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ANTHONY STOECKERT

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You hear a song called "I Just Want to Make My Daddy Proud" on Seth Glier's new album, and wonder if the singer-songwriter doesn't have some parental issues. But delve into the tune's lyrics a bit, and you'll realize that Glier is not singing about himself, but about a very specific, formerly powerful, son.

"I never planned to be a huckster/who sells this color-coded fear," Glier sings. "I've lied to all your loved ones/sent to die and disappear/but I've got Jesus and my mother/And all of Laura's useless books."

The words were written from the perspective of George W. Bush. Writing as different characters — some real, some fictional — is a device Glier learned by listening to the music of Randy Newman, who has written songs about slave traders, a man trying to impress society with the help of a dancing bear and, famously, a fellow who hates "Short People."

"He takes on characters and gets inside their heads to write a song from a perspective other than his own," Glier says of Newman. "I feel like when I'm writing about myself that I'm trying to get as far away from myself as possible. Great songs are about truth and when one is writing about themselves, there are a lot of things that get in the way such as pride, vanity, and ego."

There's also a practical reason the 21-year-old Glier writes in character: "I realize that I've only had a short time of living so far," he says. "I learn much more about myself when I am writing about others."

Glier's recently released album, *The Trouble with People* (MPress Records) contains songs about love, loss and faith. Glier wrote the songs, co-produced and plays piano, keyboard, guitar and other instruments — even some accordion. His tour in support of the album will bring him to the Sanctuary Concerts series at the Presbyterian Church in Chatham, Nov. 21 on a bill with Livingston Taylor (the brother of James Taylor).

Glier's music is best described as "piano pop folk," but with some soul elements as well. Growing up in Shelburn Falls, Mass., he was influenced by his father's record collection, which included everything from Joni Mitchell to Turkish music. A songwriter teacher at Berklee College of Music gave him a Randy Newman CD. "It was one of the few records that changed everything about my approach to writing, people and artistry," Glier says.

Another area of inspiration is his brother, Jamie, who was born with Autism and is non-verbal.

"Growing up with him as an older brother was frustrating for me," Glier says. "I wanted a brother who was going to play sports with me or take me out and hang, but at the time I didn't even know how to have a conversation with him. When I was 16 years old I started waking my brother up every morning and giving him a shower, getting him dressed, and giving him breakfast. It was through this that trust began to develop and I learn how to read into his needs and listen to what not saying says. My brother really taught me to be human and relate to others. In the end, this was what songwriting is really all about."



Glier's live performances include a good deal of material from *The Trouble with People*, and some new songs — he expects to return to the studio in January to start work on his next album.

His tour has led to television appearances around the country, including a performance in Birmingham, Ala., that resulted in a phone call from a listener who wanted to talk with him about one of his songs.

"I called her back on the way to a radio interview and she told me that her husband passed away last year and during their marriage she was physically abused by him," he



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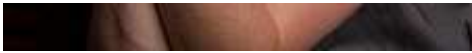
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says. "She told me that the words to 'Gotta Get Away' was what she wanted to tell the world of young females. I was pretty humbled and touch

by our conversation."

He was also thrown off a bit because the song was a personal one, about living at home with his parents and his 99-year-old grandmother.

"But then again, who am I to say what a song is about?" he says. "Whether it's something I did or didn't write, the beauty of art is that it can mean something different to different people. I'm learning to let go of my ownership. I feel like telling someone what a song is or isn't about is kind of like the lightning-rod taking credit for the lightning."

Seth Glier will perform at The Presbyterian Church, 240 Southern Blvd., Chatham, Nov. 21, 8 p.m. Tickets cost \$25. To purchase tickets, go to www.sanctuaryconcerts.org. For information on Seth Glier, go to www.sethglier.com.

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