

The Porter Trio Takes Over Monday Night At The Maple Leaf

The seasoned funk legend George Porter Jr. shuffles to center stage, finding his place half sitting, half standing against a tattered black barstool. Looking out onto the tightly packed crowd, he cracks a toothy smile - it's his first Monday night performance at the Maple Leaf Bar, nestled deep in Uptown, New Orleans. Alongside Michael Lemmler on the keyboard and Terrance Houston on the drums, Porter Jr. holds a rustically stained bass guitar ready to deliver a funk-filled and soulful show.

Best known for his work with The Meters and The Runnin' Pardners, Porter Jr. has been delivering funk music since the early 1960s, and assuming the legendary Monday night slot at the Leaf is no easy task. Since 1974, the Maple Leaf has been home to funk, blues and rock n' roll legends. It is a humble establishment, dated in it's tipsy structure and ambiance. The few rooms are lit with faded red light, and it seems hard not to run into the stage at every turn; however, performances at this place are infinitely intimate. Packing the floor each night, locals and visitors alike prepare to experience true New Orleans music far off from the tourist-filled streets of the French Quarter and the booming bass beckoning from the slushie-serving bars on Bourbon Street. The Porter Trio humbly brings a legendary funk performance for those that truly seek it.

Letting out a groovy-disco bass riff, the Trio begins their set. Porter Jr. leads the group, allowing the percussion stylings of a visibly younger Houston to shine as they build upon one another. Lemmler comes in strong on the keyboards, asserting his dominance through his high-pitched arpeggios. For nearly thirty five minutes, the Trio feed off of one another. Breaking a sweat, Porter Jr. rarely moves from his lean upon that black barstool. Aside from the occasional head-shake, the legend allows the youthful Houston, placed closest to the crowd, to showcase his skills over and over again. After the Trio trade solos, they shake their way into a stopping point. In this convivial setting, the crowd wails for more as the band members laugh and grin. It is clear that Porter Jr. plans to close out his musical career in this wonderful place - a true privilege for New Orleanians.

The Trio finds their place within the funk mecca that is the Maple Leaf. Surrounded by local acts such as James Booker, Rebirth Brass Band, The Radiators, and Walter "Wolfman" Washington, The Porter Trio undeniably deserves their spot within this place of the greats. Most Monday nights, one can find themselves entranced by the musical stylings of a funk legend, at a dive bar sure to give the personal New Orleans experience sought after by even the most dedicated of funk music fans.