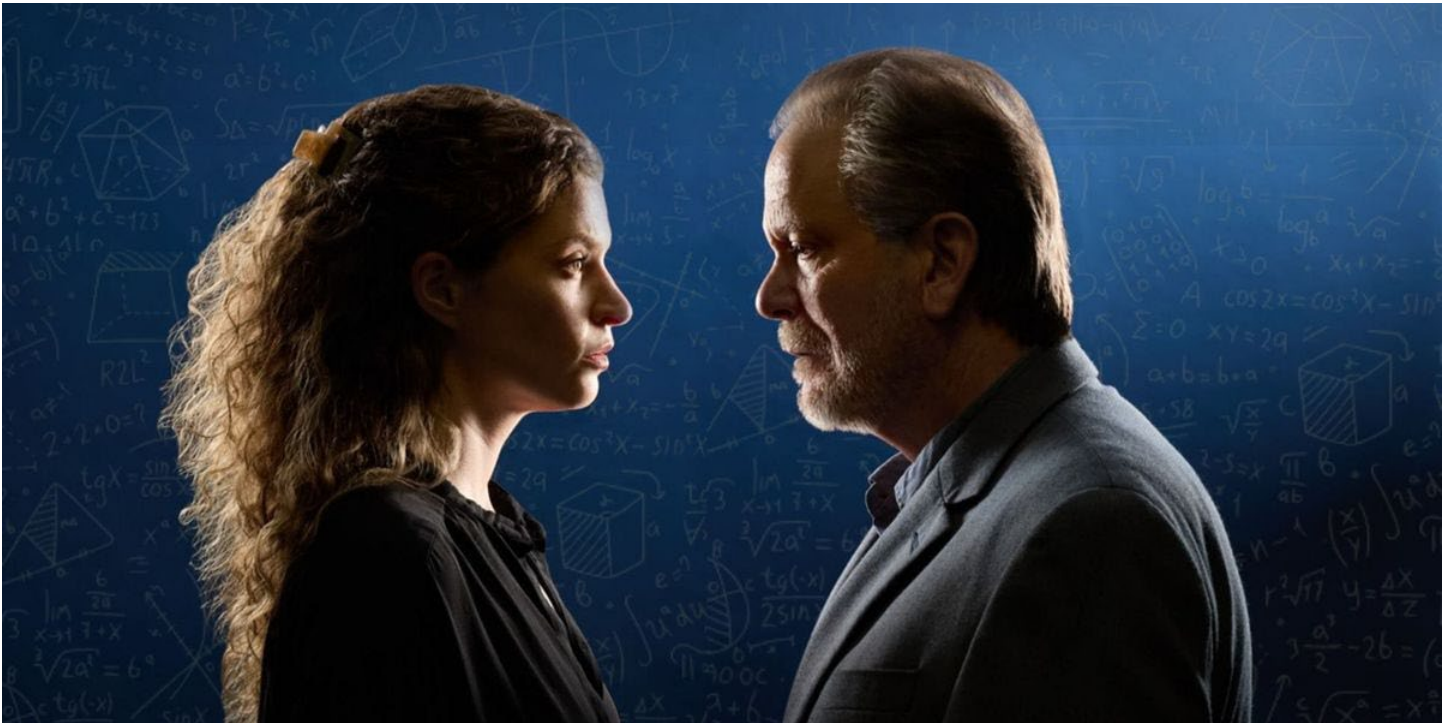


HOUSTON

Review: PROOF at 4th WALL THEATRE COMPANY

An earthy and solid mathematical analysis of what our parents leave us.

By: [Brett Cullum](#) | Sep. 12, 2026



[David Auburn](#)'s *Proof* was written in 2000 and won the Tony Award for Best Play and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 2001. And it recently had a Broadway revival. It's certainly a well-crafted script with a ton of smart dialogue about mathematics, emotions, and the tension between genius and stability. The piece asks, how much of our parents live in us? Are they the source of our greatest gifts as well as our worst curses? The show never gives us any easy answers, and 4th Wall Theatre Company's revival leans into that complexity. It's certainly a strong season-opener for them and offers their hallmarks of exquisite design, married with strong acting. Director [Sophia Watt](#) assembles an assured cast and crew to pull this one off, and it certainly feels as solid as a proven mathematical theorem.

The narrative follows Catherine, who is reeling after her father's death. She took care of him for his last five years and made many sacrifices. Her sister Claire is coming in for the funeral, but she also worries that her father's mental instability has manifested in Catherine. Meanwhile, a former student named Hal is going through their father's notebooks because he was a revolutionary mathematician. Things come to a head as both Claire and Hal realize that Catherine may be more like their father than either suspected.

The cast here for 4th Wall is amazingly well-chosen. [Meg Rodgers](#) is a Houston favorite actress whom I adore in anything, and she has this signature quality: she brings half of herself to every performance. Meg makes characters meet her halfway, and it's always fascinating to watch her combine her DNA with whoever has written the script. Her Katherine is winsome, and living in a strange halfway point between grief and hope, depression and acceptance. Her father, though dead, speaks to her, and is played intelligently by [Thomas Prior](#). Prior never makes too much of the less lucid parts of his character, but rather grounds Robert in a paternal haze fit for this specter made of memory. [Laura Kaldis](#) provides even more earthy energy as the successful sister, Claire. She's come to save the day, and Kaldis shows a simultaneous strength and frailty that gives her stage presence beautiful nuance. [David Kenner](#) gives Hal, the former student, a really wonderful combination of nerd and sexy that is hard to describe, but instantly lovable. It is easy to see why Catherine would fall for him. Everyone is here on the mulch-covered ground, but Catherine is existing in the air. This creates tension that brings even the most mundane conversations to life and gives *Proof* its status as a psychological thriller.

Kirk Domer incredibly constructs the back half of a two-story Chicago home, and then recreates an unkept backyard complete with dirt and rusty lawn furniture. The set is a dazzling piece, and a character all to its own. Christina Giannelli lights it all realistically, and amps up Domer's magic. [Leah Smith's](#) costumes are saying everything you need to know about anyone who walks onto the stage. [John Moore](#) executed all of this, and his build and tech skills are a secret weapon of 4th Wall. This show's physical elements rival anything onstage in any venue in Houston, including the huge houses such as the Alley or the Hobby Center. [Sophia Watt](#) unites everything in her direction, keeping the tech and the acting in sync throughout. She makes a lot of wonderful choices in blocking and getting the most out of the languid but charged moments.

4TH Wall does wonderful work here, and I really admire [David Auburn's](#) script more for what it doesn't do rather than what it does. It never really boils over into any sort of climax and refuses to offer an easy solution for anyone's relationship in the show. It defies the idea of its title by never nailing everything down into a conclusive formula. *Proof* drifts by, asking hard emotional questions, but leaving you to figure out the value of the unknown "x." The brilliance of what this company has done is that they grounded the mystery in what feels very tangible and real. The show has admirable emotional and physical density. 4th Wall remains a gem in Houston's theater ecosystem, offering high production values alongside the intimacy of its smaller space. *Proof* is conclusive and solid, as it should be.

Proof runs through October 3rd at 4TH WALL THEATRE COMPANY's space inside the Spring Street Gallery. Be aware that the set design means you will walk through some mulch to reach your seat, so plan accordingly. The performance runs two hours and has one fifteen-minute intermission.

More on [4th WALL THEATRE COMPANY](#)