



James Nokise.

Height 185 cm

Master Of Ceremony Biography
JOHNSON&LAIRD

For someone who makes his living out of making people laugh, James Nokise is taking his career on a surprisingly wild tangent - politics.

Passionate if not a little mad about some of the attitudes in New Zealand, James is a Labour Party member. He hopes to force change by facilitating conversations about equality, fairness and basic civil rights.

With a Pacific Island father who is a minister and a mother who worked in civil service, James was always going to have political leanings.

But his comedy was grounded in early life too. "My parents split when I was four so the whole family was fixed on trying to keep everyone's spirits up," he recalls.

A small kid compared to his classmates, James became the "fearless one", the person the others would turn to speak up if anything went awry, whether it be with the Boys in Blue or out of control parties.

Little wonder then that he found the stage while studying law at Victoria University. Together with then political student Ben Hurley, James was acting in a play and used to entertain the cast with real stories of hanging out with street boys in the Hutt.

As James tells it, he "was basically kidnapped by Ben," and asked to perform at a gig Hurley had organised at a club called Indigo (now the San Francisco Bathhouse). "I felt like throwing up," says James. "Even now when I go back there, I still get a little nervous on that particular stage."

From there, his stand-up career began to fly. In his first year, 2002, he appeared as part of the Pulp Comedy line-up and two years later was opening the New Zealand showcase at the world renowned Edinburgh Festival.

At Edinburgh, James did three shows a day for 30 days, "so you're getting sharper and sharper. Not only that but you're seeing international acts, concepts, ideas—it's a complete artistic explosion."

James soaked it all up and while he started off nervously, by the end of the Festival's run, he was so polished he was asked to MC the Kiwi contingent.

The experience was invaluable, leading to two Billy T James Comedy Award nominations, a nomination for Best Writer at the Chapman Trip Theatre Awards and nominations for Best Wellington Show and Best MC at the NZ Comedy Festival and the NZ Comedy Guild Awards respectively.

With a CV like that, there's no way James will forget about his comedy career at the expense of his political passions. That is when he's not travelling the world, drinking wine—and dreaming of bowling a six wicket over.

Testimonials.

James performed at two of our work functions. He spent time before his performances researching our company and the interests of the attendees to tailor his performance. The audience loved him and people commented about his knowledge of our company. He also made time to socialise with everyone before and after his performance. - Nic Keating, PWC

James Nokise was our MC for the 2014 Party Congress held in Wellington, covering the Friday and Saturday sessions in two different venues with audiences in the hundreds. As a values led organisation, we want to make sure that people who come together to support our party, candidates and campaigns feel fired up and ready to go. James Nokise did just that with humour, charm and weaving his personal narrative with his passion to see a better and fairer world. He was helpful, insightful, got the vibe of what we wanted to achieve and performed past our expectations. A true professional. - Tim Barnett

James was an excellent host for the annual industry convention for the NZ Motion Picture Industry Council and comes highly recommended. He's enthusiastic, witty, a great entertainer and all-round a pleasure to deal with. NZMPIC have used him for a second year in a row and we are looking forward to inviting him back for a third year. Thanks James for all of your great efforts at this years Trade Show - Sandra Carrucan, General Manager Luminary Group&2015 NZMPIC Trade Show Event Organiser