



Guests watched anxiously from below as the pair exchanged rings. Above: A wedding album snap with The Edge hosts (from left) Mike, Jay Jay and Dominic.



Unexpectedly roped in to a sky-high ceremony, Tony and Jessica got happily ... ah, hitched!



News Editor Aroha Awarau

THIS RADIO COUPLE'S WEDDING SURE HAD AN EDGE!

Love is in the air OUR MARRIAGE GOT OFF TO A FLYING START

Like so many brides before her, on her wedding day Jessica Shaw had her head in the clouds. She was dizzy with nerves and excitement as she prepared to marry her longtime partner Tony Beetham – but mostly because she was dangling from a rope nine metres off the ground and in hurricane-like winds!

Having won The Edge radio station's Man Made Wedding competition, where the groom had to organise the entire day in only 72 hours, the pair had an inkling that their 7am wedding would be crazy and spontaneous.

But Jessica never imagined her short walk down the aisle to Opshop's "One Day" would be halted by The Edge morning hosts Jay Jay Feeney, Dominic Harvey and Mike Puru, who revealed the shocking twist – she was going to get hitched up in the air.

"I'm really scared of heights," confesses Jessica, "but I was surrounded by family and friends and thousands more listening on the radio, and knew I couldn't say no. I didn't want to be a bridezilla."

Good sport Jessica, 26, quickly changed from her long, figure-hugging wedding gown into a

short dress and a harness, swapped her veil for a helmet, and hoisted herself nine metres from the ground in 25-knot winds to marry Tony, 29.

Fearing for the couple, their 80 guests nervously viewed the proceedings from the ground.

"I was hyperventilating," recalls Jessica, who was joined up on the ropes by her bridesmaid Kerry Faulkner and best man Jarrod Smith. "I had to stay focused and didn't look down."

NOT FUNNY!

Jessica wasn't the only person worried about being in the air. The celebrant, comedian Ewen Gilmour – who's petrified of heights – nervously clung to a nearby pole as he conducted the ceremony. "I take my hat off to him," says Tony. "He looked like a koala bear hugging a tree."

Despite being on the ropes, the couple were able to exchange rings and Tony kissed his bride.

With the ceremony over, the wedding party came down

to enjoy their day. It was a wonderful end to a whirlwind 72 hours for builder Tony. From the catering to the flowers and wedding dress, he organised the event without input from Jessica, who was whisked off to Sydney.

"I've never worked so hard," explains Tony, who shed 6kg in the two weeks after being made a finalist. "I reckon I lost all that weight from running around and organising everything."

Eleven months ago, after the pair moved into their new home on a two hectare property outside of Auckland, Tony proposed to the girl he met four years earlier at a 21st party. The pair jumped at the chance to get hitched sooner than expected when they beat more than 400 couples to win the radio wedding contest.

As the couple had frequently talked about what they wanted for their wedding, Jessica trusted Tony to organise the biggest day of her life – with one exception.

"I worried about the dress," she confides. "He only had my

measurements, and I know it's hard to find anything that fits me. If they got just one measurement wrong, it would all go downhill."

'MAKE IT LIKE THIS ...'

But with the help of Auckland dressmaker Megan Kenny, who had less than two days to design and create Jessica's gown, Tony knew that his bride would look beautiful. "When I was describing what I wanted, I didn't know the terminology," he jokes. "I was like, 'I want it to be boofy at the bottom with a bit of length'."

Luckily, Megan deciphered the description, creating a stunning strapless two-piece satin and lace gown, with a sweetheart neckline and fishtail bottom. She also designed a shorter skirt for the tights and a stunning silver cocktail dress for the bridesmaid.

Jessica instantly fell in love with the gown and was relieved when it fit like a glove. "It was a dress I'd have picked for myself and I couldn't wait to put it on. Tony did well," she says.

With the radio station providing the reception venue – Auckland's Butterfly Creek – Tony had \$10,000 to splash on the rest of the day. And thanks to The Edge's listeners, businesses donated champagne, wine, lights, flowers and a tower of chocolate and vanilla cupcakes.

As guests dined on a delicious buffet breakfast, Jessica reflected on the perfect job Tony had done.

"I was amazed by everything. It was a big surprise every time I saw something new," she says. "I wouldn't change a thing."

And the sky-high vows didn't faze the groom a bit. "I'm glad there was a twist," says Tony. "This will be something we can tell our children and they can tell their kids."

The Edge is renowned for its crazy weddings, most famously for marrying couples who haven't met beforehand. Tony and Jessica love being part of the "radio family", and look forward to sharing their future with the world. "We definitely plan to have children," says Tony. "I'm sure The Edge will be checking up on us, so watch this space." **WD**

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PICTURES: FIONA TOMLINSON