

## **Artist Statement**

I moved to Hawai'i twenty-one years ago and have called Kaua'i home for the past fifteen years. The Garden Island is not where I was born, but it is where I became myself. The natural beauty, the climate, the aloha of the people — there is nowhere on earth I would rather be, and nowhere I feel safer.

And yet, even here — thousands of miles from the nearest continent, cradled by the Pacific — the world found us. The Covid pandemic reached Kaua'i, and with it came the fear, the isolation, the questions that no island paradise could buffer: Who do we trust? Who decides who survives? What does community mean when the world is coming apart?

*Apocalypse and Aloha* was born in those times, on this island.

It is a play about what happens when the machinery of power — technological, governmental, ideological — collides with a community rooted in aloha, in the 'āina, in the kind of knowledge that cannot be coded or patented. It asks whether love and connection are enough to outlast catastrophe. I believe they are. Kaua'i taught me that.

At its heart, this is also a story about fathers and sons, about the secrets we keep to protect the people we love, and about the reckoning that comes when those secrets finally surface. The land holds memory. So do families.

I wrote this play because Kaua'i deserves to be on a stage — not as backdrop, but as protagonist.

**Leroy Olen**