

Cody Simpson set to make huge splash starring in *Guys & Dolls* musical on Sydney Harbour



Opera Australia today announced that pop star and champion swimmer **Cody Simpson** will make a spectacular return to the stage in 2025, making his Australian musical theatre debut alongside an all-star cast in a brand-new production of the award-winning Broadway musical ***Guys & Dolls*** at Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour from 21 March to 20 April.

Not content to slip quietly back onto the entertainment scene, Simpson is making a big splash, choosing the country's largest outdoor stage for his first major musical endeavour since retiring from competitive swimming earlier this year.

Hailing from the Gold Coast, Cody Simpson rose to fame in Australia and the USA as a young pop singer, signing an international record deal at the age of 14 after uploading covers to YouTube. He toured with Justin Bieber and scored a Top 10 debut on the US Billboard 100. An accomplished vocalist and guitarist with four studio albums under his belt, he made his Broadway musical debut in 2018 after landing the lead role of Dmitry in *Anastasia*.

Drawing on his 'inner crooner', Simpson will play the lead role of Sky Masterton, which was made famous in the 1955 film by one of the biggest names of Hollywood's Golden Age, Marlon Brando, starring alongside Frank Sinatra.

"The role of Sky has always been one of my dream stage roles ever since I was first introduced to the story and the soundtrack of ***Guys & Dolls***. I fell in love with the film as a teenager when I first developed a passion for musical theatre prior to my debut on Broadway.

"I'm drawn to 1940's-50's era, the music, the style, the fashion. I'm heavily inspired by the singers and crooners of the era and am excited to introduce this to the next generation. It's probably why the ***Guys & Dolls*** movie is an all-time favourite and Frank Sinatra in particular, is a major inspiration," he said.

Starring alongside Simpson will be two of Australia's favourite leading men, the uber-talented entertainer **Bobby Fox** as Nathan Detroit, and the highly acclaimed breakout star of *Hamilton* **Jason Arrow** as the cheeky rogue, Nicely-Nicely Johnson, along with celebrated musical theatre performer **Annie Aitken** as the saintly Sarah Brown, the object of Sky's scheming and eventual love interest.

With music by Frank Loesser and book by Joe Swerling and Abe Burrows, the five-time Tony award-winning musical is filled-to-the-brim with instantly recognisable tunes, including 'Luck Be a Lady' and 'Sit Down You're Rockin' the Boat'.

Directed by award-winner Shaun Rennie, ***Guys & Dolls*** on Sydney Harbour promises lots of laughs, show-stopping dance numbers all set on a larger than life slice of New York City designed by Brian Thomson with costumes by Jennifer Irwin.

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Annie Aitken

Annie Aitken is celebrated for her performances across Australia (*Melba*, *Muriel's Wedding*, *A Gentleman's Guide*, *Oklahoma!*, *The Sound of Music*, *Anything Goes*, *Sweet Charity*, *Rolling Thunder Vietnam*, *Legally Blonde*) and the UK (*How to Succeed in Business*, *Cinderella*).

Her critically acclaimed portrayal of Millie Dillmount in *Thoroughly Modern Millie* put her on the map as one of Australia's leading ladies and she is soon to star as Cunégonde in Opera Australia's 2025 season of *Candide*, a role she previously played with State Opera South Australia & State Theatre SA, and originally for Sydney Philharmonia Choirs.

Hand-picked by composer Frank Wildhorn to be Lucy Harris in the *Jekyll & Hyde* London premiere development (Lambert Jackson), Annie also performed with him in *Frank & Friends* at Cadogan Hall.

Annie is a Victorian College of the Arts Musical Theatre Graduate and 2018 recipient of the prestigious Rob Guest Endowment Award.

Cody Simpson

Australian born, Cody Simpson, is a true multi-hyphenate; guitarist, singer, songwriter, performing artist, published poet, children's book author theatrical star, environmental activist and athlete.

As a young recording artist Simpson enjoyed chart success and toured with Justin Bieber across the U.S., Europe and Australia while amassing an ever-growing following on social media. He has earned numerous honors including three Nickelodeon Kids Choice Awards, an MTV Europe Music Award and a Young Hollywood Award, as well as being named among GQ's Men of the Year and the first United Nations Development Programme advocate, with a strong voice for environmental responsibility.

Cody made international headlines with his stunning return to swimming in 2021 qualifying for the finals of the 100m butterfly at the 2022 Commonwealth Games and winning a Gold and Silver medal in the 4x100m men's freestyle relay and the 4x100 men's medley relay respectively.

Jason Arrow

Jason Arrow launched into the spotlight as Australia's Alexander Hamilton, performing the title role for four years with the Original Australian Company, then reprising the same role with the Original International Company of international smash-hit *Hamilton*, alongside other notable performers Rachelle Ann Go (Eliza in Original West End *Hamilton*) and De'Andre Woods (MJ in *MJ on Broadway*).

A graduate of Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, Jason has previously appeared in *Beautiful – The Carole King Musical*, followed closely by Disney's *Aladdin*.

During his spare time Jason writes his own musicals, novels, orchestrates and arranges, most recently for the new Australian AFL musical *One Day In September*.

Bobby Fox

Irish born Australian actor Bobby Fox originated the role of Franki Valli in the Australian production of *Jersey Boys* which he performed to great acclaim over 850 times. He is a 4 times World Irish Dance Champion and toured with dance productions *Riverdance*, *Dancing on Dangerous Ground*, *To Dance on the Moon* and starred in the revival of Australian musical *Hot Shoe Shuffle*.

One of Australia's most captivating and in-demand live performers, Bobby has been nominated for a Green Room Award (*Ladies in Black*) and a Helpmann Award (*Assassins*). This includes leading roles in productions such as *Blood Brothers*, *Mamma Mia!*, *Leader of the Pack*, *Dusty – The Original Pop Diva*, *We Will Rock You*, *Spamalot* and The Production Company's *Oklahoma*, *Guys and Dolls* and *Sweet Charity*.

GUYS AND DOLLS

A Musical Fable of Broadway

Based on a Story and Characters of Damon Runyon

Music and Lyrics by
FRANK LOESSER

Book by
JO SWERLING and ABE BURROWS

Licensed exclusively by Music Theatre International (Australasia).

Creatives

Director **Shaun Rennie**
Musical Director & Supervisor **Guy Simpson**
Choreographer **Kelley Abbey**
Set Designer **Brian Thomson**
Costume Designer **Jennifer Irwin**
Sound Design **Jim Atkins**

Cast

Sky Masterton **Cody Simpson**
Nathan Detroit **Bobby Fox**
Sarah Brown **Annie Aitken**
Nicely Nicely Johnson **Jason Arrow**

More cast to be announced soon!

Performance dates

21 March – 20 April
Evenings 7:30pm
Excluding Mondays and Good Friday on 18 April

Bookings

Adult tickets from \$79 (fees may apply)
Children tickets from \$59 (fees may apply)
Group and concession prices available for most performances.

Opera Australia Box Office
+61 2 9318 8200

opera.org.au/harbour

**Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour
Fleet Steps, Mrs Macquaries Point**

Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour is supported by the NSW Government, via its tourism and major events agency Destination NSW, and through the International Foundation for Arts and Culture as Naming Rights Partner, Dr Haruhisa Handa OA's Patron in Chief, and OA's Principal Partner HSBC.

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