

JigTime

Music at your Fingertips

Welcome to a site which celebrates music and culture from around the world
JigTime International



Darrell Scott sings up a storm in Atlanta



As many of you know I don't tend to criticize much on these pages. I don't need to. There is enough great music out there to keep [JigTime](#) filled with news of things I think all my readers will like without ever having to write anything bad about anyone. This doesn't mean I like everything I hear. It just means I don't have the time or indeed the arrogance to think that I know what's wrong with something that just didn't suit my tastes. Having clarified that, there are two things about the [Darrell Scott](#) show in Atlanta that I have to mention in a negative light. One thing was the system used by the venue for getting the capacity crowd into the venue. It may work for a small crowd but on a night when you have so many people coming to see a big name like Darrell it just didn't work. It caused confusion, more than a few disgruntled customers and was almost certainly responsible for the show starting late. Once again I am in no position to complain. Apparently the system works most of the time and having played at [Eddie's Attic](#) myself I still say it is one of the best venues for music in all of Georgia. The second complaint is about Darrell himself; he didn't play [Heartbreak Town](#), but more about that in a minute.

After the initial confusion of getting the eager crowd into the venue I didn't envy the task of the young [Packway Handle Band](#) to open the show for the still unsettled audience. I needn't have worried. The Athens (Georgia) based bluegrass band took to the stage like seasoned pros and within one song had the audience in the palm of their hands. From old bluegrass favorites to jazz infused musical jams they showed why they had scored so highly at the Telluride Festival. The band has a new album out and they showcased it and themselves in great style. I particularly liked the old time gospel song which featured an incredible bass vocal by fiddler [Andrew Heaton](#), but the rest of the band shone as well. [Josh Erwin](#) is a fine guitar picker while [Michael Paynter](#) is up there with some of the finest mandolin players around. [Tom Baker](#) made the banjo sing while [Chris Holliday](#) held the whole thing together on the bass. Each of them looked like they were having a ball playing the music they love. That's the way music should be. I believe the [Packway Handle Band](#) will grow musically and become a staple name on the big bluegrass festival circuit.

Then there was [Darrell Scott](#). Now Darrell has a few hits under his belt by the biggest names in the industry and I am sure financially doesn't need to tour. But when you see him on stage you totally understand that it is where he needs to be. He is a performer, and like all good performers, only truly comes alive when he is in a studio with his peers or on a stage in front of those who appreciate what he does. Darrell seemed very much at home on the small [Eddie's Attic](#) stage as he sat cradling his guitar on his knee.

"I usually stand" he said "but I left my strap in a rental car in DC, so now, I sit."

Standing or sitting, he plays with a rare power. When he plays one of the songs you have heard by [Travis Tritt](#) or the [Dixie Chicks](#) a million times on the radio, you suddenly hear the song the way it should be. The guitars and banjo rang with a gorgeous full sound thanks to a good house system and soundman. Darrell is, however, one of the most imaginative and best guitar players I have ever heard. Effortlessly changing tunings from standard to drop D and some I couldn't work out; he was all over the neck with chord sequences and solos that caught my breath on more than a few occasions. I swear he was just making up some of those chords as he went along.

In the end though, it is Darrell's voice and songs that shine through. He played most of the hits including "It's a Great Day to Be Alive" "Long Time Gone" and the amazing "You'll Never Leave Harlan Alive", which as always gave me goose bumps. He also led us through some more of his other greats like "Banjo Clark" which he co-wrote with another great writer, [Verlin Thompson](#). Despite the late start Darrell was happy to do a set that ran close to 2 hours and still left the packed house shouting for more. He finished with the tongue in cheek "Title of a Song", a comical simplification of the craft that has made Darrell a good living in recent years. Despite how simple he makes the process sound I believe it takes not just a special talent but a genuinely good heart to write songs that touch the soul. If that is true, then Darrell Scott really is one of the good guys.

Darrell's latest album is [Theater of the Unheard](#) and is available on Amazon or at Darrell's own website

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