

Laurika's talent in full flower blending style and intimacy

Writing about Laurika Rauch a long time ago, I made what I thought was a rather clever play on words by saying in German, "Niemals Rauch ohne Feuer" (Never smoke without fire!)

Now, years later the allusion seems maybe a bit glib and obvious, but I'm glad to say that the lady's flame of talent burns as brightly as ever, plus an added intimacy in approach which draws her even nearer to the audience.

During the 20 or so numbers comprising this programme, a faultless microphone technique and capacity to range from Boere Meisie interpretation to continental European sophistication fully revealed why Laurika Rauch is busy working on her sixth solo album.

One of the unusual characteristics of the singer's talent is that she is blessed with those rare and special qualities of timbre and voice production which were typical of such great continental cabaret artists as Lale Andersen and Zarah Leander who were irresistible in their particularly intimate vocal presentation.

Laurika Rauch's easy ability to switch from soft and sensual self-expression to accentuated but always melodic rhythm is probably partly a consequence of catering to the demands of Afrikaans "musiek en liriek" for strong melodic or rhythmic lines (coupled, incidentally, with intelligible lyrics!)

Just as the singer has gathered to herself a very large following in South Africa within this genre of musical entertainment, so I surmise that if she cared to tour overseas she would also win considerable popularity in Continental Europe (as opposed to Britain), where melodic song in the "musiek en liriek" tradition still has a following even among the younger generations.

This is borne out by the fact that she has already enjoyed considerable success in Belgium, due, I am sure, to the fact that her type of light music is closely related to the work of many contemporary songwriters on the European continent which is distinctly different from the American and English scene (which

scene, of course, is also very evident in Europe).

Wessel van Wyk who accompanied on piano and sometimes vocally, is an excellent pianist in his own right. For several years Van Wyk studied at the famous High School for Music and the Interpretive Arts in Vienna, and his technique reflects his training although I found the accompaniment somewhat pianofortissimo rather than pianoforte, which was perhaps due to his voice microphone picking up the piano although I think it was in the playing.

This concert, in this intimate salon-theatre, showed Laurika Rauch at her very best and it is typical of her talent that she breathed new life even into the over-familiar "The Man I Love".

But I did feel that she could have offered another encore if only a repeat of her much-loved "Kinders van die Wind".

MUSIC . . . by DICK TURPIN

CONCERT: Laurika Rauch with Wessel van Wyk
(Soiree Society, 49 St Patrick Rd, Houghton)
PRESENTERS: Des and Dawn Lindberg



Laurika Rauch