

North Sea Gas
Folk Music From Scotland

Scottish folk entertainers North Sea Gas are first and foremost a Scottish folk band that have now been performing for over 26 years. The band's eclectic career includes live performances in a variety of venues, from national theatres to private functions, oilrigs, folk clubs and open-air concerts. They have recorded 13 albums, and have maintained a large and diverse repertoire. North Sea Gas' philosophy is one of quality folk music coupled with entertainment.

Over the years they have played to audiences all over Great Britain, Europe, Scandinavia, Canada and the U.S.A. They have headlined the Hunter Mountain Celtic Festival in New York State, and toured Australia. The band has attracted large audiences to concerts held during the Edinburgh Festival over the past 16 years. In 1998 the band collected a Gold Disc award from the Scottish Music Industry for their album "Caledonian Connection." Silver Disc awards have been received for "Keltic Heritage," "Live from Edinburgh," "Scottish Destiny," "power of Scotland," and "Dark Island" Albums. North Sea Gas have been touring America, Canada, Germany Austria, and Estonia every year since 2001. The band released their Latest album "Lochanside" in 2005. August 2007 will see the release of the bands latest Album. "Rosslyn" They will again be touring America and Canada in May and September /October. They will return to Germany and Austria in July/August and November/December 2007.

Dave Gilfillan. Lead and Harmony Vocals, Guitar, Banjo, Mandola, and Bodhran.
Dave is the founding member of North Sea Gas and has built up a reputation for rousing vocals, heartfelt ballads and a sense of on-stage fun. Add to that a wicked tongue-in-cheek humour and you'll soon see why his music and personality has taken him all over the world.

Grant Simpson. Fiddle, Mandolin, Harmony Vocals.
Grant a full time musician who has played with many leading musicians in the folk world. He has recorded with various artists and is always working on one project or another, whether it is with his association with North Sea Gas, fiddle tuition, or organizing and fronting many of the folk music sessions in and around Edinburgh.

Ronnie MacDonald. Lead and Harmony Vocals, Guitar and bouzouki.
Ronnie, or Mac as everyone knows him, was a member of North Sea Gas 19 years ago. He left to follow his own career, which took him to Australia for 12 years, as founding member of the Celtic City Sons. Mac has a great love of Scottish folk music not to mention a great sense of humour.

Together they will entertain you with songs, new and old, great instrumentals, history and more! Their approach is professional, their arrangements thoughtful. Add to that strong vocals featuring three part harmonies and a sense of fun and you have North Sea Gas.



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Stage plan.

Viewing stage from audience

Mac

2 D/I
1 vocal mic
1 instrument mic

Grant

2 D/I
1 vocal mic

Dave

2 D/I
1 vocal mic
1 foot drum mic
1 instrument mic

Instrument mic's for Mac and Dave are for Bodhrans.



North Sea Gas

31 August, 2007 - 08:36 — Mairi Anderson
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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Rating Guide

None = Unmissable



= Unwatchable

Page number refers to the Fringe programme

North Sea Gas in Concert - (p125)

Drams

Music Folk music

Band Dave Gilfillan (guitar, banjo, vocals); Ronnie "Mac" MacDonald (guitar, bouzouki, harmony vocals);

Grant Simpson (electric fiddle, harmony vocals)

Venue Acoustic Music Centre, (venue 123)

Address St Bride's Orwell Terrace

Date 19 August 2006

Reviewer Julian Davis



[North Sea Gas](#)

After an absence from the Fringe of two years, it was with anticipation and excitement that the many disciples of one of Edinburgh's finest and successful folk bands welcomed back North Sea Gas and a slightly slimmer than I last remembered, Dave Gilfillan to the steeply terraced auditorium of the Acoustic Music Centre. It's a great venue to be able to see the group perform and the acoustics are exceptionally good as many converted churches are.

However, in that aspect also lies one of the problems with seeing a band like this. Those of you who have followed the various line ups over the 26 years since they first burst upon

the scene at the White Hart Inn in the Grassmarket but more importantly and particularly for most, at Platform One in the Caledonian Hotel (among many other temporary venues) will remember nights of the banter back and forth with Dave and hearty singing and clapping as the beer flowed. The festival setting with its regimented rows of seats and tight inflexible time schedules do not necessarily sit well with this informal concept and the performance appeared similarly sanitised.

That's not to say that it wasn't good - it was up to the usual high standards of musicianship and harmony that we have come to expect from this band. Obviously with an album recently released called *Lochanside* they chose to showcase it and perform excellent renditions of many of those tracks - *The Gallowa Hills*, *I'm looking for a job*, Tunes (jigs and reels comprising *Jig of Slurs*, *Stan Chapman's* and *McArthur's Road*), A little bit more, *Sae will we yet*, *Shift and Spin*, *Joseph Baker* and *The Overgate* being among those selected.



North Sea Gas-Germany 2006
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There were several occasions where the audience could clap along or help out singing a refrain, and there were many occasions for tall and ribald tales to be told as the sharp wit of Mr Gilfillan still pervaded. We also had time for a silly song in *Paradimethylaminobenzaldehyde* (hope I spelt that right) a sort of supercalifragilistic type song recounting NSG's ingredients for a successful cocktail, beautifully sung by Dave and showing that he has lost none of his infamous vocal strength. The *I'm looking for a job*, carefully updated to include reference to our dear Holyrood politicians, gave us a brief chance for a sing along combined with actions - take a bow the audience! It was great to see "Mac" back and just as amiable as before. His playing and harmonies augment Davie's powerful tones

well. And Grant's fiddle playing is just exquisite - a rose between two thorns? But there was only time for two from older material - the *Haughs O' Cromdale* from *Schiehallion* and *Our town* from *Dark Island*. I can understand the need for a disciplined show for the Fringe venue; perhaps the new line up reflects a certain slight change in direction which allows the undoubted multi instrumental talents of the group to shine through, but I left with throat barely warmed up let alone hoarse. I left with a slightly deflated feeling that maybe all those nights of raucous singing of *Wild Rover*, *Irish Rover* or *Will ye no come back again* are possibly passed? I do hope not - for all the old fans' sake.

I do look forward to the chance of once again hearing Dave 'folk' it up, but it's still good to see them back even if it is in restrained mode.

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