

Alyce Platt

Finding My Sense of Self...

Making Today Count!

by Maggie Wilde

When you weigh up her career starting with Sale of the Century and Neighbours, The Chantoozies, A Country Practice, Blue Heelers, Cash Trivia Challenge, movies, theatre and more... and along the way you throw in writing and recording two albums, starring in her one-woman show and performing for the Dalai Lama... there's definitely more to Alyce Platt than meets the eye!



Most people remember Alyce as the young, vibrant Sale of the Century hostess standing alongside the quiz master

himself, Tony Barber! But I've discovered there is something about Alyce that is far deeper, far more profound than this Quiz show beauty ever let us see!

Although Alyce and Tony are working together again on TV1's Cash Trivia Challenge, Alyce has a little magic of her own going on that reflects her personal journey over the past decade.

MW: Tell me a little about life for the past few years Alyce, it seems to have taken a slightly different path.

AP: Well, after Sale, I returned to acting and music and I did quite a few long term stints on various TV productions; I've done some theatre and toured Australia with my band.

MW: Is music a passion then?

AP: Ever since I was a little girl, music was my thing. I wrote music and played the guitar, it was just what I did. After Sale I began to write again and I picked up my guitar & produced two CDs.

Alyce released her first Album *Cowboys in the Attic* in 2000 and after performing at a benefit for the Dalai Lama she was inspired to record the track 'Still The Mind' which was the catalyst for her latest Album, *Beautiful Death*. The album came together with songs she had written over the last ten years.

AP: The Dalai Lama definitely inspires me... I would like to invite him home for dinner... and The Pope... and Leonard Cohen... Alyce laughed.

MW: Hmmmm, perhaps you should send out the invitations before it's too late to get that particular trio together...

Releasing her second album inspired Alyce to put together her one woman show, *Beat, Beat, Beat* for the fringe festival.

AP: The show developed out of the album... the title was borrowed from an ancient Egyptian

poem which is about the pulse of life and coming back to your own sense of rhythm. Putting it all together was quite a journey!

MW: Is your passion for writing and music the thing that brings you back to your own sense of rhythm and your own pulse?

AP: Yes, it is. I think being involved in the 'celebrity' or 'television' arena can sometimes be about what the market wants you to be. That can alienate some people from their sense of self. I seek creative things that connect me to who I am. Connect me to my inner sensibility and truth. My music comes from that place, from my personal space of inner truth.

MW: How do you connect to that place? If you're searching for inspiration for a new song perhaps, how do you reach that 'sense of self'?

AP: Just sitting down with my guitar and being with myself allowed me to get in touch with and release feelings that needed voicing. Painting is the same for me; I almost go into a trance like state. I got into Buddhism awhile ago too and I indulged in that side of life. I explored ancient mythology, ritual practice and the ancient Egyptians. All of those things enriched my creativity and song writing, they gave me the space and time to find me.

MW: Was there a catalyst for you in your spiritual practices? Was there a point where you began to no longer just think there was something more... but began searching for it?

AP: Definitely. Doing Sale of the Century was a double edged experience for me. I was 21 when I started and I became a well-known Australian face. I was featured in magazines every week and people would come to me believing they knew who I was from what they had seen on television. That was overwhelming

for me because I didn't have a sense of who I was, yet everyone else seemed to think they did.

MW: How did you deal with it?

AP: I didn't have the arrogance to pretend I knew who I was. I think some people go through their teens and 20s with a bravado or arrogance that gets them through, but I didn't have that. I was extremely obliging, I was a people pleaser. I was who you wanted me to be. So having a public role five nights a week on a top rating TV show and being unsure of who I was, definitely became the catalyst. Towards the end of the show I was hitting crisis point. Nobody else knew it, but within me, I was craving to come back, to journey back into connecting and finding who I really was.

MW: Are you there yet?

AP: Well it's been a long journey and it's still going. But I'm so much more comfortable and connected than I've ever been. In fact, I'm now in the television arena again, which is quite ironic. But there's a difference, I now have a great sense of all those things, so I look at it differently.

MW: Perhaps this is your chance to test your truth... to take what you've learnt and try again to balance and maintain a sense of self in the same industry?

AP: I've thought exactly that. I'm in a really empowering position and I'm in control this time... it's quite exciting!

MW: What's next for Alyce? Obviously the TV1 Cash Trivia Challenge will continue... it's been a great success... but what's next for you?

AP: I'm open to more television. The nature of being on television has changed for me, it's now a tool. It's become a place for me to continue my growth, in the past I allowed it to hinder my growth. I will keep my music and acting going and perhaps I will put together something based around my experiences of life-balance, well-being and creative living. Who knows... time will tell.

MW: If someone out there is dreaming of a career in the entertainment industry, is there anything you could say to help them maintain that balance and perspective?

AP: Hmm, it's hard to give advice because people are where they are. You can only deal with the stage you're at when you're at that stage, if that makes sense. I'd say... "Take it for what it is, don't make it personal. It's not about

being judged for whether you're good enough for this role or that performance, it's mostly about 'Are you right for what's right at the time?'" I think the danger for many young people today is that society has created an alarming desire for fame. I think it takes young people away from where they should be focused at that age.

MW: So what is your concept of the Almighty, the All Knowing, the Energy that some call God?

AP: I'm going to steal something from Leonard Cohen. I heard this the other day and it summed up where I am in my life at the moment. I love Buddhism and I love coming to the truth of now and making yourself a better person. But I don't know that I'm aspiring to a path of enlightenment... it's more the fact that I'm on that path and making it what I can for today. I don't think I'm going to get somewhere... I think I'm already there... today is the day I have been given to attain enlightenment. I know that practicing things like Buddhism and meditation are essential in terms of exercising those muscles and getting you back on track, but for me it's about the balance... when you're in harmony and in the moment...

MW: A little like the Buddhist practice of Mindfulness perhaps?

AP: Yes, I found a Vietnamese teacher... a monk who is in exile from Vietnam and his instructions on meditation are very simple. It is about bringing the awareness of mindful living into your life... that's what I try to do.

I try to be aware of every moment of every day. He teaches the Washing the Dishes Meditation and the Driving the Car Meditation. It means you are meditating all the time... you're not just sitting on a cushion... although I do need to be on the cushion more too!

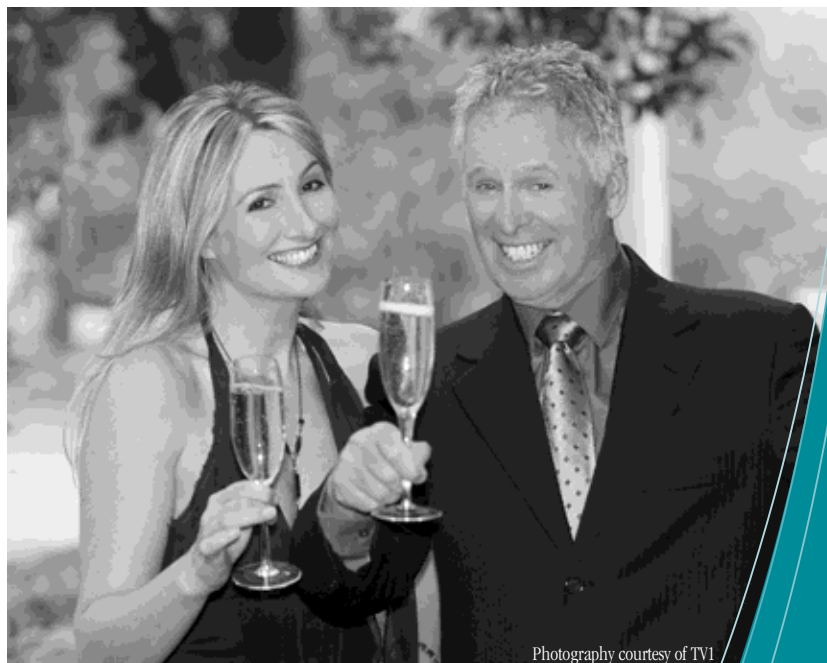
MW: I have read a little about mindfulness meditation. There is also the Mindfulness Eating Meditation... meditative eating... taking the time to focus on the food you eat, the textures, the temperature, the flavors, whilst living in the moment of each bite. Hey, that could be great for losing weight too... by the time you're half way through dinner... you're full... you loved it... you're relaxed and you don't have indigestion... what more can a meditating monk teach us?

AP: Lots more, it's so simple.

MW: Lastly Alyce... is life for you about "What am I doing today, in this moment that takes me closer to enlightenment?"

AP: YES it's where I am today... that's really all that matters... so I make it special... I make today count!

Catch Alyce Platt & Tony Barber on TV1's Cash Trivia Challenge, 8.30pm weeknights. The masters of quiz are offering the chance to win up to \$5000! You can also find Alyce's album *Beautiful Death* in music stores or on the web.



Photography courtesy of TV1