

DATEBOOK

7 Bay Area arts and entertainment events to check out this week, Jan. 31-Feb. 6

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Gene Hackman stars in Francis Ford Coppola's "The Conversation" (1974).
Photo: Rialto Pictures

The Chronicle's guide to notable arts and entertainment happenings in the Bay Area.

Lunar New Year 2022: How to kick off the Year of the Tiger in the Bay Area

Black History Month 2022: events, performances and more ways to celebrate in the Bay Area

Francis Ford Coppola's restoration of 'The Conversation' to open at Embarcadero Cinemas

Two years after its planned theatrical release was derailed by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Francis Ford Coppola's restoration of his 1974 masterpiece of paranoia, "The Conversation," finally hits the big screen.

Landmark Theatres announced that the San Francisco-shot film will begin a limited engagement at the **Opera Plaza Cinema** on Friday, Feb. 4.

An independent production by Coppola's San Francisco-based American Zoetrope, "The Conversation" stars Gene Hackman as Harry Caul, a surveillance expert caught up in a plot involving murder and power. Robert Duvall, Cindy Williams and a young Harrison Ford co-star.

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“With ‘The Conversation,’ I was experimenting with two things,” Coppola **told The Chronicle in 2020.** “One, I was experimenting with the concept of repetition, as a tool. The fact that you could repeat things over and over and over again and gain insight from that. Also, I was interested in the idea that a film could actually *be* what it was about. In other words, if ‘The Conversation’ was about privacy and surveillance, then I wanted (the camera) to behave as if it were a surveillance camera. You felt, in its audio and visual expression, that it was about surveillance because we were performing surveillance on these characters.”

Unlike other recent Coppola restorations, “The Conversation” is unchanged edit-wise; Coppola merely wanted to restore the fading elements of the film, especially the vibrant colors and a dense sound design that was unusual in movies at the time.

Coppola pointed out that between American Zoetrope and Dolby, both still based in the city, “the modern movie soundtrack and the sound standard of the world originated in San Francisco.”

“The Conversation” (PG) starts Friday, Feb. 4. \$12.50-\$15. Landmark’s Opera Plaza Cinema, 601 Van Ness Ave., S.F. 415-771-0183. www.landmarktheatres.com

— *G. Allen Johnson*



Baritone Gerald Finley
Photo: Sim Canetty Clarke

Gerald Finley to introduce a new song cycle in Stanford recital

The Canadian bass-baritone Gerald Finley is well known to Bay Area audiences for his mastery of contemporary music — he was a brilliant presence in the title role of John Adams’ opera “Doctor Atomic” (as the physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer), and he’s just been announced as one of the title performers in Adams’ upcoming world premiere, “Antony and Cleopatra.”

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But there's no need to wait that long to hear him work his artistry. Together with pianist Julius Drake, Finley will unveil "Without Ceremony," a new song cycle by the British composer Mark-Anthony Turnage that sets the poetry of Thomas Hardy. The familiar delights of Schubert's songs complete the program.

Gerald Finley: 7:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 4. \$16-\$64. Bing Concert Hall, 327 Lasuen St., Stanford. 650-724-2464. live.stanford.edu

— *Joshua Kosman*



The Circadian String Quartet will perform works by Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn as part of the Old First Concerts February programming.

Photo: Old First Concerts

Circadian String Quartet plays music by the Mendelssohn siblings

The composers Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn were brought up together in an environment of support and fabulous wealth — just the setting to encourage two budding musical geniuses. The siblings were one another's companions and sounding boards, and in a more honorable and just world, they both would have gone on to successful careers.

The best we can do now is to shine a brighter light on Fanny's long-overlooked work. That's the plan for the upcoming recital by the Circadian String Quartet, which includes Fanny's String Quartet in E-Flat alongside the String Quartet No. 6 of her brother.

Circadian String Quartet: 8 p.m. Friday, Feb. 4. \$25. Old First Presbyterian Church, 1751 Sacramento St., San Francisco. 415-474-1608. oldfirstconcerts.org

— *Joshua Kosman*

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‘Pretty in Pink’ captures the feeling of the 1980s

“Pretty in Pink” is a special kind of movie. When films like it first premiere, they feel like just another movie. Then time passes, people watch it again and they realize: That movie embodies the mood, the feeling, the style and the aspiration of that particular era.

This film is the 1980s. It captures, not necessarily the reality of that decade, but how it felt and dreamed, what it looked and sounded like. In its outlines, the movie is just another poor girl/rich boy story, but everything about it has acquired a time capsule quality, from its theme song (by the Psychedelic Furs) to the hairstyles.

It was written by John Hughes and stars three of the best-known young actors of the period — Andrew McCarthy, Jon Cryer and, best of all, Molly Ringwald.

“Pretty in Pink”: 11:30 a.m. Sat., Feb. 5. \$13.50. Alamo Drafthouse Cinema New Mission. 2550 Mission St., S.F. drafthouse.com/sf

— *Mick LaSalle*



Composer Derrick Skye
Photo: Courtesy Derrick Skye

Berkeley Symphony opens its season with a commissioned premiere

The Berkeley Symphony and Music Director Joseph Young plan to emerge from the long COVID shutdown with an opening concert program that speaks to the organization’s historical strengths on a number of fronts.

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Chief among these, of course, is the orchestra's long track record as a purveyor of new music. So Young will lead the world premiere of "As Water, Freedom," a work commissioned by the orchestra from Los Angeles composer Derrick Skye (a.k.a. Spiva).

Also on the program is "Lollapalooza," the zippy orchestral curtain-raiser by Berkeley's own John Adams, and an excerpt from Morton Gould's 1941 "Spirituals." There's more familiar fare included as well: Sibelius' "Finlandia" and Stravinsky's "Firebird" Suite.

Berkeley Symphony: 4 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 6. \$15-\$90. Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley. 510-841-2800. berkeleysymphony.org

— *Joshua Kosman*



A moment from Nathaniel Dorsky's "Emanations: Four Films."

Photo: Strand Releasing

Silent films by Nathaniel Dorsky focus on nature and the elements in S.F.

Bay Area filmmaker Nathaniel Dorsky's work is not available on video, so it can't be previewed in advance. But on the basis of his reputation as one of the country's most important avant-garde filmmakers, this promises to be an enriching program.

The screening, hosted by the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, features four films made by Dorsky over the course of ten months during the pandemic. These are silent films that focus largely on nature and the elements, filmed mostly in Golden Gate Park and downtown San Francisco. The first film, "Emanations," was filmed in October and November 2020 and focuses on the ocean. "Ember Days" was filmed in the spring of 2021; "Terce," also in the spring of 2021; and "Interval" in the late summer of 2021.

Dorsky plans to attend the screening and take questions from the audience.

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“Emanations: Four Films”: 4:30 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 6. \$10-14. Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, 2155 Center St., Berkeley. bampfa.org

— *Mick LaSalle*



Peter Saul “San Francisco” 1986.

Photo: Berggruen Gallery

San Francisco native Peter Saul shares trippy visions of his hometown at the Berggruen Gallery

Artist Peter Saul returns to the city of his birth in his first solo exhibition with Berggruen Gallery. The paintings and works on paper on view in “Peter Saul: San Francisco” mostly span the 30 years from 1966 to 1996: a time when both the city and Saul’s visions as an artist evolved considerably.

Among the works are three extraordinary paintings from 1969: “Frisco,” which depicts a Day-Glo Golden Gate Bridge bending and twisting around the city and Marin Headlands; the equally trippy (and witty) “Frenching in Frisco,” which also shows the twisted bridge while figures interlock tongues in what look like LSD hallucinations of French kissing; and “Self-Defense,” painted in the same style but more message-oriented, showing the tensions in the city between the rich and poor as well as the police and communities of color. A later painting, “San Francisco” from 1986, offers a more idealized view of the city and its familiar landmarks.

“What motivated [these pictures] and a number of others I’ve painted is an almost complete lack of humor in ‘Modern Art’ since WWII,” Saul said in his artist statement for the show. “Where are the jokes? Even if it’s wrong, I prefer to add something that wasn’t there before to doing the same old thing, even if it’s highly praised.”

The jokes are evident throughout “Peter Saul: San Francisco,” but like the best humor, they also reveal truths. While some of the works absolutely evoke the 1960s era in which many were

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created in their use of color and form, what was most apparent after viewing the show was how many of the issues expressed in the works remain essentially unchanged.

“Peter Saul: San Francisco” 10 a.m.-3 p.m Monday-Friday. 11 a.m.- 4 p.m. first Saturdays. Through Feb. 26. Free. Berggruen Gallery, 10 Hawthorne St. S.F. 415-781-4629. berggruen.com

— *Tony Bravo*

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