

POPSICULTURE

Jennie Sawdon at The Sanctuary, Manchester, July 17th 2011



The Sanctuary's live music night has firmly claimed its place on the calendar of cultural events taking place in Didsbury week by week, which is testament to the commitment of its organiser Sara Dowling and some very talented musicians who provide the entertainment itself.

At Popsiculture, we've become firm supporters of the wonderful Jennifer Sawdon, a wedding singer turned recording artist who recently took the brave step of going it alone and self-producing her debut album.

So we couldn't say no to a return to The Sanctuary yesterday evening as Jennie once more took to the stage to perform her own songs and a couple of well-known favourites.

The Performance

Jennie's set was, as ever, an engaging experience - each song introduced with a monologue explaining the inspiration behind the lyrics and helping those less familiar with her music to understand the emotion behind each composition.

Back in March, the first time we saw Jennie live at The Sanctuary, the audience were littered throughout the bar. This time, it's no coincidence that they gravitated towards the stage over the course of her performance, drawn in by her note-perfect delivery and angel-sweet voice.

From our place towards the back, the acoustics were great and the performance near-perfect - not only from Jennie, but also her band, album co-contributors Johnny Heyes on guitar, Bryan Hargreaves on drums and Neil Fairclough on bass. At times it was easy to forget this was a live performance in a venue not really designed for live music - the vocals and instrumentals alike were of recording quality and the audience seemed to really appreciate that fact.

The crowd's appreciation, in fact, was such that an encore was demanded, a call that Jennie was happy to oblige. For those of us who count ourselves as fans, it was one more chance to hear her sing before calling it a night.

Jennie Sawdon trivia: In March and last night, the first song played by The Sanctuary after Jennie's set was I'll Be There, which you can hear her sing on her website.

Fighting the Fairytale

Just a quick footnote about *Fighting the Fairytale*, Jennie's debut album which is available on iTunes.

I've been waiting for the chance to see Jennie live again so I could grab a copy on CD - and I didn't waste last night's opportunity. For the record, this really is a 'proper' album, with original artwork and a professionally printed inlay with full lyrics to all the tracks. And it sounds great, so don't be afraid to go for the download version if that's your thing.

by Bob Bardsley