


THEATER

# Afraid, grief-stricken, confused? Bay Area fall theater hears you

This season's shows you can explore in the woods, return to a beloved playhouse or stream from home.

 Lily Janiak | September 8, 2021 Updated: September 8, 2021, 7:48 am





Kim Ip (left), Clarissa Dyas, Hannah Ayasse, Julie Phelps and Krista DeNio in “Radius.” The piece will be performed at Djerassi Resident Artists Program as part of CounterPulse Festival 2021.  
Photo: Robbie Sweeny / CounterPulse

As audiences, we have been afraid, grief-stricken, confused and lonely for more than a year, and theater makers have heard our cries and issued their own. Joy and a sense of healing ring out from the fall season’s offerings, whether you’re exploring in the woods, returning to a beloved playhouse or streaming from home.

## CounterPulse’s “Radius” and “Network”

The wild art of CounterPulse heads into the actual wilds as part of the company’s CounterPulse Festival 2021, as two pieces made for the outdoors tour to the Djerassi Resident Artists Program’s ranch in Woodside.

“Network,” directed by Krista DeNio as a response to climate change and other disasters, explores what humans actually need to survive in nature and counts an ecologist among its collaborators.





5-8 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 18. \$19.99-\$29.99. Djerassi Resident Artists Program, 2325 Bear Gulch Road, Woodside. 415-626-2060. [counterpulse.org](https://www.counterpulse.org)



Jason Mooney, Eiko Yamamoto, Stacey Reed and Mai Abe in Palo Alto Players’ “Working.”  
Photo: Scott Lasky / Palo Alto Players

Palo Alto Players’ ‘Working’

Ordinary workers talking about their on-the-job routines is not only worthy of our interest but ripe for the grand scale of musical theater. That’s the premise of “Working,” which still feels revolutionary 44 years after the show’s premiere. Its lyrics wring poetry from the banal: “Looking in my rearview mirror, I saw myself the next car back.”

Palo Alto Players’ production of the show, which is based on the book of the same name by Studs Terkel, features songs by Stephen Schwartz, Mary Rodgers and James Taylor, as well as Lin-Manuel Miranda (who contributed to the 2012 revised version). It should resonate all the more in an era of hollow praise — praise not backed up by action — of so-called essential workers.

Sept. 17-Oct. 3. \$27-\$57 in person; \$25-\$100 per household online. Lucie Stern Theater, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. 650-329-0891. [paplayers.org](https://www.paplayers.org)





Junru Wang rehearses hand balancing in anticipation of the world premiere of “Dear San Francisco: A High-Flying Love Story” opening at Club Fugazi.  
Photo: Jon Bauer / Club Fugazi Experiences





Prepare to radically redraw whatever stereotypical or nostalgic images you have in your head of circus. This new show, from the creators of Montreal’s the 7 Fingers, plans to bring an edgy, gritty vibe to acrobatics and aerial work.

The piece pays homage to its home city, though not uncritically, and in a renovated Club Fugazi that now serves food and drinks from local vendors, especially North Beach and Chinatown spots.

*Previews Sept. 22-Oct. 10. \$25-\$39; \$35-\$89 starting Oct. 13. Club Fugazi, 678 Green St., S.F. 415-273-0600.*

[www.clubfugazisf.com](http://www.clubfugazisf.com)



Kirsten “Kiki” deLohr Helland (left), William A. Williams and Justin Huertas star in “Lizard Boy,” the contemporary comic-book-infused musical hit opening TheatreWorks Silicon Valley’s 51st season.  
Photo: Alabastro Photography

### TheatreWorks’ ‘Lizard Boy’

Musical theater gets a revitalizing dose of youthful irreverence with Justin Huertas’ show, now in a TheatreWorks production in which he co-stars.

The show fuses the sound of indie rock with the aesthetics of comic books to tell the story of a socially isolated Seattle resident who takes the plunge into online dating and winds up having to save the world, all while covered in reptilian skin.

*Oct. 6-31. \$30-\$100. Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro St., Mountain View. 650-463-1960.*

[www.theatreworks.org](http://www.theatreworks.org)

### San Francisco International Arts Festival

Last year, the festival sued the city of San Francisco on free-speech grounds for barring gatherings for COVID safety reasons. (The lawsuit was later settled, and the show performed outdoors.) Now the festival returns, with a mix of indoor, outdoor and online performances, and among the highlights is a collaboration between Pop-Up Theatre of St. Petersburg, Russia, and Bay Area actors Caleb Cabrera and Megan Trout about a coded message Leo Tolstoy left for Sophia Behrs, the woman who became his wife.





Leslie Alexander as Mrs. Higgins (left), Shereen Ahmed as Eliza Doolittle and Kevin Pariseau as Col. Pickering in “My Fair Lady,” which tours to BroadwaySF’s Orpheum Theatre.  
Photo: Joan Marcus / BroadwaySF

### BroadwaySF’s ‘My Fair Lady’

Oh, hey, it’s only one of the wittiest, most joyous and tuneful musicals ever written, but now with a revamped ending that’s more feminist than Professor Henry Higgins’ asking former “draggletailed guttersnipe” Eliza Doolittle, “Where the devil are my slippers?”

BroadwaySF’s touring production is helmed by Bartlett Sher, whose takes on classics (including “The King and I”) are at once fresh and loving.

Nov. 2-28. \$56-\$256. Orpheum Theatre, 1192 Market St., S.F. 888-746-1799. [broadwaysf.com](https://broadwaysf.com)





Les Waters returns to Berkeley Rep to direct “Wintertime.”  
Photo: Actors Theatre of Louisville

### Berkeley Repertory Theatre’s ‘Wintertime’

When Berkeley Rep, one of our region’s flagship nonprofit theaters, finally reopens for in-person performances, Bay Area theater will have reached a crucial pandemic milestone.

This family reunion play, from collagist-qua-playwright Charles L. Mee, who somehow wrangles a kind of sense from nonsense, has an auspicious cast with many locals: Sharon Lockwood, James Carpenter, Jomar Tagatac, Sarah Nina Hayon, Micah Peoples and Lorri Holt.

Les Waters directs.

Nov. 12-Dec. 19. \$17.50-\$100. Berkeley Repertory Theatre, 2015 Addison St., Berkeley. 510-647-2949. [www.berkeleyrep.org](http://www.berkeleyrep.org)

Lily Janiak

Follow:

Lily Janiak is The San Francisco Chronicle’s theater critic. Email: [ljaniak@sfchronicle.com](mailto:ljaniak@sfchronicle.com) Twitter: @LilyJaniak

### More In Theater

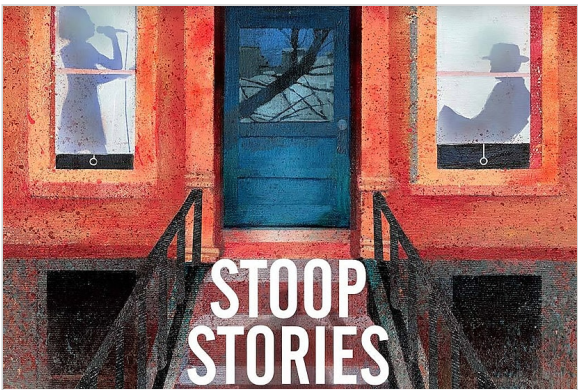


SPONSORED CONTENT

Stoop Stories

BY AURORA THEATRE COMPANY

Related Events




SEP 03

SPONSORED EVENT

Stoop Stories

Theater - Filmed Product...



DATEBOOK PICK


SEP 17

THROUGH OCT 22

The Marsh's Theater

The Marsh San Franci...

\$20 - \$1...



DATEBOOK PICK

SEP 10

THROUGH SEP 26

Cinnabar Theater's Theater

Cinnabar Theater

\$25 - \$35

You must be signed in to comment

Sign In

Conversation

Be the first to comment...



Sign In

FOLLOW US



WEBSITES

SFChronicle

SFGATE

Datebook

GreenState

SERVICES

Offers

Store

e-edition

Apps

Archives

Subscriber Services

ABOUT

Company

Careers

Advertising

Customer Service

Contact Newsroom

FAQs

Privacy Notice / Notice  
At Collection

Your California Privacy  
Rights

Interest-Based Ads

Terms of Use

CCPA

Do Not Sell My  
Personal  
Information