

# NEWS RELEASE



**For photos, interviews, etc.. contact:**  
Cristóbal McKinney, Marketing Associate  
[cristobal@playwrightsfoundation.org](mailto:cristobal@playwrightsfoundation.org)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



## PLAYWRIGHTS FOUNDATION IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE!

### Emerging and Established Playwrights Will Converge on San Francisco For The 2008 Bay Area Playwrights Festival

*Two Weeks, Ten Playwrights, Ten New Plays (plus more!)*  
July 25th - August 3rd, 2008 at the Magic Theatre

**Festival Playwrights**

Claire Chafee

Marcus Gardley

Domini Hall

Dominic Orlando

Debra Reddy

John Silverman

**Plays**

*Whisper From The Book of Etiquette*

*every tongue must confess*

*The Mountaintop*

*Danny Casolaro Died For You*

*Safe House*

*Crane Story*

**ASH Playwrights**

John Bregman

Greg Beuthin

John Bernier

Jonathan Luskin

**Plays**

*Dora's Rhapsody*

*A Time Upon*

*Haditha*

*N of 1*

**Playwriting Master**

**Classes with:**

Naomi Wallace

Lee Blessing

May 23, 2008 – SAN FRANCISCO. 10 playwrights will converge on San Francisco this summer to develop new unfinished scripts as part of the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual **Bay Area Playwrights Festival (BAPF)**, Playwright Foundations’ core program designed to support new, diverse, and vibrant playwrights. Two additional established masters in the field will offer classes for student writers, two special events will engage contemporary playwrights with the issues that affect modern theatre, and a special theatre professional’s weekend will host producers from around the country.

Chosen from nearly 500 local and national entries, this year’s winning full-length festival plays are authored by an exciting mix of illustrious Festival alumni and fresh, new and, as yet undiscovered voices. Cherished Bay Area veterans **Claire Chafee** (best know for *Why We Have A Body*) and **Marcus Gardley** (best known locally for *Love Is A Dream House in Lorin*) join BAPF alumnus **Dominic Orlando** (know locally for *Juan Gelion Dances for The Sun*). All three of these exceptional writers credit the festival as an integral part of their development early in their career. Most notable is the local **Marcus Gardley**, who was raised in Oakland, attended SF State, and moved to New York to earn his MFA in playwriting from Yale after his play *like sun fallin in the*

*mouth* graced the stage of the 2002 Bay Area Playwrights Festival.

Now, these experienced playwrights are returning to join three emerging playwrights who were chosen for their fresh and relevant expressions. They are: **Katori Hall**, **Geetha Reddy**, and **Jen Silverman**. Though young and just entering the field, these three writers have each approached playwriting from a unique and non-traditional path. **Katori Hall** cites the impetus to her playwriting career as the day her acting teacher couldn't assign her a scene for two strong, African American women because she 'just didn't know any.' **Geetha Reddy** originally studied to be an astrologer, and **Jen Silverman** was raised in numerous countries across the world, recently spent a year in Japan, and works tirelessly for Amnesty International and immigrant advocacy group Families for Freedom.

"The selection process was truly brutal this year," says Amy Mueller, Playwrights Foundation's Artistic Director, "we read an unprecedented number of exceptional plays by young writers exploding with vision and rage, along with new and quite accomplished work by festival alumni. The question is: Do you continue to deepen relationships with more established writers whose careers were launched at the Festival or do you continuously seek the undiscovered gem to polish and send off? Ultimately, we felt that the mix would be a rich and provocative community that could provide audiences and each other with insight and interesting perspectives."

In addition to the six full-length plays, four local playwrights will be participating in the sixth annual BASH! (Bay Area Shorts) event, performed on the first weekend of the Festival. This year BASH! will feature excerpts from full-length works by four emerging local playwrights: **Erin Bregman**, **Greg Beuthin**, **Joan Bernier**, and **Jonathan Luskin**. BASH! playwrights are mentored by master writers. Previous mentors have included **Marcus Gardley**, currently a Festival playwright, and **Migdalia Cruz**.

Beyond the readings, the Festival will also include some special events, such as our annual **New Play Symposium** and **Playback**. Participants of both events will discuss contemporary issues surrounding theatre and new play development.

In addition this year's BAPF will be book ended with playwriting workshops by two renowned master playwrights, **Lee Blessing** and **Naomi Wallace**, who will teach as part of the Playwrights Foundation's **New Play Institute**. MacArthur "Genius" Fellow **Naomi Wallace** (*Slaughter City*, *One Flea Spare*) will teach a class titled 'Transgression, Politics and the Engaged Play.' **Wallace's** class will take place from July 31<sup>st</sup> – August 3<sup>rd</sup> and is co-produced by **Golden Thread Productions**. **Lee Blessing** (*Thief River*, *The Scottish Play*) has been nominated for the Pulitzer, the Tony and the Olivier Awards, and is currently head of playwrights at the Rutgers University. He will teach a short intensive before the festival begins from **July 10<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>**. Up to date class information is available at [www.playwrightsfoundation.org](http://www.playwrightsfoundation.org) under New Play Institute.

Founded in 1976 by **Robert Woodruff** for the purpose of creating new works of theater with the support and feedback of other playwrights, Playwrights Foundation was one of the first new play development organizations established in the nation. Sustained throughout the years by community members who share a deep belief in the value of new plays, the Foundation continues to encourage the artistic development of playwrights through innovative programs and collaborative relationships between professionals in the field.

Alumni of the annual BAPF have gone on to win every major award in the theater world (including the Tony, the Obie, and the Pulitzer). Our alumni include such writers as **Nilo Cruz**, **Sam Shepard**, **Philip Kan Gotanda**, **John O'Keefe**, **Mac Wellman**, **Brighde Mullins**, **Bill Irwin**, **Migdalia**

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

Media Contact: Cristóbal McKinney [cristobal@playwrightsfoundation.org](mailto:cristobal@playwrightsfoundation.org)

**Cruz, Anna Deavere Smith, David Henry Hwang, Naomi Iizuka, Prince Gomolvilas, Liz Duffy Adams, Sheila Callaghan** and several hundred others.

## **EVENT INFORMATION**

- What:** **Bay Area Playwright's Festival**, an annual event produced by the Playwrights Foundation to provide artistic support and development to today's rising playwrights. Six playwrights were selected from submissions to participate in the full Festival, and four other playwrights were selected from submissions to participate in BASH: Bay Area SHorts, readings of short plays. Two weekends of readings, Special Events, a Theatre Professional's Weekend, and two classes taught by renowned playwrights: Naomi Wallace and Lee Blessing.
- Where:** Magic Theatre, Building D, Fort Mason Center, San Francisco, CA 94123
- When:** July 25 – August 3
- Tickets:** \$15-25, sliding scale by donation. Tickets will be available online at [www.playwrightsfoundation.org](http://www.playwrightsfoundation.org) and by phone (415-626-0453 x 105) starting on June 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **EVENT SCHEDULE**

- Fri 7/25 8:00pm **every tongue must confess**, by Marcus Gardley
- Sat 7/26 12:00pm **Whisper From The Book Of Etiquette**, by Claire Chafee  
4:00pm **Crane Story**, by Jen Silverman  
8:00pm **The Mountaintop**, by Katori Hall
- Sun 7/27 10:00pm **Playback**, a panel discussion on contemporary issues regarding Theatre and New Play Development. Topic TBA.  
12:00pm **BASH** – Performance of Bay Area SHorts, readings of short plays by Erin Bregman, Greg Beuthin, Joan Bernier, and Johnathan Luskin.  
4:00pm **Danny Casolaro Died For You**, by Dominic Orlando  
8:00pm **Safe House**, by Geetha Reddy
- Fri 8/1 4-6:00pm **Symposium**, a panel discussion on contemporary issues regarding Theatre and New Play Development. Topic TBA.  
8:00pm **Whisper From The Book Of Etiquette**, by Claire Chafee
- Sat 8/2 12:00pm **Crane Story**, by Jen Silverman  
4:00pm **The Mountaintop**, by Katori Hall  
6:00pm **Cocktail Reception For Theatre Professionals**  
8:00pm **Danny Casolaro Died For You**, by Dominic Orlando
- Sun 8/3 12:00pm **Safe House**, by Geetha Reddy  
4:00pm **every tongue must confess**, by Marcus Gardley

**ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHTS**

**BAY AREA PLAYWRIGHT'S FESTIVAL (BAPF) PLAYWRIGHTS**

**Claire Chafee's** plays include: *Why We Have a Body, Even Among These Rocks*, *5 Women on a Hill in Spain* and *Darwin's Finches*. Her plays have been produced by The Magic, The Women's Project Off-Broadway and received productions in L.A., Boston, Chicago, Minneapolis and Seattle. She has received the Dramalogue Award, Critic's Circle Award, New York Newsday's Oppenheimer Award and a Princess Grace Special Projects Grant. Her plays have been published by Dramatist Publishing, Smith and Krauss, Penguin and Alexandra Street Press, a database of 20th Century Women's Drama. She is a graduate of The Drama Studio, London and holds an MFA from Brown University.

**Marcus Gardley** is a poet-playwright who teaches Creative Writing at Columbia University. His play *dance of the holy ghosts* just premiered at the Yale Repertory Theater in March. He has had five plays produced some of which are: *(L)imitations of Life*, March 2004 at the Empty Space Theater in Seattle; *like sun fallin in the mouth*, August 2003 at the National Black Theatre Festival Winston-Salem, North Carolina and *livin tired*, July 2003 at the Yale Summer Cabaret. He was a finalist for the Alliance Theatre Graduate Playwriting Competition 2004, the sole runner up for the Princess Grace Award 2004, a Sundance writer in residence at Ucross in 2003 and the summer lab in 2006. He is the recipient of the Eugene O' Neil Memorial Scholarship, the Bay Area Playwright's Foundation Fellowship and the ASCAP Cole Porter Prize. *His play Love is a Dream House in Lorin* premiered at Shotgun Players last fall. He holds an MFA in playwriting from the Yale School of Drama and he is a member of New Dramatists.

**Katori Hall** has been published as a book reviewer, journalist, and essayist in publications such as The Boston Globe, Essence, and Newsweek. She is a 2007 winner of the Fellowship of Southern Writers Bryan Family Award in Drama, 2006 recipient of the New York Foundation of the Arts Fellowship in Playwriting and Screenwriting, 2005 winner of the Lorraine Hansberry Playwriting Award, and a 2006 participant of the Royal Court Theatre NYC Residency. In October 2007, her play *Hoodoo Love* will have its world premiere at the Cherry Lane Theatre, where it was developed under Lynn Nottage as part of the theatre's 2006 Mentor Project. *Hoodoo Love* received three 2006 AUDELCO nominations (Best Actress, Best Supporting Actress, August Wilson Playwright Award), the play winning for Best Supporting Actress. She is currently writing commissions for Fluid Motion Theater & Film and the Irish Repertory Theatre. Hall is a proud member of the Women's Project Playwrights' Lab in New York City.

**Dominic Orlando** is a former Jerome Fellow to The Playwrights Center and last year was awarded a McKnight Advancement Grant. His plays have been developed and produced at The Guthrie Theater (commission), Crowded Fire Theatre (San Francisco), The Aurora Theater (SF), The Bay Area Playwrights Festival, Teatro Del Pueblo (commission, multi-year), The Illusion Theater, Here Arts Center (NYC), The Samuel Beckett on Theatre Row (off-Broadway), The Lincoln Center/American Living Room (multi-year), The New York International Fringe Festival (multi-year), The Edinburgh Fringe, The Prague International Fringe Festival, The Pasinger/Fabrik in Munich, and The Tokyo International Arts Festival, among others. He has been a writer-in-residence at The MacDowell Colony (multi-year), The William Inge Festival, The Edward Albee Foundation (multi-year), The Djerassi Resident Artists Program, The Ucross Foundation and The Atlantic Center for the Arts (a residency with Paula Vogel). He is a Founding Producing Director of The Workhaus Collective.

**Geetha Reddy** is a four-time recipient of PlayGround's Emerging Playwright Award. In 2005 she was awarded PlayGround's June Anne Baker Prize. In 2006 and 2007 she was awarded PlayGround Alumni Commissions. Recently her plays were performed in the Santa Rosa Actor's Theatre "Quickies" festival, the Best of SF Fringe Show "Three Plays About Your Mother", and on the 'Writer's Block' an NPR podcast. In 2007, her play *Me Given You* was included as part of the Playwright's Foundation 'In the Rough' reading series. In 2008, Theatre Bay Area selected her as a local "Up & Coming Playwright."

Although born in America, **Jen Silverman** was raised in a number of countries, including Japan, France, Finland, and New Zealand. She received a BA from Brown University, where she studied playwriting with Paula Vogel and Brighde Mullins. Her work has been produced at Brown University, Rites & Reason Theatre, NYC Fringe, and has been developed at New Georges, New York Stage & Film/ Powerhouse, and in conjunction with the Boston branch of Amnesty International and the immigrant advocacy group Families for Freedom. She recently spent the past year living in rural southern Japan.

*BASH! (Bay Area SHorts) PLAYWRIGHTS*

**Erin Bregman** studied literature at the College of Creative Studies at UCSB. Her other plays include *Hop*. (UCSB New Plays Festival 2005), *Between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn* (Corwin Award), *I.S.O. Explosive Possibility* (Magic Theater/Sloan Commission, 2006) and *The Magic Hour* (Semifinalist: PlayLabs; O'Neill Conference).

**Greg Beuthin** is a writer and performer whose work is strongly influenced by his upbringing overseas and his background in music and percussion. From 2004-2006 he led the collaborative multi-disciplinary performance group Balé Techlorico. Previously, his DJ-culture play *REWIND* was workshopped at the 2003 New York City Hip Hop Theater Festival.

**Joan Bernier** is a playwright and actor in the Bay Area. She wrote and produced *The Magdalen*, the story of the first Apostle. She wrote an adaptation of *The Mysterious Visitor*, from The Brother's Karamazov. *Haditha* is informed by her correspondence with Tim McGirk, the reporter who broke the story

**Jonathan Luskin** has written for PlayGround for five seasons and his play, *Aegis*, was a 2004 Emerging Playwright Award winner. He received a commission from the Magic Theatre to write *Early Adopter* and is the founder of *Take My Ball and Go Home*, a playwriting workshop. He served as Assistant Director to Les Waters for ACT's production of *Buried Child* and has directed for many theatre companies in the Bay Area, receiving two Goodman Directing Awards.

###