

WORLD OF FOX

Former frontman of Birmingham post-rock pioneers Grover, Simon Fox, returns with his debut solo acoustic effort. Just don't call it folk.



After 10 years at the forefront of Birmingham's experimental music scene with post-rockers Grover, Simon Fox has certainly earned some quiet time.

But while his debut solo album *Everything is for the Best*, under his one-man moniker *World of Fox*, exhibits a gentler side to his music, it maintains an experimental drive.

Released on the fantastically-named Commercially Inviably Records label, it draws on a range of influences imbibed through nearly two decades of performing. Despite an appearance at this year's Moseley Folk Festival and a live set-up that includes little more than just an acoustic guitar and a banjo, Simon is reluctant to be lumped under the label of 'folk music.'

"I think of myself as an alternative musician," he explains.

"Other people lump me in with folk and acoustic music but I still think of myself as experimental."

"I found I was listening to more and more acoustic stuff, but the stuff Grover were listening to like Mogwai, I was getting a bit bored of,"

As for playing live, he admits it represents a different challenge to that of fronting a noisy, post-rock band.

"Playing solo is always scarier than playing in a band," he says.

"Grover were always very loud and distortion oriented so any bum notes would be covered up by a bass player and drummer and

now it is all me.

"I used to dabble in solo stuff but it's taken me a while to get comfortable with it."

The record itself was all recorded at his Kings Heath home but still features a range of raw sounds and a variety of instruments.

Guitar, banjo, theremin, mandolin, percussion, keyboards, brass and woodwind all find their way onto the album.

"I tried to make quite an eclectic album, I've tried to mix it up a bit so it doesn't all sound the same.

"The record is all me, but there can still be some quite big arrangements.

"It was about self-sufficiency. I've always been a bit of a control freak and it was just about channelling it without having to rely on anybody else."

As well as pushing the new album, Simon still has a host of other musical projects in the pipeline, aimed at pushing his boundaries, including one particularly unexpected sideline.

"I'm also working on a collection of covers of 80s songs," he explains.

"I wanted to do some covers and I realised all the ones I was thinking of were from the 80s.

"I'm not being cheesy, I'm trying to stick to the songs that specifically meant something to me."

Words by Sean O'Muir.

• *Everything is for the Best* by *World of Fox* is out now on *Commercially Inviably Records*.

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