

The Waybacks

iS Venue
Charlottesville, Va.

JUNE 12

• Attending a **Waybacks** show is like listening to a vintage Americana jukebox. In recent years, the San Francisco-based string band has evolved into a well-oiled machine that adeptly hops around roots genres of yesteryear with cohesive ease. Though the group was once lauded as newgrass torchbearers, a recent change in line-up has widened the scope of the four-piece outfit, which now focuses on the dynamic interplay and rotating songbooks of founding band axeman **James Nash** and young fiddle/mandolin upstart **Warren Hood**. As a result, the band's 15-song set at iS Venue—the new identity of Charlottesville's former Starr Hill Music Hall—drew mostly from the only album that the current roster has recorded together, last year's *Loaded*.

Nash started the show by singing



L-R: Hood, Hamilton, Nash and Kyle Jr delivering some "old time with a rave beat"

one of his many character-driven story-tunes: "The River," a fiddle-driven rocker that recounts a flood tragedy. Soon after, he lightened the mood with the quirky country pop of "Conjugal Visit." He also took on a pro-

gressive issue with a traditional twist by lamenting global warming through a boozy Celtic sea shanty "Beyond the Northwest Passage." Hood countered with a mellow soulful drawl, which he used for the

speakeasy shuffle of "Savannah" and a tribute to late Texas folk icon Walter Hyatt with a true to form reading of his Zydeco-flavored "Going to New Orleans." He also combined classical styling and the gypsy jazz of Stephane Grappelli in the instrumental "Black Cat."

When Nash declared the show ready for some "old-time with a rave beat," he and Hood showed off their nimble finger chops on the 18th century standard "Shady Grove," which was amped up with a pulsing combo groove from bassist **Joe Kyle Jr.** and drummer

Chuck Hamilton. To close the night, the band nodded to its 2006 collaboration with Grateful Dead troubadour Bob Weir by craftily creating a Cajun waltz take on "Dupree's Diamond Blues." *Jedd Ferris*

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