

Compliment paves pathway to success for upcoming designer

by Michelle Vollemaere

A chance compliment from Hilary Alexander, the fashion writer for London's *Daily Telegraph*, at the inaugural L'Oréal Fashion Week gave Michelle Boyes a new direction for her life – at the age of 39.

Mrs Boyes, who lives in Remuera with husband David and their two daughters, went from full-time mother to part-time shop assistant (at Trelise Cooper's Parnell boutique) to full-time student in just three years on the strength of that comment and her love of sewing.

Now 41, she has almost completed her second year of the new Bachelor of Art and Design in Fashion degree at AUT, where she intends to major in Fashion and Costume.

"I like dressing up, but there's a bit of that in everybody," she says.

"You like people to admire the things you wear and I just like to be different."

Mrs Boyes, who has always made her own clothes in her own style, was helping Trelise Cooper dress models for the Fashion Show when she met Ms Alexander.

"I was wearing one of my own dresses when this lady came up to me and said, 'Nice outfit. Whose is it?'"

When she discovered exactly who had noticed her dress, Mrs Boyes found a new confidence and began to believe what her family and friends had been telling her for years: that she was good at designing clothes.

"The fact that she, being so important, complimented me made me think, 'Wow! I might have some talent.'"

It was enough to help her decide what she wanted to do with herself now both her girls were at school and she was not needed at home full-time.

She says it made her think, "Why don't I do something that I love doing?"

A late application for the new degree at AUT gave her very little time to prepare, so she arrived at her interview with an unusual portfolio.

"I just went through my wardrobe, basically."

"I wore some clothes and took some photos with me. The only photos I had were of costumes I had just finished making for the Corran School play."

"I took it all along and showed them what I could do."

One of her AUT tutors, Bev Furniss, a fashion lecturer, believes Michelle Boyes is an innovative fashion designer who is dedicated to her art and who tends to think outside the square.

"She has a flamboyant personality



PHOTO: MICHELLE BOYES

FOAMY AND FROTHY: Michelle Boyes' Style Pasifika entry.

that comes through in her designs and in what she wears herself.

"Michelle shows an incredible amount of promise."

"A lot of us have great ideas but don't manage to finish."

"Michelle has great initial concepts and is well driven by her desire to see an end product."

A personal triumph for Mrs Boyes this year has been seeing one of her designs modelled on the catwalk in the popular eveningwear section of this year's Style Pasifika Fashion Show held in Auckland's Town Hall in September.

She did not win a prize, but just getting her dress selected for the show the first time she entered was an exciting step.

Eveningwear is one of the most heavily supported segments of the show, says organiser Stan Wolfram of Drum Productions.

Only 10 dresses were selected from the 40 entries submitted by nearly 30 designers.

For her entry, Mrs Boyes drew on her passion for the styles of the '50s and her years as a ballroom dancer, and combined it with the colours and motion of the sea to create an evening dress that froths and flows.

Under an overskirt of crushed, blue-green double silk organza, 10 tulle skirts (240m of tulle) are alternately edged in blue or green satin binding to create the right effect.

The bodice is silk hand-painted in blue and green and then ruched and embroidered to imitate waves.

To complete the effect, she spent hours hand-felting a silk and wool wrap in the same colours, added bonded silk panels and had a wave motif embroidered onto it.

The final touch was a pair of hand-dyed green shoes to match the entire ensemble.

The Boyes creation took over 60 hours of painstaking, labour-intensive work.

"But," says Mrs Boyes, "the effort was worth it."

Local horror movie 'actually quite good'

REVIEW: *The Locals*

by Hayley Barnett

Not another New Zealand horror film! The blood, the gore, the bad acting, the deranged story lines! No, *The Locals* is definitely not a Kiwi splatter movie. Not much blood, not too gory and the acting's not too bad. In fact, it's actually quite good.

Full of twists and turns, *The Locals* will keep you on the edge of your seat, or curled into a ball with your hands spread across your face.

Two young guys (Grant and Paul) go on a road trip after Grant is dumped by his girlfriend. They decide to take a back road on a mission through the Waikato.

Along the way they meet some strange, but attractive girls, who easily persuade the boys to follow them to a party in an abandoned house. Trouble is, the girls are too fast for the boys and they end up crashing in a ditch.

With no idea where they are, the boys head off in search of help. This is when they come across the locals, who are not a friendly bunch.

Writer/director Greg Page wrote the story over a two-year period while commuting from Auckland to film school in Hamilton.

"I used to drive around the Waikato back roads late at night and thought this would make a really scary movie, so it just sort of evolved from there," he says.

"I wanted to get that real look, but also make it pretty."

And pretty it is. The cinematography alone is amazing. To get the look he wanted, Page brought in cinematographer Bret Nichols, who works with him on music videos.

Page and Nichols have done videos for many of the big names in the New Zealand music industry, including Elemen P, Blindspot, the Datsuns, Betchadupa, Carly Binding, 8 Foot Sativa and the D4. Page has recently been nominated five times in the Juice TV Music Video Awards and won best group video for Elemen P's Verona.

His passion for creating music videos led to Page failing his film course.

"I concentrated a bit too much on the music side of things, and not enough on the actual course," he says without too much disdain.

Most of the film is shot at night in

the Waikato countryside and in Te Awamutu.

"To get that real look we needed to actually do it at night," says Page.

"And I wanted to get really bright lighting coming out of the darkness, like you have a whole lot of cars in front of the scene with their headlights on. To do that we needed the darkness."

And what about the night work, the long hours, having to sleep during the day, the cold, the dark eeriness of it all? "It was fun!" he assures me. "But I wasn't allowed more than two cups of coffee a day."

Page has a tendency to get too excited about things, but it's this trait that seems to have pulled the whole thing off. "I had to be like that or everyone would have got tired and depressed. It's all about working together and making sure everybody's working to the best of their ability."

The film stars some of New Zealand's brightest talents, who are emerging into

the spotlight with many of them in the music industry themselves. John Barker plays Grant in his first lead role. Barker was lead singer in the now-defunct band Jester. He has had roles in television shows *Mercy Peak*, *Street Legal*, *Jackson's Wharf*, *Shortland Street* and *Hercules*.

Dwayne Cameron, who plays Paul, currently stars in *Street Legal* and *Mercy Peak*.

The Locals' most film-experienced cast member, Kate Elliot, plays Kelly, a not-very-sharp sheila with way too much makeup.

Elliot has been starring in three other New Zealand movies while making *The Locals*: *Toy Love*, *No One Can Hear You* and *Crime Story*.

Newbie to the screen is Aidee Walker, who plays Lisa. Walker is a member of the award-winning band Handsome Geoffrey.

Probably the most recognised face amongst the crew would be Dave Gibson, lead singer of Elemen P. Gibson took the part of Nev, the bogan with attitude who provides the film with a humorous side.

Musically blessed, *The Locals* proves to be the start Page needed to burst into the New Zealand feature film arena on his own merits.

Oh, but a little advice: don't judge a film by its trailer!

"I used to drive around the Waikato back roads late at night and thought this would make a really scary movie."

Big laughs at the Classic

REVIEW: *The Classic's Big Wednesday comedy night*

by Sebastian van der Zwan

Ever see a man give birth to a wall? How about Bjork tripping on mushrooms in a supermarket?

Me neither. But now I know what they would look like thanks to the sensationally surreal impressions of Guy Capper.

The frenzied funny-man was just one of the nine multicultural comics compered by Jason Hoyte (*The Viagra Monologues*) on my visit to *The Classic's Big Wednesday comedy night*.

The bill promised fresh laughs from a mix of stand-up professionals and novices, and the audience was not disappointed.

American Dave Wiggins got the crowd giggling with tales of his countrymen's ignorance.

Apparently the Yanks believe the Two Towers really exist and that there is a bridge connecting Auckland and Sydney.

Darren Jardine from Ireland had

the audience in fits with his description of terrorism as "something to do in the weekend with your friends".

But it was the Kiwis, especially the Maori contingent, who really won the crowd over.

Highlights included Kiaora Haeremai (Rachel Callinan), a self-styled "motivational speaker for the dignified beneficiary".

Her advice: pronounce "dole bludger" as if it were French.

The guitar-playing Gish (Justin Hansen) also entertained onlookers with his "A-Maori-can Idol" audition, which included a yeast infection-inspired version of Jennifer Paige's *Crush*.

What do you get when you cross a troupe of talented comedians with a willing audience and just a bit of alcohol?

Two hours of top-notch entertainment for the student-friendly price of six dollars.

Big Wednesday at the Classic, every Wednesday from 8pm.

Tap dancing up a storm at Auckland dance festival

by Amanda Kyne

It is no surprise Linda McFetridge lives in a house with wooden floors. Carpet just doesn't cut it for the 32-year-old professional tap dancer, who bangs out rhythms from her bathroom to her bedroom.

In her upcoming show, *Rhythm ConstructioNZ*, McFetridge will show audiences what has gone on behind her closed doors.

One of 20 performances in next month's Tempo, the Auckland Festival of Dance, *Rhythm ConstructioNZ* is a combination of percussion, acrobatics and complicated rhythms performed to live music.

McFetridge, who is joined by choreographer Jodi Russell, says audiences will be surprised when they see her show.

"There is a general perception of tap that is old. In this show we've got no sparkles, no set arms and we wear jeans."

Her unique style of tap is similar to

the Australian Tap Dogs – influenced by the classic American style where rhythm takes precedence over arm lines and posture.

"Tap in New Zealand has revived itself. We don't have to stand like ballet dancers."

"Instead it's all about making noise."

Slapping, stomping and scraping on different surfaces are common themes in her work.

As part of her research, McFetridge has watched hours of video footage of old American tappers such as the Nicholas Brothers, Gene Kelly and Shirley Temple.

Unlike other forms of dance, hoofing, where dancers steal steps off each other, is part of the art of tapping.

In the 1950s people would have dance-offs on street corners, copying and exchanging choreography.

While steps in *Rhythm ConstructioNZ* are purely original, McFetridge says they are strongly influenced by her background.

She is from a big farming family in Taranaki, where getting her hands dirty was a daily chore.

But, she says, thanks to evening dance classes, she got out of feeding the calves every night.

Like most of the dancers in the upcoming festival, McFetridge has created work to showcase her own talent and to give other tappers a platform to perform.

"It's easy to find avenues to perform as a jazz or hip hop dancer, but not as a tapper."

The cast of five, including McFetridge and Russell, consists of Richard Cesan and Amanda Chan (both 18), who have just finished performing in Black Grace's *Urban Youth*, a dance show in AK03, the Auckland Festival.

Tempo is in its fourth year and promises to be the biggest yet, bringing over international acts from Switzerland and Australia.

Tempo started on October 31 and finishes on November 23.