



## “IT’S NOT SUPPOSED TO BE EASY” : A CONVERSATION WITH JEREMY PORTER OF JEREMY PORTER & THE TUCOS

Posted on May 18, 2022 by J. Hubner

Once in a while I get the privilege to help promote a cool local show that’s happening in my general vicinity. In doing so I get to chat with some pretty amazing rock and roll road warriors. Long haulers touring the highways and byways of the great Midwest in search of cool stages located in cooler venues and in front of crowds searching for a live music high. Today I get to talk to Jeremy Porter of Jeremy Porter & The Tucos.

Jeremy Porter & The Tucos hail from the Motor City, Detroit, Michigan. A town known as much for rock and roll as it is for the automotive industry(and maybe *Robocop*, too.) Jeremy Porter & The Tucos sound like a band raised on classic rock and roll(Beatles, the Who, Cheap Trick, NRBQ), but then took a detour that led them to punk rock, alt-country, 90s indie, and most anything with a little jangle. Their songs are earworm after earworm, with a solid front man and songwriter in Porter who has a voice that’s part Jay Farrar, Rhett Miller, and Robin Zander for good measure. He’s just got one of those voices that can pretty much sell anything.

Jeremy Porter & The Tucos will be stopping in Fort Wayne, IN to play a show at The Brass Rail on Thursday, May 19th with Fort Wayne’s own Streetlamps For Spotlights. I sat down and chatted with Jeremy Porter about the bands now 12 year career, their influences, history, and recent best-of, rarities, and live album releases, and how he’ll never play Olivia Newton-John in the tour van again.

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**J Hubner:** *Hello Jeremy. So tell me about Jeremy Porter & The Tucos. When did the band start? How did you come together?*

**Jeremy Porter:** Hey John – Great to meet and talk to you! The band formed in late 2010 when I was coming off a solo-album and tour, looking to get back to playing and traveling with people again. I was asked to contribute to a holiday compilation from a label out of Ann Arbor and had a song that needed a band, so I called my pal Jason, who’d been with me in The OffRamps and Fidrych, and we met Gabriel, who was a friend of a friend, and in a few weeks we were playing shows around Detroit, Chicago, Ohio, etc. A dozen years, four albums, and four bass players later, and here we are, still at it!



**J Hubner:** *Who were some bands you guys bonded over? I definitely hear bits of power pop, punk, and alternative country ala Uncle Tupelo, Old 97s, and The Bottle Rockets.*

**Jeremy Porter:** Yeah, I can't deny any of that stuff. It doesn't really show in our sound much, but we were and are all into Descendents. That's one of the few bands that we all really liked. Uncle Tupelo was in there for sure, and The Beatles and The Who, and there might be a couple others, but we start to branch in different directions pretty quick after that. Back in those early days, Jason and Gabriel were into more punk stuff and I was more into the alt-country/singer-songwriter stuff, but there was always some crossover. Over the years we've found some more common ground, turned each other onto new things, new bass players brought new stuff in, and we still embrace the things we don't have in common. We're music fans before artist/genre fans, so we can almost always latch on to something someone plays, and it's all swimming around in our heads, affecting our sound. Except once I played Olivia Newton John's *Greatest Hits* in the van and Gabe vowed to quit the band if I ever did that again.

**J Hubner:** *Hey man, I'll never turn off "Xanadu" or "Magic" if I run across them. Just saying. It seems to me that coming from Detroit you guys are at the epicenter of some major music history. Stooges, MC5, Bob Seger, Nugent, White Stripes, and Motown giants like Smokey Robinson and Berry Gordy. Standing in the shadows of giants in the Motor City. What's the local music scene like in Detroit nowadays?*

**Jeremy Porter:** It's a strange place, Detroit. There are several great venues, loads of great bands, and a lot of good people that I consider close friends. The scene, however, is very cliquy. The same small handful of bands get 99% of the accolades year in and year out, even though a lot of them haven't released any new music or played more than a show or two in years. It seems that being a touring band works against you here, maybe because you're not socializing at all the local shows every weekend, I don't know.

It might come off like sour grapes, and I don't want that, because we love it here – we do well in the city, we get some great shows, people come out, and we love being here and from here, but compared to some of the cities we travel to, it just seems a little less unified and a little more segmented. But it's Detroit – it's not supposed to be easy, it's supposed to be hard and rough, no? Bands like Ladyship Warship, Popular Creeps, Jennifer Westwood & Dylan Dunbar, Counter Elites – it's exciting to see these guys and know that there's great music coming out of the city.

**JEREMY PORTER AND THE TUCOS  
BOTTLED REGRETS: THE FIRST TEN YEARS  
THE COMPLETE COLLECTION**



**BOTTLED REGRETS:  
THE BEST OF THE  
FIRST TEN YEARS**



**CASTAWAYS: RARITIES  
AND B-SIDES FROM  
THE FIRST TEN YEARS**



**PATTY'S NOT  
IMPRESSED:  
LIVE IN TORONTO**

**J Hubner:** The band recently released back in March a pretty staggering 3-CD collection of music, which included a curated set of tunes from the band's first 10 years, a rarities set, and a live gig recorded in Toronto. First, can you believe you've been a band for 10 years already? Second, going thru all of the outtakes and unreleased tracks did you find yourself wondering why some of them didn't make it onto proper LPs? And third, what is your all-time favorite live album?

**Jeremy Porter:** Yeah, we're actually coming up on 12 years at this point, but who's counting? I built the band for longevity. I called it Jeremy Porter AND THE... for the sole reason that I wanted to be able to keep it going if/when members came in and out without losing momentum and traction, and it seems to be working. We're on bass player no. 4 now, and the band name has stayed the same and the shows and records keep getting better. What sometimes makes me take pause is to look around and see that most of the people I've played with over the years are retired from performing, if not playing altogether. The appeal wore off, life happened, and they've moved on. Those things haven't happened to me, and that is something I occasionally ponder.

OK, second – honestly, no... and the same applies to this compilation and almost all the deluxe edition reissues that have come out in the last few decades – be it the Stones, the Who, Replacements, X, Lemonheads, whoever. Bands put a lot of work into recording and sequencing albums and as the sessions progress and conclude the good stuff rises to the top and it's not all that hard for me to decide what isn't going to make the cut, and history is almost always on the side of those decisions. There are a few exceptions, but outtakes are outtakes for a reason, and sometimes they're great, they're fun, I'm glad people get to hear them, but I don't look back very often and think one of them would have been better on the record than one of the songs that made it.

And what was the third question? Oh yea – favorite live album. I have to go with Cheap Trick *...at Budokan – The Complete Concert* (not the original single LP, but the full-show double LP). *Live at Leeds* is right up there, the Deluxe Edition, again, with the complete concert, not the original culled and overdubbed release. I also love the UFO *Youngstown* Record Store Day release, and *The Jimi Hendrix Concerts*, which is amazing.

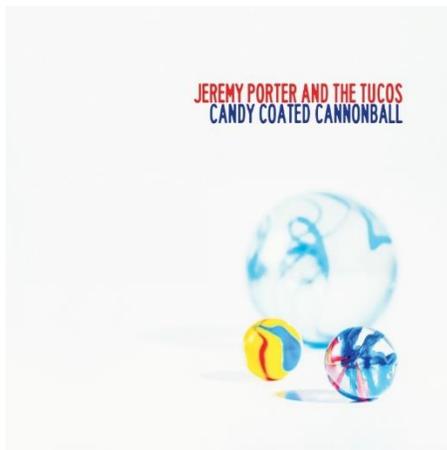


**J Hubner:** *On Thursday May 19th Jeremy Porter & The Tucos will be playing a gig with Fort Wayne's own Streetlamps For Spotlights at The Brass Rail. Have you played Fort Wayne before?*

**Jeremy Porter:** Yes, actually quite a few times. I've played there a couple times solo-acoustic, and The Tucos have played The Berlin (now The Ruin), and our last FTW show was at The Brass Rail, with the Raelyn Nelson Band. She's Willie's granddaughter, she rules and her band is amazing, and they've been great to us, bringing us down to Nashville to play. That show was awesome. Love The Brass Rail – it's one of those upper-Midwestern clubs that has great history and vibe.

**J Hubner:** *What should folks expect to see at the Brass Rail on the 19th?*

**Jeremy Porter:** It'll be an upbeat set for sure. We'll pull mostly from our latest album *Candy Coated Cannonball*, but we'll hit every record and maybe do a new one or two. We'll do about 45 minutes, give or take, and get ya home in time to get a good night's sleep before work Friday. Openers Streetlamps for Spotlights are a great Fort Wayne band we met in Dayton, Ohio, I think, and we can't wait to watch them and hang out. I love them. I think it's their first show since before the pandemic.



**J Hubner:** *You guys keep a pretty tight schedule, hitting Illinois on the 20th. When you have time in a town, what kind of stuff do you look for? Local record shops? Book shops? Breweries?*

**Jeremy Porter:** Whenever possible we like to hit record stores. We're all music junkies, and we like to shop and make sure stores have a copy of our record to sell too. It's not uncommon for Gabe and me to spend more at a local record store than we make at the gig. Record stores are part of the scene too, just like people like yourself who do write-ups, college radio stations, venues and bands. Time permitting, we might hit a guitar store or some touristy historical or rock and roll landmark or something. Sometimes there's a mandatory food stop – like Hattie B's in Nashville, or Starliner Diner near Columbus. Love Cindy's in Fort Wayne!

**J Hubner:** *What are some essential road tunes for Jeremy Porter & The Tucos?*

**Jeremy Porter:** We just pass the aux-cable and pick records going around clockwise in the van. Sometimes we get in a theme – like a genre, or an era or whatever. Sometimes I'll hijack the iPod and play something specific for the city we're in – like Cheap Trick in Rockford, The Replacements in Minneapolis, or The Nils in Montreal. I

tend to play a lot of metal too. I'm a big metal fan, even though that's not *our* sound at all. Gabe has the most diverse taste, and Jake is younger, so he brings a lot to the table that we haven't heard.

**J Hubner: *What's the rest of 2022 look like for the band?***

**Jeremy Porter:** Our last record, *Candy Coated Cannonball* came out in January of 2021 and before this year we haven't really had time to support it as a band, so we're trying to make up for that. Jake, our bass player, came on at the end of 2021, and he's been fitting in great, with a great sense of musicianship and positive attitude, and we're just looking to play wherever, whenever we can. We've got a 7" coming out in the fall and we're looking to do a longer run then, get back to Canada, and rack up as many shows as we can. We're also working up a batch of new material for what will be album number 5, hopefully in 2023.

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**Go deep dive into Jeremy Porter & The Tucos' discography [here](#). Keep up with the band's comings and goings right [here](#). And if you're in the Fort Wayne area on Thursday May 19th do yourself a favor and head down to Broadway to the Brass Rail and see Jeremy Porter & The Tucos in action, along with amazing *Streetlamps For Spotlights*.**



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