

Running Dog has got form

Ex Fat Lady Sings frontman Nick Kelly chats to Tom Dunne of Today Fm about his latest solo album



Nick Kelly plays *Deerz's* tonight at 9pm and *The Lobby* on Saturday night at 9pm.

X FAT Lady Sings frontman Nick Kelly jokes that with the release of his latest solo album, *Running Dog*, his first in seven years, his work rate musically is starting to approach that of the famously slow moving Blue Nile.

Well perhaps the gap between albums bears comparison, but in that time didn't the Blue Nile Boys also complete a short film, put together a live songwriters' album, start a family and create almost all of the recent award winning Guinness TV ads? Yes, Nick did both the Tom Crean one and the one that used Mic Christopher's *Heyday*. When does he sleep?

As long as I've known Nick I've been enthralled by his use of English. We first met at about the time that both our bands were coming off the rails. Asking him what had happened with his own crew, he replied that he had left because "my own momentum was being forestalled by the structure of which I was part."

And for those who don't remember, Fat Lady Sings were a class act. They started life in Dublin but quickly moved to the UK. Touring the UK incessantly and releasing independent singles, they attracted rave critical reviews and burgeoning audiences in equal measure.

Signing to East West records, the bands first album *Twist* was released in 1991 to widespread acclaim. One single from it, *Arclight*, remains to this day one of the most popular Irish songs of all time. It was followed by a second album *Johnson* and an exhaustive tour schedule. That coupled with a steady turnover in band members eventually led Nick to call it a day.

A year after leaving the band, he did some low-key gigs in Britain, Ireland, New York and Tokyo, which were rapturously received. By January 1997, he was ready to release his first solo album, the brilliant *Between Trapezes*.

To say reaction to that album was positive would be an understatement. It was described variously as the album of the decade. In the UK the response was equally over the top. A series of stunning shows in the UK and Ireland was topped off when *Hot Press* readers voted the album Debut of the Year.

Since then, Nick has been the busy man described earlier. But seven years is a long time between albums. "To be honest it really suited me. Ideas and melodies can come quite quickly but finishing things can actually take years."

Part of what gives the album its freshness is how it was recorded. "It was really one of the least stressful records I ever made. I recorded it with Joe Chester and Sean Miller in a series of four-day recording sessions. We'd take four days, record a block of songs and leave it for a few months. Then go back and do more. Then at the end we got a few extra people in to add overdubs and additional vocals. Joe mixed it in his bedroom and Steve Osbourne (U2, Massive Attack, Happy Mondays) who I've worked with in the past did a remix of the single *You're Gonna Fall*."

I am in truth breathless at the quality of the album, the quality of the songs and achievement of a man who has determined to make the most of what is a huge song writing talent.

"I have three-and-a-half of the eight essential talents to make it in music, but I find those three-and-a-half are enough to enable me to write songs, record albums and play gigs. I've put together a great band for this tour. I'm hoping that at some of the gigs people will come up to me afterwards and tell me I'm great. No one has told me that in ages and you need to hear it."

At this point we are running out of time so I don't get to ask Nick what are the eight essential talents and which are the three-and-a-half that he has? I don't even get time to tell him he's great; which he is, as is the album.