

The written word is not my preferred method of expression - grammatical errors have been left uncorrected.

Recording 'Doorways' the beginning and the end. *a sort of Internet conversation to be overheard by other people who know nothing about Finish The Story.*

"Tell me, after the Malvern gig did you take the synths back to Bromsgrove? How did they end up there because as far as I recall there was never any intention at that point to take FTS further and our going to Bromsgrove was more of an autopsy/end of gig thing - wasn't it? That's sort of how I remember it." (Garry)

The only thing I can remember is my parents were on holiday and the three of us ended up at 59 Crabtree Lane. At some point you went back to Bristol and Nicola was still with me in Bromsgrove. I can vividly remember walking into the newsagent, buying 'Record Mirror' and reading a review of the Malvern gig. The review was full of praise and contained an intriguing and telling couple of lines at the end '*...the crowd were obviously impressed, even though the band weren't. Quite a debut.*' I think we were prepared for an autopsy but not prepared for the praise. It was at this point we got our heads together and decided we would 'have a go' to see if we could build on the success. Unfortunately we weren't strong enough emotionally or as a unit to cope with the sudden roller coaster ride ² - we weren't allowed to make our mistakes in private (in the rehearsal room) we had to test-drive new material before we could actually play it with confidence. It was a bizarre journey - to be in the music press described as a 'band' with Nicola not knowing who I was and me not knowing who she was - you had to be the artery for our creative juices (yuk!). You could argue that this was pure, a creative, adrenalin driven ideal scenario for the creation of something different and unusual. - I would agree to that in theory but in reality it was incredibly stressful. We had got our product to market too quickly; we hadn't invested enough time in development. We were '*...better than the second coming of Jesus Christ*' ³ - we proved that eighteen months later when we had matured and got to know each other better.

'Doorways' was recorded on a 4 track Tascam 144 cassette recorder - I had bought this in Birmingham - the store fleeced me with excessive repayments⁴ - they were expensive bits of kit and a piece of cutting edge technology - in comparison with today's digital audio world they were positively primitive. This was a massive investment for me and at the time - it was the best available home recording equipment on the market and Finish The Story had two of them. ⁵ (Peter)

"Yep, two tascams, mine and yours. We both saw the Tomorrow's World when they appeared and instantly wanted one - took some time I seem to remember. I don't think though you bounced down to each other - I was sure you had a reel to reel but if not it does explain how it was recorded."

Nicola was new to me, we had only met a handful of times so everything was polite courteous. She was 'mike

¹ August 8th 1981

² We were confident and extremely excited superficially.

³ ZigZag September 1981

⁴ I think I was paying over 15% interest.

⁵ When Jez joined us he put his bits on to our tracks in London - we wrote by post, sending master cassettes in brown padded envelopes. All this before the Internet and its wonderful collaborations - it was happening back then, it just took longer.

shy' and it was difficult to get her to sing with any power.⁶ I can remember it being a deliberate process – the recording was organised and structured.

There are five recorded parts to the track: Drum Machine, Guitar, Vocals, Roland JP4 percussion track (drum sound) and an Elka string machine/ JP4 synth voice part. The master tape has been lost but I think I bounced the JP4 percussion track and the string/voice keyboard track together (internally). There is a point on the tape where I had to drop edit the string/voice track – it involved remarkable timing by you and a swift left index finger by me. You can hear this where the flanger's tonal sweep changes towards the later end of the track – this edit actually emphasised the elation of the keyboards, a lucky accident and I can remember us all jumping up and down with relief – it was a shit or bust moment.

I remember laying down the drum track, just playing that odd percussion sound on the RJ4, slightly off, doubled up here etc and getting very bored so stopping after so long - hey this track ain't going to be this long - and then hours later Nicola doing her final vocal - she had just written the lyrics so no one knew how long it was going to be and as she was singing it you recorded it as with her then there was a danger she would clam up. The counter kept getting closer to the final number and Nicola seemed to never end. If she continued and the drum track, along with your guitar, stops she is going to be pissed as hell, then she stopped, mere seconds before the drum, that's why the end nicely falls apart, it is us naturally stopping, not a contrived ending or a bloody fade out.

History would repeat itself doing 'Cold as Roses'. We laid out a long, long track; she wouldn't sing so Lazlo just played a very long solo and gave a typical violin ending. She comes along, does her bit then suddenly starts that 15 bar yell that worries the crap out of us as yet again we are running out of recorded track and then she ends smack on Lazolo's flourish - amazing.

On 'Doorways' the vocals are recorded in sections, you can hear these distinctively, the echo/reverb on Nicola's voice has different qualities.⁷ (The echo/reverb was recorded directly onto the track – 144's only have one send and return, mix downs are limited.)

This simple little track was hard to record, caused by the restrictions of the 144 – if we recorded it now it would be a piece of cake - but would sound completely different. Doorways captures a unique moment. A moment which can never be repeated – lost innocents, optimism, hope, naivety and desperation. Doorways was also our fate – we couldn't play it live and we never recorded anything afterwards that came close to its awkward perfection. We never recorded anything afterwards that was worthy of our pride.

I do remember playing it to The Photos and to Tim at his place later the next day or week and them going in disbelief 'That's

⁶ This is something she overcame and her live performances became powerful as did her stage presence – she eventually became awesome.

⁷ I think we used either: 1/ a Watkins Copycat (Echo Machine) – another ancient tape machine preferred and used by many including Bauhaus or 2/ a Philips reel to reel tape recorder that I adapted to create a three speed echo machine – this was a cleaner sounding beast that had very little hiss – I used this machine extensively when recording other bands and my solo This Window projects – I was very sad when it ended up in that great big skip in the sky in the late 1990's. There are things that I can't do digitally that these machines could do in their old eccentric analogue way.

Nicola?' The most interested and supportive was Ollie who listened to it about 3 times. He was a man of few words; most of them sarcastic, so the fact he was genuinely interested spoke tons.

Finish The Story never recorded anything that we were happy with – I know most artistes say that....but everything we recorded was useless⁸, there was always something catastrophically wrong with each track: bad mix, bad guitar, bad keyboards, bad vocals, bad hair day etc. None of the tracks stood a chance of being released they were just demo's, we were a live band every gig was a performance never to be repeated or captured.

All we recorded was really for a record company's ear not for the general public; the only one that was deliberately 'given' to the public domain was that one the two of you did.

Yes, the only thing that did get released was when Finish The Story was as good as finished – I'd walked off stage in the middle of a gig at the 'AdLib' and decided to call it a day (or was I sacked?). It had all got too much for me, all I could here was that fucking violin and I thought I'm playing bollocks? I can't hear Garry, has Nicola done that bit yet? This sounds shit and I am disappointed. It was the last straw that broke.....besides I was trying to hold down a job and I was in love. I'd reached breaking point. Nicola and I eventually put this behind us and we had a go at writing songs together. Zig Zag (magazine) offered Nicola a track on an album they were releasing in conjunction with Situation Two- we recorded a version of 'Like A Sickle Runs Through Corn'⁹ on the old Tascam 144 which I mixed onto a Revox PR99¹⁰ - that was released on 'Gunfire and Pianos'^{11 12} (like 'Doorways' a track recorded in a bedroom in Bromsgrove).

I was never told, contacted or asked about my feelings concerning the 'wheat through whatever song' and I must admit I was a little pissed off when I found out but when I heard it - what the fuck could I have offered? It was wonderful, it was FTS! It is also one of my favourite FTS songs. If you have a chance to work with her again please, please, please don't see me as important or necessary. From me: Support, images, feedback, love etc yes: playing? writing? Um, sorry, no. You two were the best version of FTS.

I disagree. What I really want to happen is.....

To be continued

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⁸ In retrospect some of the tapes have mellowed with age and have become less disappointing to listen to, they have a naive charm. We never captured our live presence – we were a live band, not a recording band.

⁹ The songs we were writing were stripped down to the bones – 'Sickle' was simply guitar and vocals – naked and sparse.

¹⁰ Nicola and I went to 'Lanes End', a studio in Shropshire to mix it down but yet again the finished product was shocking so we reverted to the DIY method.

¹¹ Ironically the one track deal was a Beggars Banquet release – I had turned down a five year contract with them a few years before with 'The Urge' – I wonder if they remembered?

¹² I will always regret Garry not being on this track – it was impossible for the three of us to get together – I don't think we have all been together in the same room since.