



tvguide

every program, every day

Sunday Mail
NOVEMBER 29 - DECEMBER 5, 2009

RUDE AWAKENING



How a band overcame the odds and took
on the world Page 6-7

INSIDE

BRAIN BENDERS, DVD REVIEWS, FOXTEL HIGHLIGHTS



Cover story

Band will win your heart

Rudely Interrupted won't let anything stop them rocking, says NATHAN DAVIES

NEW York, Chicago, London, Bristol and Manchester – it reads like every rock band's dream tour.

Melbourne's Rudely Interrupted, however, is not your typical rock band.

The six-piece outfit features five members with serious disabilities, ranging from blindness to Aspergers to Down syndrome meaning the trials and tribulations of touring overseas stretch well beyond bad roadhouse food, lack of sleep and a crowded Toyota Tarago. During the trip, Rudely Interrupted not only changed people's perceptions but also became the first rock band to play at the United Nations headquarters in New York City.

The tour, and its lead-up, has been wonderfully captured in a rockumentary that will screen on the ABC this week.

For Rohan Brooks, the band's musical director and mentor, getting The Rudies around the world was always going to be a monumental challenge.

"I still can't really believe it," Brooks says during a break in rehearsals. "We were invited to play at the United Nations on Disability Day, so we did a lot of fundraising and somehow we pulled it off."

They pulled it off all right, but not without a few hitches. During their time in New York tour manager Caroline Tully was hit by a car while fetching dinner for the band, leaving her seriously injured in Brooklyn hospital.

While the band members were trying to come to terms with the near tragedy, thieves robbed Caroline's van and stole much of documentary crew's camera equipment.

"I think those things just made us stronger as a band," says Rory Burnside, Rudely Interrupted's singer and guitarist.

Born without eyes, and later diagnosed with Aspergers syndrome, Rory has overcome significant challenges to play with the band.



Constance Kirkpatrick, Marcus Stone, Sam Beke, Rory Burnside, Josh Hogan and Rohan Brooks are Rudely Interrupted



29-Nov-2009

Page: 1

TV Guide

Region: Adelaide

Circulation: 306556

Type: Australian Capital City Daily

Size: 1649.50 sq.cms

Frequency: -----S



He believes his musical talents he has perfect pitch developed to compensate for his blindness.

"My perfect pitch and great hearing make up for my lack of vision," Rory says.

"I find music fairly easy. You could almost say too easy - when other people are a little bit slow to cotton on, that can get on my nerves."

The band, which formed in April, 2006, also features Marcus Stone on keyboards, Sam Beke (bass), Josh Hogan (drums) and Constance Kilpatrick (tamborine). Sam and Constance have Down syndrome, Marcus has Aspergers and Josh was born with a rare chromosomal disorder.

"When we first put the band together, I don't think we had any idea of just how much talent we had at the time," Rohan (pictured right) says. "It took us a couple of months to even play a note together. We were just dealing with each others' differences, learning to understand each other. The guys had no conceptual idea of what it meant to be in a band.

"I think the first chord we played together

It took us a couple of months to even play a note together

was a B. When we played that B together, something just clicked. Their worlds collided.

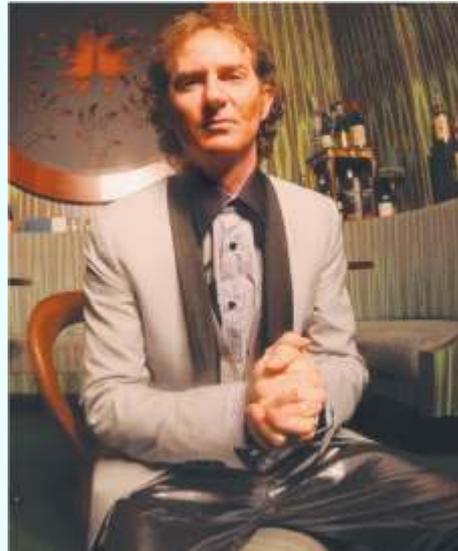
"Josh had never even played the drums before. I was trying to get him to maybe play some guitar, and he just jumped on the drums and started playing a rock beat.

"He's being playing the drums in his head all his life."

Rohan says that he and all of the band members were adamant from the start that Rudely Interrupted had to stand on its merits.

"People have these preconceived ideas," he says.

"They think, 'this is a disability band, we'll put them on the small stage, tuck them away



somewhere'. These guys are very, very talented, but they've never been given the right support and the right opportunities. So we're going to take this as far as we can now.

"If we can trailblaze and bring some people along with us as we grow, then all the better.

"Disability culture has been under a blanket for too long in this country. There's some really good stuff happening and we hope we can raise awareness of that and challenge people's preconceived ideas and what it means to have a disability. When we're up on stage, there are no disabilities."

The band plans to continue touring and recording, and there's even another US tour on the cards next year.

"The best part about that is that we'll be touring in June and July this year so we won't have to pack so heavily," Rory jokes.

"It was freezing last time!"

■ **Rudely Interrupted, Thursday, 9.35pm, ABC1. The band will play live in Adelaide during next year's Fringe Festival.**