

SHINING bright

WORDS XANTHE COWARD



courtesy Lady Beatle Production. photo Dylan Evans Photography

“IF TIME IS CIRCULAR and our stories have already been told, then maybe we can’t change the ending,” muses Naomi Price. The NOOSA alive! festival ambassador is contemplating the mysterious woman featured in her new show, *Lady Beatle, The Little Red Company’s* third and final pop-culture cabaret.

Naomi says this show is the most complicated and the most challenging work the company has created. A kaleidoscopic soundtrack of The Beatles’ most monumental hits, *Lady Beatle* showcases Naomi in a role she’s been busy creating from scratch. Who is the character? “She’s anyone you want her to be,” says Naomi. “She’s from Liverpool because that’s where The Beatles are from, but with a new character you have total free range.”

Lady Beatle comes hot on the heels of the shows *Wrecking Ball* and a sold-out national tour of *Rumour Has It*. Naomi says that of all her shows, written and produced with the Sunshine Coast’s Adam Brunes, *Rumour Has It* was probably the least collaborative. “Adam and myself did a lot of that writing ourselves.”

Naomi admits that when they first wrote what has affectionately become known as “the Adele show” on a balcony in Brisbane over a bottle of gin, it was more of a satirical show about the British singer. But since then it has become a generous tribute to Adele’s amazing musical talent, and the ideal vehicle for Naomi, one of the country’s brightest stars. At the time, *The Little Red Company*, new on the scene, couldn’t afford to pay the band.

She loves having the musicians in the rehearsal room, involving them in every stage of the creative process. She says, “You have one idea and then you have another 20, and then you delete 20, and you have to keep apologising to the creative team. It’s new work so it’s just the way it goes. The band is really amazing.”

Naomi has always valued a collaborative approach to the creative process. She admits it’s intense, but during the making of a show she and Adam thrive on 24/7 collaboration, acting as sounding boards for each other. “You both have to live and breathe the same oxygen. You have to be ready for inspiration to strike at any moment.”

Even when they’re on the road, the two talk about work every day. Naomi says of Adam, “He’s my eyes. As a writer and performer I have to trust him implicitly. I have to trust his instincts.”

Adam adds, “Because we’ve been working together for many years across multiple projects, the individual band members are very much our equal co-creators on the work. Musical reinterpretation is key; we always look to present known and loved material in a new light.

“The trademark of our pop culture cabarets to date is that they provide a vehicle for a strong, sole female voice. In our early research for the project, we were fascinated to learn the real stories behind the music and were introduced to so many real-life women who inspired some of The Beatles’ most iconic songs.”

Naomi moved from the UK to Brisbane in 2003 and assumed that she could live and work in the river city. She was met with some scepticism. “I didn’t realise that people weren’t living and working here as artists.”

People would ask her when she was moving to Sydney. “I’m really happy that I didn’t have that precondition for failure. For me, I always wanted to live here. I moved across the world to live here.”

Naomi says one of the best things about living and working as an artist in Queensland is the encouragement and support offered by other Queensland artists. She says life as an artist can be lonely. “But I have amazing allies. I love that about the industry >



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“ I HAVE AMAZING ALLIES. I LOVE THAT ABOUT THE INDUSTRY IN QUEENSLAND. WE’RE SUPPORTIVE AND GENUINELY SO PROUD. LIVING HERE IS THE BEST.”



courtesy Lady Beatle Production, photo Dylan Evans Photography

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photo Matiland Proozzi

“ NOOSA IS NOT JUST A TOURIST DESTINATION, IT’S A REAL COMMUNITY, AND UNLESS YOU CONTRIBUTE TO THAT COMMUNITY, YOU DO GET THE FEELING THAT YOU’RE JUST PERPETUAL TOURISTS.”

in Queensland. We’re supportive and genuinely so proud. Living here is the best.”

And what about the Sunshine Coast? Naomi says, “It’s the best coast, obviously. Where else in the world do you have this tropical rainforest that bleeds into mountains? It’s so stunning. You can have the city feel but you can also have the beach feel; it’s super relaxing. Every time I’ve been up there it’s just gorgeous, an outdoor living celebration.”

She and her partner Luke Kennedy love coming here. “We’ve always visited the Sunshine Coast for some down time. We stay right on the beach. You open up your room and literally, you’re on the beach.”

Noosa Long Weekend festival founders David and Kristin Williamson discovered the same irresistible natural beauty when they came to Noosa in 1996 and decided to stay. They invited a group of dedicated friends, including violist and composer Brett Dean and restaurateur Leonie Palmer-Fisher, to help them establish Noosa as a destination of cultural excellence. The rest, as they say, is history. David says, “Noosa is not just a tourist destination, it’s a real community, and unless you contribute to that community, you do get the feeling that you’re just perpetual tourists.”

Naomi is excited to be returning to the region as this year’s NOOSA alive! ambassador. Noosa Long Weekend festival director of 10 years, Ian Mackellar, says the star of stage and screen represents all the qualities that NOOSA alive! aligns with. “She is a modern-day star,” he says.

During the 10-day arts festival (which runs from July 21 to 30), Naomi will attend events, mingle with artists and audiences, and perform Lady Beatle. She is thrilled to be bringing the show to Noosa. “I’m excited because usually we premiere our work and

it takes eight to 12 months to take it somewhere else. The Noosa audience will see the original version of the work. They’ll be able to say they were among the first to see it.”

The new-look festival this year honours the high calibre of local, national and international artists that have made it a favourite on the festival circuit, and offers a smorgasbord of events to audiences. Naomi is looking forward to joining the audience and experiencing other artists at the festival. “I love Lior and I also think he’s insanely talented. I love him as a storyteller.”

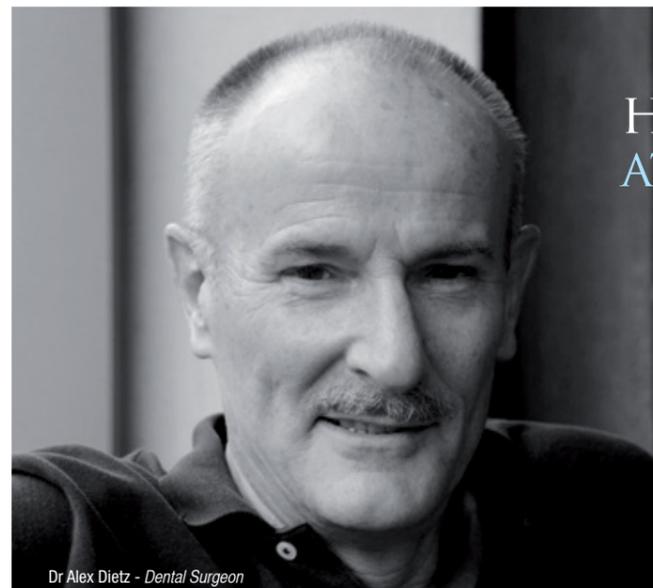
She’s also keen to check out “all these amazing pockets of inspiration. I’m going to feel very topped up with creativity. The arts really does enrich every day; it’s like having an amazing buffet. I’ll be full by the end of it!”

After enjoying 10 full days of rich culture in Noosa, Naomi will go on to feature in the national touring production of Beautiful: The Carole King Musical.

She will also be busy representing brands and causes she believes in. She and Luke are also ambassadors for Wildlife Hospital Foundation and National Trust Queensland, protecting the tangible assets that are historically important. To have a stake in the legacy that’s left for the next generation is important to Naomi. “Something we’re able to give Luke’s daughter, Olivia, is the Queensland we know now.” She says proudly, “NOOSA alive! is a legacy project too. Arts is another thing we have to be fiercely protective of.”

There’s no doubt that Naomi Price has her heart in the performing arts. As one of the country’s most captivating and versatile performers, her story has only just begun to be told. [noosaalive.com.au](https://www.noosaalive.com.au)

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