A smiling man with dark hair, wearing a black tuxedo jacket, a white dress shirt, and a black bow tie. He is holding a vintage-style microphone with a red light ring around the top. The background is a warm, dimly lit room with out-of-focus lights.

THE GREAT FIRST NATIONS SONGBOOK

A NIGHT OF SWING & SOUL

INFORMATION FOR PRESENTERS

ABOUT

A showcase of iconic First Nations songs reimagined with the electrifying flair of 60s big band music by celebrated Quandamooka singer-songwriter **Adam James**, aka **The Quandamooka Crooner**.

Backed by an 8-piece jazz orchestra, Adam takes audiences on a musical journey with everything from country to pop to ska to rock and roll, all reinterpreted for jazz and big band. Although First Nations songlines are 60,000+ years old, *The Great First Nations Song Book* is, as Adam says “just a taste” of the incredibly diverse sound of Blak music over the last 60 years.

“...one of the most enjoyable evenings of Australian music you will ever experience.”

– STAGE WHISPERS

The Songbook opens with Royal Telephone, by the legendary Yorta Yorta man, Jimmy Little – Australia’s very first pop star – and closes with Treaty by the incomparable Yothu Yindi.


In between is a musical odyssey of swing and soul, honouring First Nations songmen and women such Troy Cassar-Daley, Coloured Stone, Dan Sultan, Pirra, Ruby Hunter, Archie Roach and Busby Marou, among others. Between songs, Adam shares stories from the heart of family and a life in music.

“Do your heart – and feet – a favour and go and see this show!”

– STAGE WHISPERS

It’s a celebration of heritage, harmony, and Dreamtime Swing.





**"It's jazz. It's Australian. It's intimate. It's huge.
It's how the songbook should be."**

- THEATRE HAUS

TARGET AUDIENCE

Lovers of live music, jazz, swing and big band.

First Nations people and allies.

REVIEWS

"... this show has something for everyone. ... No wonder many in the crowd were on their feet dancing throughout the show. A demure lady sitting next to me politely clapped all the way through – at the end she was on her feet saying 'That was bloody brilliant! I hope there's an album!' ... this show should take Adam to every theatre in Australia and beyond. Do your heart – and feet – a favour and go and see this show!"

- BETH KEEHN, STAGE WHISPERS, OCTOBER 2024

"The First Nations music is melded into a cohesive whole through the creative arrangement of works spanning more than half a century, unified by both the theme and the musical genre. ... it force[s] a profound reckoning with how we see and consume Australian music."

It's jazz. It's Australian. It's intimate. It's huge. It's how the songbook should be."

- DENHOLM BROCKLEY, THEATRE HAUS, 25 OCTOBER 2024

CREATIVE TEAM

Performer / Creator: Adam James

Director: Bridget Boyle

Co-musical Director / Pedal Steel Guitar: Michel Rose

Co-musical Director / Guitar: Jamie Clark

Band: The Dreamtime Swing



PERFORMANCE HISTORY

Redlands Performing Arts Complex,
World Premiere October 2024

REFEREE

Brett Howe

Programming Manager
Redlands Performing Arts Centre
Brett.Howe@redland.qld.gov.au

NUTS AND BOLTS

COST RANGE

Remount costs: \$10 - 15K
Weekly sell-off fee: \$40 - 50K
Per-performance fee: \$8 - 10K

TOURING AVAILABILITY

2025-2027

DURATION

70 minutes

SUITABLE VENUES

Proscenium arch
Concert Hall
Black box

MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PERFORMANCES PER WEEK

5 performances

MINIMUM BREAK BETWEEN PERFORMANCES

120 minutes

TOURING PERSONNEL

The touring party consists of 6 people –
5 x musicians and 1 x Prod/ SM

MARKETING

MARKETING COPY

One-line

A night of swing and soul

Short

The beloved hits of Australia's iconic First Nations musicians, reimagined with the electrifying flair of 60s big band music by celebrated local Quandamooka singer-songwriter **Adam James**, and his band, The Dreamtime Swing.

Extended

This concert-length performance features the beloved hits of Australia's iconic First Nations musicians, reimagined with the electrifying flair of 60s big band music by celebrated local Quandamooka singer-songwriter **Adam James**, and his band, The Dreamtime Swing.

"This is a first of its kind musical event. Although First Nations songlines are 60,000+ years old, *The Great First Nations Song Book* concert is a celebration of First Nations song from the last 60 years," said Adam.

"Australia's very first pop star was the legendary Yorta Yorta singer, Jimmy Little. In the 1960's a dapper young Jimmy Little rocketed to an international no.1 on the Top of The Pops with his hit single, *Royal Telephone*. The concert opens with this legendary song, and closes with *Treaty* by the incomparable Yothu Yindi," he said.

In between is a musical journey underlined by swing and soul and covering First Nations music makers like Troy Cassar-Daley, Coloured Stone, Dan Sultan, Pirra, Ruby Hunter, Archie Roach and Busby Marou, among others. Between songs, Adam tells stories, with the whole experience truly memorable.

The music provides a unique glimpse into the heart of Adam's creative journey as he brings the best of Blak Australian music to new audiences, new beats and new heights.

"It's a celebration of heritage, harmony, and Dreamtime Swing," said Adam.

MEDIA QUOTES

"... this show has something for everyone. ... No wonder many in the crowd were on their feet dancing throughout the show. A demure lady sitting next to me politely clapped all the way through – at the end she was on her feet saying 'That was bloody brilliant! I hope there's an album!' ... this show should take Adam to every theatre in Australia and beyond. Do your heart – and feet – a favour and go and see this show!"

– STAGE WHISPERS

"The First Nations music is melded into a cohesive whole through the creative arrangement of works spanning more than half a century, unified by both the theme and the musical genre. ... it force[s] a profound reckoning with how we see and consume Australian music.

It's jazz. It's Australian. It's intimate. It's huge. It's how the songbook should be."

– THEATRE HAUS



VIDEO LINKS

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/1037639191>

MARKETING MATERIALS

- High resolution production photography
- Marketing images
- Trailer



CONTENT WARNINGS / AUDIENCES TO AVOID

None

SPONSOR OR OTHER ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

RPAC (Original presenter, logos provided)



CREATIVE TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

ADAM JAMES

Adam James is a recording artist who defies easy categorisation, standing out in the music industry with his vast and versatile talent. Integrating his indigenous heritage, country origins, and a deep love for blues, James has crafted a sound that is distinctly his own.

Renowned in Australia for his notable debut in the country music scene, James has expanded his repertoire to embrace blues and jazz.

James's musical journey began in Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island) and rural New South Wales and Queensland, eventually leading him to prestigious award stages and the esteemed blues scene in Nashville. Themes of truth and storytelling are central to his work, and his live performances offer a powerful connection with his audience, revealing an artist deeply committed to his own authenticity.

James's first studio album, *Messages and Memories* (2007), paid homage to the Australian country sound and the landscapes of his northern NSW upbringing. Success followed with *The Country Singer* (2008) and *Children of the Sunrise* (2012), leading to performances at major festivals such as Woodford Folk Festival, The Dreaming Festival, and Tamworth Country Music Festival. In 2015, he was recognised as TSA's best Alt-Country-Blues artist.

With his third studio album, *Russian Blue*, James embraced his blues influences, recording in Nashville's The Sound Emporium with longtime producer Stuie French and a talented backing band. The album blends James's sincere storytelling with a deeper, soul-inspired sound, exploring profound human experiences and truths.

As a man of Quandamooka Country heritage, James maintains a strong connection to the Australian community. He serves as a Board Director for the non-profit charity Uncle Jimmy Thumbs Up, which promotes good nutrition and positive life choices through music. James also holds First Nations board memberships with BlakDance and Sobah Beverages, furthering his commitment to his culture and community.



JAMIE CLARK (CO-MUSICAL DIRECTOR)

Jamie Clark is a guitarist, arranger, songwriter and composer from Brisbane. He has toured as a musician extensively across Australia and New Zealand, and has worked with theatre companies such as QTC, La Boîte and Women In Voice.

Jamie has been part of many projects for QPAC, Brisbane Powerhouse, Queensland Music Festival, Musica Viva and other Australian arts festivals, and has performed / recorded with artists such as James Morrison, Paul Grabowsky, Kate

Miller-Heidke, Emma Pask, the Bull Sisters, Mahalia Barnes, Katie Noonan, Lisa Simone (USA), the Ten Tenors, the Queensland Symphony Orchestra and Topology.

As a musical director Jamie has worked with directors Sean Mee, Michael Gow and Wesley Enoch.



MICHEL ROSE (CO-MUSICAL DIRECTOR)

Michel began his musical journey at age eight in his homeland of Mauritius, receiving a Dutch-made Egmond acoustic guitar.

His first steel session was on 1981 Star Maker winner Leanne Douglas's Don't It Make You Wanna Cry, which won her the New Talent Golden Guitar the following year. He then played on each successive Star Maker release.

Michel became a sideman to the ultimate Aussie star when he joined Slim Dusty's Travelling Country Band, touring with the king for the first time for two years. He played on all of Graeme Connors' early albums, apart from A Little Further North, and toured with him for several years.

Michel's distinctive pedal steel can be heard on Anne Kirkpatrick's ground-breaking album Out of the Blue and her successive albums, and most of Lee Kernaghan, Beccy Cole, Adam Harvey and Gina Jeffreys' albums.

He has worked extensively with Australian film composer Peter Best on soundtracks for ABC TV series and movies, including Doing Time For Patsy Cline, which won an Australian Film Institute award for Best Original Music Score. He also played on the movie soundtrack for My Mother Frank, which won the Australian Screen Sound Guild Soundtrack of the Year.

In 2002, Michel was invited to the International Steel Guitar Convention in St Louis, Missouri. The Feral Swing Katz (with Felicity Urquhart out front) performed at that show and smashed all records, receiving four standing ovations, previously unheard of in the history of that event.

Michel re-joined the Slim Dusty Family Tour, playing dates in NSW and Queensland, and played on the live album, Reunion.

He's also played on a single for kd lang, Our Down Will Come, which she performed at the Sydney Gay Games, and played in US country star Jann Browne's Australian touring band.



BRIDGET BOYLE (DIRECTOR)

Bridget Boyle is a co-founder of debase productions. She has worked extensively in the field of clowning as a director, performer and teacher, having studied with Philippe Gaulier in 2001.

With debase productions she has been involved in the creation (writing, directing and performance) of many new works, including *Death in a Statesman*, *Leotard* (with Neridah Waters, co-production debase and Metro Arts), *The Longest Minute* (co-production with Queensland Theatre and JUTE), co-winner of Best Mainstage Production Matilda Awards 2018. In 2005 she was nominated for a Helpmann Award for Best Actress in a Musical. Debase productions won the 2018 Gold Matilda award for special contribution to Queensland theatre.

Directing credits include *Breaking the Castle* (Pleasance Theatre, Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Old Red Lion, London), *An Ideal Husband* (La Boite), *Weathering Well* (Brisbane Powerhouse and QLD tour), for JUTE theatre: *Cloudsong* (creative development), *To Kill a Cassowary*; for Queensland Theatre: *The Holidays*, *The Longest Minute* (co-pro with JUTE and debase), *Rice* (QPDA Finalists reading), *The Landmine is Me* and *Hurry Up and Wait*. For Flipside Circus and Metro Arts: *We Live Here* (co-directed with Natano Fa'anana, Winner, Best Direction 2018 Matilda Awards), *The Outhouse*, *Babushka Book Club*, *Right to Party*, *The Owl and the Pussycat* (Little Match Productions, Brisbane Festival, Festival 2018, Flowspace), *Angels in America*, *Gloria*, *Dead Man's Cellphone*, *Little Revolution*, *Bassett*, *Twelve Angry Women* and *Top Girls* for Queensland University of Technology, *Death in a Statesman*, *Popping Lead Balloons*, *The Clown from Snowy River*, *Lovejunk* and *Titanic – the Clown Show* for debase productions



TECH SPECS

STAGING

- Stage suitable for number of performers, with risers at 300mm for upstage performers (2400 x 2400mm for drummer, 2400mm x 2400mm for bass player, 2400mm x 3600mm for horn section) Venue to provide
- Stage dressing (florals) provided by production
- 1 x stool (venue to provide)

AUDIO

- Venue to provide PA system suitable for the space and audience area
- Venue to provide audio console and operator, both for FOH mix and monitor speakers
- Venue to provide backline:
 - QLD: Drum mics, bass amp + mic, three guitar amps + mics, 10 wedges, two wireless vocal mics, two mic stands, in-house piano and mic + mic stand (if available otherwise can fly keyboard), two DI's (direct inputs - acoustic guitar, piano keys), 3 instrument mics for brass section
 - Interstate: full backline of drum kit with mics minus symbols and snare, bass amp + mic, three guitar amps + mics, 10 wedges, two wireless vocal mics, two mic stands, in-house piano and mic + mic stand (if available otherwise can fly keyboard), two DI's (direct inputs - acoustic guitar, piano keys), 3 instrument mics for brass section
 - Venue to provide music stands

LIGHTING

To fully enable the design of this show, the show requires the following lighting systems to be available in-house:

- Facelight for full coverage of the stage, gelled in Lee 501
- EITHER 3x moving spots at FOH for specials OR 5x static profiles (in L501) on FOH for performer specials
- Overhead colour to suit the stage space (RGB minimum, ideally RGBW or RGBAL colour mixing, moving wash even better)
- Moving spots overhead to suit the stage space (ideally minimum 4, on upstage position, centre spot appreciated but not necessary)
- Molefay/blinders (ideally minimum 4, 2cell or 4cell are both great, pixel modes preferred)
- Haze (flexible on the type and means, but aerial effects and gobos are significant throughout the show)
- Floor package appreciated but not necessary (blinders/moving wash/moving spots)

Tour intends to use standard rigs where possible with minimum changes where needed to maintain design philosophies; that said, all above lighting systems besides the floor package are important to maintain the consistency of the show and if this is not possible within venue inventory other options can be explored.

Toured console is a Chamsys Stadium Connect capable of 4x 5pin DMX outputs directly or network lighting (Artnet, SACN, etc). Standard venue lighting patch and plot to be provided in advance of contract signing.

A/V

- If there is a projector or LED screen in the venue, a show logo will be projected behind artists for the entirety of the show. Will either be run from the venue or touring QLab machine depending on preference.

VENUE-PROVIDED CREW

- Venue to provide bump in/out crew as required.
- Show crew includes:
 - 1x House Audio Operator (FOH, or FOH + Mons)
 - 1x House Audio Operator (Mons/stage tech, if needed by venue)
 - 1x Touring Lighting Operator (Steven May or substitute)
 - 1x House LX/Systems Tech
 - No AV tech should be required unless dictated by venue crewing
- If changes are made to the house rig, ideally a pre rig of overhead lighting is completed prior to ensure a smooth show day. This should be discussed on a venue-to-venue basis, however.

