

Tim James

All of Tim's music
can be purchased
for \$20 from
tjames.com.au

Thanks to the King of Rock n' Roll, Tim James overcame his childhood obsession of lawnmowers and developed a passion for music. Now a professional musician, Tim is working on his third album, and is on a mission to raise money to help children with CP.



When I was four years old, I remember vividly sitting in a beanbag watching TV and being absolutely mesmerised by Elvis Presley.

No one else in my family is musical but music was often played in the house. I discovered Kiss when I was about seven years old and my teachers wrote to my parents saying they thought it wasn't such a good thing for a child to listen to. My parents just ignored them – Dad was great – he used to take me to see all the best rock bands like Motley Crue and Bon Jovi.

I started off playing the drums, although in hindsight I don't think I was that coordinated. I took up the keyboard because I wanted to play a melodic instrument – my parents were probably pleased as well. Despite years of music theory lessons, I still prefer to create music by ear.

I can't remember being conscious of my CP. I didn't know any different. My parents and their friends never treated me any differently, so I always just had the attitude to get on with my life, even from a very young age.

I used to get teased a lot at one school, but then changed schools where the teachers and other kids were much more understanding. It also helped when I met an inspirational music teacher who was a classical pianist – he could even sight read music upside down. He was very encouraging and boosted my confidence in my own ability.

I think my CP was probably more difficult for my older brother. He used to give me a hard time when we were young, but just before he left home for university he sat me down to apologise for how he had treated me. That was quite unexpected and now, despite living in different cities, we're quite close.

I live and breathe music – it's been pretty much the only way I've made money since leaving school – at first through busking and then performing at various venues around Canberra. In 2001, I recorded my first album called Able Bodied - it was a real turning point because I did everything myself without the assistance of a record company and I realised that perhaps I could use my music to raise money to help children with CP.

It's only recently that my mother has come around to the idea of music as a career. Earlier this year, my dad told me how proud he was of me – I think they're surprised that I've persisted with it. Since 2001 I've recorded another two CDs and from each one I donate

20% of the sales to CP Australia to disperse amongst the cerebral palsy organisations across the country. It's not a lot of money at the moment, but I intend to do this for the rest of my life, so I'm hoping there will be a good sum by the end of it all! It takes me a bit longer to break even, but that's ok – it's not like I'm not surviving.

My wife Lucia and I were friends for a long time before we began dating. Even though I knew I wanted to be with her for the rest of my life I still had to make sure she'd be happy staying with a musician whose life ambition was to fundraise. She went away for a week to think about it and, luckily, she came back. It was then I knew Lucia was the one – fortunately she thought I was the one as well. She's been amazing, plus she has the most fantastic smile in the world.

Earlier this year, Disability ACT approached me to run some high school workshops about the music industry for students with disabilities. Through my experiences and association with The Music Managers' Forum, I've built up some great contacts in the industry - and the workshops are an ideal way for me to pass on some survival tips to the kids and encourage them to give music a go.

I've also secured sponsorship from Disability ACT that will greatly help me take my music to the next level. It's fantastic to have this support which will ensure that I can extensively promote my music without the financial burden of doing it myself.

Tim James's third CD, 'Another World' will be released in January 2007.