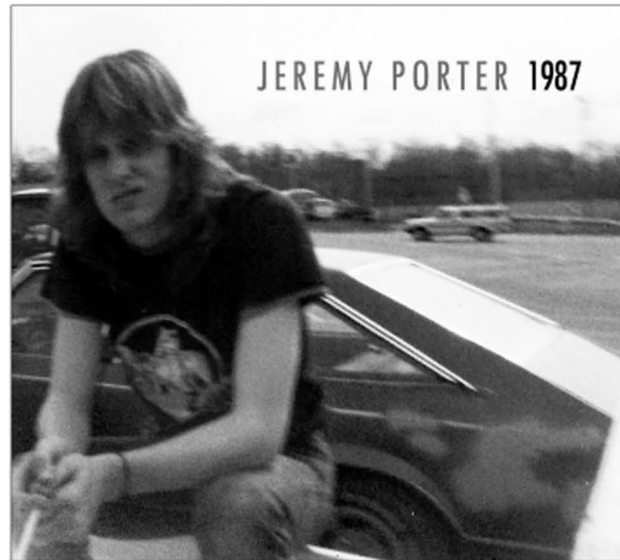


Jeremy Porter is bringing his band, The Tucos, back to Marquette for their first gig in the U.P. in about ten years. The band shown, from left, includes Jake Riley, Gabriel Doman and Porter. (Photo courtesy of Noreen Porter)



JEREMY PORTER 1987

Jeremy Porter's solo album cover photo was taken in the Marquette Senior High School parking lot. He said he draws on events and situations from his time in Marquette, where he spent his formative years, during the creative process of writing songs. (Courtesy of Jeremy Porter)

# Bringing home the music

By Kristy Basolo-Malmsten

Jeremy Porter hasn't played music in The Queen City for a about decade.

Porter, who grew up in Marquette, will bring his Detroit-based band, Jeremy Porter and The Tucos, to perform at the Ore Dock at the end of March. The stop will be part of his tour promoting their new album, *Candy Coated Cannonball*.

"We lived in Harvey," he said. "I moved away in September of '88. I went to NMU for a year after high school, and then moved downstate."

Porter spent the '90s and '00s fronting bands like SlugBug, The OffRamps and Fidrych, as well as a solo stint. He formed The Tucos in 2009, and they have released four full-length LPs, five 7"s and several contributions to compilations.

The Tucos, who describe themselves as "a rock and roll band who sound like guitars and whiskey, hooks and heartache, energy and passion," have toured the United States and Canada many times. Joining Porter on stage are Gabriel Doman (Hotwalls)

and Bob Moulton (Cactus) to complete the trio.

In 2018, they toured the United Kingdom, playing nine shows in nine nights, including two nights in London.

Their hometown venues have made them one of the go-tos for national acts coming through Detroit, opening for Lydia Loveless, Jesse Malin, Supersuckers, Beach Slang, Jesse Dayton, American Aquarium, Deadstring Brothers, Two Cow Garage, Whitey Morgan, LA Witch, Tim Barry, Old Man Markley and many more.

"Detroit has a reputation, a big hard rock history—Eminem, White Stripes, Kid Rock," Porter said. "We're proud to be a Detroit band, but it's a bit difficult for us in Detroit because we don't necessarily fit those molds. We do get some really good shows of all sizes."

Porter said he had a full circle moment in September, when The Tucos opened for Soul Asylum at The Shelter.

"That's one of my favorite bands," he said. "When I was 17, my friends and I drove to Detroit to see Soul Asy-

## Celebrating a decade

In December of 2009, Jeremy Porter and The Tucos played their first show at a non-venue bar in Royal Oak, Michigan on a Sunday night, to a small handful of friends who ventured out in the blizzard of the season for the event.

A decade later, in December 2019, they entered the studio to record their fourth album, *Candy Coated Cannonball*. Three record labels, four bass players, four full-length LPs, five 7" singles, and about 370 shows later, The Tucos are still at it.

To mark the occasion and put a cap on what is loosely being called a decade (ok, it's more like 12 years, but there was a pandemic in there!), the band is releasing a three-CD series to celebrate the accomplishment that not even The Beatles could achieve. The three-CD set includes:

- **Disc One, Bottled Regrets: The Best of the First Ten Years** includes 21 songs, hand-picked by Jeremy Porter, including fan-favorites, live staples, and singles. All tracks are remastered from the original final mixes and a couple have never been available digitally.

- **Disc Two, Castaways: Rarities and B-Sides from the First Ten Years** includes 18 demos, outtakes, B-sides, compilation contributions and EP deep cuts, all remastered from originals, several never heard before. There are originals and covers, fully realized and pro-recorded songs and basement recordings never intended for civilian ears.

- **Disc Three, Patty's Not Impressed: Live in Toronto** captures

the band live in Canada on their "Above (and below) the Sweet Line Tour" in 2016 and 2017. The shows were recorded live, edited together and mixed by the band. It's raw and loud, warts and all, and contains songs from the first three records, some early singles and a couple covers.

"This stuff was all just sitting there, gathering dust, and we started thinking about it during the lockdown, how to get it out there, let people hear it, and sort of say, 'hey, this was cool—let's clean the slate!' before we get back to the grindstone and start working on the next phase—album five, and a bunch of new songs, stories and adventures," Porter said. "It was way more time, work and money than expected—isn't it always?—but I'm glad to see it finally realized."

Compilation artwork illustration was done by original Tucos' bassist Jason Bowes, and all mastering was done by longtime Tucos' partner Chris Goosman at Baseline Audio Labs. The compilations will be released by GTG Records on CD individually and as a discounted three-CD set. There will be a limited digital release, with streaming services to follow later in the year. Pre-orders will come with some bonus swag. Release date currently scheduled for March 4, 2022, pending supply chain, workforce, and delivery time issues.

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lum. It was a really cool thing for me to open for them."

Despite living in the Detroit area, his U.P. connections got him in touch with the Ore Dock to put together this hometown gig, which is taking place during the four-day vinyl record show, put on by his friends.

"The pop-up record sale is great," he said. "Geoff (Walker) has a list of mine, and knows some things I'm looking for. It's great to be playing while that sale is going on."

Jeremy Porter and The Tucos' latest album, Candy Coated Cannonball, was released in January of 2021, which was a hard time for bands, touring and promotion.

"It was such a weird time," he said. "We finished recording the album right before the pandemic hit.

We figured we'd take a few weeks off—we had 25 tour dates booked—but we'll be out there in the spring."

By summer, with the pandemic still raging, there still was nothing happening with music venues. "We thought, 'Should we put this out or wait?'" he said. "We were already writing new songs. COVID is difficult for the bands, but also for the venues. They don't want patrons to get sick, but they need to make money. It's so difficult."

Thankfully, people were looking for ways to help artists and musicians during that time, so the record was a success, Porter said.

"Touring musicians and music venues had nothing, and yet the record did really well," he said. "The band

has done six shows since it came out. We usually do 50 to 100 shows to promote a new record."

Porter said every band and venue did the best they could during the pandemic.

"There wasn't a right way or a wrong way," he said. "We're super proud of the record. There's that void where we didn't go out and promote it, but we're hitting the road hard this year. All we can do is be as safe as we can, and play as much as we can. And I need to get these album copies out of my basement."

A founding member of one of the U.P.'s first punk bands, The Regulars, Porter is no stranger to changing times, and adapting to keep his music viable. Playing punk in the U.P. during a strong rock era was a challenge.

"We were the first to play that music within our

age group," he said. "It was something that a lot of the people up there weren't prepared for. We'd play parties out in Forestville, Trowbridge. People wanted to hear Lynnyrd Skynnyrd, not the Dead Kennedys. We start writing our own songs near the end, as we were getting close to being done with high school. It was around that time that we starting moving away from covers; we all realized that writing our own music was where the real reward comes from."

The Regulars formed in the Spring of 1985, when John Burke and Jeremy Porter met over a common love of The Who's music. With Fritz VanKosky on bass and Tim DeMarte's vocals, the band learned punk and alternative covers of the day.

According to The Regulars website, "many flannel-clad, hunting-cap-wearing swampers laughed and beat them up, but there were just as many who

actually dug it. Occasionally sandwiching a Black Sabbath or Iron Maiden cover between songs by The Clash, The Replacements, Dead Kennedys, Velvet Underground or Ramones, the swampers were appeased."

Despite a rough start, The Regulars became a mainstay in local music of the time. They even did four reunion shows in the 2000s. Porter's other bands such as The Offramps, SlugBug and Clashback, have played at venues in the U.P. as well, including UpFront & Company.

"I have a long history of playing in Marquette," he said. "A lot of cities don't have places like UpFront & Company. That was a blessing to have that atmosphere and sound. It was a really nice medium-sized music venue."

The Tucos expect to bring a variety of sound to the Ore Dock stage during

this visit. In addition to playing singles from all of their records, they have a catalog of covers, and hope to bring some friends up to sing or play with them.

"I still have a lot of close friends in Marquette," he said. "I love coming home, so it's great to see those friends and get them up to help us out."

Porter has fond memories of Marquette County, and especially misses the people and the community atmosphere. Despite not visiting the area often, he still has strong bonds from his time in Marquette.

"It's really crazy how many people I am close with from my days in the U.P.," Porter said. "There are many people I met in the few years I lived up there that I'm still very connected with. That is not a normal thing—it's unique."

In addition to the people, Porter

said he tries to stop at as many of his favorite places as possible—Portside, Vango's, the Vierling and Blackrocks, to name a few.

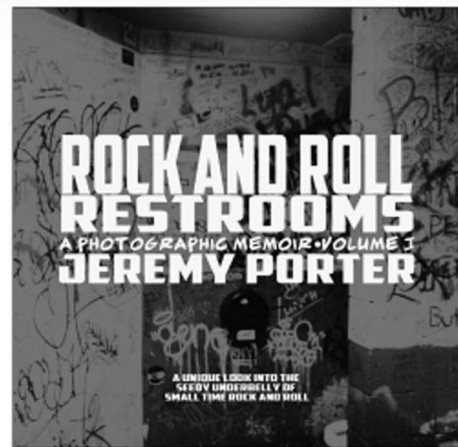
"I think Marquette is a great food town," he said. "When I'm coming up to play, I'm working so I can't get everywhere I want. I probably won't get a chance, but we love climbing Hogsback and watching the freighters come in."

Porter said he did the Ore to Shore bike race for many years as well.

"This is not just another show for me," he said. "I still consider Marquette my hometown, and it's always special when I can come back. When I write, I pull on events and situations from Marquette; that's always been a part because those were such formative years. I always draw from that creatively."

In addition to the live music offering, Porter will have albums for sale, as well as his new book *Rock and Roll Restrooms: A Photographic Memoir*.

"We started this thing, 17 or 18 years ago, because there was this incredible bathroom at this place in Detroit," he said. "I put a picture of it on social media, and it kind of exploded.



It's been going on for so long that I actually put together a coffee table book—some really nice restrooms and some nasty squats."

Jeremy Porter and The Tucos will perform at 8 p.m. on March 25 and 26 at Ore Dock Brewing Company in Marquette.

For more about the band, visit [www.thetucos.com](http://www.thetucos.com)

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*About the Author: Kristy Basolo-Malmsten has a master's degree in writing from NMU, has worked for MM for almost two decades and has her own editing and publishing company. Her day job is as senior center director in Negaunee.*



At left, The Regulars, shortly after inception, pose on Bluff Street in Marquette in 1986, clockwise from top, including Fritz VanKosky, Tim DeMarte, John Burke and Jeremy Porter. (Photo by Julie Lyons) At right, Porter, VanKosky, Burke and DeMarte, pose during the four-gig 2012 reunion tour, near the Lower Harbor ore dock. (Photo by James Burke)