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A pizza the action



The big audition at Pizza Express Leeds

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Ansdell-based X Factor and Open Mic UK veteran Charlese Allen is hoping it's going to be third time lucky in her latest stab at fame and fortune.

The 27-year old singer has beaten off thousands of others to reach the final 10 of The Big Audition, a talent search in which Pizza Express has teamed up with superstar Jamie Cullum to find the next big name in live music.

Contestants were invited to enter via video and then 50 were shortlisted for regional heats. Charlese was invited to Leeds where she wowed the audience and was filmed for the competition's website and online voting to find the final 10 performers.

Now she is looking forward to a masterclass with Jamie Cullum and a further round of internet and text voting until November 4 to determine who will be in the final five and performing live at the Jazz Club at Pizza Express Dean Street, London.

"I heard about the competition from a friend and thought I'd give it a go," says Charlese, who has built a solid local reputation and last weekend was appearing at the Olive Tree Braserie in St Annes.

At the Leeds heat she took a chance and performed an original song – Turn On The Light – written by her musical partner Mathew Shaw, who she met whilst taking a Diploma in Popular Music and Sound Technology at Paul McCartney's Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts.

Having sung since she was a child, Charlese began to take music seriously when she discovered soul,

blues and jazz at 17 and for a while performed with her former school pal Little Boots (Victoria Hesketh).

She also took a degree in Spanish for four years and lived in Granada for a year before returning to the Fylde coast. She currently couples performing with teaching Spanish privately and English at Rossall.

“I enjoy teaching but I love singing and that’s what I want to do most,” she says.

Having previously reached the last round of X Factor’s boot camp and the national final of the Open Mic UK 2009 competition she is now hoping it’s going to be third time lucky with The Big Audition.

“It all looks good on the CV but it would look even better if I could win,” said .

Details of how to vote can be found on the Big Audition website –

www.pizzaexpress.com/thebigaudition
