



Art STAGE

with Rasa Fournier

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GUYS AND DOLLS

When: March 4-13

Where: Mamiya
Theatre

Cost: \$18-\$22

More Info: 739-
4896, boxoffice@
saintlouisshawaii.org



Saint Louis School juniors Dillon Wong as Sky Masterson, and Angelo Oasay as Nathan Detroit in 'Guys and Dolls.' PHOTO COURTESY OF SAINT LOUIS SCHOOL



Raymond Del Barrio as Damon Runyon in the 2009 Broadway revival of 'Guys and Dolls'

PHOTO FROM RAYMOND DEL BARRIO

A Throwback To GAMBLING AND GALS

It's 1940s New York, a time of gangsters and gambling and fetching dames with their cute-girl curls and charming innocence. It's the era of *Guys and Dolls*, which Saint Louis Center for the Arts brings alive beginning March 4.

Adding a touch of star power to the production is Raymond Del Barrio as director of choreography for the nearly 40 singing and dancing high school students. Del Barrio, who hails from a renowned lineage of songwriters and musicians (with patrilineal family members who worked with Michael Jackson and Whitney Houston, wrote songs for Earth, Wind & Fire and tangos for Carlos

Gardel of Argentine fame), himself has appeared in film and on Broadway, including the Tony-winning 2009 revival of *Guys and Dolls*.

Del Barrio accompanies a creative team that includes director Kyle Kakuno and musical director Judy Yoshioka. The cast is comprised of standout students from Saint Louis, Punahou, University Lab and Kaiser high schools, as well as students from Sacred Hearts Academy and Mid-Pacific Institute.

The musical's narrative follows Nathan Detroit who runs an illegal gambling practice, suave gambler Sky Masterson, the pious and beautiful Sarah Brown who works for Save-a-Soul Mission and Nathan's longtime fiancée, Adelaide, a nightclub performer.

"The tone in America is

changing slowly but surely (since the milieu portrayed in *Guys and Dolls*)," says Del Barrio, who enjoys not just the entertainment value of musical productions, but their potential for students to absorb practical historical and social lessons.

"*Guys and Dolls* is at a time when there were thieves and gamblers, and gambling was a sin. Then there were hot box girls and girls like Sarah who works at a mission. And then girls who got married.

"It was simpler times. Things were looked at a lot differently then, but we're still dealing with all those issues," adds Del Barrio, who also directed Iolani students in selections from *Guys and Dolls* over the summer. Says Del Barrio, "I explained to the kids that back in those

days, those were the options for women: Get married, be a dancing girl or be a nun, basically. *Guys and Dolls* is kind of a cartoonish take on certain aspects of that period."

In the 2009 revival, Del Barrio played Damon Runyon, a newly devised role by director Des McAnuff, based on the real-life author whose short stories served as the genesis for *Guys and Dolls*. The character of Runyon opened the show, walking out with a typewriter and attempting to recover from a plague of writer's block. For Saint Louis School's production, Del Barrio and the creative team will be presenting the popular, classic version of the musical.

"The musical is driven by the relationship between Sky Masterson and Sarah, and Adelaide and Nathan," says

Del Barrio. "It was written with innuendo — Damon Runyon is famous for his play on words, so there's a lot of comedy and adult humor, but nothing too racy. This musical is for everyone."

As a bonus for the student-performers, Del Barrio is happy to use his connections to encourage them on their theatrical journey.

"I'll have some major legendary stars like Chita Rivera (from the original Broadway cast of *Guys and Dolls*) or Carol Lawrence (from the original Broadway production of *West Side Story*), or cast members from (modern Broadway musical) *In the Heights* get on the phone or Skype to send messages to my kids, encouraging them. It's something extraordinary I get to do that is innate to my life experience."