

The Southland Times

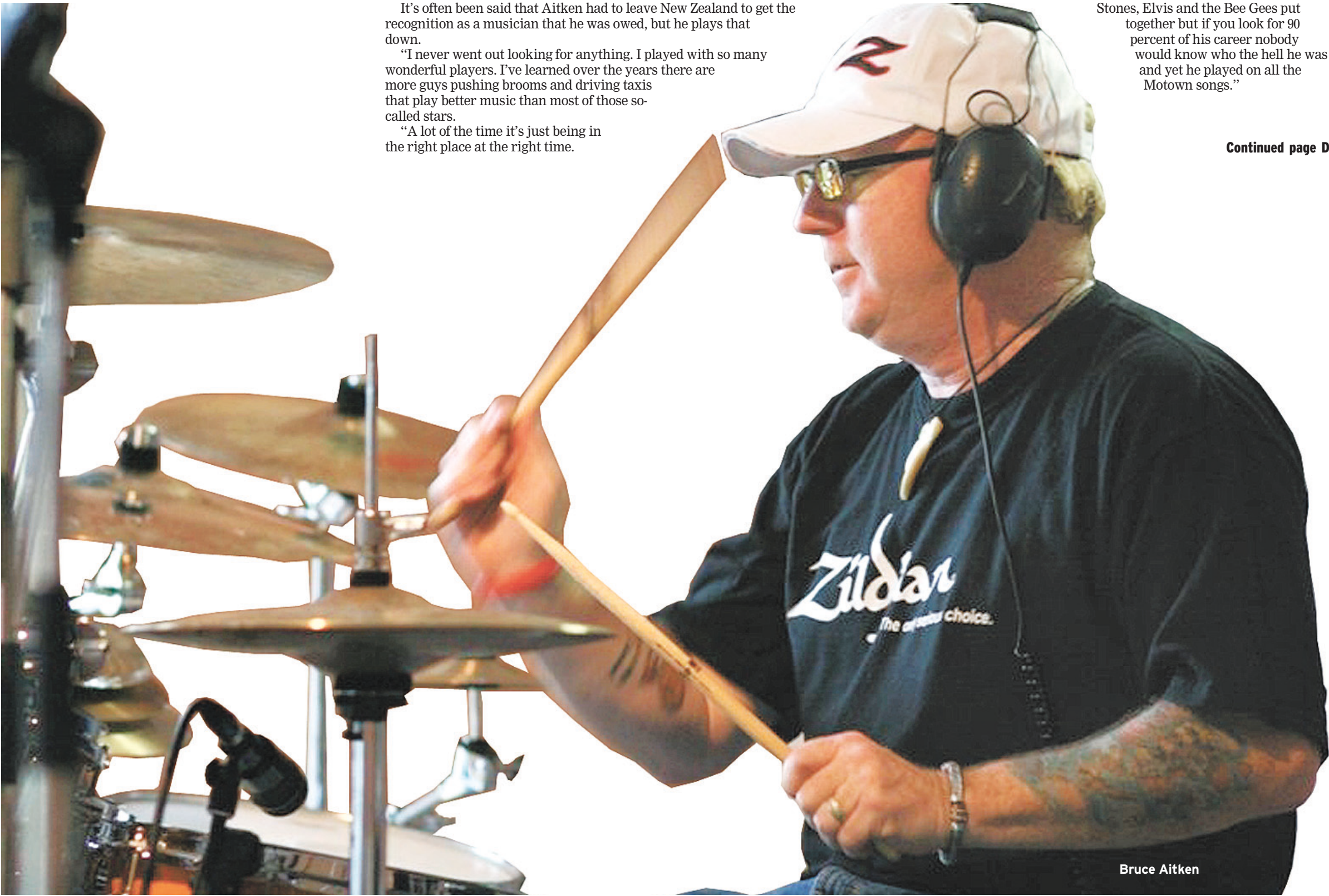
# Unwind

STONER FLIX  
... a fascination **D5**



# The beat goes on

He's the little guy at the back making the big noise. He's being inducted into the Southland Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame in September. He's Bruce Aitken. **Chris Chilton** talks shop.



**B**RUCE who, did you say? Look up Bruce Aitken on the internet. He's all over it. He may have been a bespectacled kid playing snare drum for New Zealand's youngest beat group Roger's Dodgers the last time you saw him in Invercargill, but since then he has taken the music world by surprise, if not by storm, he says with a chuckle. You'll even find Bruce Aitken's autograph on three series of Pro-Mark drum sticks. A respected session drummer and teacher in his new homeland of Canada, founder and operator of the annual Cape Breton International Drum Festival and now a singer and songwriter, Aitken is the embodiment of a man who lives for music. It's often been said that Aitken had to leave New Zealand to get the recognition as a musician that he was owed, but he plays that down. "I never went out looking for anything. I played with so many wonderful players. I've learned over the years there are more guys pushing brooms and driving taxis that play better music than most of those so-called stars. "A lot of the time it's just being in the right place at the right time.

You can have all the talent in the world and you can sit in a garage forever or you can have no talent and do something crazy on one of those stupid shows and next thing you know you've got platinum-selling records and suddenly you're referred to as a superstar. That's all total crap. "I know many legendary players that have changed the course of history — a lot of them are my closest friends — and I swear to God they've worked hard all their lives. "A lot of them go nameless because they're session guys. "My good friend Uriel Jones, who's probably one of the foremost recorded drummers in the history of music, has been on more number one hits than the Beatles, the Stones, Elvis and the Bee Gees put together but if you look for 90 percent of his career nobody would know who the hell he was and yet he played on all the Motown songs."

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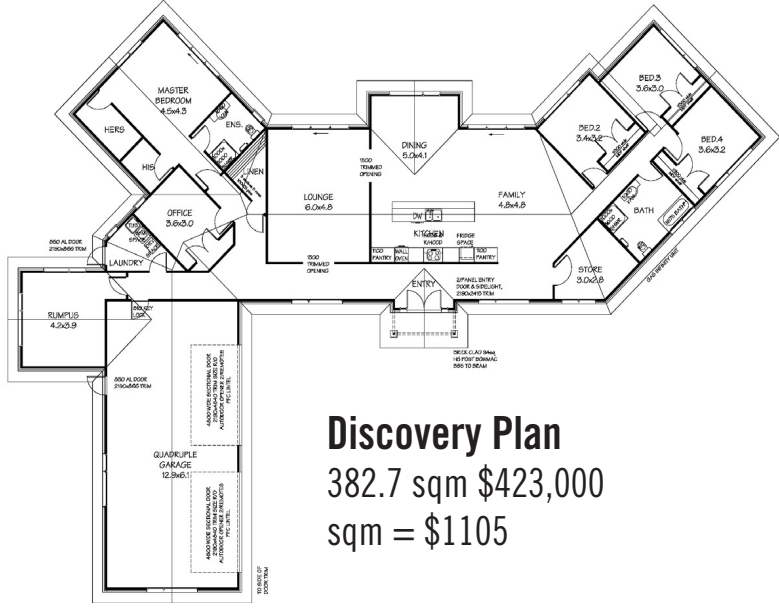
## Red-eyeing the Games

**MATE**  
MARK WILSON



**I**'M sure a few work places this week are experiencing a noticeable drop in productivity as a result of the slight distraction that is Beijing 2008. I've definitely had a few red-eye, hit-the-snooze-button-three-times, zombie-like awakenings these last couple of days. Even for those who don't particularly follow sport it's a TV spectacle comparable to 1991 Gulf War air strikes in complex camera angles and slow motion replays. As if the real footage wasn't enough, it's been made even more impressive by some cunning Chinese computer wizardry airbrushing away any possible imperfections. I'm not the biggest fan of excessive culture, bright-coloured hippie exotic clothing or any form of non-erotic dancing but the sheer scale and wow factor of the opening ceremony seemed to distract me from overly cultural flowery parts. There were more fireworks than the opening minutes of an early '90s State or Origin game and a Winston Peters press conference combined. That was just the opening ceremony — the action on the outside of the aqua cube is enough to give you a seizure and that weed clearing machine (10,000 committed Chinese workers) would be great to have at Lake Dunstan over summer. There is sport on as well and, unfortunately, from a New Zealand perspective, so far it has failed to deliver the same highlights as the Chinese efforts in impressing the world have. We seem to be falling into the same trap as the Rugby World Cup. This is the best Olympic team ever, expect many a medal. Enter the New Zealand phenomenon of gut-wrenching nearlys, last minute catastrophic losses and comments like "Well at least we made the finals". I've lost count but between the hockey and soccer there must be at least four times we handed victory out in the dying seconds to a grateful opposition, then to top off the insult the soccer team got in the pelt and did a haka. For what? — they didn't win a game. Our much vaunted rowing team will hopefully pave the Air New Zealand flight home with gold but almost came unstuck on Wednesday night with two crews dipping out in close battles and many others only just scraping in. Equestrian, well let's just not even delve into that. Hopefully, we have used all the not-quite-your-day moments and medals will begin to rain down. It's good to see southerners out there doing a top job, Storm Uru and Nathan Cohen will hopefully be accompanying the Stags in providing the weekend's entertainment with some powerful performances in rowing finals. Southlander Michael Timmers Stewart is also at the rowing doing New Zealand proud in a custom-made skintight, one-piece, full length gimp suit, complete with Silver Fern. Possibly the most impressive kit at the Olympics since Cathy Freeman in 2000?

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