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Living

Xavier Rudd goes global

12 January 2010 12:00

New band. New world music album. New UK tour. Xavier Rudd speaks to Australian Times.

editor@australiantimes.co.uk



By Ashlea Maher

ESCAPING to the Bryon Bay hills, laying down some tunes with a few mates and travelling around Australia to appear at the best summer music festivals certainly doesn't seem like it's a hard life for Xavier Rudd, and maybe that's why the cruisey muso is always appears so chilled out.

On the back of recording his first studio album, *Koonyum Sun* in two years with his new band Izintaba, formed with two South African performers, bassist Tio Moloantoa and drummer Andile Nqubezelo.

Given that 'Izintaba' is the South African word for 'up in the mountains' he said it is a very fitting word to describe how he is feeling currently.

By working in this new collaboration, he said he is moving away from the heavier-edged sound that he pursued on his last record, *Dark Shades of Blue*.

"The newness of the band is very exciting for me...the new record is really heavy, the spirit in the music is strong," Rudd said.

"The reason we're called Izintaba is because these guys are so heavy that I feel like I'm standing on top of a mountain."

For the past couple of months Rudd recorded at 301 Studios in Byron Bay with his new band, as well as a group of Indigenous Australian musicians.

"These are songs I've been carrying around for about two years," Rudd said.

"[Izintaba] toured the US before making the record, playing all these songs and we worked on them the whole time, so it's great to finally have the tracks laid down." Working with other musicians has given him the chance to diversify, he said.

On stage, Rudd is usually surrounded by at least three didgeridoos and a considerable collection of interesting guitars which the multi-instrumentalist regularly swaps around in order to play his collection of 'funky roots'.

"With a bass player now I have a lot more freedom. I'm not playing the bass line with my thumb while playing the rhythm so I've been branching out more with these rhythms," he said.

Rudd will be playing at the Shepherd's Bush Empire as part of an extensive UK tour of Ireland, Scotland and Britain.

Rudd said his audience in the UK continues to grow, and that he is pleased that his uniquely Australian music is met by such a pleasing British response.

Xavier Rudd is playing at Shepherd's Bush Empire on February 13.

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