

To the beat of his own drum

Michael Ferguson

Gregory Witt, a 22-year-old from Rynfield, started playing drums at the age of 10 and never looked back.

Today he is the deputy percussionist for The Phantom of the Opera and will soon be starting rehearsals for Cabaret, as the lead percussionist.

When asked how many different kinds of drums he plays, Witt answered: "Anything that makes a boom, bang, dish, crash, nick, knock, chic and kcrrrr."

The drum kit is his first instrument and he thinks of himself primarily as a kit player, but he also plays classical percussion, like the timpani, glockenspiel, cymbals, tambourine and triangle.

"I also play the congas, bongos and djembe," he said.

"Anything you can hit bash or shake I can play; I even had to use an empty glass coke bottle for one concert I played."

Witt spent nine years playing for the East Rand Youth Orchestra, from 2001

to 2009, then went back in 2011, and spent another year with them as a tutor, training a new percussion section.

He has been giving drumming lessons at his studio, at his home, for the past eight years, as well as at Neill Et-

tridge's DrumLabII, in Woodmead.

"I love what I do, because I'm doing what I'm passionate about and making money from it," he said.

"I get to work with the coolest people; no one gig is ever the same and, when the work is done, you get the applause.

"I don't see it as a job."

When Witt was in primary school, one of his teachers asked him what he wanted to be one day.

When he told her he wanted to be a professional drummer, she told him that it was more of a hobby and not a career.

"I guess I showed her!" said Witt.

"My advice to anyone out there with a dream is: if you want it badly enough, go and get it!

"Take responsibility for your situation and don't ever give up."

Gregory Witt is living proof that it pays off if you march to the beat of your own drum.



Gregory Witt, from Rynfield, is the lead percussionist for Cabaret, which starts on June 7, at Monte Casino.