

X Factor?

Charismatic Claudia has the full alphabet!



Just when you think things couldn't possibly get better, along comes something so completely different it blows your mind. Music lovers who regularly attend The Fourcroft Hotel Jazz Brunches will know exactly what I am talking about following the stunning performance by Claudia and The Jazz Masters on Sunday in Ossie Morgan's dining room at the hotel. Fronted by the incredible vocal talent of Claudia Gunnars, the artiste quaintly described by Fourcroft manager, Rob Cottle, as the 'local girl from Iceland', was ably supported by Yanni Hryscos on guitar, Jim Outram on piano and supporting vocals, Martin Jones on drums, and John Rodge on double bass. Performing together for the first time, the band had some impressive acts to follow and reputations to live up to. They more than held their own, delivering one of the best performances seen or heard at The Fourcroft since the regular Sunday Jazz Brunch sessions began. The audience's introduction to Claudia Gunnars came as they entered the dining-room and she was busily taping down the microphone lead. It was not until she stood up to introduce herself and the band that they realised that she was to be the main focus of their eyes and ears for the next three hours. While most of us suffer the mediocrity of contestants on the X Factor destroying classical hits of yesterday on a regular basis, it did not take long to realise that compared to most X Factor contestants, here singing live in Tenby, Claudia Gunnars has the full alphabet. Ousing charisma from the moment she started, Claudia was as entertaining to watch as she was to listen to. When she wasn't singing during the musical break, she swayed rhythmically and hypnotically to the melodies produced by her very capable backing musicians. When she sang, it was obvious that she was in complete control and enjoying every moment of her performance, and so were the audience. It was clear to all that this girl has a real voice, capable of singing some of the smoothest classics whilst giving gentle hints that if she chose to, she could blow out every window for miles around. Claudia is indeed a rare talent. Claudia's heavy Scandinavian accent added a new dimension to the sound of the many jazz and blues classics she so competently delivered. The names of



Icelandic jazz singers may not easily spring to mind. However, to hear possibly the only one singing in fluent Portuguese right here in the middle of Tenby is an experience that few people will have experienced and those that did will never forget. There seemed no end to this girl's talent. The songs she tackled came thick and fast as she flitted between jazz and blues, via the odd visit or two to a few West End showstoppers, and even Van Morrison classics weren't safe from her grasp. Each one a joy to behold, each one bringing out the best in her backing musicians. As the main performance ended,

the captivated audience immediately demanded an encore. Claudia pulled out yet another surprise - not only to the audience; the surprised look on the face of most of the band indicated that it was a first for them too. Accompanied by Yannie on guitar and later joined by John Rodge on double bass, she delivered a unique and haunting version of Over the Rainbow. The reaction of the audience and stunned fellow band members nearly brought the ceiling down. Yes, this was the first full blown jazz session that Claudia and the Jazz Masters had performed. If this performance is anything to go by for the sake of live music, it certainly won't be their last. Once again thanks to everyone at The Fourcroft for giving local talent a chance to shine. In this case they have truly lit a bright beacon. Watch this space you will certainly be reading about them again.

Allan Morris