

Live: Ingrid Michaelson Gets Playful With Food At Joe's Pub

By Rae Votta Wed., Jan. 25 2012 at 8:30 AM

Ingrid Michaelson

Joe's Pub

Tuesday, January 24

Better than: Hearing odes to other gourds.

Ingrid Michaelson might have been the star on Tuesday night at Joe's Pub, but second billing definitely went to a slice of cucumber.

To leaven the emotion brought on by her music, Michaelson pokes fun at herself and the audience in equal measure between songs. Which is how a particularly long, thin and weird slice of cucumber got a ton of attention last night; Michaelson took offense to the veggie, a staple of the venue's salad preparation, when she first stepped out on stage. When she came out to do her encores the offending vegetables were still around, flopping on empty plates.

Vegetables weren't Michaelson's only comic concern; she also pointed out the "New Yorkness" of the audience that only clapped briefly, a playful critique the crowd responded to with thunderous applause for her second song, "Blood Brothers." Michaelson's ability to broker a sort of closeness with her audience elevates her from dime-a-dozen singer-songwriter to beloved figurehead. She also turned her critiques on herself, joking about a recent trip to the hospital and using her condition as a playful excuse when her ukelele was out of tune, or when she couldn't remember the chords on a new track and had to switch to an old standby instead.

Michaelson's set contained tracks from her just-released album *Human Again*, older selections from her catalog, and a stunning cover of R.E.M.'s "Nighthswimming" where she used her looping pedals to create a haunting backdrop. By the time she'd reached the encore the crowd was warmed up enough to enthusiastically shout out song suggestions, much to her bemusement. She left the stage joyfully shouting that everyone should come see her at Terminal 5 in April, a decidedly more grand venue—and one where the cucumbers should, at least, stay far from the stage.

Critical bias: "This Is War" from the new album is quite an earworm.

Overheard: "Oh no, this is the one I cry at."

Random notebook dump: An argument against physical CDs if there ever was one—Michaelson's has a typo! "End of World" should be "End of the World." Though, as she noted, the printed title does give the tune an added sense of urgency.

