



**H** **HEAVEN** **IN A** **NIGHTCLUB**  
1ST FEB 2013  
CONCERT @ 8 PM  
WATERSIDE THEATRE  
LONDONDERRY/DERRY  
tickets £ 8  
concession £ 5  
“The Spiritual Roots of Jazz”  
tickets can be booked at waterside theatre box office

When Ruth Naomi Floyd sat on a stool in the middle of the stage and sang 'Sometimes I Feel like a Motherless Child' to the sparsest of accompaniment 150 years since slavery seemed a short blink and we were transported back to the pain and tears of the captive. She was in tears herself by the end of it and it was a hard heart wasn't moved as well.

The evening had not begun in a way which forewarned us of the excellence to come. The audience of good souls who filed in may have heard about the evening from the co-sponsor of Derry and Donegal Presbytery and looked more ready for a fork supper than a jazz gig and our compere had done more BB display votes of thanks than intros. And when Bill Edgar came on stage in his tweed jacket and tie .....well we knew he was a theology professor but what about the jazz?

Then he sat down at his keyboard without a note of music and started improvising with Randy Pendleton wrapped around his double bass and they were away. Terrific stuff.

After every couple of pieces Bill Edgar stood forward and told us a little bit more of the roots of jazz a musical development from the African American community brought over as slaves; the gospel influences; even the development of negro spirituals learned at the back of the slave

## Heaven in a Nightclub Review

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owners' churches from the acappella singing of metrical psalms with precentors leading ; the work songs; the warning when escaping songs; the crossing the river to a slavery free state songs.

The music on its own from Bill and Randy was brilliant but maybe less accessible. When Ruth came on after a few minutes and sang with accompaniment the three together were superb. What a range of voice she has. Her low range had such strength you could almost hear and feel her resonate. And she was never less than totally committed to the song and its meaning. No cheap entertainment here.

The hour and a half flew by. The audience responded warmly and a couple of encores were just brilliant. I have never heard 'What a Friend We Have in Jesus' sung with such swing warmth and heart. Great night.

Richard McPhillimy.