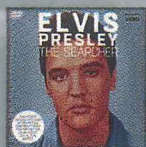


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Kate Bush

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The Music Magazine





AN ARCHITECT'S DREAMS

Sensual, secretive, obsessive: the story of KATE BUSH: Recording Artist is a rich and dramatic quest for control and possession of her art – one which her raft of newly remastered albums underlines with an unmistakably personal touch. In new material from interviews with MOJO's TOM DOYLE, she relives the highs and lows of her hunt for perfection: "It would've been nice if some of the stuff I did wasn't always so hard."

Portrait: CLAUDE VAN HEYE

SMASH! THE FIRST GLASS HIT THE FAMOUS parquet floor of Abbey Road's Studio Two. Another quickly followed it. Then another, and another. Before long, the place was a mess: jagged shards everywhere. Later, the canteen staff at the world's best-known recording facility would be none too chuffed to learn of the wanton destruction of their glassware.

In the spring of 1980, as she was nearing the completion of her third album, *Never For Ever*, the 21-year-old Kate Bush was loving the sound of breaking glass. Miked, recorded and stored on the still-newfangled Fairlight Computer Music Instrument, the smashing sounds were looped and played amid the balalaika crescendo of *Babooshka*, destined to be a Top 5 single. Then it was on to the rifles, the percussive cocking of their hammers sampled to enhance the bodhran beats of another future hit, *Army Dreamers*. For Kate Bush, it was a revelatory experience: the moment she could begin to paint with colours of sound that, up to this point, she'd only heard in her head.

"It meant I could do some of the experimentation which, for me, is such a part of the process," she told me in 2005, in a four-hour-long, face-to-face interview, much of which remained unpub-

lished until now. "It was fantastic. There was this lovely feeling of creativity and freedom and fun."

Bush had been introduced to the Fairlight by Peter Gabriel, around the time she'd added her distinctively haunting backing vocals to *Games Without Frontiers* and *No Self Control* for his third eponymous solo album. Gabriel subsequently lent one of the bulky and expensive new instruments to Richard James Burgess and John Walters of the electronic band *Landscape*, and asked the two to cart it over to Abbey Road to give Bush a demonstration. She didn't need its potential spelling out.

"She can see and hear exactly what she wants to get and then she has to struggle to try and achieve it," noted David Gilmour, who first brought the teenage Kate Bush to the attention of EMI in 1975. "I think she found that the Fairlight gave her much more control and helped her to achieve her vision."

On *Never For Ever*, as opener *Babooshka* slipped into the tangential track two shapes of *Delius*, Kate Bush the artist we know today was born. There was a good reason for this – three albums in, she was now in command of her production, albeit for now working in cahoots with Jon Kelly, the engineer of her 1978 debut, *The Kick Inside* and, for her, its too-hasty follow-up, *Lionheart*.

"I mean, I didn't really know a lot about what you did in re- ➤

The dreamer: Kate Bush at the grand piano in Abbey Road Studio 2, October 5, 1982; (opposite) in Holland, 1978; with game-changing Fairlight proto-sampler in a 1983 tech mag cover story.

“cording studios,” she reflected. “But I’d made two albums and was getting the hang of it. So, with the third album, I said [to Kelly], Shall we produce it together? So that was the first big step.”

“I think music is very visual,” she continued. “On *Never For Ever*, there was quite a bit of that... trying to imagine being there. It’s that thing of being in this place, isn’t it? That you’re talking about or singing about. So, then you’re trying to create what it looks like and who’s there.”

Much later, Bush would work with Michael Kamen on her 1989 album, *The Sensual World*. The composer had recently finished the score for Terry Gilliam’s 1988 film, *The Adventures Of Baron Munchausen*, and when he played it for Bush, she was thrilled to discover that she could visualise the movie’s scenes from the music alone.

“I was saying to him, Oh, is this the bit where there’s the storm and the boat goes down? and he was going, ‘Yes!’ His music was so visual, I could see it.”

It was during *Never For Ever* that Bush realised that only through the painstaking control and curation of her soundworld could such effects be ensured.

“Obviously the production is such a big part of what the song is,” she told me. “It’s every bit as much what the song is as the lyric and...” She paused, and smiled, before precisely nailing down what would become her attitude to record making.

“I mean, it is the song.”

INITIALY, THE TEENAGE KATE Bush, rushing home from school to get back to the piano and her ever-growing collection of highly original, self-written songs, wasn’t ever in need of a tape recorder: “I was the tape machine. I used to practise, practise, practise in order to remember the stuff. It’s what I did all the time.”

Looking back, she recognised that she must have cut quite an intense figure as a young girl. “I think I was, yeah. Muted intensity. I suppose it was the equivalent to my hobby. Whereas some girls were off riding ponies and stuff, I was sitting, y’know, writing my rock opera.”

Brian Bath, the guitarist who would go on to work with Bush until *Hounds Of Love* in 1985, remembers being invited by Kate’s older brother Paddy to their home at East Wickham Farm in Kent to hear the then-13-year-old play her songs. It was May 1972. “They were amazing, because they were just so different,” he enthuses. “The chord progressions were like nothing I’d ever come across before. Kate just seemed to go elsewhere.”

Soon, Bush began committing these songs to tape at home in a rudimentary fashion. Some of the recordings were passed, via Ricky Hopper, a mutual friend of Paddy Bush and David Gilmour, to the Pink Floyd guitarist. Impressed, Gilmour offered to record a more polished demo: “I trundled off down to her house with a tape recorder one day and recorded a load more songs with her at the piano in her front room.” He then selected three – *The Man With The Child In His Eyes*, *The Saxophone Song* and never subsequently released *Maybe* – to record with Bush, and members of the country rock band Unicorn, at his home studio.

“But they didn’t really achieve what was required,” Gilmour remembered of the tapes. “Then basically the decision was made that it needed to be done properly. I thought that we needed to actually record masters for an album.”

So committed was Gilmour that he financed the sessions, bringing in another friend, Andrew Powell, to produce them at AIR Studios in central London. On that day in June 1975, when the 16-year-old Bush was supposed to be sitting a couple of mock O levels, she performed what proved to be the final version of *The Man With The Child In His Eyes*, singing and playing live at the piano, backed by a full orchestra.

It was the first time she’d ever set foot in a top-flight professional recording studio: “I think of myself in that room and I think, Well done, that you actually had the guts to sit there and do that. I wanted to leave school and my parents said, ‘You’ve got to take your O levels. You can’t leave school before.’ There was an element of me wanting to show them that I really meant what I was saying... I wanted to make music. When I look back at it, they were really great about it. Because they probably saw I was so driven that it was what I was going to do anyway.”

Her second recording experience was as the singer in The KT Bush Band, the group she’d been performing with in pubs and clubs in and around London. In April 1977, the band booked into De Wolfe Studios to record demos, including *Them Heavy People* and *James And The Cold Gun*, in arrangements similar to those later to feature on *The Kick Inside*. But for the recording of her debut album in the summer of that year, Andrew Powell and EMI insisted she ditch the band, in favour of a group of session musicians brought in from Cockney Rebel and Pilot, both of whom Powell had worked with as an orchestral arranger.

“She was assured when she sat at the piano,” says Stuart Elliott, the main drummer on *The Kick Inside*. “There was a performance every time. It was a luxury really. Whatever you did over the top was just the icing on the cake. Or the icing under the cake (laughs).”

As successful as *The Kick Inside* was, both creatively and commercially, Kate Bush was trying to assert further control over her creative process as early as summer 1978. A demo studio was

swiftly built in the former grain store barn at East Wickham Farm where as a child she’d been photographed playing a wheezing old organ by her eldest brother, John Carder Bush. The flagstone floor in the now ad hoc live room was kept, while its grain loft, accessed via a set of steps, served as the control room of the 8-track facility.

There, throughout June, the test recordings for the *Lionheart* songs were committed to tape by The KT Bush Band, including early versions of *Wow*, a heavier guitar rendering of *Coffee Homeground* and a take of *Hammer Horror* that Paddy Bush insisted his sister recorded in total darkness.

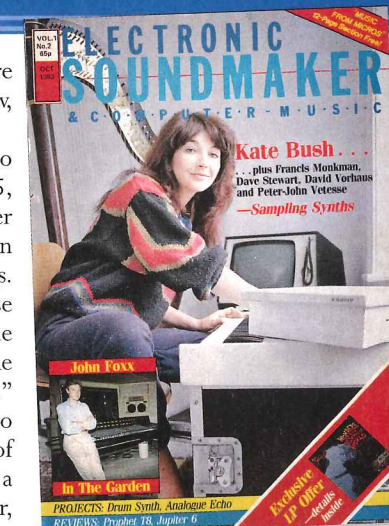
“He had some boxes of matches,” Brian Bath remembers, “and while she was singing it, he started throwing them through the air. We were upstairs listening to Kate doing her vocal. All of a sudden you just heard this ‘Waaaaaaaaaa!’ She was apparently so scared. I thought she might’ve been putting it on, but she actually lost her voice. She couldn’t sing for quite a few days after that.”

The sessions for *Lionheart* commenced in July 1978 in Super Bear Studios, near Nice. At first, The KT Bush Band were brought in for the recordings, although it quickly became apparent that the combination wasn’t working out.

“I mean, we were fairly experienced,” Bath pointed out. “I was asked to do things like swelling guitars, but I didn’t have a [volume] pedal on the floor. So, it was quite tricky. I just got a bit disillu- ➤



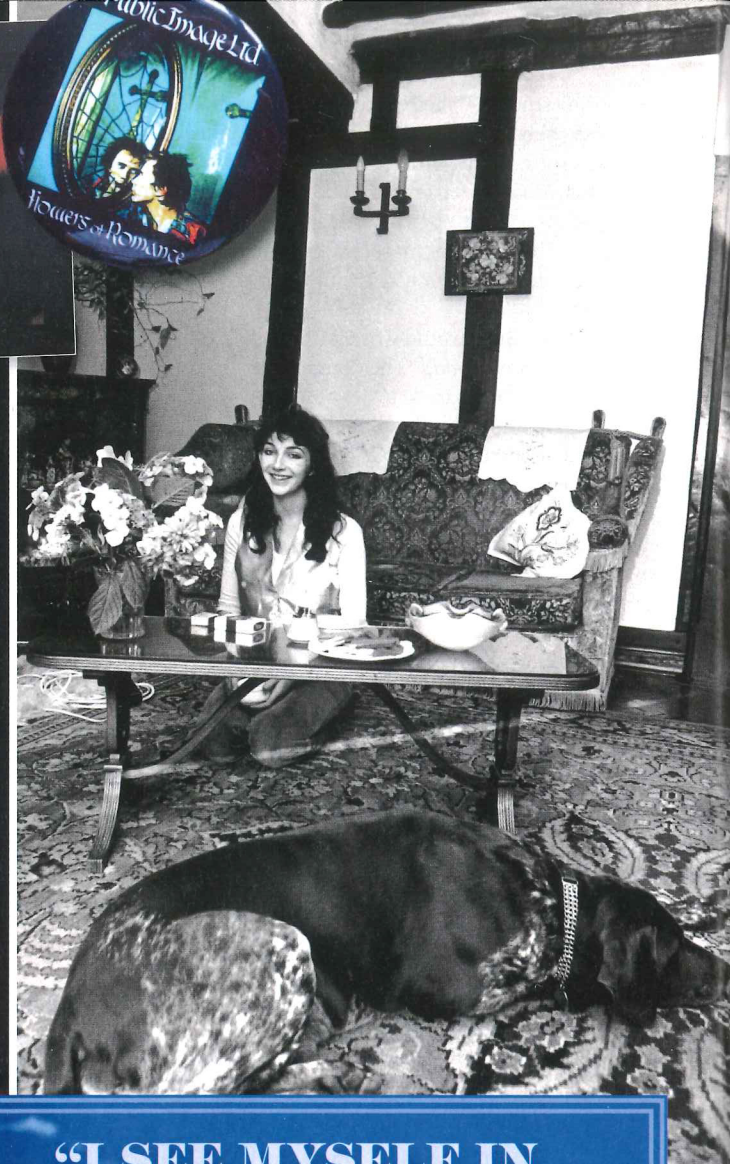
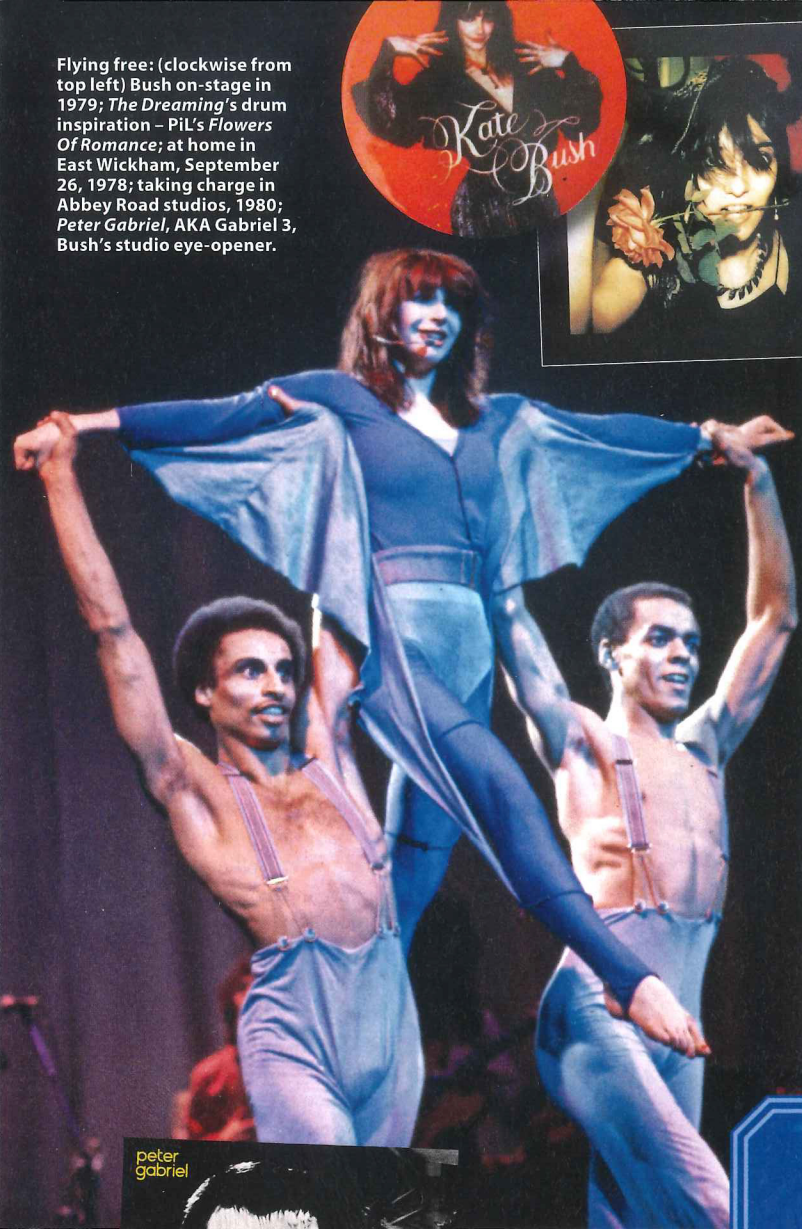
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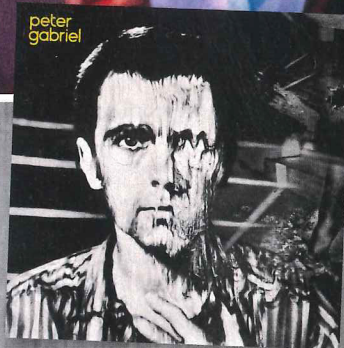
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Flying free: (clockwise from top left) Bush on-stage in 1979; *The Dreaming's* drum inspiration – PiL's *Flowers Of Romance*; at home in East Wickham, September 26, 1978; taking charge in Abbey Road studios, 1980; Peter Gabriel, AKA Gabriel 3; Bush's studio eye-opener.



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"It's not the way I would've done it," she admitted to MOJO. "Because with the first record, I'd had all the time from being 12, 13, right up until when I made the record, to accumulate a big pool of songs that I then chose the best ones from. The second record was made very quickly after the first. I just didn't like it. That was a really big turning point."

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THE BOX SETS: THE REVIEW!



Past Presents

Who's for a "proggy rebrand" of La Bush, plus one unreleased track? MARK BLAKE rewrites his Christmas list.

Kate Bush

★★★★

Kate Bush – Remastered (FISH PEOPLE, CD/LP)

One of the many intriguing aspects of Kate Bush's 2014 live shows was that nobody attending the opening night had a clue what she was going to play. Few expected a routine hits set, but who didn't go back to *Aerial* or *The Red Shoes* later, and listen to Joanni or *Top Of The City* with a different mindset?

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And *Kate Bush – Remastered* is the ultimate tinkering exercise. Bush and Pink Floyd engineer James Guthrie have undertaken a sonic refresh of all 10 of her studio albums, plus B-sides, cover versions, 12-inch singles and rarities.

The albums have been grouped together in sets, and made available in four separate vinyl boxes or two separate CD boxes (the second of which also includes the original mix of 2016's *Before*

The Dawn live album). Those who don't fancy paying £94.99 for a CD box (or £89.99 for its vinyl counterpart – £359.96 for the lot) can purchase their favourite KBLPs on both formats individually.

Beyond the remastering, there's a new approach to look and feel. Just check out the CD packaging for *Remastered – Box 1*. The very proggy iconography of her own *Fish People* record label dominates the artwork instead of the original sleeves. It's like Kate Bush re-branded by Hipgnosis or Hieronymus Bosch.

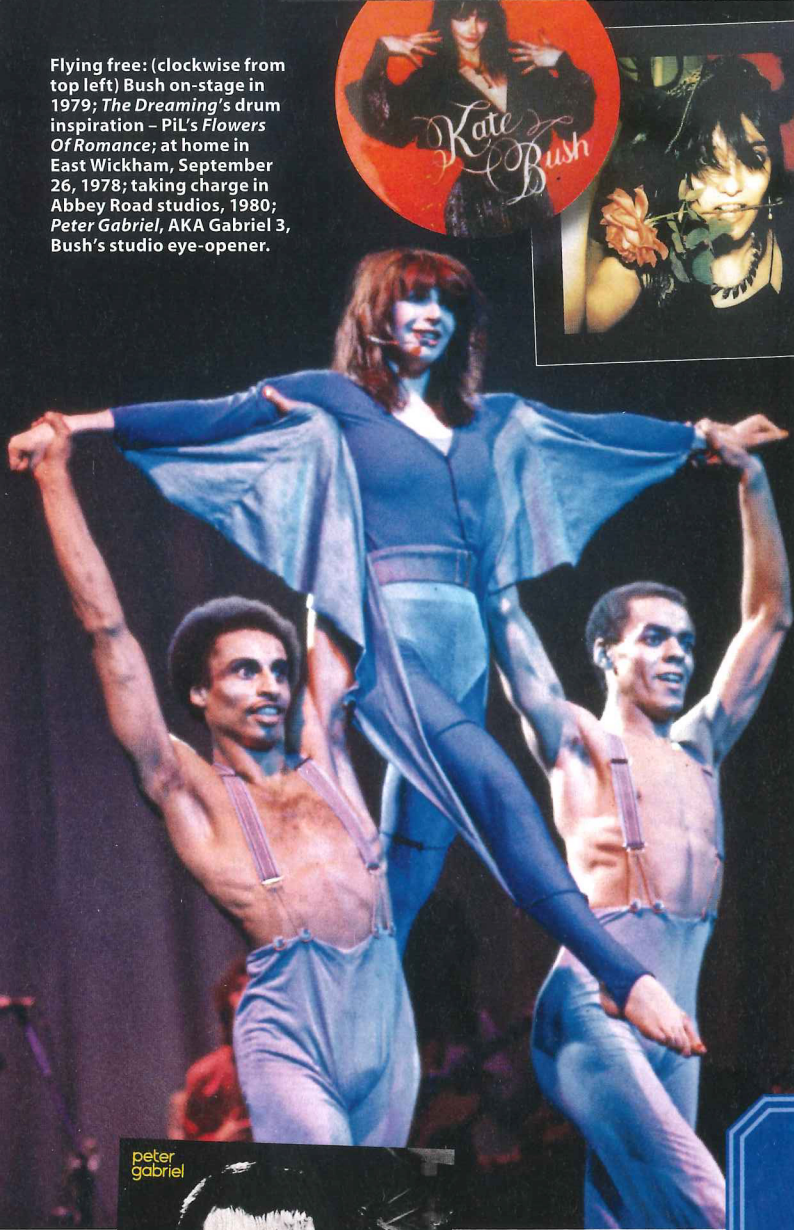
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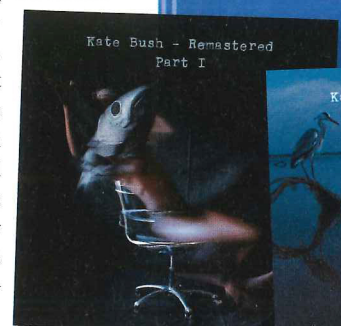
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the walls were papered in blue,
dotted with white clouds. Bush
was now in the position to make
records in the place she'd
dreamed and experimented as a
child. Rarely would she book a
commercial studio again.

"I don't like working in com-
mercial studios," she told me.
"For a start, they're so expensive.
But also, I don't like the dissipa-
tion of the focus. 'Cos you might
be in the middle of doing a vocal
and you look through to the con-
trol room and you'll see somebody walking in looking for a pair of
headphones or something. I think it's very important to get the
creative focus and it's very easily distracted. The creative process is,
I think, very much about trying to keep this focus throughout all
these things that are trying to destroy it."

At East Wickham Farm, utterly free from distractions, she began
to make the album that would become *Hounds Of Love*. "It's a quiet
space that you create from," she reasoned. "I think of it quite often
as being similar to people who write books and stuff. It's disciplined
and quite often they do it in the shed in the garden, because they
need that quiet space."

Youth, the Killing Joke bassist and record producer who added his
low-end rumble to *The Big Sky*, was wholly impressed by Bush's skills
and discipline in self-producing: "I'd seen other artists self-produce
and more often than not, it doesn't come out very well. Occasionally,
you can get a masterpiece and I think *Hounds Of Love* is one."

"It made a lot of sense because she was spending so much time
in commercial studios, that even with hit albums it didn't make her
commercially viable. So she built her own stu-
dio, spending her own money on an SSL [mix-
ing desk], which was an astronomical cost
in those days. She had a great team of
people around her and it was fascinat-
ing watching her work."

Building up rhythms with a Linn drum
machine, and creating idiosyncratic top
lines on the Fairlight, Bush invited
musicians, one-by-one, down to
the farm. "The Fairlight was in full force
then," remembers Stuart Elliott. "But we
did put a lot on top of that. Sometimes the
Fairlight became just like a string for us to
hang off, like pearls."

Bush's ambitions stretched even further
on *Hounds Of Love* than they had on *The
Dreaming*, albeit in a more controlled way.
And they peaked on side two's song cycle, *The
Ninth Wave*.

"It's a bit like... my first *novelette*," she told
me, adopting a faux-lofty tone. "I enjoyed doing
that. It was really hard work. But I thought it was the

beginning of something really interesting. It's just the
idea of taking a piece of music on a journey, which
was what opera and classical music used to
do all the time."

The recording process was
lighter in spirit than it had been
for *The Dreaming*. For instance,
booking masterly German double
bassist Eberhard Weber to play on
three tracks, Bush was suddenly
struck by a left-field notion. "Don't ask me
why," she told me, "but I just thought, Wouldn't
it be great if he did some whistling? He was out
there for a couple of hours whist-
ling. I remember somebody say-
ing, 'God, you've brought this
huge star bass-player over and
you're making him *whistle*...'"

In 2005, Bush felt she could
still hear the humour in much of
the album: "Hounds Of Love with
the backing vocals, the doggy 'Ow,
ow, ow'," she noted, laughing.

MOJO was forced to admit
we'd never realised those were
meant to be dogs...

"Oh, yeah. It's the hounds of
love, innit?"

**"I THOUGHT, THEY'RE
GOING TO GET ME.
EMI WERE GOING TO
BEAT ME DOWN AND
I WASN'T GOING TO
SEE THE DREAMING
THROUGH."**

SEPTEMBER 2005 AND KATE BUSH WAS SHOWING
MOJO around her home studio, in a location she was so
keen to leave undisclosed that when she'd had this writer
picked up that morning in a car, the driver had been sworn not to
reveal the destination. "Shall we put a bag over his head?" he'd
heard her laughing the day before, talking on the phone to someone
from the back seat.

As creative inner sanctums go, her studio was an unfussy and compact
set-up—in the live room sat a grand piano, but also a Celtic harp
with half the strings missing under a poster for a stage production by
her performance mentor Lindsay Kemp, lop-sidedly Blu-Tacked to
the wall. In the control room, standing in front of the SSL desk she'd
mixed *Hounds Of Love* on, Bush turned and gestured towards her
Sony 32-track digital tape recorder, which she'd been talked into
buying for the making of 1993's *The Red Shoes*. She really hated it.

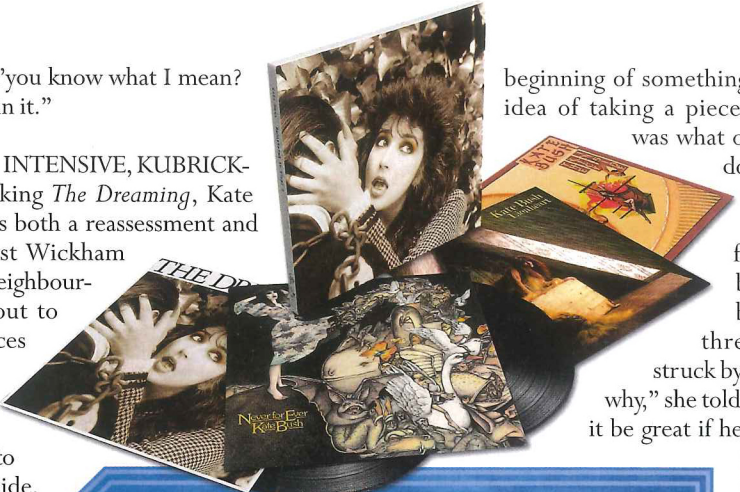
"Shitty digital tape," she grimaced. "The whole thing's got this
edgy sound which drives me *nuts* when I hear it because it's not
right. It's terrible. It's so frustrating."

Later, for 2011's *Director's Cut*, she would completely rebuild
seven of the tracks from *The Red Shoes*, retaining only some of the
original features. "I can't think of all the tracks," she claimed back
in 2005, "but there's quite a few I don't like. And it's just too long.
Maybe that should have been a double album. I should have thought
of it then, you see, shouldn't I?"

Bush was referring to the fact that she had just completed her first
double album, *Aerial*, also her first release in 12 years. Made in fits
and starts after she'd become a mother in 1998, its slow gesta-
tion had helped give her perspective on her process.

"I think one of my big faults is that I have this real
tendency to want to overdo things," she reckoned. "I
want to try to be adventurous, and sometimes if I'm
not careful, I overdo it. I think what [*Aerial*] was
doing was continually forcing me into a situation
where I was having to stand back from it. And I
think sometimes—without wanting to sound
pretentious—that thing of standing back from a
painting, standing outside of something, is the
best way to see it. Not when you're in it."

One of the standout features of *A Sky Of
Honey*, the 42-minute-long song suite that
comprised the second disc of *Aerial*, was >



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Wonder Woman:
Kate Bush in
Babooshka promo
garb, 1980; (below,
left) promoting *The
Red Shoes*, 1993.



Lichfield/Getty, Courtesy of EMI.



“I COULD’VE MADE MORE RECORDS. THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN AN EASY CHOICE. I HAD THAT CHOICE AND I CHOSE NOT TO.”



Before the dawn: Kate sheds some light, 1994; (inset above) on-stage with her son Bertie at the Apollo Hammersmith, September 26, 2014.

◀ birdsong, much of which had been recorded in the garden outside her house. Bush had listened to the recordings and “transcribed” them in her own voice, for the bird and human duets in *Aerial* Tal and the closing title track.

“I’ve always liked wood pigeons,” she smiled. “That was quite easy because that’s quite simplistic actually, isn’t it? It’s an easy shape. But the blackbird, that was tricky. Because it is intricate. I was trying to think, What in our language is in any way comparable to birdsong? I thought about that a lot and the only thing that seemed to have a sort of natural connection is the way we laugh. There is something strangely connected in the shapes.”

Bush was still delighting in her creative freedom, and the fact that there was now no one to stop her following through with even her wilder or stranger ideas. In fact, she admitted that in the past, the more resistance she’d met, the more emboldened she’d become.

“If you believe that it’s a good idea and it’s worth it, you’ve just got to not listen to what other people say,” she stressed. “It used to be almost like the acid test. If somebody sort of went, (*sharp intake of breath*) ‘Not sure about that,’ I’d think, Yes! Great, I’m on to something here. This resistance became the sign that I was on to something (*laughs*).”

She was less certain, however, ahead of the release of *Aerial*, about the wisdom of opening herself up to public scrutiny into her private life. Which begged the question: had she ever thought about making music purely for her own pleasure, and never releasing it?

“Well, I had this very interesting conversation with a friend years ago,” she offered. “They were suggesting that you didn’t have to let other people hear it. But you can’t do that, because the way I see it is... look at a Shakespeare play, you could almost say it doesn’t exist without the audience. And actually, what I think is really important about art is not so much the art, it’s the relationship between the observer and the art. That relationship is totally key to being a human being. So, if you make music and you don’t let people hear it, you haven’t completed the mission.”

WITH 2011’S *50 WORDS FOR SNOW*, KATE BUSH continued to hone her sound-world while, at the same time, returning to her first principles, relying on piano and voice, tastefully adorned with live drums, bass and orchestrations, to paint the pictures. Certain parts of that album – Lake Tahoe, *Misty*, the sparse and spectrally beautiful *Among Angels* – sounded closer to *The Kick Inside* than any of her albums since. Except the gifted girl at the piano was now a woman.

“It’s a balance, I think,” she had said in 2005, looking ahead to these future recordings. “I like doing tracks with just a piano or maybe an orchestra as well. But something very, y’know, semi-classical, I guess. And I really love doing the band stuff. For me, if I didn’t do both, I would miss not having the other.”

Later, her commitment to provoking visualisation in her listeners by sound alone was underlined by her decision to release her 2014 *Before The Dawn* show as an audio rather than video document. The actual stage production – a magical visual feast as much as it was a sonic triumph, and one which *was* filmed – seems destined to remain only in the memories of those who originally attended.

Kate Bush turned 60 this summer, and it’s easy to see why at this naturally reflective stage, she’d want to remaster her entire album catalogue, as she has done with this reissue of everything from *The Kick Inside* to *Before The Dawn*, along with her favourite B-sides and rarities. It’s an opportunity for her to give her work a state-of-the-art polish, while at the same time tidying up some of what she might consider her mistakes.

“I mean, it’s always quite a disappointing process for me, listening back to stuff,” she confessed. “Because either I think, Oh, I should’ve remixed that, or I shouldn’t have done this. Or, That was good, but I didn’t make enough of it. But that’s all part of hopefully, *hopefully* a continuing process that you can take into the next record and maybe try and correct it and not make the same mistakes again. But

it’s very hard because, of course, we all tend to repeat mistakes, don’t we?”

MOJO had one last thought. Given the time that it took her to make albums, did she ever wish she’d made more, or that they’d been a bit easier for her to realise?

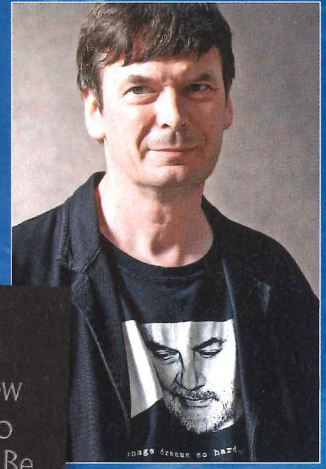
“I suppose it would’ve been nice if they’d been a bit easier,” she decided. “It would’ve been nice if some of the stuff I did wasn’t always so hard. I mean, I could’ve made more records. That would have been an easy choice. So, I had that choice and I chose not to. I chose to go through this incredibly sort of masochistic way of making records, which take a long time, and obviously there’s fewer of them.

“But I think what’s nice is although there aren’t many records out there, they’ve all really been made with a lot of care.”

So concluded Catherine Bush, purveyor of artisan albums since 1978. Still very much in business. M

Pull Out The Pen

“There’s great imagery, great poetry, a bit of mystery”: literary superfan IAN RANKIN hymns Kate Bush: lyricist.



“I DISCOVERED her with *Wuthering Heights*. That was a very early, exciting statement. I mean, she’s probably responsible for more folk picking up that book than any English teacher at high school. I was in my early teens and I was interested in books, and I was interested in becoming a writer, and here was somebody from the world of pop scoring a big Number 1 hit single with an incredibly literate song based on a novel.

“She hadn’t read the book? (*Laughs*) She knew the story. It’s a classic trope of doomed romance, isn’t it? And it’s got a spooky, supernatural element to it. So it really appealed. And such an unusual song to get to Number 1. They always stay with you.

“If you were a teenager and you were a wee bit arty, you were discovering all these things [such as the reference to Russian mystic Gurdjieff in *Them Heavy People*] as well. You were dabbling in bits and pieces of philosophy and romantic poetry. You were looking for your road in life. You were looking for answers to big questions and she was dealing with some of it in her lyrics.

“And she continues to. But at the same time, she’s also capable of writing about very mundane matters. I mean, how many folk have written songs about washing machines or songs where they recite the number pi? So one of the exciting things is that, as her career continued, you never quite knew what you were going to get. And, of course, a lot of the songs are open to the wildest interpretation you want to give to them.

“She compels as a lyricist because it’s great

Kate Bush
How To Be Invisible

use of words. There’s great imagery, great poetry, there’s a bit of mystery. I don’t know how many times I’ve read the lyrics of side two of *Hounds Of Love* [*The Ninth Wave*], looking for what it’s actually all about. You can read her the way you would read a poet or a novelist. You keep going back. As I get older, I keep digging out new things that I hadn’t noticed before. Or things that I think might be relevant, or things that might make sense to me.

“She’s painting pictures, isn’t she? She’s an extraordinarily visual lyricist. These images just flash up in front of you as you listen to the record, or you read the lyrics. When she’s singing *The Big Sky* and you’ve got that kind of thumping beat behind her, you’re looking at a big sky, because it’s such an expansive song. I’ve just got an incredible amount of respect for her because she doesn’t always make it easy. There are these three-minute pop songs, but they’re incredibly difficult lyrically, and she’s obviously worked really hard at doing them as well.

“Collecting lyrics together in a poetry book worked really well for Van Morrison [in 2014’s *Lit Up Inside*]. I think if you’re that kind of lyricist, if you’re someone who has put a lot of work into your lyrics, to your fans you feel like a poet. She’s definitely a poet when she writes, and they can be read without the music behind them. But that takes a very special lyricist.”

Kate Bush – How To Be Invisible: Selected Lyrics is published by Faber & Faber on December 6.



Thomas Zeidler/Famous. Courtesy of EMI, Eyevine