



Berkeley Rep fills up its next Ground Floor

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Some of the nation's top theater artists — **Anna Deavere Smith** (“Fires in the Mirror”), **John Leguizamo** (“Ghetto Klown”), **Colman Domingo** (“Wild With Happy”) — will be working on their next projects side-by-side with acclaimed newer writers like **Annie Baker** (“Circle Mirror Transformation,” “The Aliens”) and complete newcomers in **Berkeley Repertory Theatre**’s next Ground Floor research and development laboratory in June. Among other residencies and projects announced by Ground Floor director **Madeleine Oldham** are new plays and/or musicals by **Dave Malloy** (“Beowulf,” “Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812”), **Julie Marie Myatt** (“The Happy Ones”) and **Lisa D’Amour** (“Detroit”), working with site-specific artist **Katie Pearl** (as PearlDamour) on a piece about all the towns in America named Milton.

Some of the projects have excitingly international resonances, such as one being developed by **Aditi Brennan Kapil**, a Swedish-raised writer of Bulgarian and Indian descent, with Indian actor-songwriter **Manu Narayan** and Serbian pop-rock/folk composer **Radovan Jovicevic**. Others delve into fascinating aspects of Bay Area history, such as “FSM,” a new work by San Francisco Mime Troupe veterans playwright **Joan Holden** and songwriter **Bruce Barthol** with **Daniel Savio** and Stagebridge’s **Marge Betley**. Or playwright **Dominic Orlando** and composer **Brian Carpenter**’s “The Barbary Coast.”

It’s enough to make you want to be not one but a dozen flies on various walls. Besides which, there’s a new piece by **The Kilbanes**. I’ve been wanting to see this group’s next theatrical venture ever since their tantalizing “Weightless” rocked the S.F. Fringe a couple years ago.