

PERFORMANCE GUIDE

# NOTHING MICRO ABOUT MICRONESIA

BY LEILANI CHAN & OVA SAOPENG



[WWW.HTYWEB.ORG](http://WWW.HTYWEB.ORG)

# CONTENTS

<b>ALOHA FROM HTY ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, ERIC JOHNSON</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>PRODUCTION CREDITS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>SHOW SYNOPSIS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>ABOUT TEADA PRODUCTIONS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>ABOUT THE CO-CREATORS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>NOTE FROM CO-CREATORS: LEILANI CHAN &amp; OVA SAOPENG</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>PRE-SHOW ACTIVITY: WHERE IN THE WORLD IS MICRONESIA?</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>HISTORY AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>RESOURCES</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>WRITING ACTIVITY</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>VISUAL ARTS ACTIVITY</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>TEADA PRODUCTIONS TEAM</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>ABOUT HTY</b>	<b>15</b>

## **ALOHA FROM ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, ERIC JOHNSON**

Aloha and welcome to Honolulu Theatre for Youth! We are delighted to share these resources with you. We believe wholeheartedly in the power of stories to bring us together across time and distance. When that happens we often find great similarities with our fellow humans that strengthen our sense of belonging, heritage and shared purpose. We also find profound differences which should be equally celebrated. Differences stretch our sense of self and tickle our curiosity for what is possible. Coming from a place that is both geographically remote and culturally diverse, we treasure stories in our community and are deeply honored to share this one with you now. If you would like more information on the company or our work, look us up at [htyweb.org](http://htyweb.org).





## OUR PARTNERS

We have been fortunate to work with generous partners and funders on the creation of this project.

**Jo-Jikum**

**MAP Fund**

**Micronesia Health Advisory Coalition (MHAC)**

**Micronesians United Big Island (MUBI)**

**National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)**

**New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA)**

**Pacific Ethnic Island Arts Museum (PIEAM)**

**Pacific Voices / Kokua Kalihi Valley**

**PREL (Pacific Resources for Education and Learning)**

**UH Hilo Performing Arts Center**

**Waan Aelōñ in Majel (WAM)**

## PRODUCTION CREDITS

**Written and Directed by** Leilani Chan & Ova Saopeng

With support from Cultural Navigator Innocenta Sound Kikku and members of the Micronesia community

**Songs by**

Stephanie “Soultree” Camba

**Music by**

Derek Cannon

Daniel Bambaata Marley

**Projection Design by**

Joan Osato

**Set & Prop Design by**

Eric West

**Lighting Design by**

Maximilian Urruzmendi

**Costume Design by**

Iris Kim

**Sound Design by**

Stephanie Camba

Jonny Chang

Sarah Danvers

**Videography**

**& Sound Recording by**

Leilani Chan

Jonny Chang

**Acting & Movement Coaches**

Misa Tupou

Kiki Rivera

Jackie Pualani Johnson

Justina Mattos

**Stage Manager**

Sarah Danvers

**Performed by**

Kealaula “Lala” Faifili

Tristan Henry

Kathy Martin

Ova Saopeng

Koa Shope

---

**Study Guide by**

Stephanie “Soultree” Camba

Reiko Ho

## SHOW SYNOPSIS

HTY welcomes TeAda Productions back to Tenney Theatre with the world premiere of *Nothing Micro about Micronesia*. Students will enjoy the original songs, movement, and thought-provoking scenarios that take place in this coming-of-age story about three youths who meet at a high school in Hawai'i and are magically transported on an adventure across islands of Micronesia. The characters must navigate between life in Hawai'i and the traditions of their ancestors while facing the rising tides of their uncertain futures.

## ABOUT TEADA PRODUCTIONS



TeAda is a nomadic theater of color rooted in the stories of immigrants and refugees. The company is committed to healing and honoring the lives of the displaced, exploited and overlooked. TeAda's artistic process starts and ends with conscious listening, community building, and creative courage. Through theater workshops and performances, TeAda offers acts of service that are transformative and impactful. For more about TeAda, go to [www.teada.org](http://www.teada.org)

## ABOUT THE CO-CREATORS

### Leilani Chan, Founding Artistic Director of TeAda

An award winning performance artist, actor, playwright, director, and cultural worker, Leilani grew up in Wai'alae and Kaimuki, attended Wilson Elementary, Kaimuki Intermediate, Kalani High School.

Leilani says, "I grew up going to shows at Honolulu Theatre for Youth and UH Manoa. I would get all the actors to sign my program.

I was in the first Summer Program for the Enhancement of Basic Education program at UH Manoa. We studied acting, theater history, set and costume design with UH professors and got to perform on the Kennedy Theater stage. I LOVED It!

I wasn't very confident that a local girl like me could do Shakespeare, but I

got cast in the lead female role in *The Comedy of Errors*! And I was hooked.

My Hawai'i theater roots have carried me all over the country." Leilani is the Founding Artistic Director of TeAda Productions and is Co-Chair for the 7th National Asian American Theater Festival and Conference to take place at UH Mānoa May 24-28, 2024 hosted by The Consortium of Asian American Theaters and Artists [www.caata.net](http://www.caata.net). She is a graduate of Hampshire College and UC Irvine.



### Ova Saopeng, Associate Artistic Director of TeAda



An actor, writer and teaching artist from Los Angeles, Ova was born in Savannakhet, Laos and raised in Honolulu. He grew up in Kalihi Valley ("Kalihi Pride!") and attended Kalihi Elementary, Dole Intermediate, and Farrington High School. Ova says, "In the 8th grade, I saw T-shirt Theatre performing at Dole Intermediate. My teacher Mrs. Watanabe told me to go to the cafeteria after school. I did not know that it was an audition/recruitment for T-shirt. George Kon and Walt Dulaney opened the doors of self-expression and the theatre. From that day forward...it's been a ride. I remember singing as Sanjar, a hero, for my first production of *The Lady and the Tiger* with T-shirt Theatre and my voice cracking trying to reach a really high note. It was embarrassing and exciting at the same time."



**NOTE FROM CO-CREATORS:  
LEILANI CHAN & OVA SAOPENG  
FROM TEADA PRODUCTIONS**

TeAda Methodology is based on a devised theater practice that is inspired by many other theaters of color from across the U.S. including Urban Bush Women, Teatro Campesino, Great Leap, and many others. Our process is to collect stories from the community and put them on stage, which means that we spend a lot of time building trust in the community. Starting with our first play centering Micronesian community and stories, *Masters of the Currents*, we have been working for over a decade with the Micronesian community in Hawaii.

We were lucky enough to travel to Micronesia as part of the research development of this show. On that trip, we conducted workshops in multiple island nations including the Marshall Islands, Pohnpei, Chuuk, Guam and Saipan. We also did workshops with the Micronesian community in the Los Angeles Area in Long Beach and Pasadena. It took us over a year of collecting additional stories to create *Nothing Micro about Micronesia*. By investing time with the community, we have woven relationships across Micronesian communities in the diaspora. In turn, the community has contributed to our process by sharing their stories, inviting their networks, and being part of the development, production, and uplifting of both *Masters of the Currents* and *Nothing Micro about Micronesia*. As a result of this multi-year commitment, we are proud to say that the majority of the performing ensemble are Micronesian and Pacific Islander.

The themes that have resonated throughout our journey with the Micronesian community is the importance of upholding your culture and navigating what you want to hold on to, especially for those who leave their home islands. We have learned that the community is forced to compromise between staying or leaving home and navigating between tradition or modernity. Our roots as people who grew up in Hawai'i and represent a long list of ethnicities, has helped our theater practice in working with communities that we may not be a part of. It has helped us to create work that promotes a better understanding of each other's experiences. What's happening with the Micronesian community here in Hawaii and the pressures that this community is feeling is something that connects to what has happened for many generations in Hawai'i and across the U.S.--whether it's dealing with racism, over-policing, climate change, migration, and militarism. These are all the things that are not only affecting the Micronesian community, but if we work with the Micronesian community, we could actually reflect on what's happening across the planet.

### WHERE IN THE WORLD IS MICRONESIA?

Micronesia is a subregion of Oceania. Oceania is defined as a region made up of thousands of islands throughout the Central and South Pacific Ocean. It is divided into 4 subregions: Australia and New Zealand, Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia. Oceania is home to 43 million people.

Before (or after) the show, familiarize your students with maps of Oceania and Micronesia.



Map courtesy of World Atlas

### OCEANIA

#### Printable Map of Oceania:

Go to the link below to print maps for your students

<https://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/oceania/aulargez.htm>

#### Interactive Digital Maps:

<https://mapmaker.nationalgeographic.org>

<https://mrnussbaum.com/australia-and-oceania-interactive-map>

### MICRONESIA

Micronesia is a collection of more than 600 islands in the heart of the Pacific Ocean. It's one of the world's smallest nations, with a landmass smaller than Luxemburg, but as a region, it spans more than 1,801 miles (2,900 kilometres) and crosses five time zones! It consists of: Federated States of Micronesia: Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, Kiribati, Nauru, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Guam.



Map courtesy of Mapisland

### MICRONESIA AND COLONIZATION

Micronesia has a long history of colonization.

In 1886, Micronesia was colonised by Spain. Spain sold the islands to Germany in 1899. In 1914, Japan took control of the islands and occupied them until 1944, when American forces took them by force.

The islands became a major battleground during World War II. Between 1942 and 1943, US submarines cut off supplies between the islands and Japan and regular bombing raids began soon after. From 1947 until 1986, Micronesia was part of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI), a United Nations trust territory administered by the USA.

### MIGRATION DUE TO NUCLEAR TESTING & CLIMATE CHANGE

Micronesia has a profound and vital indigenous history beyond nuclear testing and climate change, though they are at the forefront of both conversations. The United States' nuclear testing between 1946 and 1958 left a legacy of illness, displacement, and trauma that Micronesians are still experiencing today.

In addition to dealing with the nuclear impact of WWII, the continued development of small island economies, and the impacts of climate change, many Micronesians have migrated out of their islands for more opportunities in education, work, and survival as rising tides continue to threaten their homelands and ways of life. While Micronesians are one of the groups of people that have contributed the least to climate change, their lands are among the most affected. The lack of fresh water due to rising sea levels and salt water intrusion into wells affects the crops and natural resources in Micronesia causing food insecurity. Populations in outer islands have migrated to the more metropolitan areas while residents of larger cities and outer islands are also making the difficult decision of leaving their island nations.



*Photo: National Archive*

## INDIGENOUS RESILIENCE & RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE



*Photo: Weno, Chuuk '23, Leilani Chan*

Many community leaders and organizations throughout Micronesia demonstrate and advocate for how their indigenous cultures are rooted in sustainability practices that are essential for our world's future. From sustainable transportation, handicrafts, and fishing practices to relationships with each other, nature, and animals that lead to greater biodiversity and connection - Micronesia is an example of indigenous resilience and response to climate change.

Organizations like the Madau Project and Waan Aelōñ in Majel teach indigenous practices like navigation that do not require the use of fossil fuels and non-renewable resources. Both programs support Micronesian youth and adults, respectively in navigating opportunities for education, employment, and thriving in new lands while remembering your heritage and ancestral ocean navigation practices.

Each Micronesian culture has their own unique style of handicrafts and expert weaving practices using plants, shells, and materials sourced locally. Some weavers have resorted to upcycling plastic when plant materials are not available. All of these practices are rooted in oral traditions of storytelling and show the sustainable practices embedded within these indigenous cultures. The preservation of weavings and oral traditions within different family and cultural lines represent an ongoing relationship with ancestors and ancestral stories that were not originally written.



*Photo: Majuro, RMI '23, Leilani Chan*



*Photo: Parem, Chuuk '23, Leilani Chan*

Micronesia has one of the most biologically diverse coral reefs and forests on the planet. Their remote locations allow them to be safe havens for animals that are becoming more rare like the silky sharks in Fana Island, Palau. Micronesians have been stewards of the land and sea. One sustainable fishing practice used in places like the Marshall Islands consists of creating stone or coconut front weirs to catch fish as a community, which builds relationships and support for one another that feeds the entire community.



While some Micronesian leaders believe that reducing carbon emissions and evacuating are some of the only choices available, there are others advocating for investments in expanding the land and finding other solutions to keeping these islands and atolls above sea level. As Micronesian community continues to face uncertain currents, it is the foundation and practice of extended families and creating kinship across communities that is keeping cultures and hope alive for the future of these islands and generations to come.



BOOKS



- *Collision Course at Kwajalein Marshall Islanders in the Shadow of the Bomb* by Giff Johnson
- *Iep Jältok: Poems from a Marshallese Daughter* by Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner
- *Micronesia at the Crossroads* by Carl Heine
- *Micronesia: Trust Betrayed* by Donald F McHenry
- *Militarized Currents Toward a Decolonized Future in Asia and the Pacific* by Cynthia Enloe
- *Strangers in their own land: A Century of Colonial Rule in the Caroline and Marshall Islands* by Francis X Hezel, SJ

WEBSITES

- Climate Change is our Reality by Selina N. Leem [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2-ODIcuhf\\_Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2-ODIcuhf_Y)
- Community-based Fisheries in the Marshall Islands by Kalena Kattil deBrum <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3eA64J5LWyM>
- Jo-Jikum <https://jojikum.org/>
- Marshall Islands Conservation Society <https://www.atollconservation.org/>
- Pacific Voices <https://www.kkv.net/pac-voices>
- PREL <https://prel.org/>
- Waan Aelōñ in Majel (WAM) <https://www.canoesmarshallislands.com/>



## **POST SHOW DISCUSSION**

**WHAT IS A TRADITION?  
ARE THERE CUSTOMS, VALUES, OR PRACTICES THAT YOU  
FOLLOW FROM YOUR CULTURE?**

**WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MICRONESIAN CUSTOMS, VALUES, OR  
PRACTICES IN OUR PLAY?**

**ARE SOME OF THESE CUSTOMS OR VALUES SIMILAR TO YOUR  
OWN? DID ANY RESONATE WITH YOU?**

**WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES THAT OUR CHARACTERS  
FACED?**

**HAVE YOU EVER FACED CHALLENGES LIKE THIS IN YOUR LIFE?  
WHAT ARE SOME THINGS THAT MIGHT HELP YOU WHEN FACING  
CHALLENGES ?**

**WHAT COULD YOU DO FOR A FRIEND WHO IS FACING  
CHALLENGES LIKE THE CHARACTERS IN OUR PLAY? WHO  
COULD HELP IN YOUR COMMUNITY? WHAT RESOURCES OR  
SUPPORT ARE AVAILABLE?**

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Our show features Chuukese, Marshallese, Pohnpeian, and 'Ōlelo Hawai'i languages. Here are some of the words and phrases that are used in *Nothing Micro about Micronesia*.

### 'Ōlelo Hawai'i Definition/ Meaning

**'aumakua** animal spirit

**'awa** 'awa (or kava) is a traditional drink made from the Piper methysticum plant; presented during social gatherings, important ceremonial rituals as well as a medicine.

**kumu** teacher

**uhu** parrotfish

### Marshallese Definition/ Meaning

**Iakwe / Yokwe** hello

**Lōktañūr** the brightest star above the Marshall Islands and name of the mother in the origin story of how the sail came to the outrigger

### Chuukese Definition/ Meaning

**Marau** parrot fish

**Oni** taro

**Pwon** night

**Ran** day

**Sato** land

**Tirow** asking permission

### Pohnpeian Definition/ Meaning

**Mwaramwar** head garland/necklace

**Sakau** kava

**Sarawi** Sacred Land

**Seht** shirt

## JOURNAL IN CHARACTER

In this play, our characters experience conflict, because they are from a different culture. Have you ever had a conflict with someone with a different identity or culture from you? How would that make you feel?

Choose one of the characters and put yourself in their shoes. Imagine what it might feel like to be far away from your home, facing difficult decisions.

Write a page in the voice of the character.

- STEP 1**     **Choose one of the characters in our play.**  
Which character did you relate to most and why?
- Which character did you feel most different from and what did you learn from them?
- STEP 2**     **Imagine one of the moments in the play.**  
Use your imagination to become one of the characters in our play. Imagine how that character was feeling at that moment.
- STEP 3**     **Write a page in character.**  
Write a page in that character's journal about that moment. What are you feeling as the character? What are you hoping?
- STEP 4**     **Share your journal pages**  
If comfortable, share your journal pages with your class.
- STEP 5**     **If time, write another journal page as another character.**  
Putting yourself in someone else's shoes helps to understand different perspectives.

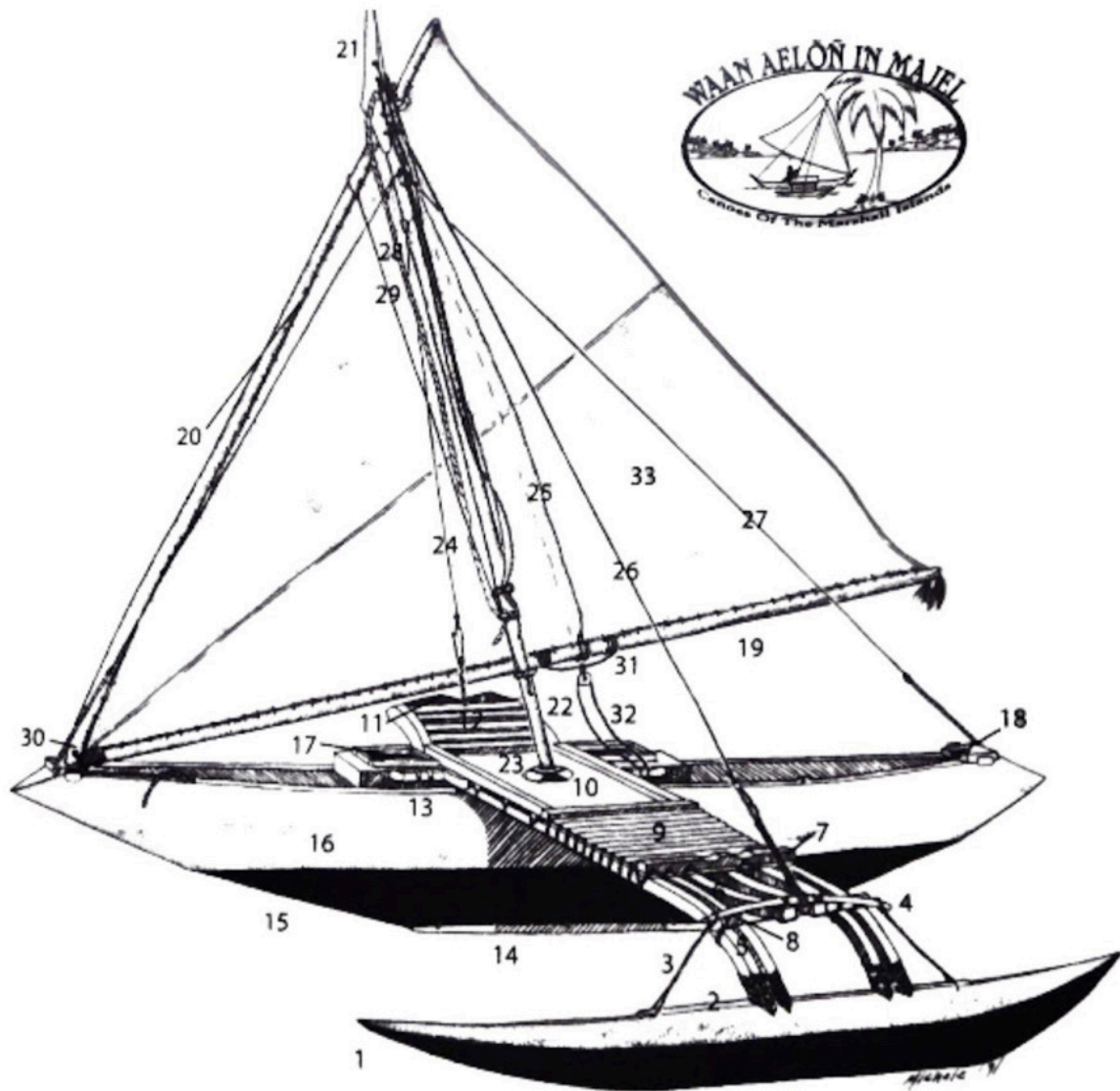
### Bonus Writing Activities

**1. Create a story about a conflict** you may have had with a person of a different culture or identity than you. Write with detail from the voices and opinions of each character involved in the story answering: Where could you travel to gain understanding about each other's beliefs, feelings, and perspectives? Who would be a fun, magical guide to take you through these travels? What type of solutions and collaborations could you and this foe turned friend come up with?

**2. Imagine you are going on a journey across the Pacific.** What will you carry in your canoe and why? What would be the hardest thing to leave behind?

**LABEL THE PARTS OF AN OUTRIGGER CANOE**

*Find and label this Marshallese Outrigger with their names below according to their number:*



- |                             |                 |                |                     |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| 1. Kubaak - lit outrigger   | 11. Kein maeron | 20. Rojak maan | 28. Maan            |
| 2. Ae - current             | 12. Ron         | 21. Lot        | 29. Jallikok/Keplok |
| 3. Kabaj - bird, reef heron | 13. Kilikili    | 22. Kiju       | 30. Kopalpel        |
| 4. Jojo - flying fish       | 14. Mal         | 23. Boklop     | 31. Lep-lik         |
| 5. Apet                     | 15. Jouj        | 24. Toron      | 32. Toiep           |
| 6. Kie fish - big eye fish  | 16. Mej         | 25. Tiliej     | 33. Ujele           |
| 7. Mweiur lon               | 17. Haj         | 26. Tokubaak   |                     |
| 8. Mweiur lai               | 18. Dipakaak    | 27. Jomur      |                     |
| 9. Kein-eoon-ere            | 19. Rojak kora  |                |                     |
| 10. Ere                     |                 |                |                     |



## TEADA PRODUCTIONS TEAM



**Leilani Chan**  
Founding Artistic Director

**Ova Saopeng**  
Associate Artistic Director

**Taloo Carrillo**  
Development Director

**Jonny Chang**  
Marketing and Local Programs Manager

**Stephanie Camba**  
Operations and Diaspora Programs Manager



## ABOUT HTY

Honolulu Theatre for Youth (HTY) is a theatre of place, deeply rooted in the cultures and people of the Pacific and dedicated to serving young people, families and educators across the Hawaiian Islands. Founded in 1955, HTY is one of the oldest professional TYA companies in the country and is recognized for its long history of innovative drama education programming and the creation of original theatrical works that celebrate the diverse cultures of Hawai'i.

## OUR COMPANY

**Becky Dunning**  
Managing Director

**Stu Hirayama**  
School Reservations

**Brad DeCaires**  
Box Office

**Fay Ann Chun**  
Grants Manager

**Jian Gu**  
Accounting

**Eric Johnson**  
Artistic Director

**Reiko Ho**  
Artistic Associate/Marketing

**Moses Goods**  
Artistic Associate/Actor

**Annie Cusick Wood**  
Artistic Associate

**Artistic Team**  
Jarren Amian  
Chesley Cannon  
Sarah Danvers  
Serina Dunham  
Iris Kim  
Lokomaika'i Lipscomb  
Mattea Mazzella  
Kaonohiokalaealohilohinei Muller  
Hermenigildo Tesoro Jr.  
Eric West  
Emily Wright

**Daniel A. Kelin, II**  
Director of Drama Education

**Tamara Smith**  
Drama Ed. Administrator

**Clara Whippy**  
Teaching Artist

**Ana Narrajos**  
Teaching Artist

**Chloe Tower**  
Teaching Artist