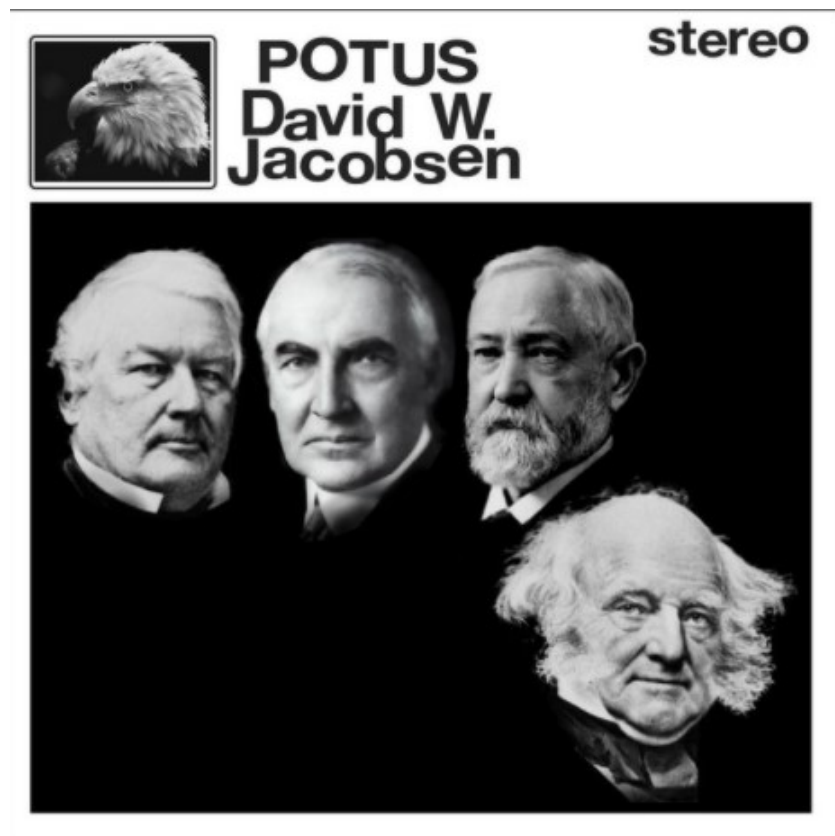


ARTS ELECTION 2020 MUSIC SPECIAL ISSUES

Satirical album runs down the ugly history of United States presidents

LAJIERE BLAKE NOVEMBER 7, 2020



The album cover of "POTUS" by Daniel W. Jacobsen. The album is about four former United States presidents who are often overlooked. *PUBLIC DOMAIN*

Artist David W. Jacobsen released a new whimsical album just in time for the upcoming presidential election. The album, titled "POTUS," is a homage to former United States presidents who are often overlooked. On his website Jacobsen writes, "The album mixes history with storytelling, providing a humanized view of men who have guided America for better or worse (more often worse)."

Although the lyrics of each song are relatively clear, the lyric and commentary page Jacobson created provides even more facts and information for listeners. The amount of research that



into each song is appreciated — it elevates the album completely. Jacobsen makes note of the books that educated him on the topic, including “Andrew Johnson The American Presidents Series: The 17th President, 1865-1869” by Annette Gordon-Reed and “The Bully Pulpit: Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and the Golden Age of Journalism” by Doris Kearns Goodwin.

Jacobsen is clearly dedicated to the topic, which enables his audience to gain fun and informative knowledge through music. “POTUS” gives listeners the chance to learn and reflect on the impact of these historical figures. Jacobsen discusses “terrible” presidents like Franklin Pierce, Andrew Johnson and Herbert Hoover. Each man changed the course of the country — from the development of shantytowns to overt racism within the White House, all of the presidents mentioned in “POTUS” have made an impact on the state of the country.

The album starts off with “1799,” a song that explores the often tumultuous relationship between John Adams and Alexander Hamilton. The song is from the perspective of Adams after Hamilton published an open letter expressing concern over Adams’ behavior. The song is catchy with a light-hearted rhythm that is bound to get stuck in your head. It is an interesting way to start off an album, but there is no denying the song hooks listeners in an engaging way.

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The next song, “Old Man Eloquent,” focuses on John Quincy Adams. It is a standout song from the rest of the album. Jacobsen writes, “He is my favorite president and one of the few on my ‘POTUS’ album who I actually like.”

The simplicity of the rhythm makes it easy to focus on the lyrics. Perhaps it is Jacobsen’s personal affinity for the former president, but “Old Man Eloquent” seems to have a striking

passion within it that can not be ignored.

Another standout tune from the album is “Swing Around The Circle,” which highlights Andrew Johnson’s rise to power and his political agenda. “They tried to take me out / I’m still here / You can say what you like / But I’m still standing,” Jacobsen croons over a creepy beat that utilizes the haunting sound of a church organ.

The rhythm is fitting; Jacobsen wanted to highlight Johnson’s terrible nature. In the commentary section for the song, Jacobsen writes, “Andrew Johnson was our worst president in many ways. He was monstrously racist in a time when most white people were pretty racist to begin with.”

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Each song on “POTUS” is meant to teach you something new. If it does not, the album is at the very least a humorous journey through the history of the United States. The album is ripe with hidden facts and gems of information that listeners are sure to enjoy in some capacity.

“POTUS” is available on YouTube, Apple Music and Spotify.

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