

All together now

Having an audience of kids sing along to their self-penned ditties keeps this couple in harmony

VANESSA STAUNTON 46 // AND
DEZ STAUNTON 46 // CHILDREN'S ENTERTAINERS

SHE SAYS:

Dez and I met at a Nick Cave concert in a London club. It was 1988 and I'd just arrived – I think Dez was the first English person I'd really spoken to. We became friends but Dez was touring with a band and I was travelling so we didn't get together until we met again in 1996. I'd always liked Dez and it turned out he'd always liked me.

He's a positive person and I'm not, so it's good to be with someone who's so upbeat about the world. He's very kind and generous with his time. We were married in 1999 and moved to Brisbane the following year.

He's a music teacher, and a few years ago he showed me a video of a show he'd put on at a school camp. I saw how well the kids reacted to him and it looked like a lot of fun, so we decided to do something together for our daughter Caitlin's birthday party.

That was the beginning of the Fabulous Lemon Drops. Dez had always written songs for adults, so I suggested having a go at writing for kids. I mainly write the lyrics but the music just comes out of Dez's head. He dreams songs, wakes up and records them on a little tape recorder.

Friends who don't work with their husbands think I'm mad, but we like being in each other's company.

HE SAYS:

When the band I was in started to come to an end, it was Vanessa who encouraged me to get a teaching qualification. I think it's really important in a relationship to support and encourage each other and we do that.

After Caitlin's birth, 11 years ago, we came on holiday to Australia and I absolutely loved it – I'm from rainy Bradford and I'd never have thought I'd end up living in Brisbane on a 1012sq m block with a white picket fence, but I do consider myself very blessed. Brisbane's a fantastic place for our daughter to grow up.

Caitlin has helped sing backing vocals on a couple of our songs but she's a bit over us now.

Writing music for children with the Fabulous Lemon Drops was a steep learning curve after being in a rock band for so long, but children are so responsive to music. It's a fantastic thing when you have a room full of children singing and dancing to a song you've written.

Vanessa's really kind and very funny. We've been together quite a while now, but we always have things to talk about – that helps sustain any relationship. And I think she's just extraordinary.

FABULOUS LEMON DROPS' CD *Everything's Gone Green!* is launched Sep 23, 10am, at Indooroopilly Senior Citizen's Hall. Ph: 3202 6551. Funds raised are in aid of Save the Koala month.

