

I Wrote That

Nick Hemming made history this year when he became the first unpublished* songwriter ever to receive a nomination for an Ivor Novello Award. He spoke to **M** about writing songs that make men cry.

Nominated in the Ivors Best Song Musically and Lyrically category, Hemming's *Last Of The Melting Snow* is truly a melancholic classic - but given the frame of mind the songwriter was in at the time, he was never going to pen an upbeat pop tune.

'I was in a real state when I wrote it,' Nick tells M. 'It was New Year's Eve and I was alone in London with a bottle of vodka and the words just started spilling out: it wasn't a conscious decision to write the song, it just happened.'

'I played it on the guitar to [fellow band mate] Christian [Hardy] when he came back a few days later and it made him cry, so I knew I'd written something meaningful.'

'One of the reasons I'd moved to London was because I'd gone through a really back break up with a girlfriend. But I played a gig in my home town of Burton-Upon-Trent and she turned up to see me play.'

'She invited me to her house on Christmas Eve and I got it into my head that we were going to get back together. Instead she told me about her new boyfriend, who then turned up, so I found myself distraught and running back to London.'

With his friends visiting relations over the Christmas holidays, Nick found himself on his own and in a dark place. 'I was in real emotional turmoil...it's all a bit of a blur to be honest,' he recalls.

Thankfully Nick wasn't so upset that he didn't record what was happening - although his methodology was a little unorthodox.

'I was just playing my guitar and writing some words down, but I've become used to recording stuff with my mobile phone, so I was able to use that to trigger my memory,' says Nick.

That's just as well because although Hemming has been writing music for about 18 years, it's only in the past four years recently that he has turned his hand to lyrics. 'I've found it can be a really cathartic process,' he says.

That soul bearing and the critical success of *Last Of The Melting Snow* is finally allowing Hemming to fulfil his dreams of being a full time musician.

'Since moving to London I've been working as a session guitarist and keyboard player for a bunch of bands, but that doesn't exactly pay, so I had to get a job.'

He started working in a fabric and wallpaper warehouse two years ago. 'I'm still there, but I've now handed my notice in because I have a couple of publishing deals on the table and I know that there will be some money coming in.'

'Since the release of *Last Of The Melting Snow* things have really taken off. We've just done a mini tour and we're off on a bigger tour in July, as well as doing a few festival dates. This nomination alone has brought us amazing things.'

As for the recognition for his work, Hemming admits, 'I was amazed when I was contacted about the Ivor nomination. We self-released the record so it just shows that you don't have to have a major company behind you to get noticed.

As for the future, Hemming is teetering perilously close to optimism.

'I work from inspiration,' he says. 'I'm not one of these people who can just sit down and write. But things are going so well now that I think I might be in danger of becoming too happy and complacent.'

*Last Of The Melting Snow has now found a publisher in Notting Hill Music.
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