

Xavier Rudd blows his groove into MFNW

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OregonLive.comXavier Rudd plays his didgeridoo at the Crystal Ballroom Wednesday
Xavier Rudd does a lot for one man.

Burrowed behind a full arrangement of three didgeridoos, a slide guitar and a percussion section, the one-man wonder kept to his billing as cultural protege of the island continent.

The Aussie entered as the headliner for opening night of Williamette Week's MusicFestNW at the Crystal Ballroom off the recent release of "Dark Shades of Blue." Though his latest album kicks much of his expected laid-back lifestyle to the surf in favor of darker, somber sounds, he came to Portland to celebrate his passion for an infused percussion set.

The earthy vibe switched into a drum-heavy groove after the encore where Rudd settled into his percussionist strengths, backed by a drummer talented enough to play at times with one stick and a free hand on bongos.

Rudd brought to the Crystal anthems that cry out to his passion for social justice, environmentalism and calls for peace. A regular among the cliques of fellow singer-songwriters like Ani DiFranco and Jack Johnson and a face on the summer camp-and-jam festival circuit, Rudd paid homage to Neil Young with a didge-heavy cover of Neil Young's 'Keep on Rock in the Free World.'

His slide guitar, Dylan-esque harmonica, and tribal beats showcased himself as a crooner of sweet songs from the beach lifestyle to thumping jungle rhythms of a percussionist that can swiftly blend differing European and Aboriginal identities into a seamless succinct harmony.



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OregonLive.comXavier Rudd sings a capella at the end of his show

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