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## TO HERE KNOWS WHEN - GREAT IRISH ALBUMS REVISITED

### *Twist* by The Fat Lady Sings

“ A TREMBLING MONSTER OF A POP RECORD FROM IRELANDS FINEST BAND

THE NME



During the mid-80s as A&R men congregated in Dublin looking for the next U2, it seemed that any half decent band was in with a chance of securing an international record deal but **Nick Kelly** felt that he had no choice but to up sticks and move to London. “I definitely couldn’t have been in a band if I’d stayed in Dublin. My father was a politician, I grew up in Donnybrook and I was a qualified solicitor. I felt like I had three strikes against any level of coolness,” says Nick.

“I only started being in a band because I went to a place where nobody knew me and I started singing in bars in New York and people were nice to me about my singing. Nobody had ever been nice to me about my singing in Dublin.”

In London **The Fat Lady Sings** would self-release four highly regarded singles. With Terri Hooley’s permission they re-activated his *Good Vibrations* label to release their debut single ‘*Fear and Favour*’. It was an astute move. In January 1987 *Music Week* wrote: “Legendary Belfast label Good Vibrations returns with its first single in nearly four years, launching yet another highly promising new Irish band. Its passionate vocal and insistent beat should ensure attention.” In March 1988, ‘*Be Still*’ the band’s second single was described by Danny Kelly in the NME as “ambitiously epic and enigmatic”.



The band’s third single was ‘*Arclight*’. Nick remembers recording the song in Howard Jones’s home studio. “It’s the first time we were ever in a properly posh studio. I had this thing that we were messing around with in the rehearsal, which is ‘*Arclight*’, and we just had a half day left over and we just knocked it down. So that was the tune and we didn’t think it was a single at all. We put it out ourselves. It was never a hit. Then weirdly after a few months we started hearing reports of it being played. The story of The Fat Lady Sings and of ‘*Arclight*’ is of growing on people very gradually.”

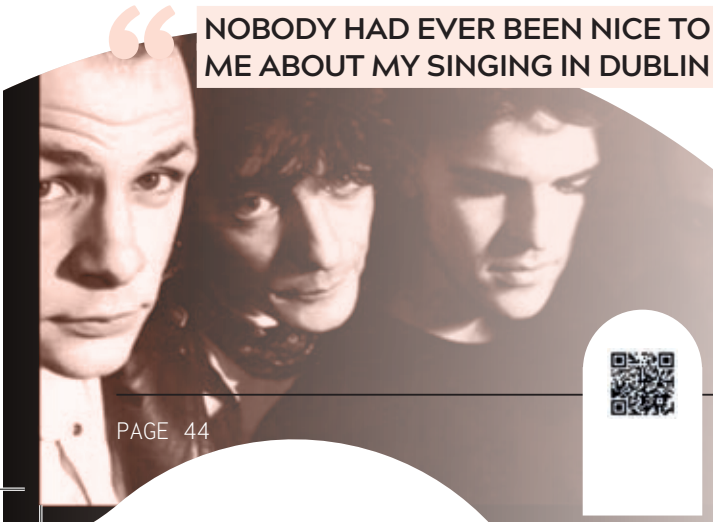
The band signed to *East West records* and *Twist*, their debut album, was released in 1991. ‘*Arclight*’ was re-issued and *Sounds* awarded it their ‘Single of the Week’ declaring: “there should always be space guaranteed for a song of the calibre of ‘*Arclight*’ - one of the most achingly beautiful songs of recent years.”

‘*Arclight*’ reached No. 7 in the Irish Singles Chart, one of five singles from the album (the others being: ‘*Dronning Maud Land*’, ‘*Man Scared*’, ‘*Deborah*’, and the title track ‘*Twist*’) that all went Top 20 in Ireland. The NME called *Twist*, “a trembling monster of a pop record” and declared The Fat Lady Sings, “Ireland’s finest band.”

The Fat Lady Sings released one more album, 1993’s *John Son*, before calling it a day in early 1994. Nick has spent the last few decades working as a film director and has just launched a Kickstarter fund to raise post-production finance for *The Song Cycle*, a documentary about his sustainable journey to play the Glastonbury festival.

The Fat Lady Sings reform for a one-off gig in Whelan’s, on 15 November.

“ NOBODY HAD EVER BEEN NICE TO ME ABOUT MY SINGING IN DUBLIN



Nick Kelly revisits *Twist* on *To Here Knows When - Great Irish Albums Revisited*, available on all podcast platforms. Episode notes and further information: [paulmcdermott.ie/podcast](http://paulmcdermott.ie/podcast)

