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## Brent Cobb @ Whelan's, Dublin - Tue Sept 4th 2018

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Tonight, Cobb returned to play Dublin and this Whelan's gig was entirely different from his last gig which was at the Bello Bar in May last year. He had his band with him this time around, excluding the keyboard player, who was unable to make the trip. The three band members made an immense contribution to the music throughout the show. So, special mention to Mike Harris on guitar, Jay Kott on bass and Olajuwon Jackson on drums. They could be as heavy or light of touch as the song required. Something that distinguished them from other bands whose southern style rock often became heavy metal in the live setting.

Brent Cobb was an engaging front-man who was full of chat and stories, in fairness something he said he would be from the start. At times it was difficult, for this listener anyway, to catch all of the tale with his Southern Alabama drawl. But enough was deciphered to catch the general drift and to enjoy what was being imparted. For the last few weeks the band had been playing short sets opening for Chris Stapleton and Marty Stuart and the Fabulous Superlatives. So, this show gave them the opportunity to stretch out

for the first night of their European tour. The set featured songs from Cobb's recent Elektra/Low Country Sound albums.

There were two support acts on the night with the first, Sands & Hearn, from Cleveland, playing songs from their debut album that was given a big thumbs up at Lonesome Highway. The duo offered sweet harmonies and insightful songs, including *American Mind*, *Crazy Carl*, *Bus To Abilene* and the title track, *Time Is A Line*. Given their recent arrival in Dublin and the onset of jet lag, they performed their short set with plenty of energy and spirit.



Zack Logan, a Mississippi based country singer, was next up. He was accompanied by a fiddle player and bassist from London who he had only just met. They had learnt the songs from his debut CD, *Raised By Wolves*, in advance and they did add to his overall delivery. Logan is not yet totally comfortable on stage or else comes across a little shy and had little in the way of easy stage patter with the audience other than allowing that the beer and shots were good. But he had a strong voice and some good songs, including *Annalee*, *Dogs Chase Cars*, *I'm Coming Home* and the title track, *Raised By Wolves*. Definitely one to watch.



The same cannot be said of Cobb who showed an engaging character and humour throughout the show. The songs were taken largely from Cobb's recent releases, (*Shine On A Rainy Day* and *Providence Canyon*). Dave Cobb (his cousin) produced both albums. One of the songs, *King Of Alabama*, was dedicated to the late Wayne Mills who was murdered in tragic circumstances and the song, he related, included a writing credit for Mills' son Jack (aged ten). A gesture that seemed very much in keeping with Cobb's natural empathy and understanding. There was also a highly energised version of Dwight Yoakam's *Guitars, Cadillacs And Hillbilly Music* which worked a treat amid his own material.

There was an obvious empathy between the players and a sense that they were enjoying themselves as much as the audience. Many of the songs were extended and gave Harris a chance to display his skill on Gibson SG, Telecaster and Stratocaster. Particularly some atmospheric slide guitar. While Jackson and Kott underpinned everything with some weighty and dexterous drums and bass. All in all, this four-piece, with Cobb on effective acoustic rhythm guitar, were firing on all cylinders. Cobb did try an electric guitar for one song but said it wasn't really his instrument and switched back to his trusty Gibson acoustic.



Although the audience was not big in numbers they enthusiastically responded to what they heard. The band didn't show any disappointment with the sparse attendance and gave a fully-fledged performance including a reluctant encore at the end as Cobb said he disliked false encores where the best songs are saved for such an ending. Whatever the reason it capped a great night of music that leaves one hoping for a return visit in the near future. C2C perhaps?

**Review by Stephen Rapid & Paul McGee Photography by Kaethe Burt O'Dea**

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