

A portrait of actress Leesa Castañeda. She has dark, wavy hair and is wearing a dark blue denim jacket over a red top. She is smiling slightly and looking directly at the camera. The background is a solid blue-grey color.

*"I believe storytelling is one of the most powerful ways we connect as human beings. When I step into a role, I lead with truth, openness, and genuine emotion —inviting the audience to not just watch, but to feel with me. I strive to tell stories that resonate long after the curtain falls, creating moments that are honest, vulnerable, and unforgettable."*

# LEESA CASTAÑEDA

**ACTOR**



# LEESA CASTAÑEDA

## ACTOR



## ABOUT LEESA CASTAÑEDA

Leesa Castañeda is an actor, singer and playwright with over 30 years in film, television, theater. Born in Lansing, Michigan she is currently based in New York, with credits spanning national and international stages. Her acclaimed one-woman show, *La Reina Yolanda*, celebrates Latinx identity and heritage while telling the powerful story of her mother's struggle with Alzheimer's.

- UNION: SAG-AFTRA & AEA
- Age Range: 40-60
- Height: 5'5
- Hair Color: Dark Brown
- Eye Color: Green
- Voice: Mezzo-Soprano



## SKILLS

- **Acting:** Versatile and committed, with a natural ability to connect with a character and deliver captivating performances in theatre, film and television.
- **Singing:** Mezzo-Soprano with a strong belt specializing in Musical Theatre with experience in various genres including: pop, rock, country and Latin. Skilled in delivering powerful and resonant performances.
- **Playwright:** An accomplished playwright experienced in writing solo shows and ensemble plays that engage audiences through truth, openness and cultural richness.



## PRESS

- **La Reina Yolanda-Freeline Media Review**
- **ON YOUR FEET: THE STORY OF EMILIO & GLORIA ESTEFAN is a Triumphant Homage to Trailblazing Icons at The Garden Theatre**-Broadway World Review
- **La Reina Yolanda at Orlando Fringe**-Orlando Sentinel review
- **Visiting Jersey with THE TOXIC AVENGER**-Broadway World Review

*La Reina Yolanda is a wonder and a triumph, and the best one-person show I have ever attended.*

**Stephen Scarborough**  
**Winter Garden Magazine**

# RESUME HIGHLIGHTS

[Click for Headshot](#)

[Click for full Resume](#)

## **REGIONAL THEATRE**

Nine-the musical  
On Your Feet  
Next to Normal  
In The Heights  
Sweeney Todd  
A Streetcar Named Desire  
La Reina Yolanda (solo show)  
El Wiz  
The Ritz  
Toxic Avenger  
Orpheus Descending  
9 Parts of Desire

Saraghina  
Gloria Fajardo  
Diana  
Camila  
Mrs. Lovett  
Blanche  
Yolanda  
Anita/Bruja Mala  
Googie Gomez  
Mayor/Ma  
Lady  
Layal

CFVA  
Garden Theatre  
G.O.A.T  
Orlando Shakes  
Bay Street  
G.O.A.T  
Orlando Fringe/Tour  
Orlando Shakes  
Bay Street  
G.O.A.T  
Dark Side of Saturn  
Empty Spaces Theatre

## **FILM**

Because He Loves Me...  
No Charge  
Sudden Terror  
Blowfish  
Oscar

Supporting  
Supporting  
Co-Star  
Supporting  
Featured

Anthony Cabrera/FSU  
Carmen Treffiletti/DME  
Paul Schneider/ABC  
Mark Caragulo/VCC  
John Landis/Touchstone

## **TELEVISION**

One Tree Hill  
Sheena  
Taina  
Shelby Woo  
The Cape  
SeaQuest  
My Brother & Me

Supporting  
Guest-Star  
Guest-Star  
Supporting  
Supporting  
Guest-Star  
Supporting

Gregory Prange/WB  
Jon Cassar/TriStar  
Kim Fields/Nickelodeon  
Allison Liddi-Brown/Nickelodeon  
Ian Toynton/NBC  
Anson Williams/NBC  
Adam Weismann/Nickelodeon

## **CRUISE LINES**

Plaza de Coco (Inagural Cast)

Imelda/Abuela

Disney Treasure/DCL

## **TRAINING**

**Acting:** American Academy of Dramatic Arts Theatre--New York, NY

**Voice:** Melanie Galiardo

## **SKILLS**

Conversational Spanish, Singing (Mezzo-soprano), Various Accents & Dialects, Stage Combat, Valid Passport.



# LA REINA YOLANDA

## One-woman show

La Reina Yolanda is one woman's life from childhood adventures to her battle with Alzheimer's. Yolanda, a fierce Latina. Beset by tragedy, she leans on her sharp mind and love of family to land on her feet. An advocate for her loved one and the less fortunate, her mind eventually becomes ravaged by Alzheimer's.

When who we are begins to disappear piece by piece, how do we hold on to the essence of what defines us?

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*Watching Leesa Halstead Castaneda honor her mother in "La Reina Yolanda" is like watching a testament to love...*

*In some ways, Yolanda's is an ordinary story - struggle, setbacks, love, children, happiness, then the unforgiving arrival of old age. But by capturing her mother's spirit and framing her tale as a daughter's love letter, Castaneda makes this emotional journey so much more.*

**Matt Palm—Orlando Sentinel**

[Click for promo video](#)



[www.leesacastaneda.com](http://www.leesacastaneda.com)

# AWARDS

- **2022:** Critics Pick-Orlando Sentinel --Gloria Fajardo in *On Your Feet*
- **2022:** Critic's Choice Award-Orlando Fringe Best Director--*The Mockingbird News*
- **2017:** Critic's Choice Award-Orlando Fringe Best Female Performance-- *La Reina Yolanda*
- **2011** Bay Street-Dolly Awards-Best Actress in a play--Googie Gomez in *The Ritz*
- **2004** Lily Stoates Award-Best Actress in a Play -- Alexa in *As Bees In Honey Drown*



## CONNECT WITH LEESA CASTAÑEDA



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