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Press release:

ANNOUNCING THE HAWAI'I THEATER PEOPLE PROJECT

The grassroots initiative includes Broadway actors, journeyman theater artists, avid theater supporters, celebrities and more – all with Hawai'i connections. They invite you to join them.

September 2, 2026

(HONOLULU) A new project to find all the theater people with Hawai'i connections just launched. The [**Hawai'i Theater People Project**](#) (HTPP) is an online survey to identify and map anyone who considers themselves a Hawai'i theater person, on the islands and in the diaspora. Members of the public are invited to participate whether you are a professional, non-professional, advocate, audience member, theater student, or former theater maker. The survey may be found [here](#).

This grassroots project was initiated by Hawai'i Kai resident [Seema Sueko-Low](#) (née Ahmed). A graduate of University Laboratory School in Mānoa and Hawai'i's Junior Miss in 1990, Sueko-Low spent 32 years as a working theater artist on the mainland. When she moved back to Honolulu to care for her parents, the former Deputy Artistic Director of Arena Stage in Washington, DC noticed that the local theater sector is under resourced. "Hawai'i theater people have won Tony Awards, worked all across the globe, and translated or leveraged their theater skills into other industries, and yet, the theater sector here is thin. Theater artists are unable to make a viable living on the islands." She continued, "If we know one another, here and in the diaspora, together, I think we can help."

She ran the mapping idea by Hawai'i playwright and University of Hawai'i alumnus [Daniel Akiyama](#) who helped beta test the survey and spread the word. "It's an effort to build community, share resources and opportunities with one another, and make Hawai'i's local theater industry stronger," he shared.

Thus far, over 120 Hawai'i Theater People currently living across the continental United States and as far away as the United Kingdom have completed the survey, along with respondents living on O'ahu, Maui, and Hawai'i Island.

“And we know there are so many more. All are welcome. If you have a connection to theater and to Hawai‘i, take the survey and be counted,” actor [Amy Hill](#) encouraged.

“I’m currently living in Draper, Utah, near Salt Lake City, but Hawai‘i will always be my home. I am Native Hawaiian, a graduate of Kamehameha Schools, and proficient in ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i. Theatre - particularly Hawaiian theatre - is my passion,” wrote [Nara Mālia Cardenas](#) when she completed the survey.

Everyone who completes the survey, and indicates they would like the results, receives them on the last day of each month. The network has been used to share opportunities and resources with one another. Some of the survey respondents have met online and swapped ideas and dreams for theater in Hawai‘i, from creating an archive or timeline, to fostering a more rigorous play development practice, to finding ways for people to make a living doing theater in Hawai‘i. Survey respondent [Justina Mattos](#) teaches an Intro to Theatre course at University of Hawai‘i at Hilo. She will use the survey results to introduce her students to contemporary theatre practitioners they can interview for a class assignment.

The group’s [Instagram reel](#) introducing their efforts has received over 9,000 views by over 5,300 viewers as of 9/2 and can be found here:

https://www.instagram.com/reel/Dcop_xevw9D/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsi=MzRlODBiNWFIZA==

More information is available at [Hawai‘i Theater People Project | Seema Sueko](#).

Direct link to the survey:

<https://cryptpad.fr/form/#/2/form/view/zBld5lQS7y1OZKj9TfSYv1qDwxHL5D8ueszuZhhAokc/>

Dropbox for Media - Includes graphics/flyers, logo, Instagram Reel, and QR code

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/vbra61d7ahsbanua8gbiv/AMemuzGp74prNkX7_46BgSk?rlkey=2bswwv38n7r0divx07idjhaq8&st=x6q36b3c&dl=0

Hawai‘i Theater People available for interviews:

[Nara Mālia Cardenas](#)

[Amy Hill](#)

[Seema Sueko-Low](#)

[Justina Mattos](#)

To inquire about others, please contact Seema Sueko-Low at

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