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[HOME](#) [ABOUT US](#) [PAST ISSUES](#) [ADVERTISING](#) [SUBMIT](#)

LGBT PERFORMANCE FOCUSES ON LEEWARD COMMUNITY

Submitted by stanleyl on Fri, 01/24/2014 - 15:44



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Photographer: Jesse Butcher

On Thursday, Jan. 30 at 8 p.m. students, alumni, and community members will fill the Leeward CC Lab Theatre for the premier of a production that serves as a theatrical reflection to many and a looking glass to many more.

"Yes, I Am: Leeward Edition" is a compilation and reenactment of stories told by real people in Hawaii's LGBT community. Actors and affiliates of PlayBuilders went out in search of Leeward students, friends, family and community members that were willing to share a part of themselves.

Categories

- [Art \(22\)](#)
- [Comics \(2\)](#)
- [Commencement \(4\)](#)
- [Commentary \(20\)](#)
- [Essay \(10\)](#)
- [Events \(6\)](#)
- [Fashion \(23\)](#)
- [Fitness \(11\)](#)
- [Food \(30\)](#)
- [Movies \(32\)](#)
- [Music \(9\)](#)
- [News \(194\)](#)
- [Other publications \(1\)](#)
- [Photography \(16\)](#)
- [Theater \(19\)](#)

Issue

- [Fall 2015](#)
- [Summer 2015](#)
- [Current](#)
- [Spring 2015](#)
- [Winter 2014](#)
- [Fall 2014](#)
- [Summer 2014](#)
- [Spring 2014](#)
- [Winter 2013](#)
- [Fall 2013](#)
- [Summer 2013](#)
- [Spring 2013](#)
- [Winter 2012 Issue](#)
- [Fall 2012 Issue](#)
- [Summer 2012 Issue](#)
- [Spring 2012 Issue](#)
- [Winter 2011 Issue](#)
- [Fall 2011 Issue](#)
- [Summer 2011 Issue](#)
- [Spring 2011 Issue](#)
- [Spring 2010 Issue](#)

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Current Issue



(Kahana Ho)

"This is a real person's life on stage, that you're witnessing," said Ronald Gilliam, co-director of the production.

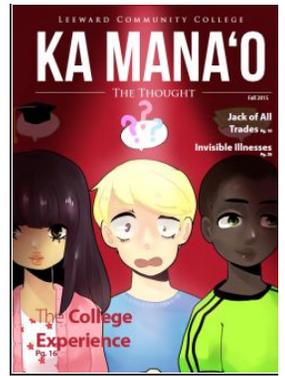
Marizel Butin is a student at Leeward and one of the cast members.

"I feel like I have to live up to the power of what they said. It's different when it's a fictional character," said Butin before one of the rehearsals leading up to their opening night. "These are real people, real lives, real stories."

Butin was among cast members that went out and collected interviews, and had a chance to speak with her classmate. Butin expressed her strong support for the LGBT community and hopes to show that support through the performance.

The play sheds light on such topics as desire, self identity, the new laws on marriage, family, and religion. Co-Directors Terri Madden and Gilliam reported that it was the students and interviewees that wanted to talk about spirituality, their relationship with their church and even rejection.

According to Madden, "Yes, I Am: Leeward Edition" is also one of the first productions to feature a *mahu* role. This is something that is familiar and somewhat unique to Hawaii, and not typically highlighted in the media.



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“Yes, I Am” had originally been performed at Fresh Cafe last summer with a broader focus of Hawaii’s LGBT community. Gilliam and Madden described that version to be more “sad, in an educational way” compared to the Leeward adaptation. They said that the young people brought humor and a “youthful energy” to the subject matter.

At a showing of the original production, Madden described how many people cried and that even older audience members came up to her and said, “It’s all about love, isn’t it?”

“We hope to bridge some of the gaps in communication between the straight and LGBT community,” said Madden. “It’s a safe place where people to come and learn about it.”

The play will exhibit 16 scenes of hardship, love, laughter, identity, and acceptance and will also be staged Jan. 31, Feb. 1 and Feb. 8.

This production is a work of PlayBuilders in partnership with Leeward Community College. PlayBuilders is a community-based theater company that aims to bring people together by featuring stories from Hawaii’s own. For more information on the company or their future productions, visit www.PlayBuilders.org or contact Madden at [terri.madden @ playbuilders.org](mailto:terri.madden@playbuilders.org).

What:	“Yes, I Am: Leeward Edition”
When:	Jan. 30, 31, Feb. 1, 8. 8 p.m.
Where:	Leeward Community College Lab Theatre (downstairs)
Tickets, info:	\$10 at the door, available from 7 p.m. More info at http://lcctheatre.hawaii.edu/



(Butin)



(Madden and Gilliam)

[Winter 2013 Theater](#)

1347 reads