

Album from both sides of the pond



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A SINGER-songwriter's new album may have been born in the USA but he says Wigan is very much home.

Bobby Long, who lived in the borough until he was six and still has family in Swinley and Orrell, travelled from his home in New York to Texas to record third album *Ode To Thinking*.

Bobby's family left Wigan for Wiltshire and he then made his way Stateside after studying at London Metropolitan University.

His latest album sees him strip back the sound of previous recordings to concentrate on his voice and guitar, while he says the studio in Austin allowed him to subtly absorb some of the state's history in country, blues and jazz music into the record.

Despite the trans-Atlantic setting and influences, which started aged 11 when his dad Chris introduced him to blues, Bobby says it is the north of England which still feels like home to him.

Bobby, 29, said: "I've got more family ties to Wigan than anywhere else and whenever I go back it feels like home.

"I really like the place, it feels like a home base. I love the people and I'm also a rugby league fan and like to go to a game when I'm here.

"It definitely influences my music and in particular my lyrics, especially with the northern sense of humour I was brought up with."

Having conceived of second album *Wishbone* as a band project Bobby decided to approach *Ode To Thinking* as a more intimate, singer-songwriter's set of tracks.

He also says *Ode To Thinking* sees him exploring a more contemporary sound after the conscious folk and blues-influenced nostalgia of his first releases.

The album was recorded with producer Mark Hallman and funded through a PledgeMusic campaign which saw more than 8,000 fans donate in return for exclusive items such as T-shirts, posters and hand-written lyric sheets.

Bobby hopes to spend more time in the UK, having just played a successful slot at Glastonbury, and says he would love a hometown gig to showcase his music in Wigan.

He said: "I've played in the rest of Europe and America but not as much in the UK.

"I'm going to do four or dates in the UK in November and I would love to perform in Wigan. All my family keep asking when I'm coming over."

The album is out on August 7. To find out more visit www.musicbobbylong.com