

North Sea Gas

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Venue: [Acoustic Music Centre @ St. Bride's](#)

Performers:

and Dave Gilfillan (guitar, banjo, vocals); Ronnie "Mac" MacDonald (guitar, bouzouki, harmony vocals); Grant Simpson (electric fiddle, harmony vocals)

North Sea Gas have struck gold again with a new show and new album *Rosslyn*. After a hectic three week Fringe schedule I



arrived at the Acoustic Music Centre rather tired, footsore and weary. Ten minutes later I was singing, clapping and stomping along, laughing and thoroughly enjoying a first class evening of entertainment - that's the North Sea Gas effect!

Playing to a full and enthusiastic house, the band treated us to an evening of wonderful music, laughter and fun. I've never heard North Sea Gas give a bad concert and I'm sure now that they wouldn't know how.

There is a wonderful warmth and integrity to North Sea Gas. They clearly love what they do and that enjoyment ripples through the audience. They have a terrific knack of drawing people in to their own blend of traditional and modern Scottish and Irish folk music. The music is very much a shared experience and there is a very genuine appreciation of their fans.

When Dave Gilfillan, who founded North Sea Gas, thanks the audience for being there you know he means it. At one stage Ronnie MacDonald (Mac) says to the others "Can you feel the love?" and they jokingly respond "Naw, that's just the lights!" The love is real and tangible though - to and from the band. Too often local bands change when they become well known and travel the world, but not North Sea Gas. They are the same down to earth, straight talking guys they have always been. There are no airs and graces, just fantastic music.

The current line up of Dave, Mac and Grant Simpson work so well together. Their vocal harmonies are rich, melodic and a sheer joy to the ear. The creative use of a range of instruments including mandolin and mandola is innovative and inspiring. Their musicianship is first class.

It's a pleasure to see how they support one another so that each of the trio have a chance to shine. There are no egos battling here, just three guys with a deep love of music exploring how to constantly improve and make the experience more interesting each time.

North Sea Gas have kept their loyal fan base through a unique formula:- preserve the beat of the old, add the best of the new and have fun with it. (I won't say that the same could be said of the line up as I am ages with the more mature band members!) They constantly come up with new arrangements and variations on old singalong classics like *Killiecrankie*; *I Will Go* and *Bonnie Lass O'Fyvie* and everyone enjoys joining in. They also introduce the audience to wonderful new songs like Karine Polwart's *Follow the heron* which is magical, poetic and melodic. The last bit of the winning formula is the humour which runs through each show:- the banter, the jokes and the audience participation numbers like Matt McGinn's *The job song* with their added verse.

Grant Simpson is a phenomenal fiddle player. He has settled so well now, vocally and instrumentally and has brought yet more freshness to their music. He can play that fiddle like a man possessed. North Sea Gas's music carries them and us to a place where it's impossible not to feel good - even without whisky!

The Fringe set showcases the new CD which also has new material and creative arrangements of old favourites.

North Sea Gas were not allowed to leave without an encore, naturally, and they finished again with the wonderful *Our Town*.

Dave Gilfillan's amazing voice just keeps getting better. It is a rich, deep expansive sound which reverberates around the room, making you laugh and cry by turns and proud to be Scottish / Irish and a fan of the timeless North Sea Gas.

The only downside of their international success is that we don't see enough of them in Edinburgh. They are about to tour America again. Haste ye back boys, we all miss you!

<http://www.northseagas.co.uk>

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