

Homeward bound



Marquette native Jeremy Porter, center, and the Tucos — Jason Bowes, left, on bass, and Gabe Doman on drums — will play Upfront & Company in Marquette next weekend. (Photo courtesy of Jeremy Porter)

Jeremy Porter brings new band to Marquette

By **RENEE PRUSI**
Journal Staff Writer

MARQUETTE — Jeremy Porter is anxious to introduce members of his new band to his favorite place on Earth: Marquette.

Jeremy Porter and The Tucos will be playing at Marquette's Upfront & Co. next weekend, April 1-2, sharing the stage with Gizzae, the reggae band from Chicago. Porter and his band are expected to hit the stage at about 10 p.m. both evenings.

"Marquette is my favorite place in the world," Porter said in an e-mail interview. "It will always be home."

Porter, who grew up in Marquette, played music at Marquette Senior High School and Northern Michigan University.

His first rock band was The Regulars, formed with John Burke. That band played house parties and bar gigs for a number of years.

Porter moved to lower Michigan, becoming a member of The Slugbugs in the 1990s. Later, his band The Offramps played all over the Midwest in the 2000s, including at Upfront.

From there, his next band was Fidrych. And now he's working with The Tucos.

"I've got a new band and we've been together since November," Porter said. "I had a really good time touring solo-acoustic last year, but as the dates were wrapping up, I was really jonesing to play in a band again.

"I was asked to contribute a track to a Christmas compilation and used that as the catalyst to get Jason and Gabe together and back me up on a song," he said. "And a couple of weeks later, we were playing our first show."

Gabe Doman, drums, and Jason Bowes, bass, are The Tucos. "Gabe is an all-around great musician who plays guitar, bass and drums," Porter said. "He's got a great ear and brings a lot of knowledge about recording and songwriting and arranging to the table. He's a versatile drummer and seems to quickly grasp what I am going for from one tune to the next. He's a whiskey snob like me and an old-school pop-punk aficionado like Jason, so he's fitting in great.

"Jason and I have been playing together for about 10 years now," Porter said. "We formed The Offramps together and he

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- thetucos.com
- jeremyportermusic.com
- facebook.com/pages/Jeremy-Porter/43142869424
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provided the low-end in Fidrych as well. He's been in the trenches for me for a while. We know what to expect from each other, we're on the same page and it's an easy, low-maintenance, low-drama relationship. He's an amazing bass player too — never takes him more than two takes to nail his part.

"We joke that we'll be playing weddings together when we're 60."

In May 2010, Porter played at Upfront in support of his first solo CD.

"Last year, I spent a lot of time on the road — over 40 shows across the East Coast, Midwest and Canada," he said. "Marquette is always a special stop though. I just love the city and have such great friends there that it's still home in so many ways.

"That show was fun," Porter said. "It was a Tuesday night, but all my friends came out and that was great. When I'm up there for a show it's usually and quick in and out as opposed to when I go up for a holiday or for the Ore To Shore (bike epic). There's little time to socialize, and the show is the only chance I get to see everyone.

"This trip will be a quick one, too, but it's Gabe's first time across the (Mackinac) Bridge so I can't wait to show him around. Over the years I've brought a lot of band mates and friends up there and many of them return on their own, they love it so much. That makes me happy."

Since the 2010 tour, Porter has been busy "writing, recording, playing or listening to or seeing music 100 percent of the time."

He and The Tucos have played in Chicago, Ohio and all over Michigan but probably won't launch a full-scale tour until they have a full-length release ready.

"We're recording a 7-inch single for Magwheel Records in April," he said. "Can't wait to get that out. We'll start demoing and getting the songs ready for a full length heading into summer. I imagine we'll start recording the record in late summer or fall."

Porter is thrilled to be coming home again. "What can I say about Marquette? After a couple months away, I start getting withdrawal symptoms for the Portside's breadsticks," he said. "Last year, I jumped off Black Rocks for the first time ever, right after the bike race.

"Scratch that one off the bucket list."

For more information, visit jeremyportermusic.com.

Renee Prusi can be contacted at 906-228-2500, ext. 253. Her e-mail address is rprusi@miningjournal.net.

What's in a name?

The Tucos? We asked Jeremy Porter about the rather unusual name for his band:

"We needed a name quick — we had a song coming out and had to attach a name to it. Jason, our bassist, suggested The Mortimers, after the Lee Van Cleef character in 'The Good, The Bad and The Ugly.' "Well, I did a little research and found that there is a hardcore band from Poland called The Mortimers, so that wouldn't work, but what about the Eli Wallach character — Tuco? Sure enough — it was available, so we jumped on it."