

# NEWS-RECORD

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## South Orange native releases music album centered on his hometown

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During the monotony of the earliest stages of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, South Orange native and musician David W. Jacobsen decided to read some of his old journals. Two years later, he turned his old words into new art in the form of an album centered on his hometown. "Imprint" was released on Nov. 5.

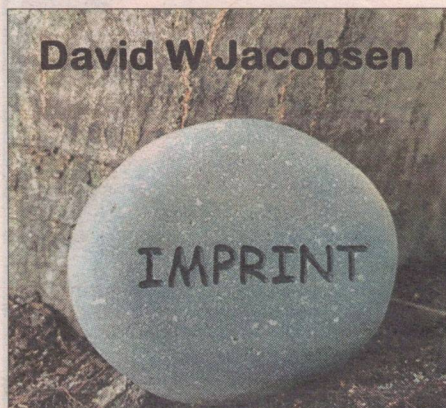
"I skimmed through my last two years at Columbia High School and the start of college, a period when I spent a lot of time in South Orange," Jacobsen said in an email to the News-Record on Nov. 23. "Skimming through them, I came upon a passage about a girl who I've long lost touch with who was having a hard time at home. The song 'Maple Street' was written about her and deals with having painful memories that she'd try not to revisit, but they are there, and they shaped her."

Some of the songs were written before the pandemic began; music isn't Jacobsen's full-time job, and he usually writes approximately seven or eight songs a year. He typically releases his music digitally every year, not worrying about how many songs he has because of the ease and ubiquity of streaming.

"I used to wait until I had enough material to fill a whole CD, but now there's no need. Most of the songs just came naturally in the last few years around this theme," Jacobsen said. "The last track, 'New Year's Day' goes all the way back to 2006 and was included because it fit the theme. It is a good closing track because it ends with a resolution to not think about the past."

Not all of the songs are completely confessional, according to Jacobsen.

"They aren't all autobiographical," he said, explaining that "Imprint" puts him and others back into Maplewood and South Orange. "If you write eight songs a year, year after year, you run out of



things to write about if it has to be about yourself."

Most of Jacobsen's songs are written on the piano he has in his apartment, and are later fleshed out and polished on other instruments. Typically, he needs uninterrupted solitude to sit down and write.

"I find writing on piano and transferring to guitar is a good way to avoid a lot of guitar cliches and leads to ideas you don't naturally attempt on a guitar," Jacobsen said. "Usually, whichever is more interesting is what I write first, as far as music or lyrics. That varies by song. Some of the best songs are the ones where I was able to marry an existing lyric to a new piece of music."

The solitude Jacobsen thrives on while writing songs carries over to when he's recording and performing music. "Imprint" is an acoustic album, as is most of his music. He prefers not to work with other musicians, which he would have to do to build a band.

"Getting a bunch of people to rehearsals, to learn the songs and to actual performances gets harder and harder as you get older, especially if there's not much money in it," Jacobsen said. "Bands are a lot more fun to see live and there is a ton you get out of that collaboration; however, if you have your own ideas and real-



Photos Courtesy of David W. Jacobsen

David W. Jacobsen, a South Orange native, recently released his newest album, 'Imprint,' which is based around his childhood in SOMA.

ly just want to express your own vision, it is a lot easier to just go it alone. Over 20 years ago, I just gave up trying to herd cats, picked up an acoustic guitar and decided to do it on my own."

"Imprint," along with Jacobsen's other work, is available to stream on Spotify, Apple Music and Deezer.