

ON FORM: Nat's Imbrilliant again



NATALIE'S
BACK TO HER
BEST AT LAST

Star Torn

IT'S been, gulp, 12 years since Natalie Imbruglia's biggest hit *Torn*.

Her last two singles both stalled at No 23, so October's new album *Come To Life* is make or break time.

Trying to whip up a buzz about her return, Natalie's playing a few tiny pubs more used to hosting indie scruffs with names like Pierced Badger And The Toenails than glamorous ex-soap stars.

As nobody could hum her recent singles in a hurry, so long as Natalie plays *Torn* it leaves her free to test the new material out — she's only half-joking when she pouts "Oh, you're on my side now" after performing *Torn* three songs in.

Natalie's been guilty of taking herself too seriously in the past, over-compensating for her start in *Neighbours* by making music that's ever so earnest in a bid to yell: "I'm a tortured artist, honest."

It's a huge relief that both her new songs

NATALIE IMBRUGLIA

Luminaire, London

★★★★

and Natalie herself are heaps of fun for the lucky few fans.

Three new songs were co-written with Chris Martin. While it's easy to imagine him nodding his head at the piano for the ballads *Lukas* and *Fun*, discotastic new single *Want* is most un-Coldplaylike, a 21st century *I Will Survive*.

Struts

With Natalie all cheekbones and leering smile as she shimmers around the stage, blokes in the audience don't know whether to leer back or find the nearest cold shower.

By the time Natalie struts out *Come—pure filth* to rival her fellow ex-Ramsay Street resident *Kylie's* sexiest moments—there's just a sweaty mess in the crowd where some of the men used to be. Eight-

een months after Natalie divorced Silverchair rocker Daniel Johns, it's not all upbeat.

Scars is the most obvious break-up song, as Natalie sings: "You've got your new friends, I've got a broken heart." That's the ballad that will be on drivetime radio for ever more.

This time round, however, it's mainly about throwing off any marital strife to have a laugh and forget how stifled Natalie's music could be.

For the finale, Natalie's five-man backing band drag up in feather boas and skirts as she dons a top hat for new swing song *Wild About It*.

With her cheeky grin she purrs: "I'm wild about it", and it's clear that whatever "It" is probably doesn't have anything to do with a night in with a pizza and Sky Plus.

More to the point, it's been a while, but Ms *Imdrollia's* music is finally ready to drive people wild again.

JOHN EARLS