

Xavier Rudd | 09.16.08 | Asheville

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Xavier Rudd :: 09.16.08 :: The Orange Peel :: Asheville, NC

Asheville's very own "Social Aid & Pleasure Club" had its doors blown off as a sold out crowd stomped and shouted to the uplifting aboriginal sounds of [Xavier Rudd](#).

The talking died and the lights dimmed as the deep, hollow croon of a didgeridoo filled the air. Bellowing a continuous, deep-gutted breakbeat rhythm through his powerful wooden oracle, the silence of the night died. Rudd's fingers jumped and skipped through the air, getting down to the music echoing from within. The dark and dancing sounds of a land far away left a rowdy crowd captivated and screaming for more.

Positioned as always behind an eclectic array of instruments, Rudd's setup included three didgeridoos, chimes, drums, guitar and harmonica. At times a one-man-band, for this tour Rudd welcomed drummer [Dave Tolley](#) along for the journey. Dropping straight into "Shades of Blue," Rudd's hands slid fiercely back on forth on the guitar, wailing a hardened, darker version of his usually up-tempo reggae style rhythm. The crowd swayed and shifted in sheer amazement at the beautiful, tribal-style harmonies seething from this one man.

Shifting between guitar, harmonica and didgeridoo while belting his heartfelt compassionate lyrics, Rudd made his way to the front of the stage. Stopping and looking around into the eyes of his faithful fans, he smiled and said that he thought Asheville was one of the best things about the United States, one of the greenest and most open minded places of all. The crowd waived their thanks and praise back as the music played on.

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Dave Tolley :: 09.16 :: Asheville, NC

Finding his way into a few recognizable jams, a sea of voices echoed in unison to some of his earlier tracks such as "Messages" and "Secrets." Rudd closed his eyes, feeling the emotions flowing from the crowd as he beat a slow bass-filled rhythm on the drums. That is until Tolley took over, kicking a fiery, up-beat solo as Rudd danced aimlessly around the stage. Making his way back to the mic, the crowd hooting and hollering for more, he broke straight into "The Mother" and perhaps his most infamous jam, "Let Me Be." Everyone knew the words to this song, screaming them back at the stage to Rudd's delight.

Just when everyone was sure that there could not be a single surprise left in the duo's musical bag of tricks, the drums kicked into high gear for an incredibly unexpected version of Neil Young's "Rockin' in the Free World." Sweaty swarms of people grinned and shouted, getting down to the classic tune. Rudd sang it perfectly, while his drummer tore through the beats, kicking it just one notch higher for that true rock 'n' roll feel.

Going out with a bang, they walked around the stage professing their love and appreciation to everyone who came out. But, the crowd wasn't done. The room filled with stomps and cheers for just one more. "Encore, encore, please, please," I heard shouted from behind me. Sure enough, they weren't quite done with Asheville yet either. They made their way back onstage as Rudd rang out a heartfelt tree chant before ripping into the slow rolling "Pockets of Peace."

The audience soaked it all in as Rudd pulled out a dreamcatcher and dangled it from the stage, gently singing a lullaby about being at peace with the world around us. His unwavering message of hope shone bright through a beautiful web of tribal drums and the bass filled harmonies of didgeridoo that left everyone in attendance moved down to their very core.

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