

LIVE REVIEW **Xavier Rudd Shepherd's Bush Empire September 28** ★★★★★

If I close my eyes tightly enough as Xavier Rudd takes to the stage, I could almost pretend I'm on a beach in Byron Bay with sand between my toes.

Seeing the Australian rock musician at the Empire, though, is going to be as close to home as I get on this night.

The set kicks off with a drum and didgeridoo combination that reverberates through the crowd, before Rudd launches into *Come Let Go* off his latest album *White Moth*.

But it is his second offering of

the night, *Message Stick* (also from *White Moth*), that gets the crowd swaying in their Akubras (yes seriously) and Bob Marley-inspired garb.

The one-man maestro, who is only assisted by a drummer and banjo player for a few songs, mixes up the tempo when he moves onto *Conceal Me*. "I think I'm in love", my friend whispers.

Rudd even slips in a shout-out to AFL team Geelong, dedicating *Let Me Be* to the Cats the night before they blitz the premierships.

Towards the end of the lengthy two-hour set (you get your money's worth when Rudd's in the house) the tempo starts to drop, but the crowd get inspired again during the encore.

A reworked version of Bob Marley's hit *Redemption Song* is a highlight of the gig, with Rudd dedicating the performance to "the situation back home".

Frankly, if you were an Aussie expat in the audience and didn't get a twang of homesickness, then you've been in London too long. ERIN MILLER



Getty Images

TNT
8 Oct 2007