

Andrew bangs drum on prejudice

Club Wild

Sydney Opera House

Music and Dance



In this era of *Australian Idol* hoopla, Andrew Hewitt is a rarity in the music industry. He's playing at the Sydney

Opera House and he didn't have to go through a TV competition to get there.

Hewitt, 35, is a professional drummer. He also has cerebral palsy. Today and tomorrow Hewitt will perform at Club Wild, a music and dance-athon which celebrates International Day of People with a Disability.

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care says one in five people in Australia have a disability and about 800,000 people in Australia care for a person with a disability.

Hewitt, who picked up the drum sticks at age 10, cites Led Zeppelin's John Bonham, Deep Purple's Ian Paice and Def Leppard's one-armed drummer Rick Allen as his inspirations. He says his disability sometimes slows him down, but importantly, he never lets it take over his life.

"It's been a battle trying to get things right, but you just practise, practise, practise."



Beat goes on . . . Heuzenroeder and Hewitt *Picture: BOB BARKER*

he says. One of the biggest struggles is trying to change the public's perception of people with disabilities.

"I've started to get more credibility. For years I've struggled because they knew I had CP and didn't want to know about me," he says.

"I tried to get a pub cover band going with people with disabilities but I couldn't find anyone in Sydney keen to help

pull it off. The community has this 'Disability should be put away and kept quiet' attitude and I have been working very hard against that."

Far from keeping quiet, Hewitt has been featured in the drumming bible, *Modern Drummer*, and is endorsed by drummakers DW. He is trying to put together a DVD and next year is planning school workshops next year to help

Accessible art

A book about how people with a disability can and do access the arts — and how much joy it brings them — will be launched in Canberra today.

Making the Journey: Arts and Disability in Australia, by Mary Hutchison, and funded by the Federal Government, is free.

The book is an initiative of Arts Access Australia (AAA), the peak body of organisations working towards greater cultural inclusion for the one in five Australians with a disability.

Making the Journey is available from AAA, phone 9251 6844, or from the Australia Council, 1800 226 912 or 9215 9000.

ELIZABETH FORTESCUE

educate students about CP. Club Wild, whose artistic director is Phil Heuzenroeder, will feature disco, tribal drumming and rock music, provided by Melbourne producer and composer MC Akash, DJ Vinnie and the BiPolar Bears, with Hewitt on drums.

□ *Today and tomorrow, 7pm. \$20 (carers free), 9250 7777*

STEPHEN DOWNIE