



George Maneas celebrated his 99th birthday!!!

Mr George Maneas celebrated his 99th birthday a couple of weeks ago at Ecco restaurant.

Family and friends gathered to celebrate this special event. Mr Maneas was very emotional and had tears in his eyes as he remembered his lovely wife that has passed away since 2002. He spoke fondly of a very special and unique lady that meant the world to him.

Mr Maneas is very proud of his family and their achievements. He is

a very proud and generous man. Although he turned 99, he remembers details from the early years of his life...

I was honoured to attend the celebration and had a chance to meet and interview a very lovely man and his beautiful family.

I had a chance to speak to a man who lived his life in full, a man with a strong personality who appreciates family values. A man who puts family first.

Next week you will have a chance

to read in "Kosmos" newspaper the interview in Greek. It was Mr Maneas wish to include it in Greek and its the least I can do, to please this very special man.

A few words about Mr Maneas

Mr George Maneas was born in Kythera [Greece] in 1910. He was the youngest of 3 boys. Paul [eldest], Jack [middle], then George. They all lived long lives but both brothers have since passed away. Mr Maneas had very little schooling; he mainly

helped his parents on the farm.

In 1936 he came to Australia & worked in Queensland on the sugar cane fields. Early 1950's he went back to Kythera where at a dance he met his wife Irene who was 20 years younger. It was love at first sight. They married in 1952. They came to Australia in 1953 and their first child, Maria Zarimis was born a year later.

At first, the family lived in Nowra and opened a cafe. Mrs Maneas has three children.

Anna Arsenis

Shine on, Marina Diamond

If there is such a thing as suffering for your art, then Marina Diamandis, front-woman of Marina and the Diamonds, is the living embodiment of it.

Earlier this year, the singer allowed celebrity photographer Rankin to stick black crystals all over her body for the video to a limited-edition single, I Am Not A Robot.

For her forthcoming release, the charmingly bonkers Mowgli's Road, she had two plastic puppet legs bolted to her waist for 17 hours to create a video she describes as "Jim Henson does Beyonce's Single Ladies".

"Making these things isn't all fun and games," the 23-year-old laughs.

"After the Robot video, the black stuff was in my ears for

the next week. My skin was covered in rashes and swelling up all over.

"But it's alright. It was worth it."

As Perez Hilton and Kanye West, who have both heavily promoted Marina on their blogs, can attest, the videos certainly grab your attention - but it's the songs that make you stick around.

They are pop, but not as you know it. You can dance to them, but there is something bubbling under the playful, piano-led melodies that hints at a darker world view.

This drama is largely due to Marina's peculiarly emotive voice - which swoops and soars like an eagle caught in the jet-stream of a passing Concorde.

Marina's own description is "alternative pop or left-field pop - but exciting, not like wingo wango weird stuff".

So that's that settled, then.

Lion Queen

Born in Wales to a Welsh mother and Greek father, Marina had a suitably odd musical upbringing.

From her father, she absorbed the influences of Greek rock trio Socrates, who recorded with Vangelis, and traditional singer Haris Alexiou.

But she was also entranced by the manufactured pop of the British charts, and harbours the likes of Britney Spears, Spice Girls, S Club 7 and dayglo pop nightmare Lolly in her record collection.

Following their examples, Marina's first attempts to break into music came via the classified adverts of The Stage magazine. She auditioned for countless girl bands, cruise ships and, on one occasion, the Lion King

musical.

But she admits it was all a bit cringe-worthy.

"I didn't have anything to show that I could do this, or that I had any sign of talent. I just wanted to get into the entertainment industry to meet someone who could help me."

Eventually, she started to write her own material, and adopted the stage name Marina and the Diamonds (her surname means diamante in Greek).

"I didn't want to be called Marina Diamond because it sounded too serious," she explains. "I wanted an element of playfulness and myth to it."

Record labels soon began to pay attention - although Marina stresses that reports of a bidding war have been grossly exaggerated.

"No-one wanted to sign me," she says. "I met a lot of people, but Warner were the



only ones to offer me a deal."

Following the example of pop sensations Duffy, Mika, Adele and Little Boots, the singer is "soft-launching" - putting out a series of low-key releases on Warner subsidiary 679 this year before a major push in the new year.

"I've built up my fanbase slowly," Marina says. "I don't think I'm an instantaneous act the whole world will love in one second - but that's how I've felt about bands I love."