

Rainman character central to pleasant RockKwiz spin-off

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Dianne Butler
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DO YOU remember a couple of weeks ago *Spicks and Specks* did a behind-the-scenes episode?

Hopefully you don't, hopefully you have a small amount of protective amnesia, it's very helpful the way the brain does that for you after a traumatic incident, which in this case was the threat of seeing Adam Hills's scrotum appearing unannounced out of the side of his underwear. You turn on a music game show, you have every right to expect to see one.

At least [RockKwiz](http://www.rockkwiz.tv/) (<http://www.rockkwiz.tv/>) has had the manners not to use their regular Saturday night timeslot to run their backstage spin-off, [Rainman Goes to RockKwiz](http://www.sbs.com.au/blogarticle/108444/Rainman-Goes-To-RockKwiz) (<http://www.sbs.com.au/blogarticle/108444/Rainman-Goes-To-RockKwiz>). Instead it's the [Inside Australia](http://www2.sbs.com.au/insideaustralia/) (<http://www2.sbs.com.au/insideaustralia/>) documentary tonight.

Probably none of you have ever watched this series, because documentaries about bearded Tasmanian men who make their own knives or clinically depressed raspberry growers frighten and disturb you, but you're diddling yourself out of one of the more rewarding experiences television has to offer.

There's nothing terribly glossy about it – take tonight's, for instance, it's just a sweet little story about a lonely guy and his *RockKwiz* audition. It probably cost about \$27.50 to make, but there are laughs, sadness, shopping, a cliffhanger . . . everything you need.

Mark, the [rainman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rain_Man) (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rain_Man) of the title, is a 39-year-old student in Sydney. He's on his fifth TAFE course, and it's one of his teachers and the teacher's partner who actually made this.

Mark was born blind but now has 20 per cent sight after a series of operations when he was little. He's also got a form of autism called [Asperger's syndrome](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asperger_syndrome) (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asperger_syndrome), and has never had a paying job, and has always just felt like an outcast. He talks in this about how he dreams of having a friend, it'll kill you.

But Mark has this amazing memory, and since his specialty is music from the late '70s through to about the late '80s, Russell Kilbey the TAFE guy and his girlfriend Amy Scully decide to try and get him on *RockKwiz*. They'll appreciate his talent, and it'll give Mark a bit of a confidence boost.

How do you get on *RockKwiz* though? They don't just pull randoms out of the audience . . . Amy Scully says when they first rang the show, the response was "cautious".

Which I suppose you can understand, you can imagine some of the people they must hear from. But when he finally gets to the audition, and [Brian Nankervis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brian_Nankervis) (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brian_Nankervis) just pulls a date out his head (15 March, 1986) and asks Mark to name the top five songs, you ought to hear the gasps from the audience. Still, there's more to it than just knowing one decade's music inside out . . . So does Mark get on *RockKwiz*? Can't say.

I'll tell you who's on Saturday night's episode though, in case you decide to watch – [Max Merritt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Max_Merritt) (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Max_Merritt) and country singer [Catherine Britt](http://www.catherinebritt.com/) (<http://www.catherinebritt.com/>). I don't know if you know Catherine Britt, she's from Newcastle, she recorded a duet with [Elton John](http://www.eltonjohn.com/) (<http://www.eltonjohn.com/>), they released it in America and it was the first time Elton had had a song on the country charts.

She and Max sing his big old hit *Slippin' Away* at the end of the show on Saturday. I can't quite decide if that's the highlight or when Max sings about 20 bars of *Ain't No Sunshine*. Maybe that one.

Documentary: *Rainman goes to RockKwiz*, 8pm tonight, SBS

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