



TWO OF US

STORY BY Nicole Partridge | PHOTOGRAPH BY James Brickwood

Sydney DJ Tom Lowndes, 38, met his wife Alexandra Plim, 34, when she was at drama school. His absences as he tours with festival act Hot Dub Time Machine are just one relationship stress – but communication sets them right.

**TOM:** The first time I saw Plim she was performing in a play. She captivated me. With her pixie haircut and her strong stage presence, she seemed to be on another level to the other actors. After that, we bumped into each other at various house parties. My mates and I would say “She’s hot” to each other whenever Plim walked into the room. With her quick wit and confidence, she always made an impression. Eventually, I asked her out.

Our first date in 2005 was at a hip-hop concert. We met at the pub beforehand. Plim wore a very sensible, buttoned flowery blouse and jeans. I was obsessed with being cool and hip and thought, “Who wears a flowery blouse to a hip-hop concert?” But I soon learnt that’s Plim – she has her own unique, quirky style and doesn’t give a shit what people think. After the concert, we sat at a corner table in a poky little pub, pashing while onlookers applauded.

We started seeing each other. For the unable-to-commit man-child who had jumped from relationship to relationship, I found it got pretty intense, so one night we sat in my shitty little car outside her house and I said, “I’m not sure I want to do this.” Plim looked shocked and hurt.

Two months later, I went to see Plim in one of her final drama school plays. Dressed in white, covered in artificial blood, she recited this crazy monologue. It was a perfect role and reminded me of what I loved about her: that crazy, creative, energetic side. We started dating again.

While Plim is this wild genius, she’s also practical. One time, we were invited to a house party. When I went to collect her, she was waiting with a huge smile and cup cakes she had just baked. She wasn’t worried at all about the feminine cliché – and the guests loved it!

In 2009, I packed champagne and oysters and took Plim out on my dad’s tinnie. We zoomed up Pittwater and pulled into a cove, where I got on one knee and proposed. When we got back into the boat, the weather had turned. We have this photo of the two of us, fighting back the current, looking bedraggled and wet but so happy.

Our wedding day was choreographed by me, right down to a 40-minute music mix. Plim made an amazing collar with a tie for our little dog Lawrence, who was the ring bearer.

The most challenging aspect of our marriage was the birth four years ago of our first child, Elizabeth. The baby’s heart rate dropped

and the medical staff rushed us into the operating room for the delivery. I felt helpless. I had gone off my anxiety medication and had reached a level of panic that was physical and debilitating. Plim was very strong and still held her sense of humour, cracking jokes at the end of the four-day labour.

Plim does have her moments, too. One night we were in bed and I heard a snuffle. I rolled over and she was weeping. Her lows are mainly to do with her career or her body image. While we have seen counsellors independently, we also opted for marriage counselling. It was the best thing we ever did. We have learnt to communicate better and unite our work and home life. Plim has always been an integral part of Hot Dub Time Machine visuals and now hosts Kid Dub, and we tour together whenever possible. Plim is the perfect person for me to be with.

**ALEXANDRA:** I grew up wanting to marry Prince William. It made sense. We were the same age, and marrying him meant I could live my dream of being a princess. And then Tom came along. He was the complete package. I recall thinking, “Wow, this guy is so cool in his leather jacket and he has a car and a job.” While we dated, I also discovered Tom was into art and music and was passionate about children. This was like flashing lights: *ding ding*. I’ll have one of those, thanks.

We dated, broke up, lived together, then Tom planned the most romantic proposal ever. In 2010, we married on a pontoon at Pittwater and travelled overseas for our honeymoon. Tom and I never fight, but ironically on our honeymoon our stress and anxieties reached fever pitch. I lost it at the airport and Tom lost it towards the end of our trip. We had a one-night stopover in Caen, France. I had booked us into a shithole of a hotel. The man behind the desk was wearing a yellow singlet with food stains. Our tiny room was dingy and smelly and it felt like someone had been murdered on the bed. I thought it was comical, but Tom was so disappointed as he wanted everything to be romantic.

We are both perfectionists – particularly when it comes to our careers. Being a mother has meant putting my own acting dreams on hold while Tom builds on the success of Hot Dub. At times, it’s frustrating knowing that Tom is on tour surrounding himself with young, beautiful people while I’m here changing nappies. But I know if the tables were turned, Tom would support me 100 per cent. When Tom gets home, he puts his dad-hat on and he’s wonderful with our two girls.

A year after Elizabeth was born, we hit a rough patch. Tom was away a lot, he wasn’t sleeping well, and I wasn’t feeling confident about my body. At marriage counselling, Tom and I spoke candidly about how our bodies had changed and how it had affected our intimacy. When you’re young, everything looks good, but the reality of marriage is that you’ll have seasons where you’ll have a tummy and hairy legs.

Eventually we had a breakthrough. I stopped hating my body and started following body-positive bloggers. I wasn’t going to waste another moment comparing myself to others. Tom and I have always had a strong marriage and today it’s stronger than ever. ■

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