

Back to Basics



BackBeat

with Cornelius Thomas

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LAST Saturday found me driving down St John's Road and dipping through a verdant valley to Parkside. I had been told The Basics — a band of which I had heard in passing — would be playing at The Steakhouse.

Inside I found them — keyboardist Chris Saunders, lead guitarist Krishna Naidoo, guitarist Russell Henricks, bass guitarist Noel Jacobs and drummer Reece Timothy — blending the standard Mr Magic to perfection.

Next number vocalist Cizario Roberts joined in, singing Al Jarreau's *Morning*, and had the crowd jazzing around on the dance floor.

The band makes a tight combination, mixing experience and youthful fervour.

Noel Jacobs, 53, has only three fingers on his left hand — the thumb and pointer were cut off in an accident years ago. His left hand still bangs out the bass in a way that quickens the dancer's heart.

He formerly played for the Port Elizabeth-based Mama's Cream, with whom he toured the country to full-house gigs.

The versatile Chris Saunders hails from Cape Town. He plays the guitar and drums with equal facility. Chris recently took his talent down to the keys.

He has big boots to fill — what with greats like Tete Mbambisa, Pat Matshikiza and Hotep Galeta having breezed through. While Chris has overtaken the locals, and approaching the virtuoso of Nishlyn Ramana, hard work is still



CIZARIO ROBERTS

awaiting him.

Russell Henricks holds a steady beat, adding touches of rhythmic soul to the band's musical collage.

Krishna "Orange" Naidoo, is one of the foremost lead guitarists East London has ever produced.

Also known as Santana, his fame has gone before him, and wherever he plays — as was the case at The Steakhouse — the crowd clamours

for Carlos Santana numbers.

Refreshing was Reece Timothy, 26, who I think is yapping at the heels of the country's best drummers. On Saturday he showed his improvisational speed and sustained creativity when he took all on a trip with the drum roll.

Given the opportunity, Timothy is sure to make his mark in terms equal to that of Denver Furness (a nationally renowned and sought-after drummer) and local wonder Kesivan Naidoo (Samro's 2000 drumming winner).

When The Basics struck up Eric Benet's *Why You Follow Me*, the lady in red took centre stage to the velvet sound of vocalist Cizario Roberts, and all else swirled about the dancer and the singer.

Roberts is ambitious; he tells me he'd like to go to a good music school to do voice training.

As for The Basics, they have for the past six months played at The Steakhouse, becoming a crisp outfit with their danceable jazz fusion and rhythm & blues.

• **Buffalo City is in for a bumper music weekend.**

The Rockets extravaganza in the EL City Hall tonight is in aid of the North End Football Association junior football.

On Saturday, also in the city hall, the band Way Back will help you unwind from the energy explosion of the Rockets, with langarm and golden dance tunes.

On Sunday at Smokey Swallows, the Matthew Boon Quartet will wind down the weekend with smooth mainstream jazz.