

National

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Max Cryer – a geeky pedant, never a nerd

By Michele Hewitson
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By MICHELE HEWITSON

The publicist said Max Cryer wouldn't answer questions about his personal life and I thought, "Oh well. he's not Rachel Hunter, and I'm not going to mind if I ask him things like where he grew up. She said she was sure he wouldn't."



Max Cryer

The reason for going to see Cryer is that he has a book coming out in six weeks, which is a wee way away. But it is about the national anthem and, apparently, we are all very excited that we might be hearing the anthem tonight if our rowers row right.

Cryer is. Because in 1972 New Zealand's rowing eight won gold and the band played God Defend New Zealand. "A blatant flouting of Olympic rules," writes Cryer, "since in 1972 the song was not New Zealand's national anthem." So tonight, "I would love to see the rowers come full circle and stand up there again with that band playing."

The book is called Hear Our Voices We Entreat and there is quite a lot about how the national anthem came to be played at the Olympics when New Zealanders win a medal.

I read all of this before I went to see Cryer but he had printed it out and left me sitting at his kitchen table, while he went off to have his picture taken, with the instruction: "If you would read that."

Can't going to let on that, actually, I had already read it because I figured, within minutes of meeting him, that he would likely test me on it.

Within minutes he had told me exactly what we were going to talk about. He used to be a school teacher and has never really given up.

From the table I could hear him instructing the photographer. "One rule: eye-level only." He didn't want any pictures taken from underneath his chin.

God knows why. He looks pretty good for whatever age he is. I did ask and he said, "I was born in 1900". I'm inclined to believe him.

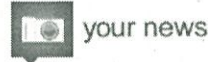
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