



Singer/songwriter David W. Jacobsen describes the artistic process, song meanings and historical parallels in his newest album, "POTUS."

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY DAVID W. JACOBSEN

History repeats itself in 'POTUS,' the neo-folk album

Musician David W. Jacobsen writes album about former presidents

JADA JONES Arts & Living Editor

While the U.S. hurtles through significant historical events, singer/songwriter David W. Jacobsen stops to recount the lives of obscure and notable U.S. presidents in his newest album, "POTUS."

Jacobsen wrote songs about Herbert Hoover, Richard Nixon and Chester Arthur. Each piece is sung from the first-person perspective to give the listener an intimate look into the lives of previous commanders-in-chief.

"It's sort of a history project with a humanizing aspect," Jacobsen said. "These people were actually alive with thoughts and feelings even if they were deplorable human beings."

"Shanties," the ninth track on the album, is from 31st President Herbert Hoover's perspective. The song follows Hoover complaining about Depression-era shantytowns, or "Hoovervilles," taking his name.

Jacobsen explained that he chose to write a song about Hoover instead of 32nd President Franklin D. Roosevelt because "that's what you'd normally expect." The two presidents held office during the Great Depression, but one was widely popular, and the other was hated by

many. To stay on brand, Jacobsen wrote a song about Hoover.

Jacobsen likes to focus on the "worst" presidents in U.S. history and tells their life stories before, after or in office. Jacobsen started writing songs about history after stumbling across the historical songs sung by Scottish singer Al Stewart.

"It started largely as a joke," Jacobsen said. "I wrote a song about Rutherford Hayes to play off the Jimi Hendrix song 'Purple Haze,' but I didn't know anything about Rutherford Hayes other than he had a funky-looking beard. Then I learned about him and realized he was awful."

Despite writing "POTUS" five years before its 2020 release, Jacobsen noticed parallels between some of the presidents he wrote songs about and former President Donald Trump. Jacobsen wrote a song about Nixon's impeachment and resignation, titled "Effective at Noon Tomorrow." Trump took office after Jacobsen wrote the song, making the old saying "history repeats itself" eerily accurate.

"[Recently] I've been playing the Nixon song a lot, hoping it would mean something," he said. "I wrote it before Trump was elected. Though I

didn't write it for that purpose, I've been playing it a lot."

Jacobsen also sees similarities between Trump and the 21st U.S. president, Chester Arthur.

"On the commentaries about some of these figures like Chester Arthur, he was this fat, corrupt New Yorker with no political experience and had no business being in office and unexpectedly became president," he said. "When Trump took office, I thought, 'maybe he'd be like [Chester] Arthur.'"

But Jacobsen makes one distinct difference between the two.

"Chester Arthur wouldn't have been on Twitter," he said.

"POTUS" features 11 tracks, with the leading track, "1799," being a parody of Prince's song "1999." Although Jacobsen intended some songs to be humorous, he also wants his listeners to learn something new after listening to his album.

"I'd want people to take away [some more] knowledge about American history. I try to express how these guys would have felt, but overall it's got an element of history with a little bit of humor," he said.

Students celebrate historic Senate win

Senator-elect restores hope for young voters

DEENA KAYALI Staff Reporter

As the result of two historic elections in 2020, Georgia officially turned blue. Both the presidential and senate runoff elections resulted in favor of Democratic candidates, and a new era begins in the state.

The last time Georgia elected a democratic senator was in 2000 when Sen. Zell Miller served his term until 2005. Since then, Republicans have represented and governed Georgia.

As U.S. Senators-elect Jon Ossoff and Reverend Raphael Warnock swear into office on Jan. 20, they will represent the needs of Georgians through their terms. While their victory may disappoint some Georgia voters, others are optimistic for the changes to come.

With both men in office, there comes an undeniable shift in Georgian policies: introducing progressive views, such as affordable health care and climate reform, and higher racial diversity and representation.

The progressive shift is not concerned solely with government offices. Diversity in voter turnout has increased during the last election.

According to a Pew Research Center analysis, the number of Latinx, white, Asian and Black registered voters increased by roughly 380,000 voters compared to October 2016.

The change in voter demographics has not gone unnoticed. Like sophomore Zora James, many young Georgians are thrilled, exhibiting a sense of pride and empowerment from the election results.

"The results of the runoff election indeed showed that there is

power in the Black vote," she said. "I think we all understood that flipping the state wouldn't be easy, but it was possible. As a Black woman, seeing the first Black senator from Georgia win gives me hope for progress."

Sophomore Ayoola Makeinde spoke of his newfound feelings of optimism when he saw the election results.

"I do personally think the runoff election has sparked an attitude change, and it's sort of like a fresh breath of air," he said. "Even though there may not be big changes in the immediate future, I do feel like change is and will happen. I see it as a sign of hope."

Junior Kinnede White spoke on the excitement of change, especially being a Black and Mexican woman raised in Georgia with influences from both cultures.

"For me, it's a chance to rebuild," she said. "It's a chance to restore all the damage that has been done to the mentality of people, particularly in Georgians' views of different race and minority issues, like the Black Lives Matter movement."

To people of color and minorities in Georgia and across the country, the change in power positions is more than just new governmental leadership; it is the beginning of repair and support.

"Since there have been so many misconceptions from our president, that mindset trickled down to the states," White said. "This is an opportunity for people to build a different perspective. I see the hope of change from Warnock and Ossoff, one that numerous people haven't seen in a long time."