

JIMMY FORTUNE

by Tamela Meredith Partridge
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According to former Statler Brothers tenor and songwriter, Jimmy Fortune, when one door closes, a new door of opportunity opens.

"The Statler Brothers founding members, Harold and Don Reid, called us in about a year before they decided to do a 2002 farewell tour and retire the group," says Fortune, who joined the group full-time in 1982 as a replacement for ailing member Lew DeWitt. "As time went on, they asked me what I was going to do. It was one of those things where I knew this group wasn't going to last forever, but I didn't quite think it would end right now. But it was happening, and I wasn't ready to retire. So I decided to take on a solo career."



Fortune is scheduled to perform at Nashville North USA in Taylorville on Saturday. Nashville North USA co-owners, Sandy and Mike Myers, are also planning a Valentine's Day door surprise for the concert.

"My show is based on the fact that you can't be anybody but yourself," says Fortune, who will perform the whole show without an opening act. "So I do my songs, tell stories and the reasons behind some of the songs that I wrote. I also do some other things by Rodney Crowell, Roy Orbison, The Eagles and some old 50's and 60's songs. It's gone over very well and the people seem to really enjoy it."

Fortune's decision to go solo was not an easy one.

"I can remember standing on stage with The Statler Brothers during our Farewell Tour thinking, 'What am I going to do by myself?'" Fortune says. "Because I was never really the spokesperson of the group. I was very happy and content to sing, smile, wave and let Harold and Don do all the talking. Being the frontman is whole new experience that I've found to be very rewarding."

Fortune's new solo career has also launched a debut cd, "When One Door Closes."

"After leaving the Statlers, God kept bringing to my mind the words 'when one door closes,' over and over," Fortune says. "One day I just sat down with pen and paper and in fifteen minutes I had the song -- the pieces fit together perfectly and I realized it was a personal anthem to where I am at this point in my life."

"When One Door Closes" features the Fortune-penned The Statler Brothers hits, "Elizabeth," "My Only Love," "Too Much On My Heart," and "More Than A Name On A Wall," along with seven other original tunes.

"I'm quite happy with this whole project," Fortune says. "But I'm really happy with the title track song because of its message of hope and positiveness of going into the future. A big door was closing in my life and I felt like the next step was to find another door, open it, go through and see what happens."

Sometimes in life, what might seem like a bit of bad luck, really ends up being a streak of good fortune.

"I was very comfortable being with The Statler Brothers for 21 years," Fortune says. "There was a special magic with them that I miss a lot. But when something happens that you have no control over, you've got to go on. And you realize that you have other dreams to pursue and begin to put it all into motion. And in some ways, I feel that life is just starting."