

Home



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- News
- Entertainment
- Lifestyle
- Fashion
- Business
- Sports
- Video
- Blogs
- Photo Galleries
- Columnists
- Dating
- Contests
- On Your Mind
- E-mail Alerts
- E-edition

AUTONET.CA

jobboom.com
Employment Ads

bclc
playing it right

On CANOE.CA

- Auctions
- Vancouver Top 20 CD's
- Classifieds
- Discovery
- Canucks
- Horoscopes
- Crosswords
- Comics
- Lotteries
- TV Listings
- Movie Listings

24 Hours

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Music

Xavier Rudd and Vancouver do a rain dance

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Xavier Rudd teamed up with bassist Tio Moloantoa during his performance at the Malkin Bowl in Stanley Park on June 4. (JESSICA ROLLI/24 HOURS)

24 IN DEPTH

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By HOLLY MILLAR, 24 HOURS

Despite the persistent warnings for rain this Friday, unfamiliar patches of blue sky graced the audience at the Malkin Bowl just in time to welcome Xavier Rudd to the stage. The musically renowned Aussie took the stage with band Izintaba amidst the trees of Stanley Park and a chilled-out Vancouver crowd. Especially when the rain started, the shoeless Rudd could not have looked more at home.

Perched on his throne of instruments, Xavier Rudd instantly hypnotized every onlooker with his signature trio of didgeridoos, his lap steel guitar and the ability to play it all at once. Alongside his funk-ed-out bass player and phenomenal percussionist, Xavier turned the entire set into an alarmingly unified and organic spectacle.

Halfway through the show the temperature dropped, the skies opened up and our rainy west coast summer resumed. Described as a comfortable shower by most Vancouverites, the precipitation did not detract from the mutual musical connection felt by those getting soaked. As the rain intensified, so did the tribal beats on stage while the bowl buzzed with energy. It would not have been out of line for the clouds to comply and salute the finale of "Set Me Free" with a monstrous thunderclap.

While the hauntingly earthy tones of his didgeridoo happily infected the crowd on a subconscious level, Xavier's lyrics tend to be a tad repetitive on a critically conscious level. Is this necessarily a bad thing? Not quite. Favouring a mother-earth-mountains-peace-love ideology rather than a constant reinvention of astute lyricism seems to be working for the musician.

When he played older material like "Let me be" and "Messages", the ecstatic reactions demonstrated the unfailing support of his devout followers. Interestingly, Xavier opted out of performing his latest single "Time to Smile". Resisting the expectations of his newer fans, Rudd's personal relationship with his music and his faithful family is evidently one of the utmost respect.

The audience was perfectly relaxed on this fine Friday evening and had no trouble at all weathering the rain. By the end, no soul could sit still or resist Xavier's maniacal call and response routine that concluded Friday's bewitching performance at the Malkin Bowl.