

The World Went Quiet – A Review

by David Kramer

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Tony Cox shines like a Namaqualand diamond; he's a rock solid and multi faceted musician. Listening to his new album, *The World Went Quiet*, I was reminded of the depth and the ingenuity of his talent. His instrument is the guitar and Tony is a fingerpicking wizard, weaving spells on his six strings with his left and right hand. He has an ability that leaves me gaping in admiration.

I've known Tony a long time. We first met when we were both young men trying to find an audience at The Barleycorn Folk club in Rosebank, Cape Town. It was here that I experienced Tony and his friend Steve Newman wowing the audiences with their jaw-dropping dexterity and their quirky humour. At that time Tony and Steve were building a huge and enthusiastic following with their offbeat virtuosity as displayed in their interpretation of The Pink Panther theme. The tracks *Elephant Stomp* and *Campling's Challenge* are reminiscent of those years. But it's not all mind boggling fingerpicking fireworks– I was happily reminded of Tony's tongue-in-cheek approach when I listened to *I Meant To Put A Heart*. Here Tony uses his flat South African accent and a simple strumming accompaniment to paint a zany, off-the-wall, satirical love song.

The World Went Quiet reminds us that Tony is no one-dimensional artist. The album showcases an eclectic selection of styles and approach. From the poignant, opening track, *One and Only* sung with his daughter Thuli – a heartbreaking take on gender-based violence to the haunting *Never Forgotten* – a homage to those who succumbed to the Covid virus. He is a composer of great depth and the tune *Empty Dance Hall* is beautifully evocative; redolent dust and half shadows; an empty stage and an abandoned piano. It belongs in a film, as does the title track, *The World Went Quiet* which captures the eerie emptiness of city streets we experienced the world over, last year. The scope of his writing is expansive, stretching from cinematic lushness to the jaunty upbeat African influenced riffs and rhythms heard on *Tauboy My Cowboy* and *Sho' Left*.

Tony Cox recently relocated with his family to the United Kingdom. *The World Went Quiet* is his first release since leaving South Africa and it combines his enormous talent and complexity. I sincerely hope this latest offering from Tony Cox will open doors for him in his new home.