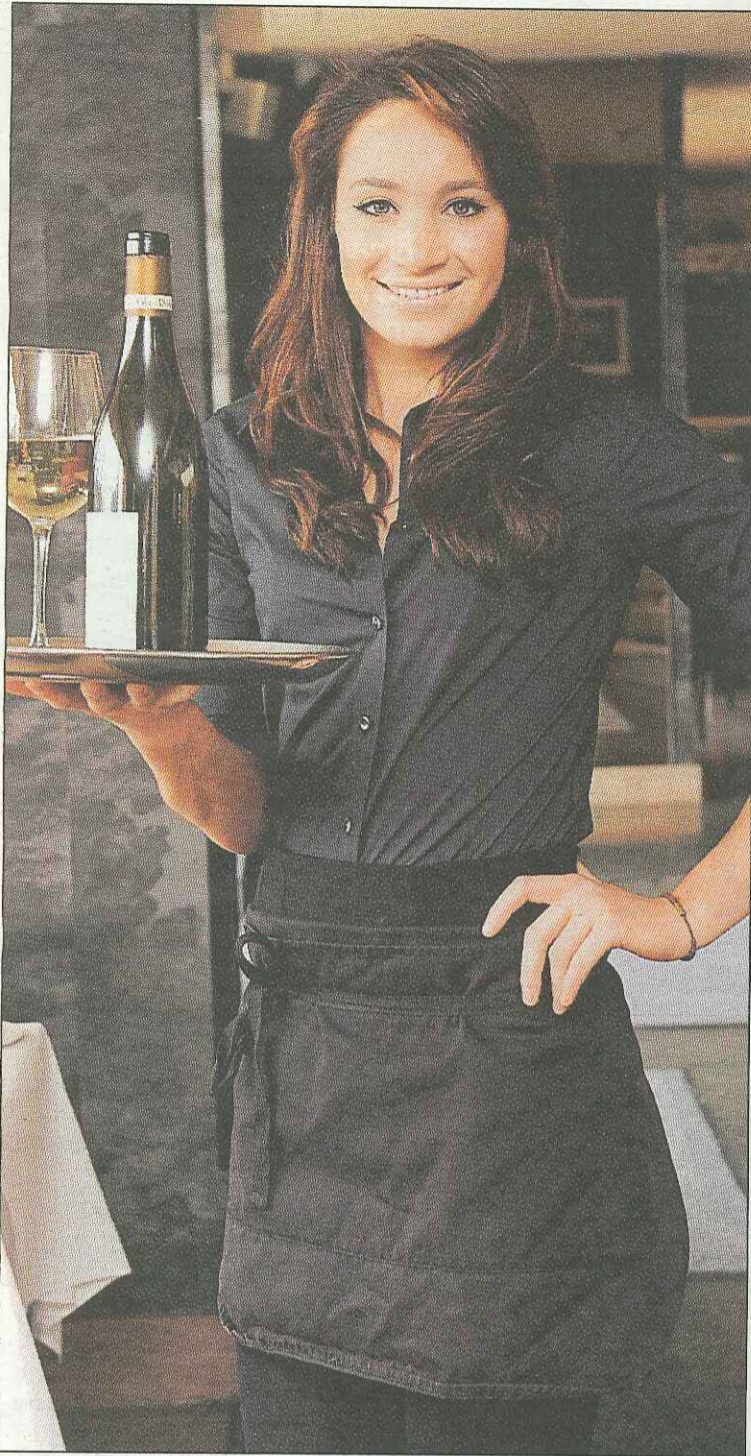


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News

Excuse me waitress, aren't you a chart-topper?



Tony Bonnici and Laura Roberts

AFTER topping the classical music charts, few would blame Laura Wright for wanting to quit the day job as a waitress.

But the 21-year-old, whose debut solo album *The Last Rose* shot to number one this week, is going back to work at the City's busy Northbank restaurant under the Millennium Bridge.

After the announcement last night that her disc had gone platinum, she said she realised it was no guarantee of riches.

"The restaurant is on hold at the moment but I will definitely go back there and continue for as long as needs be. I have made some really great friends there.

"I think it is great not only to keep me grounded but to have that on the side. I gave up working there for the last month or so just to concentrate on the album with the view to going back when things are quieter.

"It is great just to have something on the side." The hit record was "very exciting... It's nice that all the hard work from a big team of people has paid off. But you should not underestimate how hard things are in the music industry."

Laura rose to fame in 2006 as a member of the classical girl group All Angels who had the fastest selling debut for a classical record.

She left the group last year to concentrate on her studies at the Royal College of Music.

Her father Paul, 64, a financial adviser of Framsdon, Suffolk, said all his children had been obliged to work to help support themselves while at college.

He said: "Laura's doing her bit, like all our children. She's got three older brothers so there is no chance of special treatment."

Miles Entwistle, assistant general manager at Northbank restaurant, said: "She is our first famous waitress."

Inspired by her grandmother's love of traditional folk music, Laura chose



to record a new album of traditional folk songs with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

She said: "Because I had left [All Angels] with a view to concentrating on my studies more, it was quite unexpected that I seemed to be launching myself suddenly into a solo career.

"But you have to take these opportunities and follow your dream."

Gennaro Castaldo, HMV spokesman, said: "She is a crossover artist - one with classical origins but with a voice with wider appeal."

Many strings: Laura launched a solo singing career while still a Royal College of Music student

Service with a song: Laura Wright says she won't quit her waitressing job

Birth of the Beatles comes to West End

Louise Jury
Chief Arts Correspondent

THE story of the birth of the Beatles is being brought to the London stage to mark the 50th anniversary of the band's first single.

Backbeat, an adaptation of the 1994 film, tells how John Lennon, his best friend Stuart Sutcliffe, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Pete Best left Liverpool for the red-light district of Hamburg.

There, Sutcliffe fell in love with German photographer Astrid Kirchherr. His struggle to reconcile his love for her, the band, his friend and his art - ending in the fateful decision to leave the band before it won worldwide fame - is the focus of the show. Sutcliffe died, at just 21, of a brain haemorrhage.

Producer Karl Sydow said the show would "allow people the experience of being at the birth of the Beatles". The original film was written and directed by Iain Softley on the back of interviews with Ms Kirchherr in 1988. The stage show premiered in Glasgow last year and will preview at the Duke of York Theatre from September 24.

Sampson moves into bigger Streetdance role

Louise Jury

IT WAS the unexpected movie hit of last year, a British dance film that gave *Dirty Dancing* a run for its money. Now the team behind *Streetdance 3D* has reunited with a bigger budget. George Sampson, pictured, and the *Flawless* dance troupe, who found fame on *Britain's Got Talent*, are joined in *Streetdance 2 3D* by Sofia Boutella, who worked with Madonna on two world tours. Sampson, 18, whose character Eddie has a bigger role in the follow-up, admitted that no one had anticipated the first film's success. "Sometimes I have to sit down and stop and think, four years ago I was absolutely no one."



Streetdance 3D had a budget of less than £5 million and took £32.5 million worldwide.

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