

# PENCIL STORM

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## THE SATURDAY NIGHT SPECIAL: JEREMY PORTER & THE TUCOS / LIVE @ STATE FARE, CATONSVILLE, MD.

*October 22, 2022 / JCE*

My fellow Pencil Storm contributor Jeremy Porter and his band decided to undertake a fall tour this year. I started listening to **Jeremy Porter & the Tucos** a few years ago as a direct result of our mutual association with Pencilstorm. Being the “outsider” of the Pencilstorm writers, regionally speaking, I was shocked to see that the tour would bring the band as far as Virginia, all the way from Detroit. In reality, the tour continues even further south after the Virginia show. I really wanted to see the band and meet Jeremy. I always enjoy reading his stuff, as it seems our musical tastes are quite well aligned, and I really love the records he and the Tucos have released. In looking at the October 15th Virginia date, at a brewery in Salem, VA, there were immediate issues. It’s a 3-hour drive, and it would conflict with the birthday party of a close friend. It was a party I had committed to weeks earlier, which was much more problematic than the distance. Despite the negatives, it was on a Saturday and I seriously contemplated it, so much so that I booked a hotel just in case. Then I looked at the schedule again a little more closely, and saw “State Fare, Catonsville, MD” on October 14th. My first thought was “I have no idea where Catonsville is and I don’t want to go to the Maryland State Fair to see a band,” so I

initially ruled that out too. But upon even further review, it wasn't a State *Fair* (duh), it was State *Fare* (as in food), a restaurant/pub. And Catonsville is essentially Baltimore, which is a 2-hour drive for me, without traffic at least. Take off early from work on a Friday afternoon? No problem. Book a new hotel and cancel the one in Salem? Check. Make a dinner reservation at the venue? Done. Buy tickets? No need, free show.

With our plans firmly in place, my wife and I spent a few weeks with Jeremy Porter & the Tucos in heavy rotation. I left work at noon on Friday, October 14th as planned. I went home, got a few clothes together, packed a small cooler and we hit the road around 1:00. Traffic was horrendous, so the drive took us three and a half hours. Add a stop at the Columbia Mall for my wife to make a return of an online order and it was after 5:00 when we checked into our Holiday Inn Express, which fortunately was just minutes from State Fare. The drive was taxing so we relaxed a bit, had a pre-dinner drink from the aforementioned cooler and then took an Uber to State Fare for our 7:00 dinner reservation. Upon arrival, we took stock of our surroundings. We asked the hostess if we could be seated near the music, but she indicated it would be outside, under a tent, and they did not serve dinner out there. No worries, that's why we had a reservation at 7:00, so as to be ready to rock at 8:00 when the music was slated to start. We had a table next to a window looking out under the parking lot tent and I immediately saw Jeremy setting a few things up. I also saw him visit the bar inside once, but we opted to finish up dinner and wait until we were outside to introduce ourselves.

I had conversed via email with Jeremy a couple of times to let him know I was coming, so I knew that there would be an opening band, **The Silverites**, who Jeremy told me helped to organize the gig. I had listened to their album **Parking Lot Regrets** a couple of times and found it to be pretty good, so I was looking forward to the openers as well. After dinner, we took our unfinished beers outside, grabbed a little high-top table and then I went to meet Jeremy. He was super-nice right off the bat and after handling a little more of the setup he came to our table and hung out a bit with my wife & I. It was great to chat with him, and my wife took the opportunity to snap a photo of us.



### JCE and Jeremy Porter

The Silverites came on at 8:00 and played a good set. I didn't feel like I heard too many songs from the record I was familiar with, but I could be wrong. The set did include a cover of **The Go Go's** "Our Lips are Sealed" which was a pretty fun one.

After their set ended, I took advantage of the break to go grab some merch. Jeremy was kind enough to throw in a beer coozie, a key chain and a decal with my (graciously discounted) purchase of a vinyl copy of **Candy Coated Cannonball** (clear vinyl) and the newly-released single called "Tonight Is Not The Night" (red vinyl). I had procured a gig flyer that I had to peel off the outdoor bar and I had Jeremy and the boys sign that, as well as the LP that I had just purchased. Jacob and Gabriel (the Tucos) were also very cool and really friendly.







**Pretty happy to have all of this to commemorate a great show.**

The Tucos hit the stage at 9:30 and played until 11:00. I wish I could say that I can recall every song and the order they were played in, but far from it, I just know that they played an amazing set. I had shared my favorite 20 songs with Jeremy earlier in the week. My only real requests though, were "Huckleberry," "Dead Ringer," and "Girls Named Erica." In the end, I think about half or more of my twenty-song, best of the Tucos playlist were included in the set. Of course, it was a given that I would need to do a write-up of this show for Pencil Storm, so I asked Jeremy if I might get a setlist after the show. He smiled and said yes, but he told me good luck deciphering it. It was a lengthy list of songs identified only by initials, and Jeremy warned me that they do not stick to it, adding some along the way, and leaving out others. More on that later.

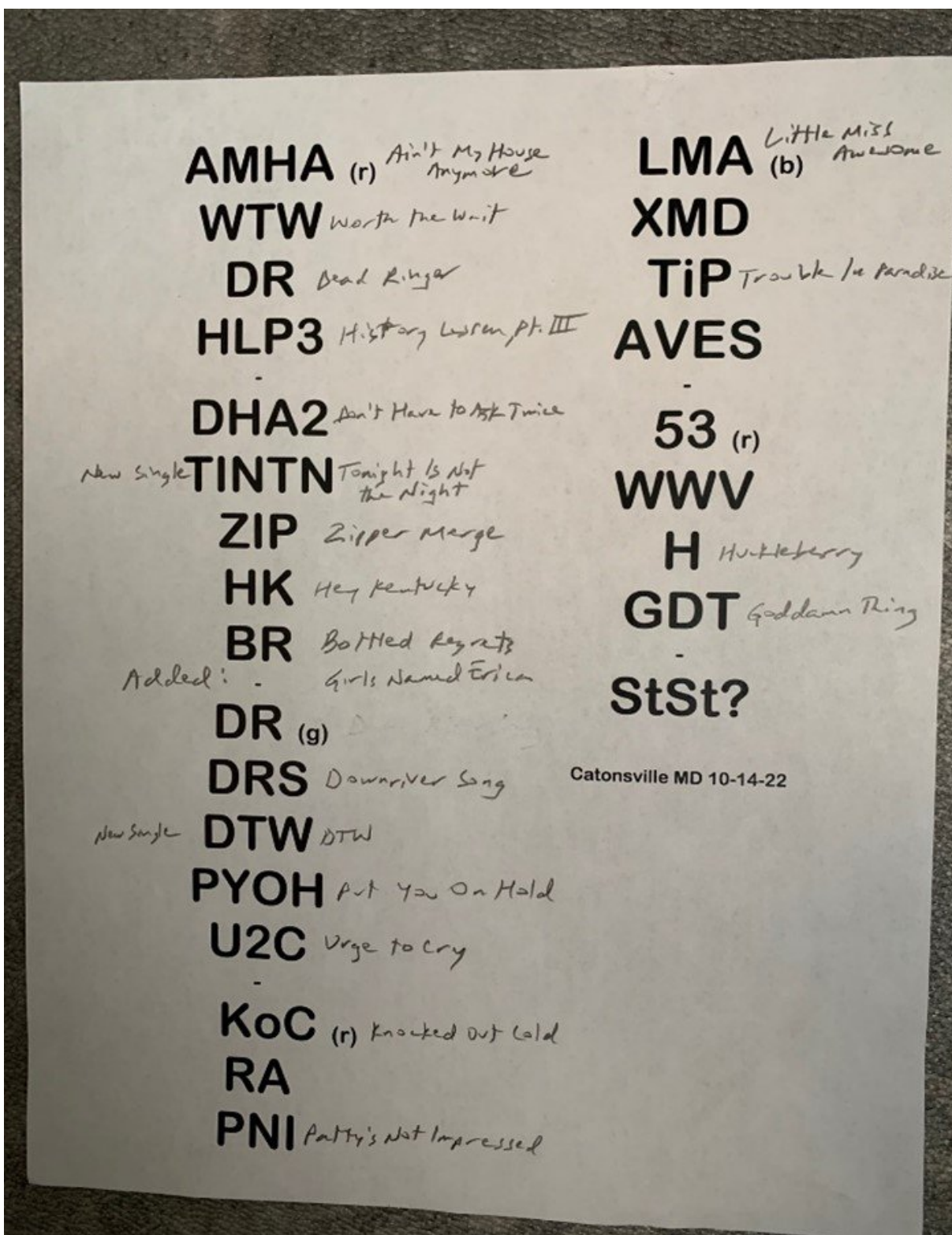
Jeremy and the band looked great on the spacious stage and Jeremy played a few different guitars throughout the show, each of them beautiful. You can see two in a rack off to the side of the stage, but the red hollow-body was my favorite. Even though I don't play, I love guitars.



## **Jeremy Porter and the Tucos under the tent.**

The first song was "Ain't My House Anymore" followed by "Worth the Wait" and "Dead Ringer," which are two of my favorites. A short time later, after playing the new single "Tonight Is Not The Night," Jeremy introduced the next song by jokingly explaining that the bands' new cause is to educate the driving public on how to "zipper merge," and then they played the song of the same name. I can totally relate, as I always wait until the lane that is ending is truly at its end before trying to merge, which is far more efficient and is actually how you're supposed to do it, as opposed to jumping over as soon as possible and slowing everything down. "Girls Named Erica" was not on the setlist, but it was indeed played, I suspect largely for my benefit---thank you Jeremy. "Downriver Song" was a highlight for me as well, I love that one. "Bottled Regrets," "Put You on Hold," "Patty's Not Impressed," "Little Miss Awesome," "Huckleberry" and "Goddamn Thing" were all killers along the way (again, my memory may not be perfect but these are all ones I believe I am accurately recalling and they are on the list). It really was a blistering set, and I have to say that Jeremy Porter and the Tucos are a really tight three-piece powerhouse. The music is clear and crisp and the sound was excellent.





A copy of the setlist with notes I added the next day.



When the set wrapped up at 11:00 I was tempted to hang around and have another beer with the band, but it had been a long day and I had had a few beers already, so I opted to say goodbye to Jeremy and thank him, Jacob and Gabriel for a great show, for the swag, and for being so accommodating to my wife and I. It was a great night and I was thrilled that we made the trip (so much so in fact that I was honestly wishing I could travel to Salem for the Saturday night show).



The next morning I got up early, made coffee in our hotel room, and sent Jeremy a thank you with some photos attached for his Facebook Road blog. He has been writing about the details of his travels on this tour, right down to the food, the venues, the bands' overnight accommodations, opening acts, and how each show went. I had really been enjoying reading about it leading up to the Catonsville show. You should go to his page and check them out. We showered and then got the free hotel breakfast before blowing out of town and back to Virginia. The drive home was much better than the drive there—two hours. It was a great 24 hours all the way around.

**BONUS: JCE's favorite 20 Jeremy Porter & the Tucos tunes (in no particular order).**

1. Put You On Hold



2. Dead Ringer
3. Upward Trend
4. Downriver Song
5. Girls Named Erica
6. Bottled Regrets
7. Sounds Like Goodbye
8. At Least She's Still In Love With You
9. How About a Beer For Smokey the Bear
10. Blue Letter
11. Don't Worry
12. Huckleberry
13. Patty's Not Impressed
14. Worth The Wait
15. Night On the Town
16. Castaways
17. Goddamn Thing
18. Little Miss Awesome
19. Make Out King
20. You Owe Me a Heart

If you compare my favorite 20 to the setlist, you know I was pretty damn happy with it.

**JCE**, or John to his friends, was born in the Nation's Capital. He grew up in the VA suburbs of D.C. He has a wife of 32 years, and a grown daughter. He leads a bit of a double life, working by day as the chief administrative officer of a VA county, and spending as many nights as possible listening to live rock n roll with his wife at any club that has a decent band within 100 miles or so of their house. Oh, and he has an ever-growing collection of about 150 vintage skateboards.

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