

NOOSA LIFE

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“The moment I get into that dress and stand on stage, I’m not me anymore.”

Jennifer Ward-Lealand



SEE HER: Jennifer Ward-Lealand in *Falling in Love Again*.

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

Channelling a true legend

Marlene Dietrich brought to life on stage

■ Michele Sternberg

IT’S the eyes and the sultry, distinctive voice that spring to mind when I think of Marlene Dietrich, that gorgeous 20th century film star and entertainer.

But while on the phone to a talented actress by the name of Jennifer Ward-Lealand (Kiwi readers might know her name from the credits of *Shortland Street*, the equivalent of our *Neighbours*), I could not help but feel I was talking to the great Ms Dietrich herself.

The deep voice, the rolling of the r’s ... Jennifer slips in and out of character effortlessly.

And it’s a character she has come to know and love on a very personal level since first playing the great German actress in the play *Marlene* by British playwright Pam Gems back in 2003.

Following the success of this production, Jennifer was asked to perform a Dietrich cabaret.

DETAILS

WHAT: *Falling in Love Again*

WHEN: Friday, July 28, 8pm

WHERE: The J Theatre, Noosa Heads

TICKETS: \$69, go to noosaalive.com.au to book

Falling in Love Again was devised in collaboration with musical director Grant Winterburn and features Jennifer singing highlights from Miss Dietrich’s films, concerts and recordings.

She brings this fantastic cabaret show to Noosa next month for *Noosa Alive!*, to give local audiences a taste of 1940s and 50s glamour.

“There’s something about the iconic nature of Marlene Dietrich that we just don’t see that much of these days,” Jennifer said.

“Everything is so much wizz, bang these days ... she didn’t have 20 half naked men or women dancing

around with her on stage.

“She just stood there and brought people to her.

“It’s a powerful thing to perform as an actor.

“When I do the show, the moment I get into that dress and stand on stage, I’m not me anymore.”

Jennifer said it took her months of research and practice to perfect the idiosyncrasies of such a famous star.

And the fact the character was a “real person” added to the pressure because audiences had a preconceived idea of what to expect.

However, once on stage Jennifer looks, sounds and performs just like Dietrich.

Speaking from her home in Auckland, New Zealand, Jennifer admitted she’s looking forward to visiting Noosa for the first time.

“I am one of the very few people who haven’t been to Noosa. I’ve heard it’s beautiful and so different to anything else on the Coast,” she said.

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