

Laurika stirs in Brel

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CABARET: Laurika Sings Brel (After Dark Restaurant, Pretoria)

PERFORMERS: Laurika Rauch, David Taljaard

By Gordon Engelbrecht

THE so-called cabaret scene in South Africa has become somewhat eclectic in the years since it mainly consisted of after-dinner entertainment provided by the likes of Judy Page and Dianne Chandler at venues such as The Top of the Carlton or Annabel's.

In the interim all varia-

tions of the genre have entered the scene, making it increasingly difficult to define a specific and consistent style – from satirical revue to the solo Chantuese, with plenty

else thrown in for further convoluted definition.

Perhaps the best description of Laurika Rauch's latest presentation is that of a Lieder concert, and in that respect she fits the bill more than adequately.

The voice, still one of my favourites, is as glorious as ever, the repertoire contains both the familiar and the less so, David Taljaard's piano accompaniment is expert and presentation wise there's little to complain about, (but oy, that dreadful lighting!)

All is not perfect. Certain songs, like *Madeleine* and *The Desperate Ones*, are perhaps better suited to a male register and I've heard more affecting versions of the classic *The Old Folks*, but there's so much more that is richly and passionately sung, with emotion and soul always hovering, that it seems almost criminal to



LAURIKA RAUCH . . . voice as glorious as ever

carp.

Her song of *The Old Lovers* is breathlessly delicate, and *Mijn Vlakke Land* stirs, as it ought and no Brel progamme would be complete without *Marike Marike*, given full flourish but still retaining finesse.

Perhaps ironically for a

show that is almost entirely English, the packed mainly Afrikaans-speaking Pretoria audiences lap up every minute of it.

Certainly its a darn

sight better than any of Taubie Kuschlick's much-vaunted Americanised attempts at the same song-writers material.