

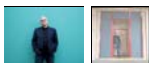
The Register-Guard

ENTERTAINMENT HOME

MUSIC

Curtis Salgado reunites with Eugene with Friday CD release show

Karen Lovely is the special guest at the show at Mac's at the Vet's Club



1/2 - Curtis Salgado's latest release, "The Beautiful Lowdown," contains 11 original songs. "It's completely conceptualized by yours truly," he says. (Jessica Keaveny)

BY JOANNA BARTLETT

For The Register-Guard

APRIL 22, 2016

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Eugene's own bluesman, Curtis Salgado, returns to his hometown Friday to celebrate the release of his latest album, "The Beautiful Lowdown."

Salgado has plenty to celebrate.

VIDEO

I'm Not Made That Way - Curtis Salgado



"The Beautiful Lowdown," his 10th album, contains the most original Salgado tunes of any of his releases to date.

"It's all original except for the last song," Salgado says. "It's 11 original songs and one cover tune by the late, and I do mean great, Johnny 'Guitar' Watson, who was a big influence on me."

In addition to being almost all songs he either wrote or co-wrote, Salgado took a stronger hand in producing this album. "I wrote the horns and the background vocals. It's completely conceptualized by yours truly," he says.

"It's a progressive step forward," Salgado explains. "I've always played a part in producing the records. I'm the guy with the last word. But on this one, it's more intensified." He'd like to produce for other people eventually, he says.

It's been more than 40 years since Salgado started out playing music in Eugene bars when he was 18, and a lot has changed in those decades.

"The future is on us and growing fast," Salgado says. "It's absolutely sped up."

Part of the increase in speed comes from social media. "You've got to fight a different game," he says. "You've got to keep your audience going. If you're not around, they have a tendency to move on to the next thing."

"Competition is fierce. Everyone's after the same dollar. And the dollar is getting thin," he says. "It's harder to make a living."

To make that living, Salgado finds himself on the road a lot. As a mid-level recording artist, he has to go out and perform, he says.

"It used to not be that way. Basically you could make a record and then there would be a record store that would hopefully sell the record. But now we're traveling record stores," Salgado says. "Because there is no more Sam Goody's and there is no more Tower Records. That's gone. And so it's a little harder to do at 62 than it was at 21 and 18."

But he's not discontent with his musical lot.

He's won several Blues Music awards for his albums and was named artist of the year in 2010, 2012 and 2013. The Blues Music

awards, presented by the nonprofit Blues Foundation, are considered the highest accolade for blues musicians and songwriters.

Salgado names Count Basie, Fats Waller and Anita O'Day as some of his early influences. "That's what I grew up on," he says. And following in their footsteps was always his plan.

"This is all I've ever been inspired to do or wanted to do, ever since I started hearing my folks' records," Salgado says. "I've been singing since I was a little kid."

While the work is hard, it's hard work he loves. "There's a difference about working and going to a job you don't want to go to and having a job you do want to go to. This is work, but it's work I love to do," he says.

It's also work he's glad to still be able to do. Salgado is a three-time cancer survivor.

"I'm just happy to be alive, and that's a level of success to me," he says.

Salgado was diagnosed with liver cancer in 2006 and received a liver transplant later that year. A year later, he underwent lung surgery to remove a tumor that had spread.

"I'm lucky to be where I'm at. It's a miracle to be on this planet," he says. "Truly what I've learned, it's all about love. Struggling, trying to be a better human being, that's what I'm doing."

Five years later, the cancer came back again. "Cancer number three," he says. In 2012, the lower left lobe of his lung was removed.

Fortunately, even with only a lung-and-a-half, his rumbling voice is just as powerful. "I'm stunned. It hasn't changed me at all, except when I'm at 12,000 feet or something. It's a little harder to climb," he says.

Salgado may not be climbing Eugene's buttes, but he will be at Mac's Restaurant & Nightclub on Friday.

"I know so many people there," he says of Eugene. "I can't wait to come and play. We have a really good time. That town, those people and myself, we go back a long ways. It's like going back to a high school reunion or something."

It'll be a reunion full of "good music, dancing, storytelling, good sounds," Salgado says. "And when they leave, I want them to have a song of mine in their head."

Joanna Bartlett is a freelance writer who's been cooking up words for more than 15 years. She lives with her children in Eugene and can be reached at joanna.y.bartlett@gmail.com.

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CONCERT PREVIEW

Curtis Salgado "The Beautiful Lowdown" CD release show

With: Special guest Karen Lovely

When: 7:30 p.m. Friday

Where: Mac's at the Vet's Club, 1626 Willamette St.

Tickets: \$25 general admission in advance (\$35 reserved seats in advance no longer available)

Learn more and listen: www.curtissalgado.com

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