

Laura Imhoff, with a 'Spotlight' of her own

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Somerville resident-to-be Laura Imhoff will feature at The SkyBar July 15 and on July 28 in the Brews Awakening Coffeehaus at the Lowell Folk Festival. A Boxford, Mass. native, Imhoff said she will be at home in Somerville in September, when she starts her semester at Tufts University. Imhoff currently attends the School of the Museum of Fine Arts and is part of a dual program with the Somerville school.

Imhoff said, "I am self-taught and started playing the guitar when I was 12 or 13, when my mother left. I am a poetry person, and that is how I got started writing songs." Imhoff said that since she started playing the guitar, she rarely writes any poetry without music. "All of my poetry becomes songs." She said she prefers songwriting because she feels she can express her feelings more thoroughly in that genre.

"I am inspired by what is going on in my life. In a way, it's a cheaper form of therapy and you can share what you learn with others," said Imhoff.

Imhoff recently returned from the Kerrville Folk Festival in Texas. She was part of the Massachusetts contingent there, with Somerville artists Hugh Mc-

Gowan and Tyler Nash. The group also included Dave Glaser, who played with McGowan on tour with Boston alternative popsters, The Push Stars, and has also played in many Somerville venues.

"I returned to Mass. with a whole new outlook. Also, playing and listening to music for three weeks can't help but improve you," said Imhoff. She said the festival was the closest she has come to taking lessons. "Coming back, I am singing and performing more from the inside—with more connectivity," said Imhoff.

Imhoff's eight-song demo is a mixture of recordings. Four were recorded by Greg Maloney, a University of Mass. (Lowell) music production student, and four were recorded by Imhoff herself in her home studio. On it, Imhoff's voice emanates out as musky and ridden with feeling. Her emitted lyrics are also accentuated by intermittent jumps to higher notes hit like searing sighs. Imhoff backs her messages with the rise and fall of her intensely rhythmic guitar playing.

The cd begins with "Spotlight," the first song Imhoff ever wrote (2000-2001). The piece captures the experience of being



nervous and on stage in front of people. "The demo also has my most recent song, Right down yonder, about having my heart broken but still wanting to be with that person and regretting that I'm not just a little bit. It is my favorite song to play," said Imhoff. "We can dance" is a Spanish-style song about dancing that Imhoff said she wrote about being in New York at a Spanish festival in a park with friends. "Hippie Gangsters" is Imhoff's reflection on a class she took on the '60s—it depicts a journey in the future, in the year 2010, which would go from East to West, the reverse of the trip '60s legend and author, Ken Kesey took with his Merry

Pranksters, as described by Tom Wolfe in his book on the topic, "The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test."

Imhoff's studies focus on stained glass. She said she sees no correlation between that and her music. Imhoff, however, said that her latest project did incorporate sounds into the colors with which she was working. The glass piece is comprised of 20-30 bell-shaped wind chimes and Imhoff recorded its movement. "My professor described my stained glass as 'rhythmic,' by which he said he meant it is pattern-oriented like my music. Maybe there is something to that, but I can't get outside of myself to see it yet," she said.

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