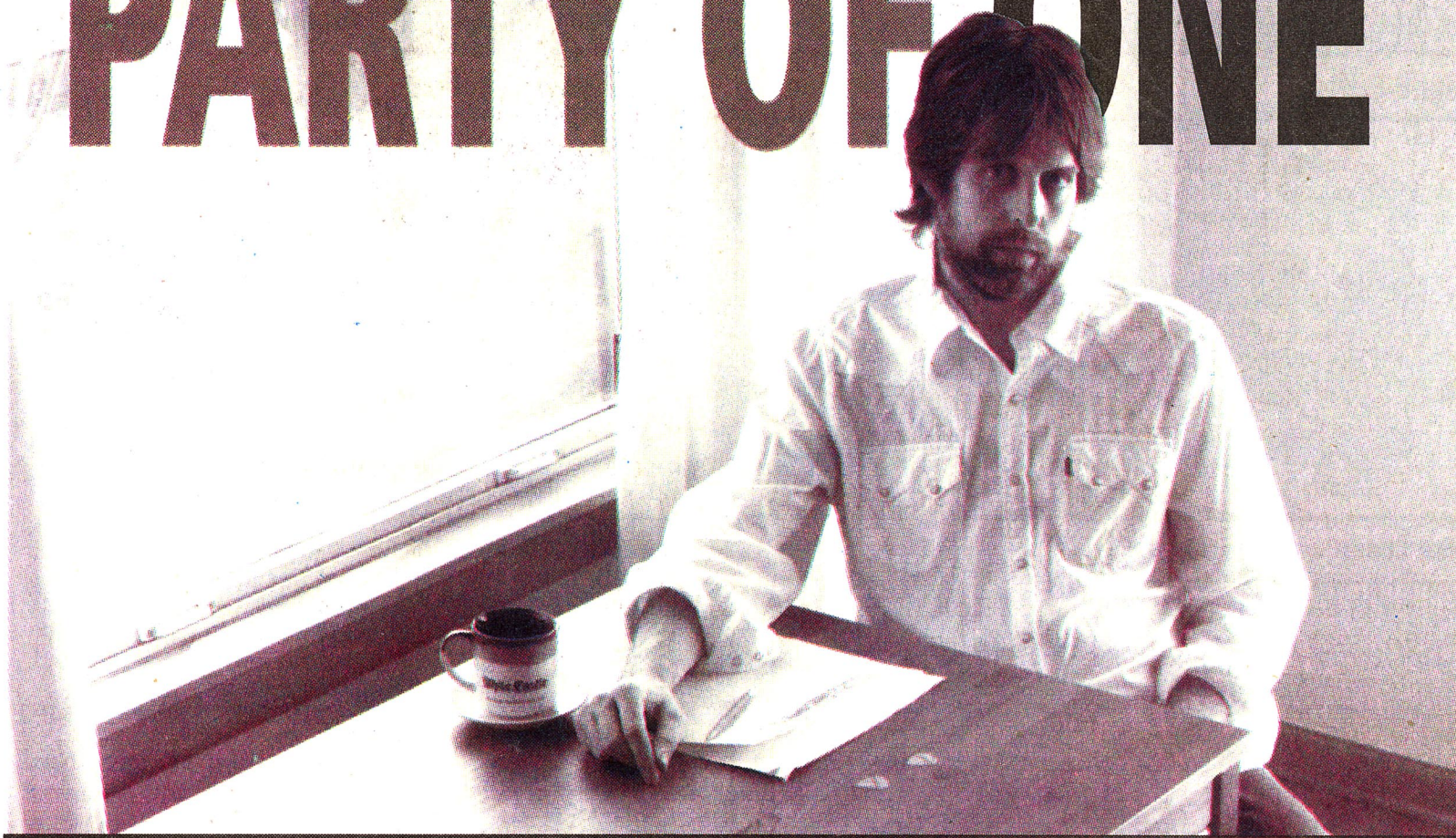


'PARTY OF ONE'



Marquette native Jeremy Porter will perform at Upfront & Co in downtown Marquette starting at 10 p.m. Tuesday. He's touring in support of his first solo CD, "Party of One." (Photo courtesy of Jeremy Porter)

Marquette native's tour hits hometown

By **RENEE PRUSI**
Journal Staff Writer

MARQUETTE — Marquette native Jeremy Porter is looking forward to his trip home in support of his new solo CD, "Party of One."

What does he most anticipate when visiting the Upper Peninsula from his downstate base, Plymouth?

"First and foremost, seeing my friends," Porter said in an e-mail interview. "Getting caught up, hanging out, having a drink. Secondly, I love the city, the food, the air, the island, Hogsback and Lake Superior. I wish I could live here again."

"Finally, playing music in my hometown is always rewarding. I feel very lucky to have moved away, made some records, and to have the opportunity to come home to play."

Porter will be performing at Upfront & Co. in downtown Marquette Tuesday.

While Porter has found success in Detroit — with bands and as a solo artist — his musical roots are in Marquette.

"I guess I started, as most people do, by being a fan. I loved records — Beatles, Stones, then later Kiss, Cheap Trick and The Knack," Porter said. "I had taken some guitar lessons as a kid but didn't really stay with it. It wasn't long until I was bored to death in school and getting into trouble."

"One spring, as an early teenager, I did something bad that warranted being grounded for the entire summer," he said. "I picked up the guitar again while I was stuck at home and haven't put it down since."

Porter did participate in music while a student at Marquette Senior High School.

"All my friends were in the school bands and I weaseled my way into the marching band when I had no one to hang out with while they were forced to be at the football games on Friday nights," he said. "It wasn't all that fun, but it beat waiting around for them to get released at halftime."

"Then I played guitar in the MSHS Jazz Band during my junior and senior years. That was fun," he said. "I also played in the NMU Jazz Band during my first semester there in fall 1987."

The first rock band he was in was The Regulars.

"I met this kid named John Burke who loved The Who, as I did, and we

Porter places:

Local performance:

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On the Web:

Porter's sites:

■ www.jeremyportermusic.com

■ www.myspace.com/jeremy-portermusic

■ www.facebook.com/pages/Jeremy-Porter

■ www.youtube.com/jeremy-portermusic

Porter's band Fidrych's sites:

■ www.myspace.com/fidrych

■ www.facebook.com/pages/Fidrych

— jammed together on a couple of Who tunes at his house one night. We were 15 and it was the first time I'd played with a drummer," Porter said. "We recruited a couple of friends of his — Tim Demarte on vocals and Fritz Vankosky on bass."

"None of us were all that good when we started out, but we kinda learned how to be better together," he said. "We played whenever we could — from house parties to bars."

"Today, those guys are all really accomplished, as musicians and as people, and we all remain close friends. In fact, John and Fritz both played on my new record," Porter said. "Fritz helped produce and mix it, and Tim helped produce a vocal session in Marquette."

After moving to lower Michigan, Porter became part of a band called Slugbug in the 1990s, then the OffRamps in the 2000s. It was with the OffRamps that he performed previously at Upfront.

"The OffRamps had some great shows there in the 2000s," Porter said. "And I was in a Clash cover band called Clashback for awhile who played there."

Porter's current band is Fidrych.

"We decided on the name a few weeks before Mark 'The Bird' Fidrych died. We were all pretty bummed about that," he said. "We formed in early 2009 and play around (the Detroit) area and get out of town from time to time as well."

"It's Brian Raleigh and Steve Bekkala on guitar/vocals and drums, respectively. They were in a band called Porch-sleeper before this. Talented lads and

good guys," he said. "Then Jason Bowes plays bass. He was in The OffRamps with me before this."

"We drink, have fun and play music together, sometimes in that order."

The new release, "Party of One," is his first solo record.

"When the OffRamps were breaking up, before

Fidrych formed,

I needed something to do... bad," he said. "I started playing out solo-acoustic and decided to make a record to facilitate that. The record was released on Magwheel Records out of Toronto earlier this year. It's not an acoustic record — It has some of that on there, but there's drums and distortion and all that, too."

Is releasing a first solo CD exciting or scary?

"Not so scary, I guess. I am certainly excited to get to make records and tour and all that. I love it," Porter said. "And there's always some curiosity about what people will think, but I don't think I get scared much these days."

"As far as the fact that it is my first solo record — that doesn't really play into it much," he said. "I feel like I've had almost as much invested emotionally in the records I've done with my bands. Yeah, it's all me this time but the motivation and dedication to quality is the same whether it's solo or as part of a band."

What are Porter's goals for the future?

"In the short term, I wanna get through this tour and get a bit of rest," he said. "I want to step up things with Fidrych and write more, record and play more with them. I am supposed to be doing a short Canadian acoustic tour this summer and hope to do a few more shows supporting this record."

"Eventually I'll probably start thinking about the next record."

"Party of One" can be purchased through links on his website, jeremyportermusic.com and will be available at his Upfront performance. It can also be downloaded on iTunes or Amazon.

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