

Dogged Nicky in top form

►NEW RELEASE

►RUNNING DOG
By Nick Kelly
(Self Possessed Records)

TEN years ago, as Nick Kelly surveyed the wreckage of his band, The Fat Lady Sings, he wondered what the future might hold. Kelly's songwriting had been acclaimed. But despite a series of notable singles (including *Arclight* and *Drunkard Logic*) and two well-received albums (*Twist* and *Johnson*), his personal mystery train was unceremoniously shunted into rock's sidings. Miraculously, Nick Kelly escaped the wreckers' yard that claims so many less-resolute young aspirants.

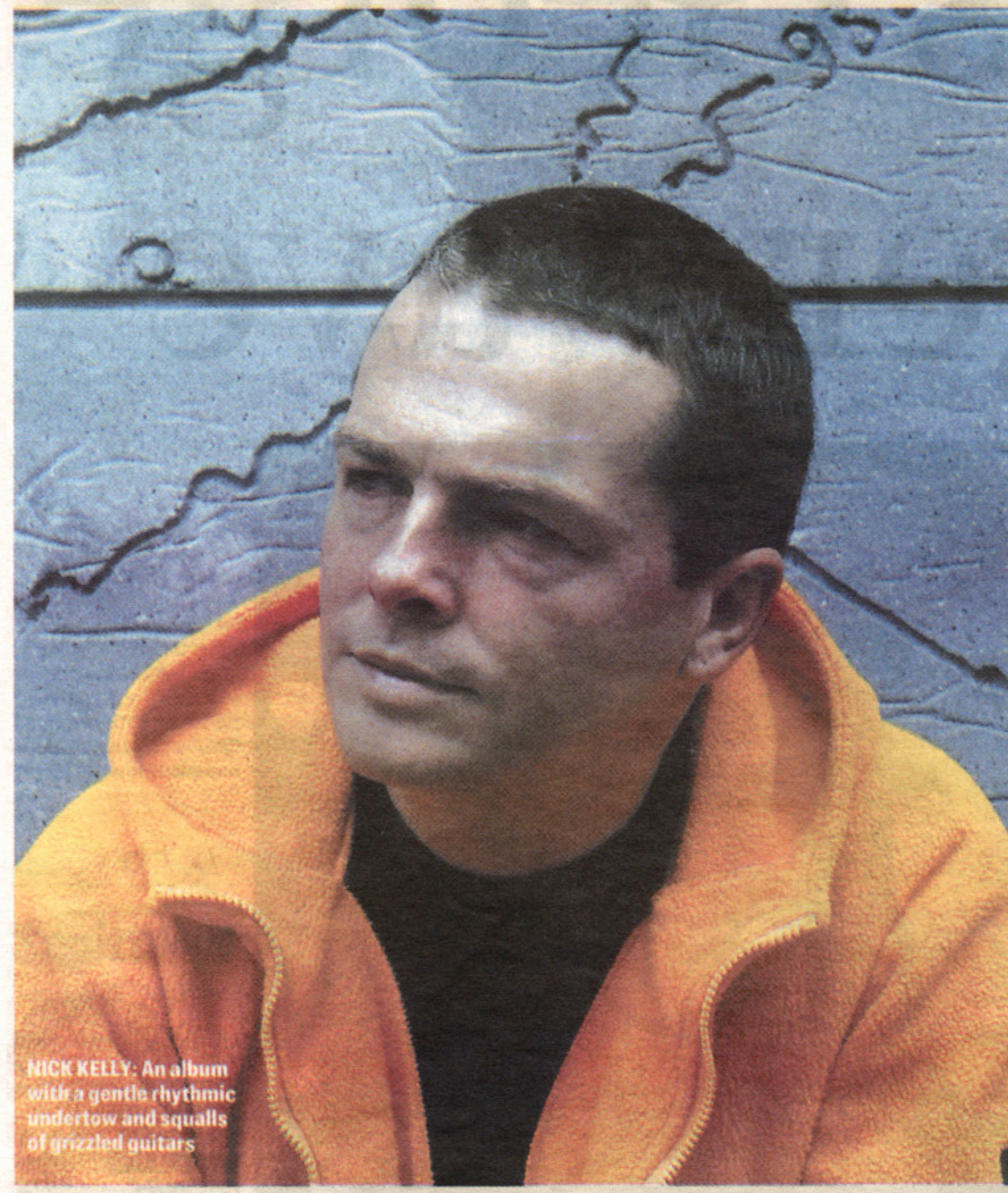
LOW-KEY
He took stock, carried on writing and, eventually, released *Between Trapezes*, a solo album that earned him a place in the annual Music Critics' Awards ahead of luminaries like Christy Moore, Paul Brady and Van Morrison.

HIGH FIDELITY

Eamon Carr
**THE MUSIC JUNKIES
GUIDE TO NEW RELEASES**



But he remained low-key, below the celebrity radar, refining songs of yearning, loss and hard-earned hope. His new 11-track collection, *Running Dog*, is evidence that Kelly is improving with age. He's always been perceptive, smart and lyrical. Now he's more focused than ever before. Each song is a compact emotional unit. Melody is celebrated. Arrangements are as stylish as Habitat furnishings. And Kelly's voice evokes the loneliness and long hours of uncertainty of the songwriter who perhaps wonders if his voice will ever



NICK KELLY: An album with a gentle rhythmic undertow and squalls of grizzled guitars

be heard again. These unique features make *Running Dog* an album that will surely find a welcome in at least 100,000 homes. Album opener *You're Gonna Fall* has the easy romping grace of vintage R.E.M. *Don't Stay Inside* unleashes squalls of grizzled noise guitars to underline its point. A gentle rhythmic undertow propels *Not Enough Love (To Go Around)*. *Running Dog* is a labour of love. A poet's soulful challenge to the fates. It sounds as tidily precise and perfect as if the same muse that guided Donatello's hand in the carving of the spirited figure of St George in Florence was hovering at Kelly's shoulder during the recording sessions.

There's a dignified sense of ardour and, indeed, valour to these tunes that calls to mind the stately calm of *The Blue Nile*. The album's centrepiece, *The Loneliest Ghost In Pere Lachaise*, is a work towering with charm and invention. ("Dear Oscar lusts after the young Lizard King..."). Would that Agnes Bernelle was around to record it. But someone undoubtedly will. The good news is that Nick Kelly has found his metier. Working in his unhurried way, it may take him years to write and complete an album but, if the standards set here are the measure, then, for his fans, the wait is surely worth it.



From TV to CDs

Why seven years between albums?
I do all the stuff myself, which takes longer than if I was with a major company. I contacted 600 fans and asked them if they'd like to sponsor it by buying a copy in advance. 450 got involved.

Despite a successful career in creative advertising you remain committed to songwriting. Why?
Part of the struggle is to find a way of doing your work which doesn't make you mad or bankrupt but which allows you to keep going.

Your campaigns have been winning awards in advertising. How did you become a copywriter?
After I split the band I wasn't sure I'd ever make a record again. I stumbled into writing ad copy for which there's no qualification. I was lucky.

Both your campaigns for Guinness made a huge impact.
I was in an aeroplane and I saw the story about Tom Crean who'd been 15 years with Scott and Shackleton and then he opens a pub. I thought, "This has to be an ad". I feel Guinness has helped me make this record because from the work I've got some level of financial stability.