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Blame it on the subway. If not for subways, the roots-blues-alt-folk band called porterdavis might never have come about. Subway stations, and in particular, the stops at Porter Square and Davis Square, turned into a stage and rehearsal hall for guitarist/lead singer Daniel Barrett and percussionist Mike Meadows, who make up two thirds of the powerhouse trio called porterdavis. They busked their way through the early mornings, earning tips from the common folks who happened upon them before their train ride. Eventually a third member, harmonica player Simon Wallace, was added to round out their developing sound. Wallace came to Boston from a small town in the U. K. He was crowned UK's National Harmonica Champ in 1999, and was sharpening his Chicago-blues style playing, when he stumbled upon Dan and Mike.

Barrett, who sings all of the songs and had a hand in writing most of them, has a husky voice that's full of the same passion that he writes with. He has a strong love for percussive blues, heartfelt ballads and songs with a guitar groove that is matched note for note by his cohorts. The new self-titled studio album, their first, is the long awaited follow up to their live CD, "Live at Eddie's Attic," which garnered them so much attention when they moved to Texas.

The CD opens and closes with signature blues songs - Bar-

rett's "Smack You Back," and Muddy Waters' "Can't Be Satisfied"...songs that clearly identify what

each of the guys bring to the table. Mike Meadows stands as one of the most interesting percussionists around. He's studied at the Berklee School of Music, and he and the whole band spent a summer in Ghana, West Africa studying the beat. Wallace's harp playing is swampy on the blues tunes and melodic on the ballads. Both of them can sing perfect harmony. The stuff in between the blues songs are folkier type songs. One exceptionally pretty song, "Carter's Song," adds Eliza Glikyson singing harmony.

It's a valiant effort for a first studio CD. Between Meadows and his unique concoction of percussion instruments, the Englishman Simon on the blues harp, and the multi-talented Barrett, the three have invented their own style of music and it works. Expect more great things to come from the fast rising porterdavis, and don't miss their live show - they are a great band to watch in action.

~ Tracie Ferguson