

Aldora Britain Records

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Diana Collier

From the Vaults with THE THEME!

Candy Coated Cannonball

Michigan-born underground rock legend **JEREMY PORTER** is renowned in and around Detroit for his brilliant work with his backing band The Tucos. Taking influence from classic rock and roll acts such as The Rolling Stones, Kiss and The Knack, Porter has enjoyed almost four decades of marvellous music making. From the pub punk scene to alt country swansongs, there is little ground left uncovered, such is the diversity and brilliance of this musician and songwriter. Most recently, Porter and The Tucos have released their pre-lockdown era album *Candy Coated Cannonball*. With live gig opportunities few and far between, *Aldora Britain Records* caught up with Porter to chat about the record and his journey so far.

JEREMY PORTER AND THE TUCOS CAN BE HEARD AS PART OF [THIS](#) ALDORA BRITAIN RECORDS COMPILATION.

ALDORA BRITAIN RECORDS: Hi Jeremy, how are you doing? It is such a pleasure to be talking to the face of The Tucos today. Thank you for your time! I was wondering if we could start off right at the beginning in that smalltown of Marquette. What are some of your first musical memories and what pushed you towards pursuing music?

JEREMY PORTER: Hey Tom, great to talk to you as well. Thanks for having me! My first musical memories were of my parent's stereo, playing Bob Dylan, The



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Beatles, then later Linda Ronstadt, Fleetwood Mac, stuff like that. There was always music in our house, on the stereo or the piano or whatever.

I started playing guitar fairly young with the reasonable and perfectly obtainable goal of being a huge rockstar like Ace Frehley. I always liked school because I could hang with my friends, but I hated being stuck there and I hated schoolwork. I wasn't a good student, but mostly just because I didn't care. I wasn't engaged. It wasn't something I embraced.

Rockstar seemed like the perfect job for me. As time went on, I started to realise that it wasn't as easy as it looked, playing guitar like those guys in *Circus Magazine*, and it started to seem unobtainable. Around then my family moved to a new city – Marquette, Michigan – I met some new friends, they turned me onto The Clash and The Ramones, and I realised you didn't have to play like Eddie Van Halen to be in a band and you could have a fulfilling music career without being a huge 'star'. I guess I've been making that adjustment for the last 35 years.

ALDORA BRITAIN RECORDS: You eventually moved to Detroit, a city that has an immense and undeniable musical heritage. What was the draw of Detroit at this



time for you? You had quite an education during this period in local punk bands. How do you look back on those days?

JEREMY PORTER: I had to get out of Marquette. I love that city and my friends there, and it'll always be 'home' to me, but I wasn't going to be able to forge a music career there. I was drawn to Detroit for a couple of reasons. First of all, I've always lived in Michigan, and from Marquette, it was basically Detroit, Chicago or Milwaukee. Growing up, we would visit Detroit, I could get into college for less money in that area, I had friends down there, and for some reason, it just made more sense. It was the only place I really considered, to be honest. It's a great city, but those were some dark years for it.

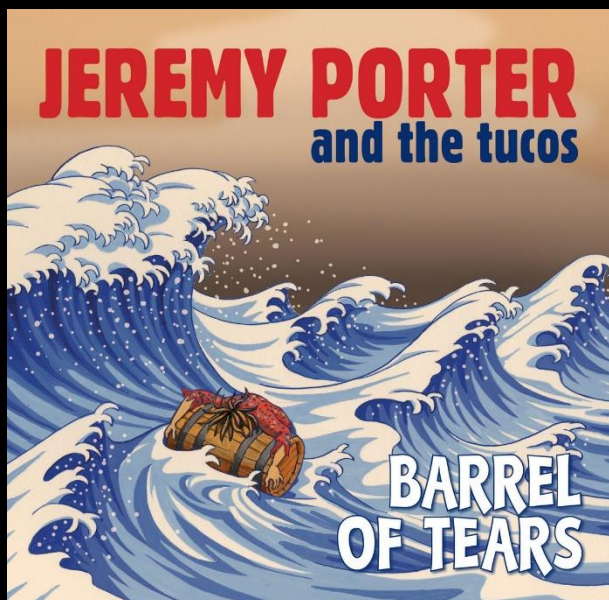
I look back on my early punk years in Detroit very fondly. I'm still friends with all those people, some of them very closely, and I'm proud of the work we did, the ground we covered, and the music we made. I've got regrets and things I'd do differently in hindsight, but for the most part I think I did the best I could at the time.

ALDORA BRITAIN RECORDS: The Tucos came about in 2009. I simply love this band and I think it is fair to say that it is one of your most successful projects to date. What was the initial spark behind it all? Can you tell me about the early days and is it a group mentality or more of an outlet for your amazing songwriting?



JEREMY PORTER: That's high praise, thanks man! It was actually late 2010 when we got together. Around that time, I was playing in a band called Fidrych with some really good friends, and good dudes, and good musicians. We had fun playing together, but it was a bit relaxed and slow-paced for me. We were coming off a slow, mostly inactive year and staring down a period of extended inactivity ahead due to outside factors, and I just can't be idle like that. I was asked to contribute a song to a Christmas compilation, so I got Gabriel and Jason together to back me up. A few weeks later we were gigging. Pretty much as simple as that. We were very busy, very early on and quickly started playing a lot of road dates, which was something my last couple of bands had done very little of, regrettably.

"It's very open and honest, and nothing is off the table. Very democratic and collaborative."



The logistics of the music we play is very collaborative. I bring in the songs, occasionally Gabriel has a riff or idea, and we work together on parts and arrangement. It's very open and honest, and nothing is off the table. Very democratic and collaborative. The logistics of the business side are more in my lap. I manage most of the booking, promotion, travel, press, artwork, etc. It's an arrangement that's worked pretty well so far.

ALDORA BRITAIN RECORDS: I love the band's sound. I think it is rooted in a strong passion for American rock and roll music. What would you say are the main influences behind it all, what bands do you look to? How do you describe the sound?

JEREMY PORTER: This is always a tough question. I generally say we're afflicted with an ongoing identity crisis and we're not really sure what we are, but there are clearly some buckets we would fit in. We've got a powerpop side – classic American powerpop bands like Cheap Trick, Plimsouls, The Knack. A little darker or more rocking – not so much the happy, janglier stuff, though not altogether excluded! We've also got a roots rock side – a little more whiskey soaked,

“Not a lot of schtick, just plug in and play the best songs you can write the best way you can, have fun, and hopefully people can relate.”

country rock, bar rock. And if you dig a little deeper you’ll hear some rockabilly, classic country and punk in there too. It’s not one thing, and sometimes that works for us, and sometimes it works against us.

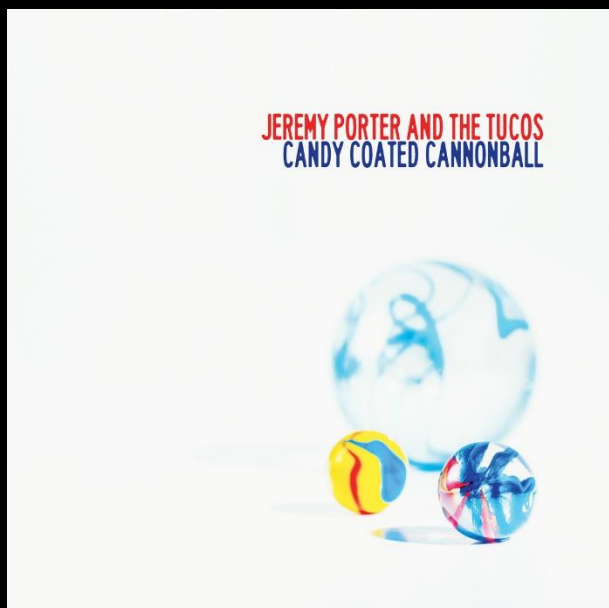
We try not to follow the sound of any band, but comparisons to The Replacements are inevitable. Uncle

Tupelo has a place in that conversation too. The bands I mentioned before. It’s very Midwestern USA, blue collar, honest rock and roll, like all of those bands. Not a lot of schtick, just plug in and play the best songs you can write the best way you can, have fun, and hopefully people can relate.

ALDORA BRITAIN RECORDS: *Candy Coated Cannonball* is an absolute godsend after the isolation, boredom and misery of the last year. How did that record come about? What are your memories from making and releasing it? It must be fairly difficult to make a ‘lockdown’ album!

JEREMY PORTER: Yeah, it’s been a real drag, hasn’t it? We finished recording the album right before everything shut down in early March. We had a bass player change at the start of 2019 and Bob came on board. We spent the year





writing the album, doing demos and playing shows, breaking him in. We did some good road work that fall then started recording right after the holidays. When the pandemic hit, we tried waiting it out for a couple of months, but when it became clear that it was going to be a while, we fired up the gears and got it mixed and mastered over the summer and fall.

It was weird releasing a record without tour dates to support it. I live

for playing live and travelling, so the record is to some extent the vehicle for that to me, and it just wasn't going to happen this time. Surprisingly, pre-sales and sales around the release were stronger than ever, and people like you have been very receptive and kind in talking about it, which helps to take some of the sting out, but it still hurts not to be able to support it out on the road and give these songs some life on stage.

ALDORA BRITAIN RECORDS: I would like to single out 'The Things Men Do'. The title caught my eye straightaway and the song itself does not disappoint. What is the story behind it and what does it mean to you?

JEREMY PORTER: Yeah, you like that one? Thanks! There's a lot going on in there. The intro is very Spaghetti Western with that beautiful trumpet played by Ingrid Racine. It's a slowed-down rip off of 'Dream While You Still Can' by NP Presley and The Ghost of Jesse Garon, with a bit of Tom Waits reverb and tribal beats thrown in. The main part of more American punk – reminds me a bit of 90s era Social Distortion, I guess. Lots of loud guitars – Les Pauls and Marshalls. Lyrically, I guess it's fairly typical of my writing. A relationship that has failed and left a deep scar on the song's protagonist, but with his acceptance of most of the blame at the same time. It's also a bit of a nod to the #MeToo movement, I suppose, because men are jerks, and because breaking hearts is what we do. That's probably where the title came from, even though it's a bit of stretch in message and execution.

ALDORA BRITAIN RECORDS: And you have a coffee table book too! *Rock and Roll Restrooms*. What is that about?

JEREMY PORTER: Yeah! It's a collection of snapshots I've taken of the bathrooms in the bars and clubs we've played across the US, UK and Canada over the years – each unique and nasty and glorious in its own special way. The book is just a prototype, about forty images or so. There are hundreds more and I'm looking for a publisher. If anyone is interested, let's talk!

QUICKFIRE ROUND

AB RECORDS: Favourite artist? **JEREMY:** These days, Nancy Sinatra and Lee Hazlewood. All time, The Who, Cheap Trick, Beatles, Stones, Gram Parsons, Husker Du, Drive-By Truckers, Bangles.

AB RECORDS: Favourite album? **JEREMY:** These days, Paul Stanley 1978 Kiss solo album. All time, The Replacements – *Let It Be*.

AB RECORDS: First gig? **JEREMY:** Alice Cooper, *Special Forces* tour, July 5, 1981, Thunder Bay Drive In, Alpena, Michigan.

AB RECORDS: Style icon? **JEREMY:** Blackie Lawless circa 1984.

AB RECORDS: Favourite film? **JEREMY:** *Every Which Way but Loose*.

AB RECORDS: Favourite up and coming artist? **JEREMY:** Tex Dynamite.

