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Meet Cody Simpson

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Meet Cody Simpson

By Veronica Martinez

Discovered in 2009 at the age of thirteen via YouTube, Cody Simpson began recording pop music for Atlantic Records. He was marketed as a Justin Bieber-like teen pop star, but due to artistic differences Cody later broke away from Atlantic Records in 2014.¹ Soon after in 2015 at the age of 18, he released *Free* with his own independent record label, Coast House Records. Through genuine lyrics and the raw sound of live acoustic rock, Cody Simpson debuted his newfound freedom and creativity with the release of his first



independent record *Free*. His new sound gave audiences a taste of his artistic journey, authenticity, and passion.

Cody's creative control of this album allowed him to explore his sound and produce music with messages true to his personal values. *Free* is composed of fifteen tracks primarily co-written by Cody. His new style of music is primarily acoustic rock with blues and island/reggae influences, with a hint of western country influences.²

The album features live instrumentation for each song. This gives a very raw and organic feel to the music. In addition to the relaxed vibes of the instrumentation, Cody offers his audience songs which induce contemplation on relateable and important topics such as love, life, and

¹ Graff, Gary. "Cody Simpson Getting 'Free' on New Self-Released Album." *Billboard*.

² Graff, Gary

environmental issues. While every song on the album is a unique work of art, some of the most notable include “Palm of Your Hand”- a very islandy, ukulele based song, about exploring life, the world, and taking action on one’s dreams. This message is illustrated in the chorus: “The more you wonder, the more you learn / The more you love, the less you'll hurt / No matter what you do or where you stand / The world is in the palm of your hand, the palm of your hand.”³ “Love Yourself” is a stronger acoustic rock song about modesty, generosity, and self-love. “Wilderness” is a short, raw recording in which he sings about ocean preservation. Cody is very dedicated to social activism and environmental issues. In 2016 he was asked to address the United Nations Social Good Summit addressing the topic of the environment.⁴ He continues to be an activist for environmental issues not only through his music but also throughout his life. Named the United Nations Development Programme Ocean Advocate in 2017, Cody works to raise awareness for this cause across the globe.⁵

After an introspective summer in Venice Beach, California in 2017, Cody formed a band by the name of Cody Simpson & The Tide. As the next step after *Free*, the band released its first EP, *Wave One*, in September and began a small California tour in October of 2017.⁶ I was fortunate enough to witness Cody’s fervid spirit first hand during an intimate show at the Rickshaw Stop in San Francisco. It was incredible to see Cody’s and the bands’ heavy passion for

³ "Cody Simpson – Palm of Your Hand." Genius. July 10, 2015. Accessed January 11, 2019. <https://genius.com/Cody-simpson-palm-of-your-hand-lyrics>.

⁴ Monique Friedlander For Daily Mail Australia. "Cody Simpson Gives Environmental Speech at United Nations Social Good Summit." Daily Mail Online.

⁵ "Musician Cody Simpson to Be Named 'Ocean Advocate' for UN Development Agency." United Nations

⁶ Stubblebine, Allison. "Cody Simpson Announces 'Zen' New Band, The Tide." Billboard

their music. The band's *Wave Two* EP was released late September 2018 along with several music videos.⁷ These two EPs draw on strong surf, rock, and psychedelic influences.

Although Cody Simpson is still young and developing as a musician, it is easy to feel his intense passion for writing, composing, and performing the music he creates. He brings a fresh, authentic sound and perspective to relevant issues that many individuals can connect with and his dedication to activism is highly admirable. I personally found a deep connection to his first independent album, *Free*, which not only brought me back to my musical rock roots but also gave me a heightened passion and appreciation for music in general. Those who appreciate meaningful philosophical lyrics and genuine musical artistry are sure to find Cody Simpson's music an enjoyable, contemplative, and relaxing listen.

⁷ Thompson, Rita. "Cody Simpson & The Tide Catch an Artistic Wave in 'Underwater' Video: Premiere." *Billboard*.

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