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Young rockers shouldn't do this - Motley Crue drummer Tommy Lee was arrested in 1990 for baring his backside on stage





ROCK ON: Think rock and roll can't be taught? Think again. These graduates are living proof it can

Rock and roll with the kids

Academy grads are hitting the right note

Does your teen long to be a rock star? Do they dream of playing five-minute guitar solos as thousands of rock-hungry fans hang off their every note?

If so, then the RAW Rock Academy, starting on Sunday at the Dubai British School, might be music to their ears. Graduates of the first Rock Academy last year are certainly singing the praises of the real world rock skills they learned - ones that you probably wouldn't get in a traditional music lesson, unless Jack Black was the teacher.

Clara Townsend is a Dubai College student and drummer with band Rainhouse (right). She says Rock Academy helped her turn her ability to engage the crowd all the way up to 11.

"I learned a lot of stage presence stuff," explains Clara, who is a massive Pink fan. "If someone is doing a solo on the guitars they need to go forward and look like they are really into it because it all affects the crowd. As a drummer I learnt that I can move quite a bit more then I thought. who is a massive Pink fan.

As Rainhouse keeps scoring gigs such as the recent Dubai Literature Festival, Clara is certain she wants to pursue music professionally.

"This summer I am going to audition for the Brighton Institute of Modern Music. The Kooks came from there and so did Tom Odell, the guy who just won the Brits Critic's Award, which Adele won in the past," says Clara.





Fellow Rock Academy alumni Josh Job (pictured inset, bottom) gained the confidence from the course to promote himself to the people that matter.

"They showed me that you should never wait for opportunities to come to you," says Josh. "You should go out and look for them and that is something that I now live by and it is only because of that I decided to write a small biography about myself and send out a demo."

It worked. The singer-songwriter and guitar player has since performed at The Fridge in Dubai as well as the Pavilion in Downtown. On the advice of Chris Stone, who runs Rock Academy along with Chris Kelly, Josh is also working on a back-up career.

"Life as a musician is very unpredictable - you could be famous after a single night or you could bankrupt," admits Josh. "So they said keep a safety net, get a full-time job but keep at the music and it will come. So that is what I did, I did some work experience as a sound engineer in a studio and really liked it.

Still, Josh is impressing local music decision makers and might just be doing enough to kick start his career in the spotlight.

"I saw Josh performing for RAW concert last June and I remembered he was confident on stage," says Anne Cabanel, who organises gigs at popular Dubai music hotspot The Fridge. "A couple of RAW participants were actually quite impressive for their age. So, we were happy to include Josh for the showcase at The Pavilion. Josh did a good job. He was nice, charismatic and had good songs. He was comfortable with the audience, making jokes and being interactive with the crowd."

Drummer and English College student Sean Vail attended Rock Academy with his brother. Although he was already in a band and pretty good at drumming he says he felt more like a fully-fledged rocker after the final show. The course helped him develop as a person, not just a rock star.

"I am a lot better at meeting new people," says Sean.

"Before Rock Academy, I only really jammed with friends, but now I can really jam with anybody who can play an instrument."

While he is busy with GCSE exams right now, Sean's dream is still very much to rock the main stage.

"It is a every boy's dream to be a rock star, it has definitely increased the possibility," he says. "[Academy teacher] Chris Kelly played at the Viper Room for years as well, so we now have connections to the music world through them as well." ***julian.pletts@7days.ae***

Do you have a natural born rock star in your brood? The Rock Academy still has spaces on its course starting this Sunday and finishing the following Thursday. For info or to book, email info@rockacademyworldwide.com

Do you have a youngster in your family who can wow with their musical skills? Letters@7days.ae