

Rating Guide

None = Unmissable



= Unwatchable

North Sea Gas in concert (page 98)

Drams 0

Musicians Dave Gilfillan (Lead Singer, guitar, banjo, mandola), Tim O'Leary (fiddle and whistle), Gerry McKenna (guitar and keyboard) and Ronnie MacDonald (guitar)

Venue Crowne Plaza Hotel (Venue 39)

Address 80 High Street

North Sea Gas have been entertaining audiences around the world for more than 20 years and have built up a fan base through their enthusiasm, musical skill and unmatched ability to draw a crowd into a really rousing sing song. They tour in the USA and Canada as well as in Europe and have many award winning albums.



North Sea Gas

North Sea Gas was started by Dave Gilfillan and the line up now also includes Irishman Tim O'Leary, Gerry McKenna and Ronnie MacDonald (now back in the line-up after many years abroad).

It has been several years since I last attended one of their concerts. My expectations were high and I was not disappointed. Musically the band have developed and their range of material is impressive. The vast majority of the material they played in this two hour set was new to me, but all of it was enjoyable and easy on the ear. They are promoting their new CD *Dark Island*.

In the past North Sea Gas were strongest leading singalongs of mainly traditional Scottish and Irish folk songs. They focused on the type of music a generation grew up with and the nostalgia factor was high.

I have to confess to being a little nostalgic too for those nights singing our hearts out with the band. However, time moves on and North Sea Gas have to. The music is more sophisticated and multi-layered and there is more of a focus on showcasing the range of instruments they play. Fiddle, mandolin, mandola, whistle, guitar and keyboard are all blended to produce a rich and individual sound.

Dave Gilfillan still has that incredibly powerful voice, shown to best effect in the big ballads like *Sonny* and *Waltzes for dreamers*. The addition of Irishman Tim O'Leary to the line-up brings a new dimension to the music. He plays the fiddle and whistle like a man possessed in the best tradition of celtic music making. His deadpan delivery goes down well with the audience, as does the range of music he brings to North Sea Gas.

It was good to see Mac back in the line-up, clearly having retained his boyish enthusiasm and love of a good story. Some of his intros are longer than the songs! Gerry on guitar and keyboard adds further to the richer musical mix that is the North Sea Gas of today.

Sound quality was very good, but the venue, despite being in a first class hotel, is the usual small, airless, claustrophobic box characteristic of Fringe venues.

North Sea Gas still have what it takes to entertain and captivate an audience. The strength of their voices is shown to brilliant effect in the unaccompanied 4 part harmonies. They now have a depth and range of musical skill and a richness of sound that is hard to match.

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Run: 14, 15 (sold out) and 17th August