

## porter davis at Cosmos — Houston

I first caught wind of [these guys](#) in Austin playing with [Will Taylor and Strings Attached](#). When we discovered they would be in Houston the following week, we put the show on our itinerary. Am I glad we did. \_\_\_porter davis consists of Daniel Barrett on guitar, Mike Meadows on percussion, and Simon Wallas on Harmonica. Barrett carries most of the singing chores, but they all contribute vocally at one point or another. The Strings Attached show where I first saw them was a blues revue, but it is hard to pigeonhole them in that genre. \_\_\_They are certainly tinged with the blues but their sound is much more complex and layered than that. First, you have to understand that Meadow's percussion is unlike traditional percussion. Meadows and Barrett got their start in Boston playing in the subway stations and drums weren't allowed. So Meadows played anything that looked sounded like a drum. This includes the simple tamborine, a frame drum, and a box drum. Watching him play is a lot like watching a magician. You keep thinking that the harder you stare at him the easier it will be to understand how he makes all of those sounds. Dream on. I finally just gave up and concentrated on the sound. It was still magic.

Barrett's guitar playing is rock solid, harder than it looks, and the centerpiece of the group. Few musicians understand the power of constraint, but Barrett seems to have learned the lesson. If anyone is interested in studying his technique, he's opening the [Red Leaf School of Music in Austin](#). If it was closer to Houston, I'd drive up and take a guitar lesson or two. Hell, I may do it anyway just as a treat for myself.

The third component to this wonderfully multi-layered band is Simon Wallace. A national UK harmonica champion at age 17, he's a great addition to the group. He is precise, inventive, and adds sounds that you have a hard time reconciling with a harmonica.

I liked almost all of their songs but tunes like Smack You Back, Diamond Eyed One, and White Freightliner stood out as did their performance of Hank William's Jambalya. The latter was probably the best version of that song I've ever heard. I really hope they commit it to (I was going to say vinyl, but I suppose that's passe)... Well, I hope they record it.

This is a group to watch.

Posted By: JohnWilson @ 1:09 am March 31, 2007  
<http://www.yourtexasmusicnotes.com/>