



In spirit, if not body: Actor Matt Walsh will portray footballer Ben Cousins in a musical.

Picture: Fotogroup

# Comic tackles Ben Cousins the musical

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The life of Ben Cousins has all the ingredients of a good musical — a stellar rise to the top, fame, money, underworld connections, drugs, a fall from grace and rehabilitation.

Little wonder then comic Kieran Butler chose the former Eagle and Brownlow medallist as the latest flawed national hero to be immortalised in a musical comedy.

Ben Cousins — A Rock Opera, follows in the tradition of Keating

and Shane Warne the Musical. It opens at the Hellenic Centre in Northbridge next week as part of the Wild West Comedy Festival.

The show follows Cousins' darkest days — including drug-taking, that ill-fated attempt at rehabilitation in Malibu — through to salvation with a little help from a God-like Kevin Sheedy.

Butler said inspiration for the show came after he wrote songs on the topic for a Melbourne radio station. The musical received rave

reviews at this year's Melbourne Comedy Festival.

"It tends to polarise people a bit. Some people expect to see Ben's life on stage, but this is a satire of the media through the prism of the AFL," Butler said.

He thought Cousins had not yet seen the show.

Cousins is played by actor Matt Walsh. "When I first gave him the role he went on a fitness regime but it's probably fair to say he's fallen off the wagon a bit," Butler said.