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Tony Furtado



Good Luck, Bad Luck and No Luck

Tony Furtado shines on *Thirteen*

There's both a philosophical and a musical reason Tony Furtado named his new CD *Thirteen*. For one, it's his 13th album. There's also a track entitled "Thirteen Below" about the Sago mine disaster that happened last year in a West Virginia coal-mining town. "Miners were down in the mine," explains Furtado, "and there was an explosion. Twelve of them died, and the way I was kind of looking at it was, 13 went down, which was unlucky, but the 13th one lived and he was lucky. So, is 13 lucky or unlucky, or is it neither? The theme of the whole album has to do with luck and no luck."

Furtado recorded *Thirteen* in Tucson, Ariz., at Wavelab. He had some all-star help, including Jim Dickinson, a famous producer of Ry Cooder's work (which years ago inspired Furtado to take up the slide guitar), and Dirty Martini's Stephanie Schneiderman, who sang harmony. Furtado describes *Thirteen* as "pretty rockin'," with a rootsy element. Some songs are a throwback to '70s rock like ZZ Top or Tom Petty, but not in an obvious way. Furtado found inspiration in the songwriting of Elliot Smith and the prose of Charles Bukowski for his own tunes and chose covers "Fortunate Son," "Won't Get Fooled Again" and Elton John's "Take Me to the Pilot." Furtado plays lots of guitars

and banjos on the CD, naturally.

The musician who made his name as an instrumental banjo player has come a long way in his career. Furtado's last studio album, *These Chains*, was his first attempt at injecting original songs with lyrics into his repertoire. Furtado says singing was something he always wanted to do and always knew he would do. "I just tried to let the transition happen gradually, and it happened over 10 years, pretty much," he says. His first few albums on Rounder Records were primarily instrumental banjo, and Furtado would hire other people to play and sing. "But it didn't feel right just doing that," he explains. "I wouldn't say 'bored,' but I didn't feel like I was expressing myself fully." Banjo led to slide guitar, and he gradually started working vocal songs into his sets. "Songwriting just sort of happened ... and it became something that was a necessary form of expression for me."

By the time Portland's Furtado appears at the WOW Hall CD release show, he'll be two weeks into his cross-country tour supporting *Thirteen*. He's lined up a crackling band to back him up on the tour: local drummer Drew Shoals, bassist Damian Erskine and Al Toribio, lead guitarist and vocalist of Renegade Saints, who will join Furtado as second guitarist. **EW**

TONY FURTADO BAND CD RELEASE

9 pm Sat., Feb. 3
WOW Hall
\$12 adv. / \$15 door

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