

Ask the Experts

Music room a sound idea



TREVOR SMITH

Recently we conducted a survey through the Home Base Expo website to see what products or information people would like to see on our website.

One interesting request was for information regarding the design of a music room.

It brought back memories of my own musical experience involving a new piano and an entire year of private lessons. The final result was a rather rusty version of chopsticks . . . and then I wanted to play the drums.

The inquiry made me think of architect Garry Baverstock, a keen guitar player who designed his entire house around his beloved music studio.

Whether you are looking to create a room solely for music practice or converting an existing room into a sanctuary in which you can play your favourite CDs as

loudly as possible, noise is by far the biggest obstacle to overcome.

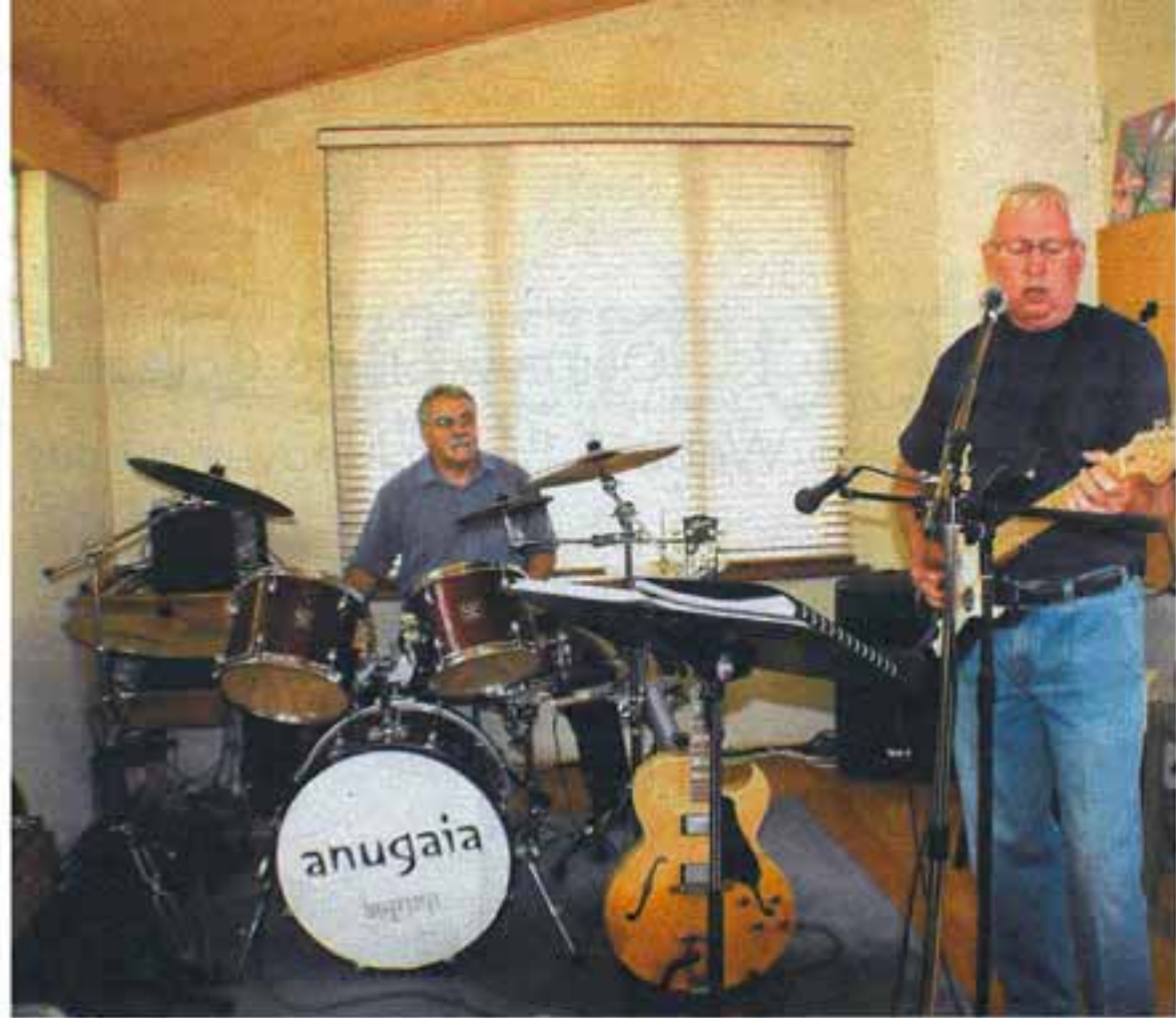
Mr Baverstock's specially designed room incorporates a range of products that significantly reduce noise while still allowing him and his fellow musicians to practise to their hearts' content.

He says location is a key factor to consider when creating your music room. If instruments and equipment are going to be moved in and out, or musicians are arriving and leaving, a separate entrance is desirable.

The proximity of the neighbours is a factor not to be overlooked in order to avoid tension in the street.

Cork tiling provides a natural sound-absorbing surface, while the addition of acoustic plywood housing R3 insulation is an effective way to reduce noise and can be easily attached to a studio wall and ceiling.

If converting an existing room, extra insulation should be installed above the ceiling, as standard roof insulation is thermal only. The extra layer will stop sound reverberating in the roof space.



Architect Garry Baverstock designed his entire house around the music studio.

Soundproofing can also be achieved through the use of double-glazed windows which allow light in but reduce the amount of noise escaping. A cheaper alternative to double glazing is to install sound-absorbing panels on the inside of the windows. Because glass acts like a drum when sound hits, it is crucial that windows are not forgotten when it comes to soundproofing the room.

With an existing room, the addition of a double-glazed partition will reduce the amount of noise while parents will be able to keep a watchful eye on their child's music lesson.

Doors and windows require proper sealing because even small gaps will allow noise to travel.

Even if the rest of the room has been adequately soundproofed, a gap under a door will undo all the hard work. Mr Baverstock's instruments and equipment are protected by double walls lined with polyester insulation and waterproof builder's paper. The inner wall and its insulation absorb sound before it can get to the outer wall.

This design also offers protection from dampness, thus safeguarding the valuable equipment inside.

As an advocate of climate-sensible design principles, Mr Baverstock's music room is an example of methods that can be put into practice to reduce the impact on the environment.

Insulation prevents the need for air-conditioning and glass bricks

feature in the studio to make the most of the external natural light while still offering noise reduction and privacy.

Mr Baverstock says that when designing a studio, the size of the room can affect the quality of sound. He suggests a 3.5m average ceiling height, with the total size of the studio to be a minimum of 20sqm.

He warns that building your own music room won't be cheap and should only be undertaken by serious, semi-professional or professional musicians.

Home Base Expo's next New Home Seminar is on Saturday, February 21. Enrol now at homebaseexpo.com.au or visit 55 Salvado Road, Subiaco, open seven days.