THE ULTIMATE MUSIC GUIDE

KATE BUSH

DELUXE REMASTERED EDITION

CLASSIC INTERVIEWS

EVERY ALBUM REVIEWED

Into the Sensual World...

KATE BUSH: THE WHOLE STORY

FROM THE MAKERS OF **UNCUT**

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A Deeper Understanding...

IN THE AUTUMN of 1980, a rather excited *Melody Maker* journalist found himself in a Munich TV studio, watching Kate Bush perform "Babooshka" while she danced enthusiastically with a double bass. Like many male writers drawn into the presence of Bush at that time, there's a certain vigour to his descriptions which doesn't come across awfully well in 2017.

Nevertheless, once the show was over, the interview with Bush is fascinating. She talks about wanting to tour again, about the books and films that have influenced her, about the permeable lines between confession and fiction. "I rarely write purely personal songs from experience," she says. "I worry about being too indulgent and giving too much away." A little later, she is discussing the specifics of "Army Dreamers", sung from the perspective of a mother mourning a son killed in action. "I seem to link on to mothers rather well," she admits. "I find it fascinating about mothers, a kind of maternal passion which is there all the time, even when they're talking about cheese sandwiches. Sometimes it can be very possessive, sometimes it's very real."

Even at her most elliptical, there is a clarity and consistency to Kate Bush which, looking back, seems a lot more obvious now than it might have done at the time. Latterly, for instance, the maternal fortitude implied in 1980 has become an explicit part of the most recent phase of her career, culminating in Before The Dawn – a theatrical spectacular inspired by her son Bertie McIntosh, and a showcase of his talents as a "very talented actor and beautiful singer," as his mother wrote in her programme notes.

This *Ultimate Music Guide* considers, in depth, the whole career of Kate Bush. There are forensic and revealing essays on every one of her albums, presented alongside a host of interviews we've taken from the archives of *NME*, *Melody Maker* and *Uncut*. They show an artist who slowly gains the confidence to assert herself and – very slowly – gains the respect of the press. But also one whose idiosyncratic vision, and whose determination to bring that vision to fruition, has been there right from the start.

This, then, is the story of Kate Bush, a genius on her own remarkable trajectory. "There are always so many voices telling me what to do that you can't listen to them," she told another *Melody Maker* journalist in 1985. "All I ever do is listen to the little voices inside me. I don't want to disappoint the little voices that have been so good to me..."

TRINITY MIRROR/MIRRORPIX/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

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Live at Hammersmith Odeon, London, on the penultimate date of her European tour, May 12, 1979

BEVERLEY GOODWAY/REX, PETER STILL/REDFERNS

Kate Bush, June 1978

Ruff stuff: Kate as Pierrot in a promo shot for *Director's Cut*, 2011

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JOHN CARDER BUSH

"I'd like my music to intrude. It's got to."

Spring 1978. Kate Bush's arrival on the music scene is greeted, first, with bewilderment and then, rapidly, with adulation. *HARRY DOHERTY* pays two visits to meet an incredible new talent, and learns about her formative years, her ambitions to become a social worker, her interest in punk – and why she'd rather be a male songwriter than a female one: "Anything you do that you believe in, you should club people over the head with it!"

"Music is a vehicle for a message..." Bush relaxes at EMI, February 1978

BARRY PLUMMER

BY NOW, THE voice of Kate Bush will have made a full-frontal attack on the brains of the nation. Attack? Not an unreasonable word when you consider the strange, weird quality of Ms Bush's vocal, captured in all its resonant glory on her first single, "Wuthering Heights".

Whether attack is construed as compliment or insult is down to the individual, but after an initial reaction of shock – as one reacts to all things foreign – I've grown to like "Wuthering Heights" and am presently engaged in learning the finer delights of her competent, if occasionally erratic, first album, *The Kick Inside*.

But first – an introduction to the unknown name and face that is suddenly being hailed as a major new singer-songwriter in Britain. Kate Bush is 19, comes from Kent, is now resident in South East London, has a pretty face with curves to match, and is more intelligent than the usual singers who have emanated from EMI in such dramatic fashion in the past. The girl has a mind of her own and is not adverse to forcefully presenting an opinion (an asset in itself).

She comes from a "good" family. Her father is a GP and she had quite a comfortable childhood. The family itself was always musical, specialising in English and Irish traditional, and playing around local folk clubs.

Kate, however, never performed outside the confines of home and was content to learn the basics, starting piano at the age of 11 and quickly finding that she could write her own songs. School was St Joseph's Grammar School, in Abbey Wood, but apart from her early period in the classroom, it held little fascination. The explanation in hindsight: "I found it wasn't helping me. I became an introvert. I guess it was the teachers' system, the way they react to pupils, and I wasn't quite responsive to that."

Nonetheless, Kate quit school at the age of 16 with 10 O-levels, specialising in English and Music and showing an unusual interest in Latin, although she found it an incredibly difficult language to master.

"The reason I left was that I felt I could do something more in tune with my purpose – music."

This she was able to do with the help of an inheritance from an aunt. Effectively the money gave her the security to become her own boss and follow her own mind. At one time, just before leaving school, there was an ambition to become either a psychiatrist or a social worker. Both careers made sense to her as an alternative to her first love.

"I guess it's the thinking bit, trying to communicate with people and help them out. The emotional aspect. It's so sad to see good, nice people emotionally disserved, screwed up, when they could be so happy."

She couldn't have pursued the ambition because she was lousy at physics, chemistry and maths. She agreed that the careers she fancied – psychiatry, social work or music – were in direct contrast. Music is completely self-indulgent and the other is almost charitable.

"I know what you mean. The only reason in the first place that I did think of those things was that I in no way thought that my music could be a career because it's so difficult to make it. It's all a matter of timing and contacts and talent... and luck. I never thought I would have a chance to do that, so I deliberately tried to have a career-orientated ambition, something I could hold on to.

"The reason I chose those sort of things is that they are, in a way, the things I do with music. When I write songs, I really like to explore the mental area, the emotional values. Although in a way you can say that being a psychiatrist is more purposeful than writing music, in many ways it isn't, because a lot of people take a great deal of comfort from music. I know I do. It makes you feel good.

"The really important thing about music is that all it is, is a vehicle for a message, whatever your message is. I'm probably a lot better at being a songwriter than I would be a psychiatrist, for instance. I might have people jumping out of windows now."

"I became introvert..." Kate in '78

BARRY PLUMMER

She thinks, then, that her music is a therapy?

"Oh, yes, it's very much a therapeutic thing, not only for me. That's a really good word. It really is like a therapy. The message I would like people to receive is that if they hear it and accept it, that's fantastic.

"If they let it into their ears that is all I can ask for, and if they think about it afterwards or during it, that is even more fantastic. There are so many writers and so many messages, to be chosen out of all of them is something very special. The messages? Things that maybe could help people, like observing the situation where an emotional game is being played and maybe making people think about it again."

It's very glamorous to make a statement like that, but how true did she think it was?

"It's easy to say everything. Really, all I do when I write songs is try and write something that affects me: something that I feel does have a solution or something that is unexplored. It really is just self-expression, and although I know that a lot of people will just say it's a load of rubbish, I would like to think that there is a message and maybe people will hear it."

On leaving school, Kate took up dancing, because she felt it was an art parallel to music, "another pure art form inasmuch as it's free". The show that inspired her was *Flowers*, a Lindsay Kemp performance at the Collegiate Theatre, London, three years ago. Kemp's mime attracted her and the next day a perusal through *Time Out* magazine uncovered an advertisement for classes by Kemp.

Kemp made an instant impression on Kate, displaying an ease in communication that she had never experienced before. He taught her the importance of disciplining the body before attempting to mime. The association with Kemp lasted only six months: he went off to perform professionally in Australia and she moved on to another class.

She reacts vehemently but positively to my comment that mime appeared to be an upper-class art.

"No, I wouldn't call it an upper-class thing at all. It's probably further away from the upper class than anything else, because they probably find it hard to be free, as they're so caught up in all their status problems, and the same probably goes for working-class people in a lot of ways, because they always feel this alienation from other people."

Mentors David Gilmour and Lindsay Kemp

Because of her inheritance, Kate didn't have the trauma of desperately searching for a job on leaving school. However, she had decided her career would focus on music... long before.

"The money did enable me to think that I could do it, because I was obviously worried about leaving school and finding myself nowhere. I had strong feelings in not having little securities like a nice, little job. I wanted to try and do what I wanted and if it went wrong, OK, but at least try to do it."

During this time, Kate had been staying at home writing songs and accompanying herself on either guitar or piano but not daring to let anyone outside the sphere of family hear her work. Then a friend of the family, Ricky Hopper, who had worked in the music business, heard her material, took an interest and started flogging tapes around the music biz, with little luck.

> "There are so many writers, to be chosen out of all of them is very special"

The big break came when Hopper contacted an old friend of his from Cambridge, Pink Floyd's Dave Gilmour.

Gilmour came and heard and liked. He suggested making proper demo tapes. He put up the money, "an amazing thing", for the studio, found Kate a good arranger and the songs were recorded properly. From there it grew. Gilmour introduced Kate to a friend, Andrew Powell, noted for his work with Alan Parsons, and he was asked to produce the LP.

The voice? Ah yes, that voice. Kate is genuinely bewildered at the response her vocal has evoked. She refutes suggestions that she deliberately "cultivated" the voice. "Honest, I just opened my mouth and it came out."

And then came the album. "Wuthering Heights", by the way, emphasises her unique high-pitched vocal more than any other track. Usually, she comes across as a stranger concoction that resembles a Joni Mitchell-Noosha Fox mongrel, which is a fascination in itself. It's a very promising debut, and that it has spawned a hit single already is a surprise to Kate.

"I was so involved with all my artistic frustrations that I never thought of having a hit. I was thinking of all the things that I wanted to be there, musically, that weren't and vice versa.

"The battle is with yourself because there's your expression going down there, and there's no way you can change it. It's there forever. It is very frustrating to see something that you have been keeping transient for years just suddenly become solid. It's a little disconcerting... but exciting."

At this early stage in her career, Kate appears uncannily aware of the dangers of an early hit. She is determined that her work in music stays an art.

"You see people who are into the glamour and the ego of it and not the work, and really work is what it's all about. It's not anything to do with ego. Music is like being a bank clerk. It's still work, only a different channel of energy."

THIS WEEK, FRIENDS, we find ourselves in a 350-year-old home enjoying the company of a girl called Kate Bush and a dog named Piggy. Outside, we have her doctor father's surgery and a barn-cum-studio, in a secluded Kent pastoral setting.

This Kate Bush is 19 years old and a budding beauty, though she'd prefer it if you ignore the sex symbol stakes. She is exquisitely mannered and articulate. In six short months, via a single, "Wuthering Heights", and album, *The Kick Inside*, both of which stayed in the chart for 12 weeks, she has shed the anonymity of a beginner and become, for want of a better word, a star.

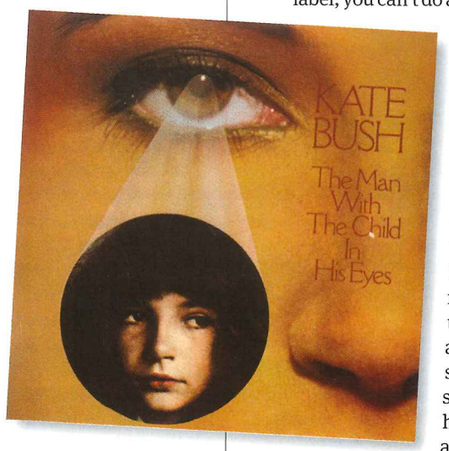
Kate Bush is doubtless the success of '78. Should you have difficulty in swallowing the talent of Ms Bush, then consider that she counts many established songwriters and new wave leaders among her early fans. Bob Geldof, not usually noted for dishing out praise elsewhere, swears by her.

Kate Bush is taking a break from the arduous task of writing songs for her

IAN DICKSON/REDFERNS; DERI DOSS/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

second album. It is not coming along too well. She is finding it a bit stifling to write to demand, but is sure that once the intensity of sitting at her piano returns, so will the songs.

The trouble, of course, stems from the rush of acclaim that greeted *The Kick Inside*, which, with half a dozen examples of classic writing and singing, was more a sign of potential than actual realisation of it. "Wuthering Heights" was the proverbial smash, and suddenly the whole world went crazy. Kate made a valiant and successful attempt at keeping it all under control.



The songs for the debut had been written over a period of three years. Because of a number of fortunate encounters, an inheritance and then the record company (EMI) advance, she could concentrate solely on her writing and dancing without worrying about finance. Dave Gilmour, of Pink Floyd, was impressed enough by her potential to put up the money for proper demos, and Andrew Powell, usually noted for his orchestral arrangements, stepped in to produce her album. With all the business taken care of, Kate was able to "educate" herself.

"Train myself for the ...ah... Coming, I guess. I really felt that I wanted to get some sort of bodily expression together to go with the music. Music is a very emotional thing, and there's always a message, and your purpose as a performer is to get it across to the people in as many ways as you can."

The "Coming" came and Kate Bush took everybody by surprise, including herself and EMI, by breaking through immediately. She had insisted that "Wuthering Heights" be the first single, as much for business reasons as artistic ones.

"I felt that to actually get your name anywhere, you've got to do something that is unusual, because there's so much good music around and it's all in a similar vein. It was, musically, for me, one of my strongest songs. It had the high pitch and it also had a very English storyline which everyone would know because it was a classic book."

EMI had wanted to go with another track, "James And The Cold Gun", a more traditional rock'n'roll song. But Kate was reluctant, just as they were with the new single, "The Man With The Child In His Eyes", which, musically, is a complete contrast to her first hit. The record company would have opted for a more obvious follow-up in "Them Heavy People".

"I so want 'The Man With The Child In His Eyes' to do well. I'd like people to listen to it as a songwriting song, as opposed to something weird, which was the reaction to 'Wuthering Heights'. That's why it's important. If the next song had been similar, straight away I would have been labelled, and that's something I really don't want. As soon as you've got a label, you can't do anything. I prefer to take a risk."

The relationship with EMI has been good. Kate has been astonished that they've allowed her so much say. But she was very insistent that she should be involved in every facet of her career, to the point where, at such a young age, she had almost been self-managed, with help from friends and family.

"I've always had an attitude about managers. Unless they're really needed, they just confuse matters. They obviously have their own impressions of a direction and an image that is theirs, and surely it should come from within the actual structure rather than from outside. I often think that generally they're more of a hindrance than a help."

Ideally, she would like to exert control over every area to ensure that she is projected as she wants to be. Strangely, very strangely, the pressure and frightening newness of the music business hasn't upset her at all, and she reveals shyly that she somehow feels she has been through it all before. "I wonder if it has to do with the concept of time in some way, in that everything you do, you've done before." (Refer to "Strange Phenomena" on *The Kick Inside*.)

For her, there is an unreal aspect to all that's happened. That she has had a No 1 single, a gold album, television appearances, interviews, attention. She has held a reasonable balance throughout and generally got through all the hubbub as she would have liked. Disasters were her first television appearances in Germany and England, on *Top Of The Pops*. "It was like watching myself... die. It was a bloody awful performance."

I remember watching with some shock when she appeared on *Saturday Night At The Mill*, hardly the most inspiring rock programme, and thinking those people didn't have a clue what she was about. To them she was a curvy little girl who contorted her figure erotically to a song they didn't give a damn about. Another weird programme to do was *Tonight*. Both, Kate points out, were at peak viewing time.

She doesn't know how she ended up on them. They probably phoned EMI, but there was no way she would be averse to appearing on programmes like that.

"I was reaching an audience that was a little wider-spread, and that's incredible. That's what I'm really into. I'm into reaching more than the ordinary market because I think it's very... not snobby, but something similar, when you're choosing your public, and I think your public should choose you and you should get to as many people as you can, so that as many people as possible can choose you.

"I'm reaching people that have maybe had a totally different life from me and are well ahead of me in many standards, but yet they're accepting me. A lot of older people won't listen to pop music because they have a biased idea of what it is, and that's wrong because a lot of them would really get into some of the music that's around. It's not all punk, and if you can get music to them that they like, then you're achieving something. You're getting into people's homes who have been shut off from that sort of music for years. They're into their Bach... 'Bach is wonderful, but I don't like that pop music.'

"Maybe they do, but they're never given the option. They're always given the music that people might think they like. But I think they're really into exploring."

She would, then, like to be more than just a young people's musician?

"I'd really like to think that there is no age barrier because that's a shame, and I'd like to think that there's a message in my music for everyone. That's the greatest reward I could get – to get different people getting into different tracks.

"It really means a lot to think that I'm not just hitting on an area that may be just identified with me, that people are actually identifying with what the songs are about. I'm really not sure where my music is hitting, although I think it is mainly hitting younger people."

All of this involvement – she'd also like to learn to produce – mounts up. At times, the pressure must be unbearable, especially as all Kate's successes have come so fast. But no, she assures me again, the pressures don't come from the hits. She feels more pressure from the future, the fact that she has another album to do and there is so much to live up to.

"It's a great challenge. There's always something good in whatever pressure is around. There's an incredible challenge,

BARRY PLUMMER

"When I'm at the piano writing a song, I like to think I'm a man..."

"It was like watching myself die..." "Wuthering Heights", *Top Of The Pops*, February 16, 1978

and if you can do it and if you come out the other side and even if you lose, you've done it. I think that makes you stronger. The songs for the first album were written over a two-to-three-year period, and now I've got a two-to-three-month period for this one. It's ridiculous, and my admiration for people like David Bowie and Elton John, and Queen – although I'm not into their music – grows all the time. It's incredible how they do it. They do it all. They record and tour and promote.

"That's awesome to me. Incredibly so. I mean, I'm on a little level compared to that. It amazes me that they can keep their brains in a logical order without their speech getting all tangled because there's so much going on."

So what happens when you reach that situation? (There are plans to tour next year.)

"I don't know how I'll cope, but when you're in the situation it's very different. I would have thought it impossible to do what I'm doing now a few years ago, but now I'm here, it doesn't seem that amazing because, really, it's just doing your work on whichever level it is, and I'm really lucky for all the work I've been given."

But you've not had to struggle?

"Yeah, that's true, and it's a little frightening. There was only a struggle within myself. But even if your work is so important to you, it's not actually your life. It's only part of your life, so if your work goes, you're still a human being. You're still living. You can always get a job in Woolworth's or something.

"I suppose I would find it very hard to let go, because for me it's the only thing that I'm here to do. I don't really know what else I could do that I would be particularly good at. I could take a typing course, loads of things, but I wouldn't actually feel that I'd be giving anything.

"I think you can kid yourself into destiny. I have never done another job. It's a little frightening, because it's the only thing I've really explored, but then again, so many things are similar. They all tie in. I really feel that what I'm doing is what everyone else is doing in their jobs.

"It's really sad that pressures are put on some musicians. It's essential for them to be human beings, because that's where all the creativity comes from, and if it's taken away from them and everybody starts kneeling and kissing their feet and that, they're gonna grow in the wrong areas."

Everybody associates the whole star trip with material gains.

"But it's wrong. Again, the only reason that you get such material gains from it is because it's so media-orientated. If it wasn't, you'd get the same as a plumber.

"I worry, of course, that it's going to burn out, because I didn't expect it to happen so quickly and it has. For me, it's just the beginning. I'm on a completely different learning process now. I've climbed one wall and now I've got another 15 to climb, and to keep going while you're in such demand is very hard. It would be different if I had stayed unknown, because then it would be progressing."

Kate Bush is a frequently sensuous woman but she has no wish to be hooked as a sex symbol or anything concerned with selling her body (metaphorically speaking) to achieve ambitions. She has, for instance, taken a meticulous interest in EMI's promotion campaign to ensure that the sex angle isn't played.

"The sex symbol thing didn't really occur to me until I noticed that in nearly every interview I did, people were asking: 'Do you feel like a sex symbol?' It's only because I'm female and publicly seen. The woman is tended to be seen on that level because it gets them through quicker, like the actress who sleeps with the producer makes it.

"That seems so dated, because we're all shifting to a different level now. The woman's position in music is really incredible now. It's getting more and more accepted, if not more than men at the moment. God, there's so many females in the charts.

"I felt very flattered that those people should think of me in those sex symbol terms. That was my first reaction, but it can be very destructive. For a start, there are so many incredibly good-looking women around, and their craft is in that. They're either modelling or acting, so physical image is important. What I really want to come across as is as a musician, and that sort of thing can distract, because people will only see you on a superficial level."

She would like to think, too, that being female has nothing to do with her success and that she is being judged primarily as an artist. She has very strong views on the matter.

"When I'm at the piano writing a song, I like to think I'm a man, not physically but in the areas that they explore. Rock'n'roll and punk, you know, they're both really male music, and I'm not sure that I understand them yet, but I'm really trying. When I'm at the piano I hate to think that I'm a female because I automatically get a preconception. Every female you see at the piano is either Lynsey de Paul, Carole King... that lot. And it's a very female style.

"That sort of stuff is sweet and lyrical, but it doesn't push it on you, and most male music – not all of it, but the good stuff –really lays it on you. It's like an interrogation. It really puts you against the wall, and that's what I'd like to do. I'd like my music to intrude. It's got to. I think that anything you do that you believe in, you should club people over the head with it!

"Not many females succeed with that. Patti Smith does, but that's because she takes a male attitude. I'm not really aware of it as a male attitude. I just think I identify more with male musicians than female musicians, because I tend to think of female musicians as...ah... females. It's hard to explain. I'd just rather be a male songwriter than a female. What it is, basically, is that all the songwriters I admire and listen to are male."

She loves Steely Dan and David Bowie ("I wish I could write constructions like his"). But she was probably most influenced by Bryan Ferry, during his days with Roxy Music and Eno. "It was the moods of the songs. They had a very strong effect on me, because they had such atmospheres.

"I really enjoy some female writers, like Joni Mitchell, but it's just that I feel closer to male writers. Maybe I want to be a man," she laughs. "I like the guts that men have in performing and singing – like the punks. Like the way Johnny Rotten would use his voice was so original, and you get very few females even having the guts to do that, because they unfortunately tend to get stereotyped if they make it.

"I really enjoy seeing people doing something that isn't normal, you know. It's so refreshing. It's like that guy, you know, *'Cor baby, that's really free.'* John Otway. It was amazing watching him perform and you just don't get females like that."

What surprised me most about Kate – and it shouldn't have, because she's only 19 – was her awareness of the new wave. She seemed to regard new wave bands as contemporaries, and her comments about those bands in relation to her work seemed to emphasise that.

"I don't regard myself as a rock'n'roll writer. I'd love it if someone said they thought I wrote rock'n'roll songs. That'd be great, but I don't think I am. Some of the punk and new wave songs are so clever. Quite amazing, really. It's a modern poetry idiom. Some of the lyrics are fantastic, so imaginative, not sticking to a reality level, shooting off and coming back again."

She mentioned The Boomtown Rats as "amazing" and was genuinely ecstatic when I told her of the Rats' fondness for her music.

"Really? Oh, I didn't think they'd be into me. Great! Fantastic! I wonder if really beautiful punk groups like that – I think The Stranglers are really good, too, there are so many – I wonder if they think I'm... not so much square, but whether they think... ah... square... Sort of oblong.

> "I'm not really a rock'n'roll writer yet. I'd like to be, though"

"I really admire those bands, and I really admired the Sex Pistols tremendously. I don't know if I liked them that much, but some of their songs were great. I admired them so much just for the freshness and the guts, although I did get a hypey vibe off it, and that they were, in fact, being pushed around, because it seemed more an image that was being forced upon them, from what people were expecting.

"I feel apart from those bands, because I feel I'm in a different area, but I really like to think that they get off on me like I do them. That's why I don't see them as contemporaries, because I'm apart. It's not a matter of being above or below them, but if it was, I think I'd be below them.

"I think they're on a new level, inasmuch as... it's hard to explain. They're definitely hitting people that need stimulation. They're hitting tired, bored people that want to pull their hair out and paint their face green. They're giving people the stimulation to do what they want, and I think I'm maybe just making people think about it, if I'm doing anything."

Do you see that as the main difference between your role and others'?

"Yeah. I'm probably, if anything, stimulating the emotional end, the intellect, and they're stimulating the guts, the body. They're getting the guts, jumping around. That's a much more direct way to hit people. A punch is more effective than a look. Teachers always give you looks."

Would you like to have that effect on people?

"I don't think I could because..." She stumbles over the next bit. "...it's not what... I'm... here to... do. I really love rock'n'roll. I think it's an incredible force, but there's something about it that I don't get on with when I write it, maybe because I'm very concerned about melodies in my music, and generally I find rock'n'roll tends to neglect it a bit because it's got so much rhythm and voice that you don't need so much music.

"Some of the new wave, though, is so melodic. Like the Rich Kids [*early EMI-produced new wave band led by Midge Ure*]. I'm not really a rock'n'roll writer yet. I'd like to be, though, and I hope I'll become more that way orientated.

"Mind you, I identify with new wave music. We're both trying to stir something in the attitudes we've got, but I honestly don't know if I'm doing it. I guess I'm more interested in stirring people's intellects. It's longer lasting but not so much fun as new wave.

"The good thing about people like The Boomtown Rats is that not only is it really good, but it's really exciting and fun, and maybe my things are sometimes a bit too intricate to become fun. They're more picking pieces out and examining them. There's very little music on my album that will make you want to stamp your feet violently and hit your head against the wall.

"To actually understand what I'm about you have to hear the lyrics, which is a lot to expect; whereas in something like The Boomtown Rats, it's the complete energy that knocks you over."

Would it upset you if you missed the mark, and people totally misread what you're about?

"It's a lot, to expect people to sit down and read my lyrics, and I'd be amazed if many people did. Not many people read poetry, and it's a similar effort. No, it doesn't worry me that much if they don't. That's what I'd like them to do because that's why I do it.

"But really, I think I've had enough response from people to make me have done enough to fade away now. I've had much more of a chance than most people to get through with a message. From some of the letters I get, it seems that people have understood, and it seems to have helped them a bit. That's all I could wish for."

THE SUN/NEWS SYNDICATION

RELEASED: **17 FEBRUARY 1978**

THE KICK INSIDE

Strange phenomenon... From the deepest London suburbs, a quietly self-assured teenager reveals a unique vision.

by GRAEME THOMSON

THERE WAS NEVER much wuthering to be had in Welling, so Catherine Bush had to dream it all up for herself. A quietly self-assured Catholic schoolgirl, Bush grew up alongside her family – older brothers John and Paddy, Irish mother Hannah and father Robert, a medical doctor – at Wickham Farm, a rambling house situated where south-east London elides into Kent. An oasis of old-world tranquillity and somewhat bohemian sensibilities hemmed in by Outer London's suburban sprawl, as a symbol of Kate Bush's continued desire to exist, creatively and to some extent physically, in a world defined by the possibilities of the 'other', the hermetic environment of Wickham Farm serves her story well.

The physical characteristics of the Bush homestead – crumbling barns, ponds, rose gardens, libraries and fireplaces you could stand up in – provided an early spur to her imagination, while the general ethos of the household was permissive and artistic. At home, Bush was gently encouraged in her expressive pursuits: playing piano and violin, writing poetry, dressing up for John's camera, dabbling, dreaming. Given time and space to develop, by the age of 14, in 1972, she had a seemingly infinite number of amorphous piano songs recorded in batches on her father's Akai tape machine. Some of them – the outstanding "Something Like A Song", for instance, available to the curious out there in webland – make explicit her already heady gift.

> MID-PACED, SOLID AND TUNEFUL, IT'S A BIT FLARED, SOMEWHAT HAIRY, A BIT PROGGY

Impressed, the family decided to seek the advice of Ricky Hopper, a friend of John Bush from his days at Cambridge University, now working in the music industry. One of Hopper's many acts of tireless advocacy was to play the songs to David Gilmour, another old Cambridge connection. Gilmour was impressed but pragmatic. "The demo was not saleable," he later recalled. "The songs were too idiosyncratic... but I was convinced from the beginning that this girl had remarkable talent."

Having installed an eight-track recording studio at his home in Royston in Essex, Gilmour was looking for talent to foster. In late summer 1973 he recorded Bush, backed by Harvest soft-rockers Unicorn, but the purpose of the session was vague. Bush had no creative presence other than her songs. She didn't ➡

perform live, she had no band, and her tape – which included "Passing Through Air", included seven years later on the B-side of "Army Dreamers" – made no waves. Still, Gilmour stuck with her, and two years later offered to pay for a one-off professional recording session at EMI's AIR studios. Andrew Powell, a classical scholar who had worked with Cockney Rebel, The Alan Parsons Project, Al Stewart and Gilmour himself, would produce.

Under Powell's meticulous eye, in June 1975 Bush recorded three songs in two three-hour sessions. "Berlin" – later retitled "The Saxophone Song" – "Maybe" and "The Man With The Child In His Eyes". Embryonic versions of the latter dated back to 1973, and were written partly about her first serious boyfriend, Steve Blacknell, who later became a presenter on *Whistle Test* and Live Aid. "Wuthering Heights" may have been the song that catapulted Bush to stardom, but it was the sensuous, astonishingly worldly "The Man With The Child In His Eyes" that first made people sit up and listen. At AIR it was recorded live with just Bush and her piano accompanied by string players from the London Symphony Orchestra. For engineer Geoff Emerick, who had worked with The Beatles, it was a revelation. "That was one of my favourite recordings of all time," he later said. "We knew when we recorded it that it was one of the most beautiful records we'd made in a long time. It made a very deep impression."

He wasn't alone. When Gilmour played the demo to EMI's managing director, Bob Mercer, things finally started to happen. Bush signed to the company in 1976, but progress remained achingly slow. Both EMI and the Bush family felt she needed time to develop, finish her schooling, and come up with more focused songs. In the two years between the initial AIR sessions and recording *The Kick Inside*, Bush studied dance and movement with, among others, David Bowie's former mime muse, Lindsay Kemp. In the first half of 1977 she played several pub gigs around London with a bunch of older male friends, including future boyfriend and longterm studio foil Del Palmer, in the KT Bush Band. Observers recall her gamely ploughing through the likes of "Come Together", "Sweet Soul Music" and Free's "The Stealer", not entirely comfortable but already developing the theatrical flourishes that would come to define her performance style.

Parts of *The Kick Inside* detail the personal transformation which occurred during this period. A hymn of gratitude to those who had recently influenced and inspired her, "Them Heavy People" these days seems an almost parodic accumulation of early Bush tics, but it's a key song for the manner in which it clearly lays out her refusal to be shackled by expectations of genre and gender, or to be constrained by her physical self. "Moving" is a better song and more direct, a tribute to Kemp and the impact of dance in destroying her inhibitions: *"You crush the lily in my soul."*

There was an abundance of material available when she entered AIR in July 1977, with Powell again producing and Jon Kelly as engineer. Powell recalled trawling through over 100 songs on cassette, which he and Bush assiduously culled. Even a track as strong as "Wow" failed to make the final cut.

Her backing band was a bespoke quartet assembled by the producer, pairing up two halves of two successful groups: David Paton on bass and Ian Bairnson on guitar, from Scottish group Pilot; and Stuart Elliott on drums and Duncan MacKay on keyboards, from Cockney Rebel. Powell had worked with both bands as an arranger, ensuring that from the very start everything clicked into place. Beginning with "Moving", they cut three tracks on the first day. Bush would play a song at the piano and the band would fall into step around her. Most of the performances on the album were recorded live, with overdubs added later. Bush is recalled as endlessly polite, accommodating and professional – the only vaguely controversial aspect of the sessions being her enthusiasm for smoking reefer. "It was just a fact and you had to work with it," Powell recalled. "A confidence booster? Dutch courage? It's hard to judge, or whether it was just a state of being that she was so used to that it had to be there."

> TO HER GREAT SURPRISE AND UNEASE, SHE FOUND HERSELF A POP PHENOMENON

Recorded during the summer when punk went pop, *The Kick Inside* is decidedly pre-Sex Pistols in its leanings. It's not an easy record to place, though it possesses something of the meandering melodicism of Elton John's *Madman Across The Water*, while the *"big brass bed"* in "James And The Cold Gun" gestures to Bob Dylan's "Lay Lady Lay". Mid-paced, solid and tuneful, it's a bit flared, somewhat hairy, a little bit proggy even, with its floating melodies, classically influenced piano, shifting time signatures, consummate musicianship and poetic, frequently 'cosmic' lyrics. Certainly, the resurrection of "heavy" as the approving adjective of choice, or the blowsy horn and repeating synth line at the end of "The Saxophone Song", couldn't be further from the 100 Club if they were beamed in from the dark side of the moon. "James And The Cold Gun", a garish Wild West fantasy and one of the few originals performed live by the KT Bush Band, is the only song which could be described as a rocker, but even then its chugging riffage is firmly in a pre-punk lineage.

The syncopated reggae-funk of "Kite" and "Them Heavy People" hint at the sonic adventurism to come, while "Wuthering Heights" is, and always shall be, off-the-scale bonkers, regardless of its unlikely assimilation into mainstream culture. But this is not an album where Bush emerges fully formed as the arch experimentress of current lore. It's in the sense of vocal daring and unusual thematic concerns, rather than the musical textures, where *The Kick Inside* retains a radical edge.

The piercingly high vocals were partly the result of attempts to improve her singing technique. Bush had started writing in keys beyond her range in order to expand her vocal reach. The songs started climbing; she wanted them to fly. There was also a degree of roleplay involved. The startling vocal on "Wuthering Heights" – a late addition, written shortly before the album sessions began – was a deliberate piece of characterisation, signifying Cathy as howling spirit rather than solid flesh and bone. Throughout, the backing vocals are dazzlingly inventive, on "Moving" evoking "Queen Of The Night" from 'The Magic Flute'.

Lyrically, too, Bush draws from fresh sources, among them esoteric spiritualism, folk song, romantic literature and classical music. "Om Mani Padme Hum" is a Tibetan Buddhist mantra, uttered in "Strange Phenomena" as an ode to the unseen *"hand a-moulding us"*; the 'Goose Moon' is a concept from Native American Cree culture, where the flight of the birds heralds the coming spring. There are nods to the Armenian mystic Gurdjieff in "Them Heavy People", while the title track takes both its theme and some lines from the traditional song, "Lucy Wan".

Above all, *The Kick Inside* is profoundly, uncompromisingly female, and not just because Bush's voice is frequently orbiting the stratosphere. Barely 19, she is astoundingly bold in her declaration of appetites and fears. The language is elemental, lit up with the ecstasy and fear of puberty and sexual awakening. Everywhere you turn, there is a sense of a body growing, changing shape, quivering with wants and needs which are both immensely seductive yet also terrifying.

On "Kite", *"Beelzebub is aching in my belly-o"*. There is *"room for a life in your womb"* in "Room For The Life", and *"sticky love inside"* on "L'Amour Looks Something Like You". *"Stars climb from her bowels"* on "The Saxophone Song", while *"your warm hand [is] walking around"* on the lovely solo piano track, "Feel It". Again, there's *"this kicking here inside"* on "The Kick Inside", a beautiful song of forbidden passion between a brother and sister, sung moments before the pregnant girl commits suicide, *"Giving it all in a moment for you."* "Strange Phenomena" ties in the menstrual cycle to the waxing and waning of the moon; "Wuthering Heights" is a hyper-feminine psychodrama, with its stirring combination of the supernatural and the sheer bloody-minded power of obsessive love.

These are no run of the mill boy-meets-girl songs. To complete the album, two of the three tracks recorded at the 1975 AIR session were added: "The Saxophone Song" and "The Man With The Child In His Eyes". The latter is twilit, tinged with the illicit and the illusory, while even the more conventional romantic set pieces on the LP are sensuously drawn, with a fine eye for lace, fire and candlelight, fact and fancy. Frequently on the edge of Mills & Boon erotic-cliché (*"My stockings fall onto the floor"*; *"We move into the boudoir"*), they're usually saved by a poetic turn of phrase, a flash of inspired imagery (*"You came out of the night wearing a mask in white colour"*), or a dash of daft, endearing humour.

Somewhere in this stirring mix, Bush created a work without any obvious precedent, bearing the distinct, if still evolving, imprimatur of a unique new vision. The world quickly caught on. Released on January 20, 1978, after Bush firmly insisted to EMI that "James And The Cold Gun" was absolutely the wrong song to launch her career, "Wuthering Heights" reached No 1 in March, three weeks after the release of *The Kick Inside* (Feb 17). By the time that "The Man With The Child In His Eyes" had become Bush's second Top 10 single in May 1978, to her great surprise and even greater unease she found herself a pop phenomenon. "My whole routine was just blown apart," she recalled. "It was extraordinary how suddenly everything changed. It was instant."

So instant, in fact, that the demands of coming up with a second album good enough to match the first rather caught her on the hop.

THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"*The Kick Inside* isn't a great album but there are occasional pieces of brilliance that make me shudder when I think of her future. She is still only 19."
HARRY DOHERTY, MM, 25/2/1978

"The relative novelty of her approach guarantees interest; 'Wuthering Heights' is certainly something special. Inspired by the book of the same name, it aims for the wild, incorporeal atmosphere of its raging climax, and is utterly mesmeric."
BOB WOFFINDEN, NME, 25/2/1978

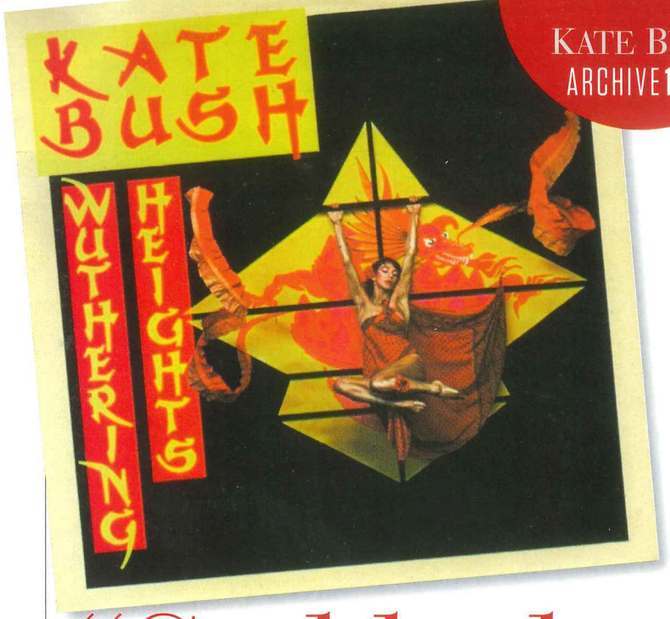
TRACKMARKS THE KICK INSIDE

1 Moving ★★★★
2 The Saxophone Song ★★★
3 Strange Phenomena ★★★
4 Kite ★★★★
5 The Man With The Child In His Eyes ★★★★★
6 Wuthering Heights ★★★★★
7 James And The Cold Gun ★★★
8 Feel It ★★★★
9 Oh To Be In Love ★★★★
10 L'Amour Looks Something Like You ★★
11 Them Heavy People ★★
12 Room For The Life ★★★
13 The Kick Inside ★★★

Label: EMI
Produced by: Andrew Powell
Recorded at: AIR Studios, London
Personnel includes: Kate Bush (piano, keyboards, vocals), Ian Bairnson (guitar, vocals), David Paton (bass, vocals), Duncan Mackay (keyboards), Andrew Powell (keyboards, bass), Stuart Elliott (drums), Morris Pert (percussion), Paul Keogh (guitar), Alan Parker (guitar), Paddy Bush (harmonica, mandolin, vocals), Alan Skidmore (saxophone), Bruce Lynch (bass), Barry DeSouza (drums), David Katz (violin)
Highest chart position: UK 3; US n/a

KB in 1978: "Her debut had no obvious precedent"

CHRIS WALTER/WIREIMAGE



"Suddenly there was another person there..."

The making of "Wuthering Heights" – or how the 20-year-old "Cathy", inspired by Emily Brontë, recorded her debut single, and fought EMI to score a monumental No 1. Kate Bush's key collaborators tell all: "From that point on, there was no stopping her..."

PRIOR TO HER triumphant London shows in 2014, the last song Kate Bush performed at one of her own concerts, on May 14, 1979, was the extraordinary single that launched an extraordinary career. Her only No 1, "Wuthering Heights" was inspired by a BBC mini-series of Emily Brontë's Gothic novel. Haunted by the image of Catherine Earnshaw's ghostly hand outside the window – "Let me in! Let me in!" – Bush wrote the song aged 18, shortly before beginning work on debut album *The Kick Inside*.

"I was in my flat, sitting at the upright piano at about midnight," she told her fan club in 1979. "There was a full moon, the curtains were open, and it came quite easily."

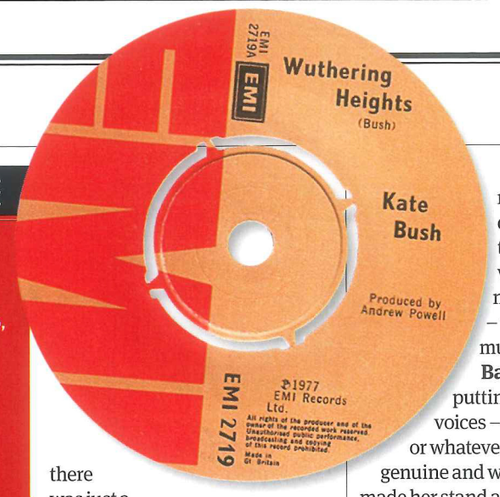
The fact that Bush shared her childhood name (Cathy) with Earnshaw, and a birthday (July 30) with Brontë, fostered a sense of cosmic kinship with the subject of "Wuthering Heights", a bond acted out when she recorded the song with members of the Alan Parsons Project. "She seemed to adopt different

Kate Bush, March 1978: "She sounds like nobody else..."

BEVERLEY GOODWAY/REX

personas when she was singing," recalls guitarist Ian Bairnson. "Suddenly there was another person there."

Aided by a wildly eccentric video and some revealing publicity photos, "Wuthering Heights" was instantly impactful, and later spoofed by everyone, from Pamela Stephenson to Alan Partridge. These days, Bush may regard its unbridled romanticism with mixed feelings (it was nowhere to be heard in the Before The Dawn shows), but it remains one of music's boldest opening statements of artistic intent, and an unforgettable exploration of obsessive love, supernatural imagining and powerful femininity.



FACT FILE

Written by: Kate Bush
Performers: Kate Bush (piano, vocals), Andrew Powell (bass), David Paton (guitar), Ian Bairnson (lead guitar), Stuart Elliott (drums), Duncan MacKay (keyboards)
Producer: Andrew Powell
Engineer: Jon Kelly
Recorded at: AIR, London
Released: January 20, 1978
UK/US charts: 1/NA

Andrew Powell: In 1975, I got a call from David Gilmour, saying he'd got this artist and he just thought she was something really special. This was substantially prior to Kate signing to EMI. Initially he said he was going to produce her, but in the end Dave put up money for some sessions. These were really superior demos, and I ended up producing them, including "The Man With The Child In His Eyes". A couple of years later I went in to do the album. She had so many songs. I've still got some of the cassettes. I must have 100 songs here, still, written pre-*The Kick Inside*.

Brian Bath: She wrote "Wuthering Heights" at her flat at Wickham Road in Brockley when she was living with [*KT Bush Band bassist*] Del Palmer there. At the time, [*their relationship*] was all a bit hush-hush, a bit keep-it-careful.

Powell: My memory is that "Wuthering Heights" was written very close to us going into the studio. I think it was only a few days before. Kate came around to where I was living and said, "What about this one?" She sat down at my piano and out it came. It was obvious to me immediately that it was something extraordinary.

David Paton: Andrew gave us a brief outline as to what Kate was all about, Dave Gilmour nurturing her and all that. He said, "She's very young but EMI are really excited about her, she's really special." I remember him saying the music was a bit wild, a bit wacky even. We arrived at the studio, Kate introduced herself, and Andrew said, "Sit down and play them the song", and that's how it was done. She sat down at the piano, said, "It goes like this", and just played. We were all gathered around the piano with our jaws dropped, because it was a stunning performance. Faultless, absolutely faultless, and she could do that time and time again. It sounded fantastic, there was just a great vibe in the studio.

Ian Bairnson: She sat and played the piano and sang the guide vocal. We wrapped ourselves around her, looking for ways to embellish it or give it direction. For us it was a very refreshing thing, because it was wide open.

Paton: Talking about Cathy and Heathcliff was so clever. I didn't like to ask her, "What's this song really about?" That book must have had a huge impact on her to influence her in that way, but she kept her vision to herself. A lot of artists you work with, you usually find that they're besotted with themselves – like Freddie Mercury, all he could do was talk about himself all the time. She wasn't like that at all. She didn't say, "I want to do this and that, me, me, me, me." She wasn't that kind of person at all and that in itself was very refreshing.

Bush in the "Wuthering Heights" video

Bairnson: I didn't pay a lot of notice to the lyrics. It was only about a year ago when I read the lyrics and appreciated them so much more.

Jon Kelly: The depth of her lyrics and the originality of her melodies were just so different from anything else that was around.

Paton: Her influences were pretty unique, pretty stylised. And that high-pitched voice. It wasn't until I was listening to "Wuthering Heights" on the radio that I really realised, woah, that's really high-pitched! When she sat and sang live for us I didn't really notice anything unusual about it, I just felt her style was very unique.

Powell: I loved it, I was very much in favour of it. She was doing some very interesting things with her voice. She was experimenting more and more in all sorts of directions – vocally, lyrically and musically.

Bairnson: Whether she was putting on an unusual voice – or voices – on "Wuthering Heights", or whatever, it still came across as genuine and we accepted it. That is what made her stand apart. The fact that her talent had so many facets to it and each one was so believable.

Powell: Did she twirl around all the time? No. I know singers who do, but she'd just stand there and sing and concentrate on what she was doing. She wasn't one for doing the dance of the seven veils while she was doing her vocals.

Bairnson: I never saw her pick up the guitar, but she loved it. On "Wuthering Heights" I built a solo and endeavoured to make it part of the song.

Paton: I didn't play bass on the song. That was at Andrew's insistence! He was a bass player in his youth and he plays OK – he's a bit busy – and as a consolation prize he said, "Davie, you can play 12-string." Hmmm. I must say he's a very accomplished musician all round.

Powell: I played bass. Partly because I had a good idea for a part, and also because Ian had sprained his wrist or something. Normally I'd have had Ian play acoustic and David play bass, but Ian couldn't play barre chords – and "Wuthering Heights", being in F#m, it's all barre chords – so David ended up playing guitar. Rather than having to double-track his own performance, I just had an idea and thought, hang on a minute, can I have your bass? Actually, I think I used my own in the end because I re-did it.

Kelly: Andrew was a superb musician and arranger. All the parts were written out and he'd hand them to the rhythm section, they had chord charts and a brief outline of what he wanted. He'd worked with Kate on the arrangement beforehand and how he wanted it to turn out. It was an absolutely brilliant job, a first-class record.

Powell: EMI wanted "James And The Cold Gun" to be the first single. It was the most obvious song on the record, and it would have been one of the worst choices. I mean, it was a fun thing to have on there, and it was one of the few songs of hers she'd already played live with the KT Bush Band, but she stuck to her guns on "Wuthering Heights" and she was absolutely right.

Kelly: It was on Kate's insistence that "Wuthering Heights" be the first single, and good for her. Quite right. It was fabulous.

Bush in 1978: "The unusualness was key..."

Bairnson: I remember thinking, 'This is really good, but I wonder how people will react?' It was going to be all or nothing. You can never pre-judge the great British record-buying public.

Bath: I remember going around to her flat when "Wuthering Heights" was first played on Capital Radio. Kate said, "Oh, they're playing my song tonight." We were all sitting round there and the DJ said he'd found this really odd song, or something like that, and played it. We couldn't believe it was coming out of the radio. And then he kept playing it. You could phone Capital to vote for the song you wanted to hear that day. I was round at her parents' farm pretty much every day, there was always something to do, and Kate's mum would say, "Have you phoned Capital Radio yet? Use the phone! Do it now!" It kept getting played and all of a sudden it just exploded.

Gered Mankowitz: I took the infamous 'leotard' photo in my Great Windmill Street studio in Soho in early 1978. I was doing a lot of work for EMI, and they called me and said, "We've got this extraordinary young woman called Kate Bush, she sounds like nobody else, she's wonderful to look at, but we don't know what to do with her. We need some photographs, we need an image." I always found the clothes that dancers used during rehearsals a very attractive look, and I thought it was a natural fit for Kate because she was so into dance and movement. I suggested we got leotards and woollen working socks and all that gear, and she seemed to like the idea. When the pictures were processed, the advertising agency EMI had employed to promote "Wuthering Heights" came up with the campaign of putting the posters on buses, and selected the one in the pink leotard – famously showing her nipples – and the rest is history. She certainly wasn't uncomfortable with it. She was perfectly aware of how she looked, because she had spent two hours in the dressing room during the shoot. It was her choice, done with her full participation and knowledge. She was very comfortable with her body. The pictures were a huge commercial success and I think they had a great deal to do with putting Kate on the map.

> "Her talent had so many facets to it"
> IAN BAIRNSON

Kelly: I can remember saying, "You're going to be so famous you're not going to be able to walk down the street." I said that to her after the first week of recording, though she wouldn't have believed it.

Powell: The unusualness was key, this strange girl. As soon as she did "Wuthering Heights" on *Top Of The Tops*, that made a difference, too, because it wasn't a conventional performance.

Bairnson: It was quite a shock when I saw her first on *Top Of The Pops*, because the Kate we knew in the studio and the one that turned up on TV was a completely different persona.

Bath: She was just a bag of nerves her first time on *Top Of The Pops*. Unfortunately it's not a great performance. It wasn't ideal. The KT Bush Band all went along expecting to play, and at the BBC they said, "Oh no, we use our own musicians." We were all upset not to be included, and so was she. All we could do was stand in front of her and say, "Come on Kate, go for it." But she was very nervous. I think if we had been onstage it would have been better, but it didn't matter. The song was already massive by then. I think the video helped.

Brian Wiseman: She had done an outdoor video for "Wuthering Heights" but EMI asked Keith MacMillan to shoot another, which I worked on. We did it really quickly, through the middle of the night at Ewart studios in Wandsworth. We got halfway through it, decided we didn't like what we were doing, and started over. We got an idea from some Canadian movie Keith had seen, shot it on video and went down a load of generations to get that ghostly, mirrored effect. It was quite striking. She didn't have any real creative input on that at all, as I recall, but she was very nice, very quirky.

Powell: When I saw the first video I thought, 'Oh, OK, this is going to be an interesting development!' By that point it was clear that there was a whole lot of layers to what she was doing. From that point on, there was no stopping her.

TIMELINE

Summer 1976 Catherine Bush signs to EMI
March–June 1977 Gigs in London pubs with the KT Bush Band
Summer 1977 Writes "Wuthering Heights" at 44 Wickham Road, South London. She records it during sessions for *The Kick Inside*, at AIR
January 20, 1978 "Wuthering Heights" is released
February 18, 1978 With the song at No 27, Bush performs on *Top Of The Pops*. She later describes the experience as "like watching myself die"
March 11, 1978 Bush becomes the first woman to have a UK No 1 with a self-written song. "Wuthering Heights" remains at the top for four weeks

PICTORIAL PRESS

"I'm not always right, and I know I'm not. . ."

"...But it's important," Kate Bush says, "to know what's going on, even if I'm not controlling it." Nine swift months after *The Kick Inside*, Bush has returned with a second album, and one she has helped produce. *HARRY DOHERTY* discovers how her artistic vision grows ever stronger, as she strives to subvert expectations and avoid "everything being soft, airy-fairy. That's not really what I want to do now."

Let me in-a-your window: Kate at her family home in East Wickham, Welling, London, September 26, 1978

CHRIS MOORHOUSE/EVENING STANDARD/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

TAKEN FROM MELODY MAKER 11/11/1978

THE ENIGMA THAT is Kate Bush – it confuses us all. I've just read a bitter character assassination of Kate Bush (in another paper) and the central area of complaint around which this assault revolves is that Ms Bush is "nice". "An hour or so in the company of Kate Bush," this enlightened scribe considered, "is like being trapped for the duration in a very wholesome TV show with definite but unwarranted intellectual aspirations."

I can understand that as a reaction to a well-mannered chance meeting, but really, had the writer listened attentively to her first album (regardless of liking or disliking it), I don't think he would have come to the same rash and puerile conclusion.

Actually, Kate Bush scares me, for a combination of reasons. The first is the diplomatic pleasantness and awesome logic she displays in interviews, but that is only one dimension – she is, in fact, a "nice" person. It is when that initial impact is paired with the multifarious intensity of her music that I start to quiver.

The contrast is eerie, and frightening. In the studio, living out her imaginative fantasies, Kate Bush is stricken by a rush of surrealism, and suddenly a range of weird personalities are displayed. It is a subconsciousness that was evident on her first album, *The Kick Inside*, and it is captured to an even greater extent on *Lionheart*, the sequel now released.

"Nice" is not a word I'd turn to, to describe the consequences. The songwriting, the singing, the arrangements, the production have the mark of a singular personality. Kate Bush's music is more like a confrontation. At times, it makes the listener feel uneasy and insecure. Kate's approach to her work is marked by an obstinate refusal to compromise in any way, so she does not make it easy for the listener to get into the music. To begin with, it's a challenge.

Because, then, it's difficult to appreciate fully Kate Bush's music (and who, after all, is she to make such demands?) – compounded with the fact that she seems to have the Midas touch – she is set up for criticism, which must make it all the more fulfilling to carry off two awards in the *MM* poll. Even when told of her performance in the poll, Kate girlishly enthuses: "That's wonderful! Fantastic! Incredible!" Nice.

THE SUCCESS OF *The Kick Inside* and its hit singles ("Wuthering Heights" and "The Man With The Child In His Eyes") was as much a hindrance as a help when the time came for Kate Bush to record a second album. As she has said before, the terms of reference were suddenly overturned. Instead of a rising talent, she is now a risen talent – and anything less than an emulation of the initial success will be interpreted as a failure. It's a pressure, though, that she can live with.

There are similarities to the debut album. *Lionheart* is produced once more by Andrew Powell and, generally, the musicians who did the honours on *The Kick Inside* are recalled. Kate wants the connections between her first and second album to stop there.

For instance, her own band makes a slight contribution to the new LP, being featured on "Wow" and "Kashka From Baghdad", and had it not been for a mix-up in the organisation, might have made a heavier contribution. It is, it appears, a sensitive situation, and one Kate doesn't care to dwell upon, but she's still determined that, eventually, her own band – Charlie Morgan (drums), Brian Bath (guitar), Del Palmer (bass), Paddy Bush (mandolin) – will play a more prominent part in the recording proceedings.

On the subject of producing, it's significant that Kate is accredited as assistant producer and so is acknowledged as playing an active role in mixing the sound as well as performing. She takes an immense interest in recording techniques and states intentions to pursue ambitions in that area. There was, however, a problem in communication when she was involved in the production and her lack of professional lingo for various methods of recording often led to confusion and amusement in the studio.

"I feel I know what I'm talking about in the studio now. I know what I should hear. The reaction to me explaining what I want in the studio was amusement, to a certain extent.

> "I guess I want to get heavier in the sound sense... and I think that's on the way"

Bush and briar... Kate in her parents' garden, September 1978

They were all taking the piss out of me a bit."

Overall, Bush was concerned that the new album should differ radically from her first.

"Maybe I'm a bit too close to it at the moment, but I find it much more adventurous than the last one. I'm much happier with the songs and the arrangements and the backing tracks.

"I was getting a bit worried about labels from that last album: everything being soft, airy-fairy. That was great for the time, but it's not really what I want to do now, or what I want to do, say, in the next year. I guess I want to get heavier in the sound sense... and I think that's on the way, which makes me really happy.

"I don't really think that there are any songs on the album that are as close to 'Wuthering Heights' as there were on the last one. I mean, there's lots of songs people could draw comparison with. I want the first single that comes out from this album to be reasonably uptempo. The first single was 'Hammer Horror'. That's the first thing I'm concerned with, because I want to break away from what has previously gone. I'm not pleased with being associated with such soft, romantic vibes, not for the first single anyway. If that happens again, that's what I will be to everyone."

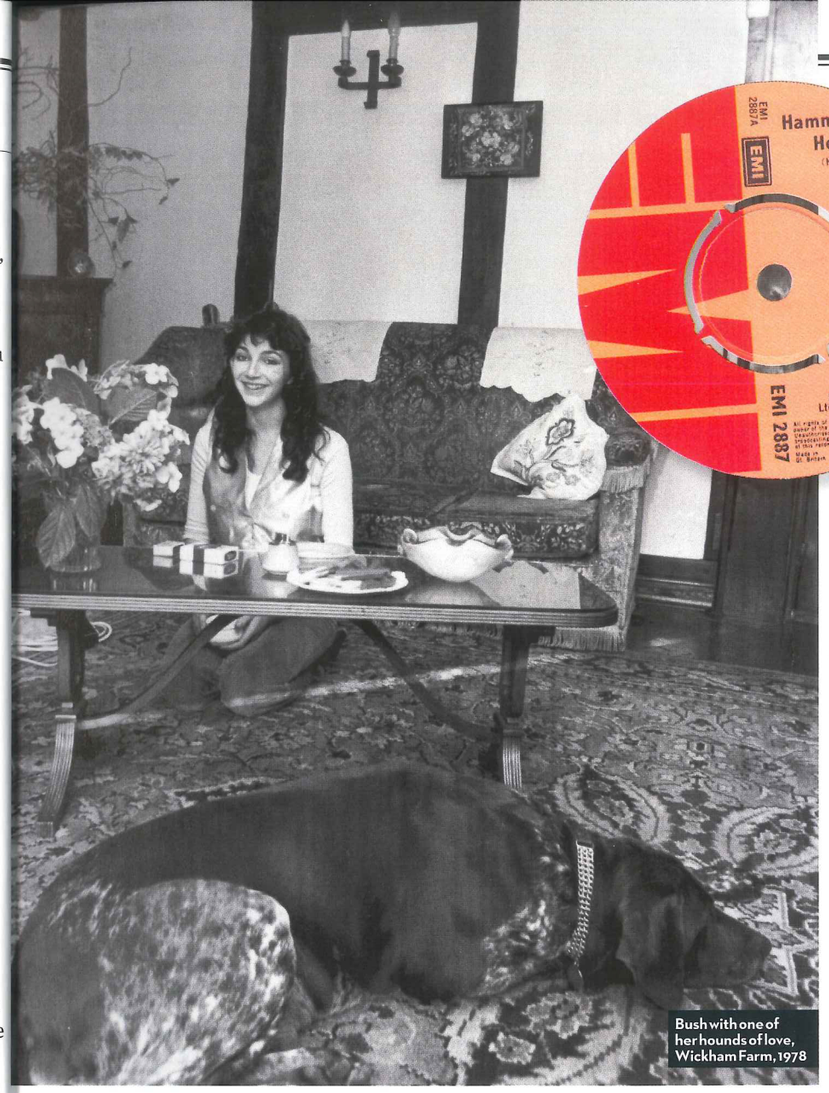
She is acutely aware of the danger of being pigeonholed, and is actively engaged in discouraging that.

"If you can get away with it and keep changing, great. I think it should be done because in that way you'll always have people chasing after you trying to find out what you're doing. And, anyway, if you know what's coming next, what's the point? If I really wanted to, I guess I could write a song that would be so similar to 'Wuthering Heights'. But I don't. What's the point? I'd rather write a song that was really different, that I liked, although it might not get anywhere."

Have you heard her new single, "Hammer Horror"? Now that's really different.

The major change in the preparation for *Lionheart* was undoubtedly that Kate, over-burdened with promotional schemes for the first album, was for the first time left with the unsavoury prospect of meeting deadlines and (perhaps) having to rush her writing to do that. It was a problem she was having trouble coming to terms with at our last meeting, when she spoke in admiration of bands like Queen – who came up with the goods on time every year, and still found time to conduct world tours.

But Kate insisted that she wasn't going to be rushed, and eventually the songs came along. In all, it took 10 weeks to record the 12 tracks (10 are on the album), an indication of the meticulousness shown by Bush herself in exercising as much control as possible over every facet of the work. "I'm not always right, and I know I'm not," she says, "but it's important to know what's going on, even if I'm not controlling it."



Bush with one of her hounds of love, Wickham Farm, 1978

I'll be interested to read the reviews of *Lionheart*. It'll be sad, I think, if the album is greeted with the same sort of insulting indifference that *The Kick Inside* met, when Kate Bush was pathetically underrated. *Lionheart* is, as the artist desired, a heavier album than its predecessor, with Bush setting some pretty exacting tests for the listener. Kate's songwriting is that much more mature, and her vocal performance has an even more vigorous sense of drama.

MUSICALLY, THE TRACKS on *Lionheart* are more carefully structured than before. There is, for instance, a distinct absence of straight songs, like the first album's "Moving", "The Saxophone Song", "The Man With The Child In His Eyes" and "The Kick Inside". Here, only "Oh England, My Lionheart" makes an immediate impression and I'm not sure that the move away from soft ballads (be it to secure a separate image) is such a wise one. As Bush proved on those songs on *The Kick Inside*, simplicity can also have its own sources of complication.

There is much about this album that is therapeutic, and often Kate Bush is the subject of her own course. "Fullhouse" is the most blatant example of that. There is no evidence that this song is autobiographical. One of the album's three unspectacular tracks musically (along with, in my opinion, "In The Warm Room" and "Kashka From Baghdad"), it is still lyrically a fine example of ridding the brain of dangerous paranoias. The stabbing verse of "*Imagination sets in/Then all the voices begin/Telling you things that aren't happening/(But they nig and they nag, 'til they're under your skin)*" is set against the soothing chorus: "*You've really got to/Remember yourself/You've got a fullhouse in your head tonight/Remember yourself/Stand back and see emotion getting you uptight.*"

Even "Fullhouse" is mild, though, when compared to tracks like "Symphony In Blue", "In The Warm Room" and "Kashka From Baghdad", which exude an unashamed sensuality. "Symphony In Blue", the opening track, is a hypnotic ballad with the same sort of explicit sexual uninhibitiveness as "Feel It" from the first album. "*The more I think about sex/The better it gets/Here we have a purpose in life/Good for the blood circulation/Good for releasing the tension/The root of our reincarnation,*" sings Kate, happily.

"In Search Of Peter Pan", "Wow" (running together on the first side) and "Hammer Horror" are examples of Kate's strange ability to let the subconscious mind run amok in the studio. "Wow" is tantalisingly powerful and "Hammer Horror" (the single) is most impressive for the way it seems to tie in so many of the finer points of the first album and project them through one epic song.

That leaves three tracks, "Don't Push Your Foot On The Heartbrake", "Oh England, My Lionheart", and "Coffee Homeground". All of them with totally contrasting identities, but all succeeding in areas that many might have considered outside the scope of Kate Bush.

A few months ago, in the paper, Kate said how one of her musical ambitions was to write a real rousing rock'n'roll song and how difficult she found that task. "James And The Cold Gun" was her effort on *The Kick Inside*, and with "Don't Push Your Foot On The Heartbrake" she has tackled the art of writing a roasting rocker on her own terms. "... Heartbrake" (another piece of emotional therapy) might not be considered a rocker in the traditional sense of racing from start to finish but it's still one of the most vicious pieces of rock I've stumbled across in some time. The verse is slow, pedestrianly slow. The pace is deceiving. It slides into the chorus. Bush moves into a jog. Then the second part of the chorus. It's complete havoc, and when it comes to repeating that second part in the run-up to the end, Kate wrenches from her slight frame a screaming line of unbelievably consummate rock'n'roll power that astounded me. A rather unnerving turn to Kate's music, I think.

Then there's "Coffee Homeground", influenced by Bertolt Brecht and inspired by a journey with a taxi driver who was convinced that somebody was out to poison him. For "Oh England, My Lionheart", from which the album title is derived, Kate is expecting a barrage of criticism because of the blatant soppiness of the lyric.

Kate's reasons for writing the song are simple enough. She had always liked "Jerusalem", and thought that a contemporary song proclaiming the romantic beauty of England should be written.

"A lot of people could easily say that the song is sloppy. It's very classically done. It's only got acoustic instruments on it and it's done... almost madrigally, you know? I dare say a lot of people will think it's just a load of old slush, but it's an area that I think it's good to cover. Everything I do is very English, and I think that's one reason I've broken through to a lot of countries. The English vibe is very appealing."

CHRIS MOORHOUSE/EVENING STANDARD/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES
CHRIS MOORHOUSE/EVENING STANDARD/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

RELEASED: **10 NOVEMBER 1978**

LIONHEART

An anthem for Albion, from the French Riviera. *The Kick Inside*'s somewhat rushed – and somewhat undervalued – follow-up.

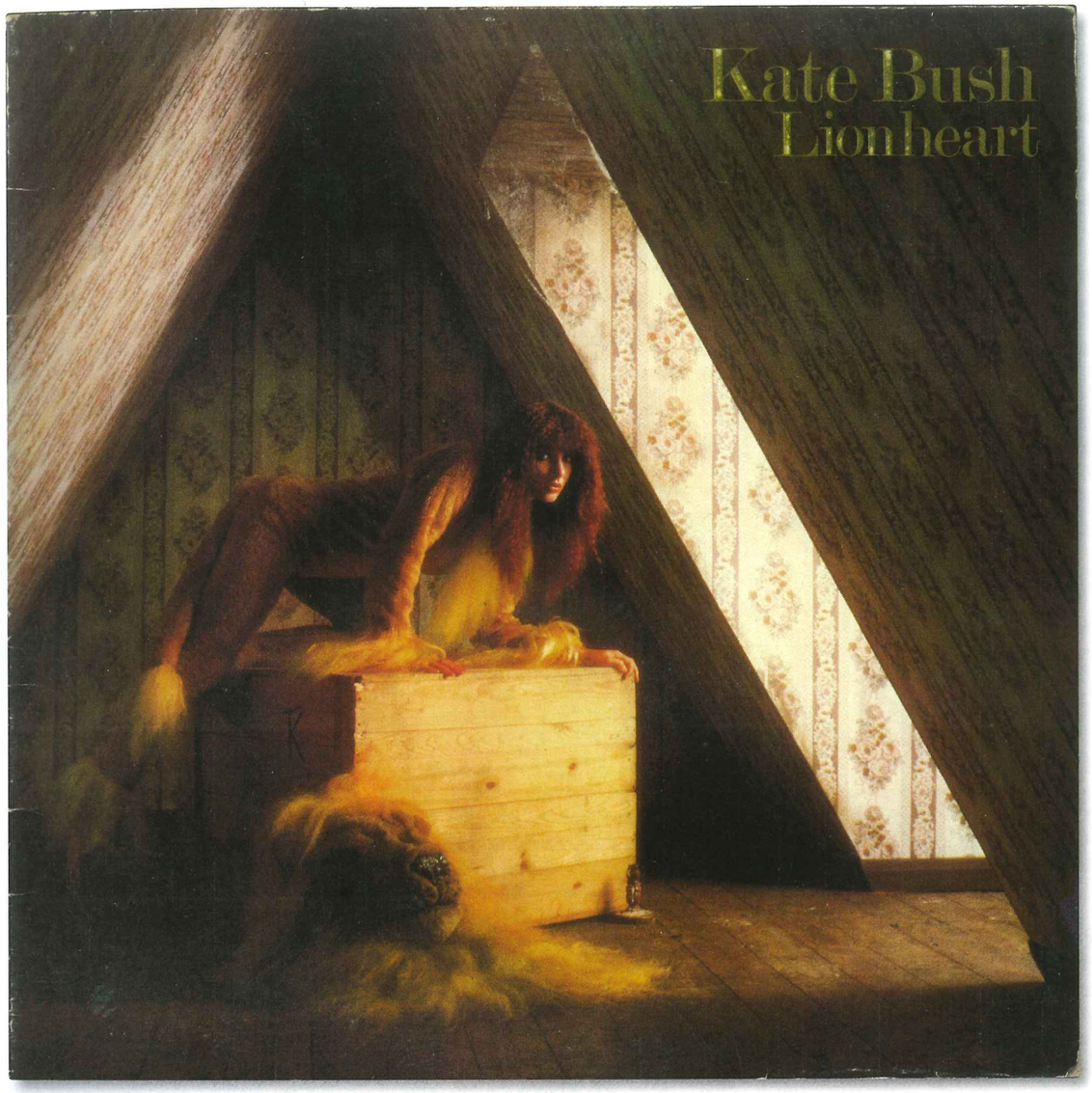
by LOUIS PATTISON

THERE'S A PIECE of music industry wisdom that goes something like this: you get 21 years to make your debut album, and two weeks to make the second. Perhaps this encapsulates why *Lionheart* occupies a comparatively unloved place in the Kate Bush canon. Recorded in 1978 with returning producer Andrew Powell, and many of the session musicians from *The Kick Inside* – including Kate's multi-instrumentalist brother Paddy, and guitarist Brian Bath and bassist Del Palmer of the KT Bush Band – it came together in a 10-week stint at a studio in the opulent surroundings of Nice on the French Riviera. The turnaround was quick, and startlingly so. *Lionheart* hit shelves in the November of that year – a mere nine months after the release of *The Kick Inside*.

Placed alongside the achievements of its gilded predecessor, you might fairly note that *Lionheart* slightly underperformed. It hit No 6 in the UK chart, a few notches beneath the peak of Kate's debut, while its closing track and lead single "Hammer Horror" – a billowy gothic melodrama in which an actor takes on the lead role in a theatre production, only to find that his late friend who previously treasured the part has returned in spirit form to haunt him – inexplicably fell just outside the Top 40. Kate would later voice her regret that *Lionheart* was rushed, and, when explaining why albums such as *The Sensual World* would have such a long gestation period, would cite its making as a sort of cautionary tale: a story of record company pressure and creative compromise that would ultimately shunt her onto a different, outsider path.

> LUSH AND SENSUAL, SOMETIMES ANTIQUATED IN ITS LANGUAGE AND POINTS OF REFERENCE

But to dismiss *Lionheart* on such terms would be premature. First, the idea that it was slapped together at pace demands a little context. Only three songs here, "Symphony In Blue", "Fullhouse" and "Coffee Homeground", were entirely written and recorded in Nice, with the vast bulk of the album drawing from that war chest of an estimated 200 songs that Kate had been working on since her early teens. Quick work, particularly compared to what would come later, but there have been flimsier starting points. Kate herself would later regret that the resultant album felt piecemeal, an assessment not entirely without its merits. *Lionheart* offers neither *The Kick Inside*'s



shock of the new, nor the alchemical flash of Kate's '80s work, often erring towards wispy fairytale dramatics and meandering symphonic rock over cast-iron songcraft or fully realised concepts. Still, its particular, heady atmosphere is often captivating: lush and sensual, sometimes antiquated in its language and points of reference, but noticeably still, in places, the product of wide-eyed adolescence.

The cover is brilliant, odd, quite silly. Taken by the photographer Gered Mankowitz, who also shot Jimi Hendrix and the Stones, it pictures Kate dressed in a lion costume, perched like a huntress on a crate in some attic with windows thrown open to the sun, and the suit's head discarded on the floor, like some grisly safari trophy. Kate – a Leo, naturally – says she picked the album's title for its connotations of heroism, and it makes explicit reference to the final Side One track, "Oh England My Lionheart". This is one of the album's songs that Kate would later dismiss as adolescent whimsy – "It makes me just want to die," she cringed to one interviewer – which is a shame, as for all its highfalutin ambitions, it's a gem: a gentle but sweeping ode to England presented with a baroque embellishment of piano, pipes and Francis Monkman's harpsichord.

In Rob Young's *Electric Eden*, his tome on the history of visionary English music, he notes the song's poetic evocations – of apple-blossom, clover blooming on deserted air-raid shelters, wrecked Spitfires and recitations of Shakespeare on the banks of the Thames – as "classic images of English Arcady". Others have compared it to works of great English poetry, such as Rupert Brooke's 'The Soldier', a patriotic sonnet written at the dawn of World War I that was blind to the horror of impending conflict, instead dreaming of *"hearts at peace, under an English heaven"*. Perhaps it makes a weird kind of sense that, just as expats frequently idealise the country that they long ago left behind, Kate's ode to Albion should have come together in a balmy summer on the beaches of the Med.

The confluence of title and theme invites one to write about *Lionheart* as an album dealing with the knotty concept of Englishness. Perhaps thankfully, this is complicated by the fact the album subtly undermines this interpretation at every turn. A title like "Hammer Horror", for instance, might prompt you for some hammy fancy about a caped Christopher Lee romping around some creaky set in Berkshire, but Kate's tale of a vendetta conducted from beyond the grave instead puns on the most famous resident of Notre Dame – *"I've got a hunch that you're following/To get your own back on me"*. It was apparently prompted by a viewing of the 1957 film *Man Of A Thousand Faces*: "The song was inspired by seeing James Cagney playing the part of Lon Chaney playing the hunchback," Kate told one interviewer. "He was an actor in an actor in an actor, rather like Chinese boxes, and that's what I was trying to create."

Looking even further afield is "Kashka From Baghdad". This is one of *Lionheart*'s numbers that feels musically rather slight, a story in search of a song, which is a shame, as this fragrant tale of homosexual love in the Middle East deserves more. The titular Kashka, Kate sings, *"lives in sin, they say/With another man/But no-one knows who..."* At first it unfolds like a fable, but come the last verse, we find the narrator lives in the house opposite, watching their silhouettes in the moonlight and listening to the music that drifts from their window. "Symphony In Blue", meanwhile, nods to George Gershwin's "Rhapsody In Blue", but instead commences with a sleight-of-hand borrowing of those melancholy major-sevenths from Erik Satie's "Gymnopédie No 1". Lyrically, it begins like teenage diary jottings (*"I spent a lot of my time looking at blue/The colour of my room and my mood..."*) before tackling some big cosmic questions – nihilism, God, fear of death – and throwing in some decidedly unpriggish observations about sex for good measure: *"Good for the blood circulation/Good for releasing the tension/The root of our reincarnations."* The English Rose is hardly demure.

Growing pains are the theme of the following "In Search Of Peter Pan". JM Barrie's ageless boy shows up twice on *Lionheart* – on "Oh England My Lionheart", he *"steals the kids in Kensington Park"*, a reference to a scene in Barrie's 1902 novel, *The Little White Bird* (a statue of Peter, surrounded by squirrels, rabbits and fairies still stands in Kensington Gardens, where Peter was said to have landed following a leap from his nursery window). "In Search Of Peter Pan", though, is a deeper exploration of Barrie's themes – of fear of the future, responsibility, and the tedium, pain and disappointment of adulthood. *"I've been told when I get older/That I'll understand it all,"* sings Kate, and then after a beat, *"But I'm not sure if I want to..."*

The reassurance of adults feels like a curse (*"They took the fun right out of it..."*), while a confident boy called Dennis, who treasures photos of his real-life heroes, appears utterly alien. Instead, the narrator obsesses over a picture of Peter Pan clipped from a newspaper, and the song closes with a drift off into a world of fantasy. Kate, her voice multi-tracked into a spectral choir, sings *"Second star on the right/And straight on 'til morning"* – the directions to Neverland as stated the 1953 Disney adaptation of *Peter Pan* – and the song concludes with a couple of lines from another Disney movie, *Pinocchio*'s "When You Wish Upon A Star". Taken as a whole, it reads like commitment to a life of fantasy, acknowledgement that adulthood might be inevitable, but that the wonder and magic we experience in childhood need not be lost along the way.

The following "Wow" is one of *Lionheart*'s most enduring moments. Kate's attempt to write a Pink Floyd song – "though I'm not surprised no-one has picked that up, it's not really recognisable", she told an interviewer – it is spacey and atmospheric, with little flourishes of woodwind and a chorus three miles wide. Chosen as *Lionheart*'s second single, it returned Kate to the charts after the disappointing performance of "Hammer Horror", peaking at No 14 in March 1979, and also proved memorable enough to be spoofable, sent up by the TV comedian Faith Brown who rose ungracefully into the air during the chorus on an invisible wire. Commencing with a whispered *"Emily"* – thought to be a dedication to Emily Brontë – it's a song about the acting life that doubles up as a wry dissection of showbusiness itself, a place of hollow compliments, cut-throat competition and thwarted ambition.

Funny, too, especially a couplet that goes *"He'll never make the screen/He'll never make The Sweeney,"* (mind you, the following couplet, about a *"movie queen"* who's *"too busy hitting the Vaseline"* has not aged so well). It's tempting to view "Wow" as a vituperative dig at the industry that would encourage Kate into figure-hugging tops, or the journalists that wrote about her with sweaty palms, although notably "Wow" was the work of a pre-fame Kate, having originally been slated for inclusion on *The Kick Inside*.

Elsewhere, *Lionheart* has its hits and misses. "Don't Push Your Foot On The Heartbreak" is an enjoyable, careening rocker, the perils of puberty and adolescent love refigured as a risky drive along slippery roads. But "Fullhouse" is a half-realised fantasy in which Kate literally runs into her old self on an autumn drive; the plot never quite gels, and a rather meandering prog arrangement doesn't help. The following "In The Warm Room", meanwhile, confirms a mid-album slump. Its womanly eroticism has something going for it – *"You'll fall into her like a pillow/Her thighs are soft as marshmallows"* – but the spare piano accompaniment feels rather tepid in comparison. The side only picks up with "Coffee Homeground", which was originally released as the B-side to "Hammer Horror", and shares its sense of macabre play. A tale of paranoia and poisoning conducted as a Weimar cabaret romp, it finds Kate trying on a German accent and turning down a procession of snacks and refreshments with the suspicion that her host is trying to poison her. The song namechecks Dr Crippen, the American homeopath hanged for poisoning his wife; others have noted similarities – such as the taste of *"bitter almonds"*, a hallmark of arsenic or cyanide – to Roald Dahl's short story *The Landlady*, in which the titular hostess with a passion for taxidermy poisons her guests to swell her private collection.

Taken in isolation, it is hard to regard *Lionheart* as a poor record. But in comparison to what would come later, the heady fantasia and pioneering technologies on display on *The Dreaming* and *Hounds Of Love*, it can't help but sound limited; this is an album mired in the progressive 1970s, not yet gazing forward to the possibilities of the 1980s. Still, behind the scenes, Kate was beginning to exert control. During the making of *Lionheart*, she set up a publishing company, Kate Bush Music, and her own management company, Novercia, headed up by her brother John, with other family members on the board of directors.

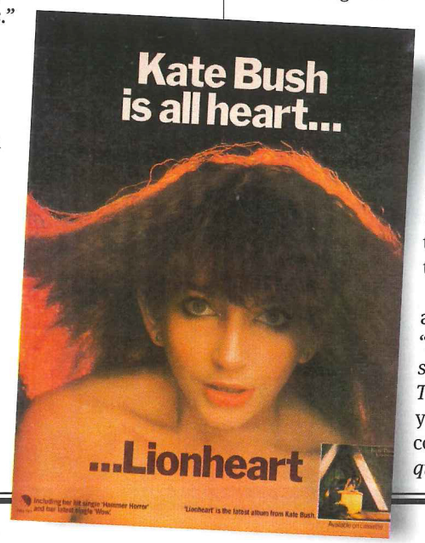
At Kate's request, *Lionheart* marks Del Palmer's debut on a Kate Bush record; he would become her studio bassist, her engineer (from *Hounds Of Love* onwards), and her lover. And while Andrew Powell was credited as *Lionheart*'s producer, Kate is credited on the sleeve as assistant producer – not without a fight, one suspects. "The reaction to me explaining what I wanted in the studio was amusement," she told *Melody Maker* in 1978. "They were all taking the piss out of me a bit." The laughter would not last for long. From now on, Kate would produce all her own work.

She was not free from the expectations of others quite yet, though. The suits at EMI had been asking, when was the tour? And of course, it had to be done right.

THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"*Lionheart* is, as the artist desired, a heavier album than its predecessor, with Bush setting some pretty exacting tests for the listener. Kate's songwriting is that much more mature, and her vocal performance has an even more vigorous sense of drama."
HARRY DOHERTY, MM, 25/11/1978

"She got the mime troupe tuition, the Gurdjieff teaching, the vegetarianism, the beauty that stops nicely before being out of reach, and what this adds up to, is the ability to 'cover markets'. What can stop her?"
IAN PENMAN, NME, 25/11/1978



Beginning to exert control: at home in East Wickham, September 1978

TAKEN IN ISOLATION, IT IS HARD TO REGARD *LIONHEART* AS A POOR RECORD

TRACKMARKS LIONHEART

1 Symphony In Blue ★★★
2 In Search Of Peter Pan ★★★
3 Wow ★★★★
4 Don't Push Your Foot On The Heartbrake ★★★★
5 Oh England My Lionheart ★★★
6 Fullhouse ★★
7 In The Warm Room ★★
8 Kashka From Baghdad ★★★
9 Coffee Homeground ★★★★
10 Hammer Horror ★★★★

Label: EMI
Produced by: Andrew Powell; assisted Kate Bush
Recorded at: Super Bear Studios, Nice
Personnel: Kate Bush (vocals, piano, keys, recorder, arr), Ian Bairnson (acoustic/rhythm/electric gtr, vocals), Brian Bath (gtr), Paddy Bush (harm, mandolin, vocals, pan flute, slide gtr, mandocello, pan pipes), Richard Harvey (recorder, vocals), Duncan Mackay (synth, keys, Fender Rhodes), Francis Monkman (harpsichord, keys, Hammond organ), Del Palmer (bass, vocals), David Paton (bass), Stuart Elliot (perc, drums), Charlie Morgan (drums), Andrew Powell (keys), David Katz (violin, orch contractor)
Highest chart position: UK, 6; US, n/a

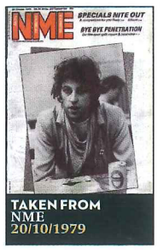
CHRIS MOORHOUSE/EVENING STANDARD/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

"I nag at myself all the time for being a waster"

A frankly underprepared *DANNY BAKER* is dispatched by *NME* to interview Kate Bush, with curious results. Why does she like "People getting their heads blown off in slow motion, very beautifully"? What makes her "freak out like a trapped animal"? Why doesn't she like some of her old songs anymore? And has Danny been to see *Alien*?

Bush live in Copenhagen, Denmark, April 26, 1979

JORGEN ANGEL/REDFERNS



TAKEN FROM NME 20/10/1979

EMI: THREE LETTERS that have come to represent "the enemy" in rock'n'roll's war games. EMI House rambles like a country home with a thousand warrens of ministry-type boring pools and divisions. The guard on the reception listens to my appointment with Kate Bush with all the emotion of a weighing machine being told a hard luck story. Like everyone else, I get told to take a seat while he talks, unheard, into one of the extension phones. About 10 minutes later I'm led down and through EMI House and up to a corridor down which *The Daily Mirror*'s Pauline McLeod is striding. She's out – I'm in.

Kate Bush is sipping Perrier water from an elegant glass. I tell her she'll get a royal old bulge if she carries on guzzling the gin like that, and she laughs naturally. She's far more attractive than I'd ever thought – not being the globe's most rabid fan of the woman, y'understand – although quite short.

NME had been after a KB interview for a while but, so I'd learned on leaving the office, her management were less than obliging. Me? Well, the truth is that I had no opinions about Kate at all. I knew the singles, but I really couldn't find it in me to go any deeper, to check out her roots (he said, nicking in this piece's most contrived gag). I still don't... such was our meeting.

Hey Kate. Do you feel obliged to sing like that these days?
"What? You mean..."

Y'know, like you could age the nation's glassblowers.
"Oh, yeah, sure. I mean, I don't feel obliged – that is me. See, like in a recording studio, when it's all dark and there's just you and a couple of guys at the desk, well, you get really so involved that to actually plan it becomes out of the question. It just flows that way. As a writer I just try to express an idea. I can't possibly think of old songs of mine because they're past now, and quite honestly, I don't like them anymore."

Doing "Wuthering Heights" must've been murder then?
"Well, I was still promoting that up until 18 months after I'd had it released. Abroad I was still promoting it on TV, where I was able to do it backwards and [*she mimes it while picking her nose nonchalantly*]... just weird."

Have you still got people around you who'll tell you something's rubbish?
"My brother Jay [*aka John*], who's been with me since I was writing stuff that really embarrasses me – he'd let me know for sure... Yeah, there's a few I can really trust."

She smiles again and I warm to her. Mind you, she speaks my language, so I could be sympathetic because she's one of the South London rock mafia. I ask her what it's like to be paraded in *The Sun* and suchlike as the Sex Goddess of POP!

"Hmmm. Y'see, you do a very straight interview with these people, without ever mentioning sex, but of course that's the only angle they write it from when you read it. That kind of freaks me out, because the public tend to believe it..."

Asking a few more questions, I begin to realise that this isn't the kind of stuff that weekloads of Gasbags [*the NME letters page*] are made of. I'm searching for a key probe, but with Kate Bush – well, there's not likely to be anything that will cause the 12-inch banner-headline stuff, is there now? I recall Charlie Murray's less than enthusiastic review of her Palladium shows, which were apparently crammed with lame attempts to "widen" the audience's artistic horizons – y'know, lots of people dressed as violins and carrots an' that. CSM reckons it was one of the most condescending gigs in the history of music. Kate had read the review, but she didn't break down.

"Just tell me one thing," she said in normal tones. "I mean, was he actually at the show that night?"

Yeah, sure. I remember he told me he'd spent a week there one Tuesday.

"Oh, well, in that case that's just his opinion and he's entitled to it."

We all smiled again, and Kate asked me if I'd seen *Alien*. I wondered if she got out much herself. "Well, I don't get out to parties often. I have this thing about wasting time..."

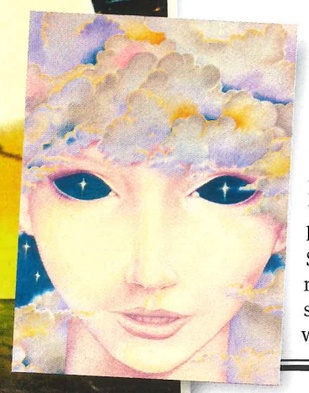
> "I'm shopping for coffee and cat litter, and there's like 40 people staring at me"

Oh really? Which thing is that?
"You know, I nag at myself all the time for being a waster. I think, 'Gosh, you could be creating the world or something.'"

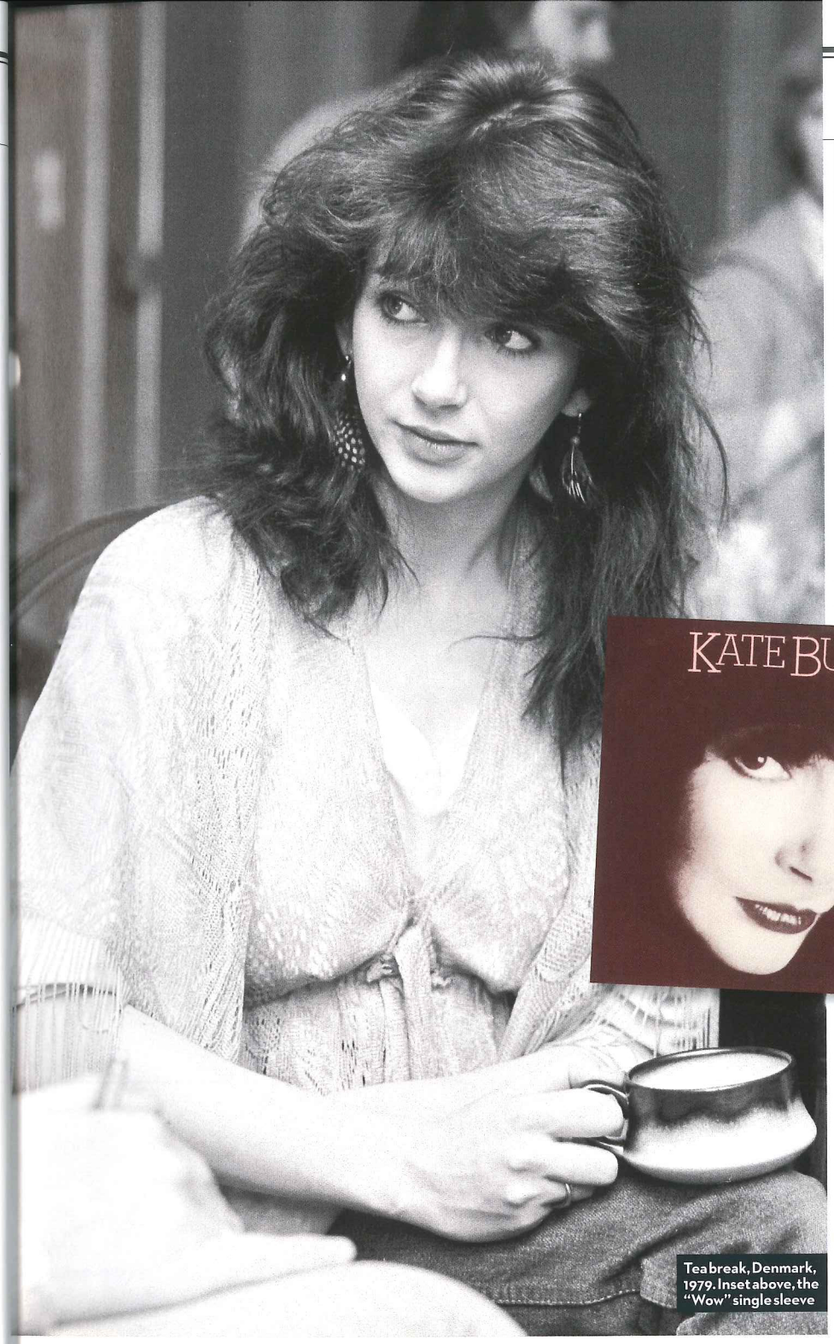
Well, that certainly seems a worthwhile thing to do, all right, although it has in fact been done before. Y'see, occasionally Kate allows the poet and all-round Tyrannosaurus Rex dreamer to slip out, a sucker for *Lord Of The Rings*. For a start I have cut about a hundred "wows" and "amazings" from her speech. She talks at length about how important she feels it is to be "creating" all the time, and when I asked her if she looked to the news for any song inspiration I got this curious answer:

"Well, whenever I see the news, it's always the same depressing things. Wars, hostages and people's arms hanging off with all the tendons hanging out, you know? So I tend not to watch it much. I prefer to go and see a movie or something, where it's all put much more poetically. People getting their heads blown off in slow motion, very beautifully."

Bush live at the London Palladium April 19, 1979



PETER STILL/REDFERNS



Tea break, Denmark, 1979. Inset above, the "Wow" single sleeve

She grins broadly again. Kate is an artist through and through, seeing the world as a crazy canvas on which to skip. Her outrageous charm covers the fact that we are in the midst of a hippy uprising of the most devious sorts. I approach her on the question of being a woman in pop music once more.

How do her workmates treat her?
"Well, when I started, I felt really conscious of being female amongst all these fellows. But these days I feel like one of the lads."

That doesn't sound very healthy.
"Oh, yeah, it is. When I'm working, it's really important for me to get on with it in that way. But at the same time, I sense that they're very respectful, because they make me aware of being a woman, and will lay off the dirty jokes and that..."

Incredible. Do you find men in awe of you?
"Socially? Well, I find that – with people that I haven't seen for a couple of years, because they won't treat me as a human being. And people in the street will ask for autographs and also won't treat you as human, but... ah... sometimes I get really scared. Sometimes when I'm going to the supermarket to get the coffee and cat litter, I get freaked out and see all these people staring, and you turn around and there's like 40 people all looking at you... and when you go around the corner, they're all following you! You start freaking out like a trapped animal. However, I don't notice guys doing it on a personal level. Maybe some will keep their distance, but that may be because they don't get off on me.

"You see, when I first got started, I thought that I'd better watch out for these rip-off artists and stick with old friends. But it's amazing that since I've been in the business, I've made many more real friends, especially on a working basis. I find that I can get so involved with a guy working with me – and usually on a platonic level, which is great! That's so special, like these two minds linked on this one project. And that is a very beautiful thing that I'd never have experienced if I had not been in this business.

"And what's more, I'll keep these friends for life, because not only do they care for you, but they give me information and their teachings. What more could I ask for?"

Do you think there's a danger of becoming detached inside music?
"Probably. I don't read newspapers, and I've said I don't watch the news. I love books, but I don't read much. What I do is I get people to read to me, and I put the stories in my head."

A bit like a hat, I suppose.
"And films. I watch an awful lot of TV films."

Do you think you might be avoiding real life?
"Well, no, because I think that all these heavy issues – equality among blacks and whites, etc – have all been done before, and if you do it now, it has to be very cleverly handled. It all gets too negative and clichéd. So I find that, working with fantasy, I can handle the same issues, perhaps, but in a more positive way."

Don't you think that albums can make you feel and think sometimes without er... pussyfooting? I remember the first time I heard The Clash, and...
"Oh, yeah, some of these new bands are amazing. They're just springing up. The Police are just amazing..."

Here, listen, I think you've got the picture. Kate Bush, to meet, is a happy, charming woman that can totally win your heart. But afterwards on tape, when she's not there and you actually listen to all this, well... golly gosh. Don't lose sleep, old mates, it's just pop music-folk and the games they spin. Wow.

This was Chicken Licken, Cosmic News, Atlantis, goodnight, man...

JORGEN ANGEL/REDFERNS

RELEASED: **3 JANUARY 1994**

LIVE AT HAMMERSMITH ODEON

Kate Bush assembles her "own troupe of gypsies" for the historic, fated Tour Of Life. Out of Blu-Tack and coathangers, revolutions are wrought. *by* LAURA SNAPES

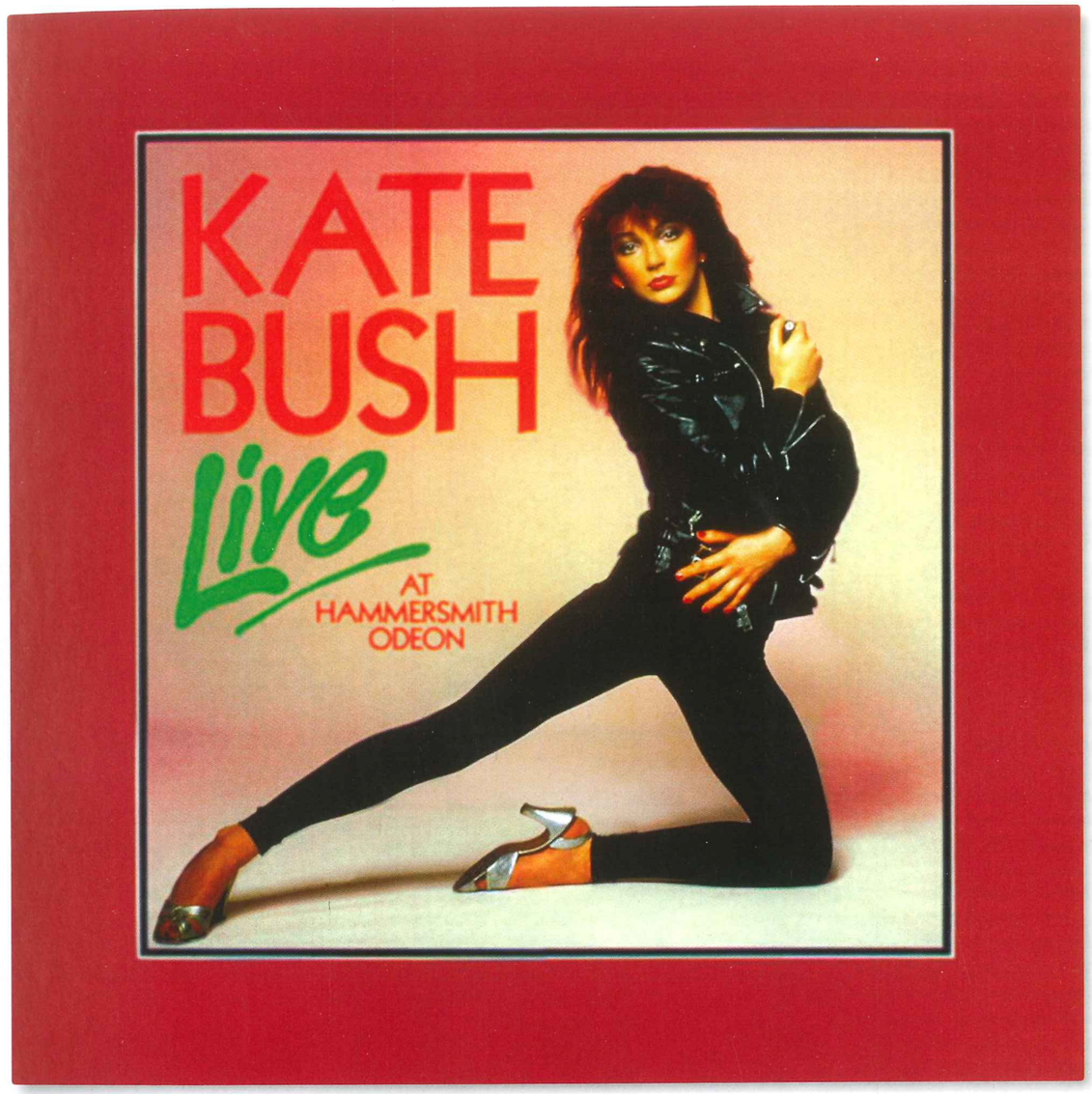
CONSIDERING HOW MANY bloated live albums lumbered out of the 1970s, it seems even more of a travesty that Kate Bush's groundbreaking Tour Of Life was so dimly preserved for the ages. Her debut live run (originally known as The Lionheart Tour) ran from April 2 to May 13, 1979: a four-track live EP, "On Stage", appeared that August, followed by *Live At Hammersmith Odeon*, first a 1981 home video, then a 1994 live album, both of which featured just half the 24-song setlist.

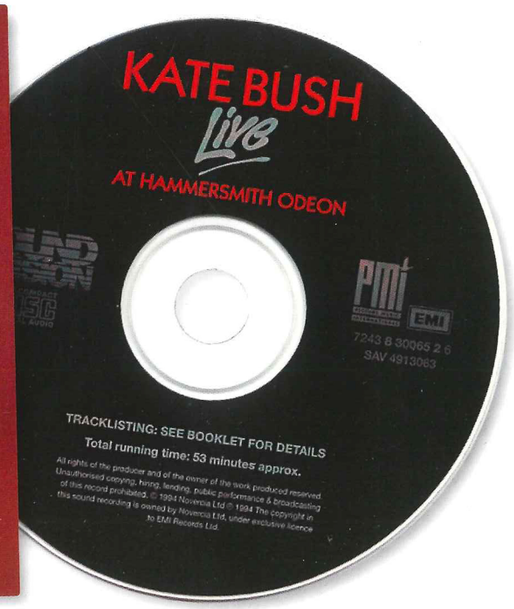
There may be some practical reasons for this. With its 150-minute runtime, the whole show would have proven expensive to reproduce. And since Bush performed almost the entirety of her first two albums, 1978's *The Kick Inside* and its swift follow-up *Lionheart*, EMI may have felt there was no commercial appetite to hear marginally different versions of those songs so soon after their original release.

The likely reason, however, is that Bush was reportedly unhappy with the way in which the tour looked in real life and on film, despite spending six solid months going over every last stitch of proceedings. The Tour Of Life is renowned for being one of the most technologically advanced jaunts of the age – for its staging, and the invention of the headset microphone as a solution for Bush's desire to sing and dance simultaneously. (Though the rudimentary Blu-Tack and coathanger wire contraption was sometimes subject to interference from taxi drivers' radio signals.) But *Live At Hammersmith Odeon* suggests that the widespread recording and video technology hadn't yet caught up with Bush's avant-garde spectacular.

> RECORDING AND VIDEO TECHNOLOGY HADN'T YET CAUGHT UP WITH BUSH'S VISION

Listening to the audio of the 12 sanctioned tracks, Bush's loopy voice often seems recorded from a great distance rather than through the soundboard. Her august 10-piece band thunder over her, squandering monitor engineer Ian Newton's careful mix. When he died of a heart attack in December 2014, Bush paid tribute to his work on the tour: "Many people commented on the high quality of the sound and soundsystem at the venue and a great deal of this was because of Ian. He was personally very supportive to me. There were quite a lot of things I was nervous about, especially as





I hadn't sung or played live for such a long time."

While there's something to be said for magic being irreproducible, it's a terrible shame that the shows weren't better captured, given that the Tour Of Life saw Bush finally carve out her own space, on her own terms. A BBC *Nationwide* documentary team were granted enviable access to pre-tour rehearsals, and Bush told the interviewer about her earliest live experiences with the KT Bush Band in various South-east London pubs just two years earlier. Mostly the audiences were "very good, very respectful," she says – a feat given the fact that she was then 18 years old, dressed as a cowgirl and climbing offstage during "James And The Cold Gun" to "shoot" the audience with a plastic firearm, a delightfully outré routine that would make it to the live show.

Sometimes, however, audiences were less predictable. One night on the eve of a football match between England and Scotland, she had to battle against a rambunctious crowd. "They had flags waving everywhere, no-one could see the stage 'cos all the guys were getting up on the stage, putting their arms round you, and it was a bit hard to keep singing when everyone was getting up on stage and putting sticks in your eyes," she explained gamely.

Bush spent the next two years plotting exactly how she would orchestrate her ideal live performance, while demand to see her live increased as *The Kick Inside* and *Lionheart* both went Top 10. Although she was always very much in control of her career, she never gave off the impression of being any kind of egomaniac, painting her decisions in terms of artistry and instinct rather than revealing the tightness of her grip. She wrote in the tour programme, "Since the time I saw magic made by loving bodies that moved me beyond words – I've craved for my own troupe of gypsies, my own show, the chance to take a trip with you." She witnessed those inspiring "loving bodies" in choreographer Lindsay Kemp's production of *Flowers*, and when David Bowie retired Ziggy Stardust at London's Hammersmith Odeon on July 3, 1973, when she was 14. Years later, she told an interviewer that she had cried at the gig, "And it looked like he was crying, too."

Both performances left her convinced that a powerful live show required "everything you've got", as she told *Smash Hits* in 1980. "Bands that do nothing, that just go out and perform their basic function, play their latest album, or sing it, or whatever and then walk off, are boring. You have to keep your audience's attention all the way to be a success."

As such, her all-or-nothing approach was a slow process, which left critics and the public questioning whether she could perform live at all. "I really wasn't deliberately keeping myself away from an audience to build up a reputation," Bush explained to *Record Mirror* ahead of the tour in March 1979. "It has simply taken all this time to stage things the way I want to. And to match up to the standard I've set myself. Which I haven't reached, and probably won't reach. But however it turns out, it's my concept – my concept as much as the time, the budget and the presentation will allow."

> "THE TOUR WAS REALLY EXCITING. I JUST CHOSE TO SPEND MY TIME MAKING ALBUMS"
> KATE BUSH

The tour cost more than £10,000 a night (£250,000 in total, approximately £1.3m today), to cover 10 band members, two male dancers, choreography by Lindsay Kemp, dance training by Anthony Van Laast, 40 crew members, and importing a host of expensive instruments. It covered dance training at The Place in Euston, band run-throughs in Greenwich, rehearsals on The Who's massive soundstage in Shepperton, and full technical test performances at Finsbury Park's now defunct Rainbow Theatre, along with 17 costume changes (and designer Lisa Hayes, who would "stand in the wings with a torch in one hand and apple juice in the other"), magician Simon Drake, and a host of props ranging from homemade (red ribbons flew out of her pistol in "James And The Cold Gun") to hydraulic platforms. Bush applied her own make-up after one of Drake's acquaintances showed her how it was done. Tickets cost between £2 and £5.

The first song on the setlist – and the recording – was "Moving". As in its role as opener of *The Kick Inside*, the performance started with a sample of whale song, a quirk that Bush explained to *Sounds* a year later: "The whales are pure movement and pure sound, calling for something, so lonely and sad... on the ground they're *ppfff* [*splodging sound*] but in the water they're, 'wahoo!', which is the way with a lot of dancers." It's a characteristically Bush-like statement that says a lot about her own idealised – if not necessarily realistic – approach to the stage, which she later described as trying to create "a complete experience, like a play. I can hide behind a role onstage and really enjoy performing, but I think to an extent I would become lost without costume and make-up."

"Moving" was one of the Tour Of Life's more minimal set pieces – just Bush in a blue leotard, performing on a ramp. Not that there's any marked difference between her stationary performances and the more physical numbers: the second song on the recording is a sprightly version of "Them Heavy People" (during which she donned a trilby and danced with a cane) that vindicates Bush's desire to dance as intensely as she was singing. She is never audibly breathless, a feat that's consistent throughout the album. "She couldn't dance the way she *could* dance properly, and sing at the same time," Van Laast told the BBC.

In that documentary, Bush explains that replicating the sound of her albums would be a problem. "For live work, to a certain extent, we couldn't do it exactly as the album is even if we wanted it to, because it wouldn't come across in a strong way. For a live performance you have to [*make*] things more obvious so that people can hear them, possibly making songs quicker." That doesn't correspond to any palpable logic about the kinds of songs that did or didn't make the live recording: if there was only room for one of her plainly gorgeous piano ballads among the 12 chosen songs, why "Feel It" over the distinctly better known "The Man With The Child In His Eyes"? And why include "Hammer Horror", the only song that Bush performed to a vocal backing track? She even warned audiences about it in the programme, and later explained in her fanclub newsletter that because she wanted to use the routine from the video, she "couldn't possibly sing and dance at the same time", but wanted to let everyone know "that it wasn't a cheat".

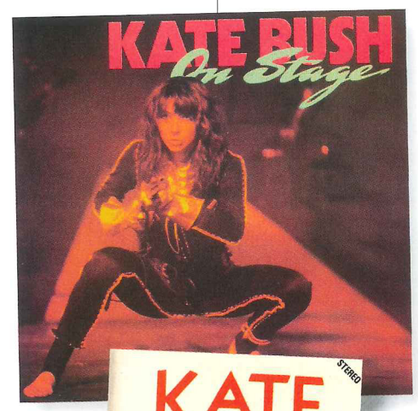
There's also a distinct favouring of band over Bush on the live document: the presence of "Kite", with its vast windy outro, and an initially great but over-long rendition of "James And The Cold Gun" both raise the question of who the perceived audience was. The Eastern styling of "Kashka From Baghdad" is left off, while the defiantly British encore remains in full: Bush and her dancers perform "Oh England My Lionheart" dressed in WWII attire, parachute in tow. After another brief interval, she returns to a stage fogged with dry ice, to close with "Wuthering Heights" while dressed as the ghost of Catherine Earnshaw.

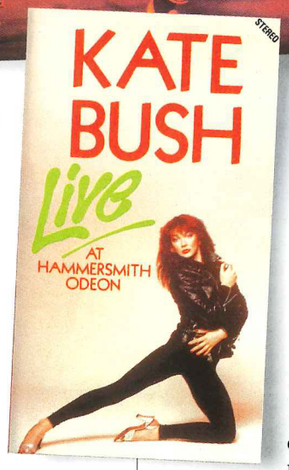
Live At Hammersmith Odeon was recorded on the second night of a three-day residency added to the very end of the tour due to demand. The first night was a tribute to Bill Duffield, the lighting engineer who fell to his death from a lighting galley at Poole Arts Centre on the opening night, which almost lead Bush to cancel the whole affair. Instead, she organised a fundraising benefit for his family, where she was joined by Peter Gabriel and Steve Harley, and closed on a cover of The Beatles' "Let It Be".

Duffield's death was frequently cited as a reason for Bush's reluctance to tour again, as was her fear of flying. An offer to support Fleetwood Mac on tour in the US was rejected. Bush admitted that even for a 20-year-old, the experience was exhausting, and many concluded that she just didn't enjoy it. "But I did," she professed to *The Word* in 2011. "It was really exciting. I just chose to spend my time making albums."

What seemed to count against touring was the lack of control Bush felt she had onstage, and her own absurdly high standards. "It can't be original," she had told *Record Mirror* on the eve of the tour. "It couldn't be, ever. Nothing could, because to an extent, it's all been done before." But Bowie's 1974 Diamond Dogs Tour aside, little like this had been done before: Bush either failed to recognise the singularity of her achievement, or was deterred from doing so by the seam of parodies that the tour provoked. As with so much of women's work, her ability to flit from gravity to slapstick was treated as mere whimsy, while Bowie would be credited for his range.

Interviewers repeatedly pestered Bush about when she would return to the stage, but she turned her attentions to the studio, her personal philosophy paying off as she took control of her own production and went on to release some of the most distinctive work of her career: "You have to believe in yourself. You can't just accept what other people say all the time, otherwise you become them and not yourself." As an artist intent on the process of becoming herself, expending energy on a disc that documented someone she was briefly, two years before, was never going to hold much appeal.





THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"A live record from saucy, squeaky obsequious Kate Bush featuring songs that have not been on her singles. Over half the people who will buy it will do so once they see the video on *Top Of The Flops* and Ms Bush is obviously being groomed for a long career that won't be impeded easily. One of the titles is 'Don't Push Your Foot On The Heartbrake'. Ric Ocasek of The Cars says he truly believes that songs can affect your weight on the gas pedal. Kate Bush sends me to sleep at the wheel..."
ON STAGE EP, NME, 15/9/1979

Cowgirl Kate: Bush performs "James And The Cold Gun" on the Tour Of Life

GAI TERRELL/REDFERNS

TRACKMARKS LIVE AT HAMMERSMITH ODEON

1 Moving ★★★
2 Them Heavy People ★★★★
3 Violin ★★★★
4 Strange Phenomena ★★★★
5 Hammer Horror ★★★★
6 Don't Push Your Foot On The Heartbrake ★★★★★
7 Wow ★★★★★
8 Feel It ★★★
9 Kite ★★★
10 James And The Cold Gun ★★★★
11 Oh England My Lionheart ★★★
12 Wuthering Heights ★★★★★

Label: EMI on Picture Music International
Produced by: Kate Bush, Jon Kelly
Recorded at: Hammersmith Odeon, London
Personnel: Kate Bush (vocals, piano), Ben Barson (synthesiser, acoustic guitar), Brian Bath (electric guitar, acoustic mandolin, vocal harmonies), Paddy Bush (mandolin, vocal harmonies, additional instrumentation), Glenys Groves (backing vocals), Preston Heyman (drums, percussion), Kevin McAlea (piano, keyboards, saxophone, 12-string guitar), Alan Murphy (electric guitar, whistle), Del Palmer (bass), Liz Pearson (backing vocals)
Highest chart position: n/a

Bush bursts through to top the *Melody Maker*'s Reader's Poll, September 6, 1980

ADRIAN BOOT/URBANIMAGE.TV

"I find myself inspired by unusual, distorted, weird subjects..."

In Munich, Kate Bush is embarking on a strenuous promotional tour for *Never For Ever*. A palpably excited *COLIN IRWIN* joins Bush to investigate the strangeness at the heart of her songs, and their roots in folk, literature and film. "I worry about being too indulgent," she says, "and about giving too much away." Plus: which album was so good, it made her think there was no point in writing any more songs?

TAKEN FROM MELODY MAKER 4/10/1980

CORRIDORS. BLAND ANTISEPTIC corridors leading nowhere and lasting forever. An occasional flight of stairs to negotiate; the odd babble of German chatter that passes without interest or acknowledgement; a dressing-room bearing the name of Loudon Wainwright momentarily raises spirits.

A multi-coloured sign in bizarre lettering that stinks of the '60s psychedelia smacks you between the eyes, the legend just decipherable as *RockPop*, accompanied by a little arrow that suggests you're getting warm. More corridors, steps, signs and then the final triumphant indication of imminent victory. The Voice. It shrieks high over the cacophony of silence, like a crazed cockerel on a berserk rollercoaster. Initially wild and formless, it quickly begins to bear shape and recognition as we approach it with increasing urgency.

"Whenshewuz... biew-tee-foool... shesy-yned the lett-tah... Mmmaaww-yooors Babooshkababooshkababooshkayaya-ah..."

Diddle-dee-dum bang crash... *"Babooshka! Babooshka! Babooshka!"*

Suppressing lust, cameramen zoom in and out, caught up in the mania of the music. Official-looking geezers grip clipboards which threaten to snap in two under the ferocity of the clasp, and assorted clusters of people hover in the background solicitiously pretending not to be impressed or to notice, but still helpless to prevent jaws dropping open with neither dignity nor discretion.

Kate looks stunning. She wears scarlet trousers that flare absurdly from the thighs down, but sink their teeth into her buttocks with obscene determination. The matching T-shirt is breathtakingly skimpy and looks like it's been painted on her.

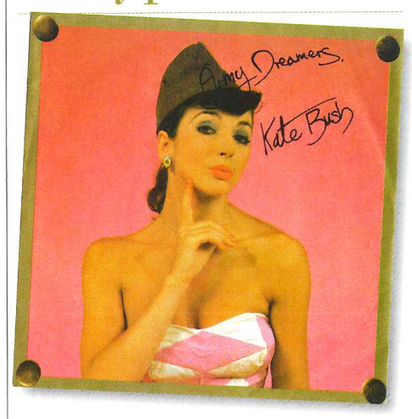
She clutches a double-bass, her body contorting around it in a transfixing demonstration of mime as Babooshka's drama of love, suspicion, trial and ultimate faithlessness unfolds. The double-bass is alternately the object of her lust and her fury; she wraps herself around it, she grinds against it, she beats the hell out of it, she wrings its neck, she claws it, she slithers down its neck, she blows in its ear. Her face pouts and spits and leers and jeers and dreams and schemes and ravishes; and all the while bottom jerks and thrusts from one end of the studio to the other. It's the most erotic thing I ever saw.

A weird month for Kate... a crucial one for EMI. The new album, *Never For Ever*, took six months to record. It was completed three months ago, but EMI decided to hold back on its release because of other major issues around the same time. The one genuine new superstar in the team, it was essential this one made a huge splash. In keeping with the Bush/EMI policy of slow, careful build-up – just like Liverpool and equally effective – a concerted plan of campaign has been prepared for its launch. A series of personal appearances, various interviews, radio station spots and thorough advertising have been arranged; and flying to Munich to mime two numbers for *RockPop* on German television is merely one more stone in a wide-reaching wall.

Kate embraces it all with a smile and a giggle. I refuse to believe anyone enjoys being the object of mass marketing, but she at least acknowledges its necessity, maintains firm control over its operation, and accepts its demands with professionalism and good grace. Various German EMI representatives are in Munich to welcome her and she greets them all with a big hug like they're favourite cousins, a brief flurry of reminiscences over the last time Kate was in Munich during her concert tour.

"Oh hello, nice to see you," she hails the *Melody Maker* expansively, as the first rehearsal concludes in a welter of satisfied nods from technicians. A bit of chit-chat, a lot of nervous giggling from all parties, and then: "Oh God, I've got to go and have a shower. I feel all sort of... you know." Somehow it's hard not to be captivated.

> "First songs I ever sang were dirty sea shanties. I'm very proud of it"



And yet there are extraordinary paradoxes about her. There can be no greater dichotomy between a public image and the art inside it. She's forever portrayed as a nice middle-class kid who can't believe her own luck. A renegade from St Trinian's, likeably naïve, tolerably favoured and just a shade flippant, gushing "amazin'" and "incredible" from poll award to poll award. Glamorous but not intimidating, the media instantly moulding her into a wrapping of sweetness, purity and light. Earmarked for a path of pop records, and television spots into the elite of artists who appear on each other's TV series; and ultimately becoming the family entertainer destined to end up in pantomimes and seaside cabaret.

I COULD NEVER EQUATE the image with the music. The most indifferent glimpse beyond the image of "Wuthering Heights" reveals a rampantly independent spirit. I mean, no sweet, flippant family entertainer ever wrote a song as sexually explicit as "Feel It". No surrogate Olivia Newton-John ever tackled a subject like incest ("The Kick Inside"). No cosseted girl-next-door would ever dare conduct a strange, exotic fantasy around a saxophone ("Saxophone Song").

The lights suddenly pick out Kate on the other side of the studio, standing perfectly still, the bass standing phallically before her, her eyes wide and manic, staring at the camera. The intro to "Babooshka", the bottom protrudes, and she's away, jumping and thrusting, and utterly living the part. A bunch of photographers have been allowed into the studio, and push and jostle each other for the best views.

As the song ends, several kids chase her for an autograph, but she's already gone, flitting away on her broomstick, or does she merely turn into a pumpkin?

Kate re-emerges, totally unrecognised, sitting alone at the side, observing, waiting for her next party-piece. She's dressed as a haggard washer-woman in dowdy clothes and headscarf.

It's a routine she's never tried before and she's been nervous about it all day. The song is "Army Dreamers", a track from *Never For Ever* and the next single, a simple but melancholy little song in which Kate appears as a weary mother reflecting on the death of her son, a soldier killed on duty.

"Should have been a rock star... But he didn't have the money for a guitar..." Three soldiers dressed in British Army camouflage uniforms appear, one carrying a mandolin, one a Tommy gun [*played by Paddy Bush and Del Palmer respectively*], another in the role of a sergeant barking orders.

"Should have been a politician... But he never had a proper education..." Kate shrivels and cringes behind the soldiers, her face crumpled and distraught. The soldiers march and prowl and stand to attention.

"Should have been a father... But he didn't even make it to his twenties..." The song is all the more striking for the pretty tune, and the genteel structure, the innocence of the lyric.

Performing "Babooshka" on German TV's *RockPop* in 1980, and left inset, as the washer-woman in "Army Dreamers"

It ends with the three soldiers cowering in a heap, Kate spreadeagled protectively above them. Purely as a piece of theatre it's brilliant. *RockPop* has never seen anything like it, that's for sure.

Kate has an enormous number of relatives in Ireland, and she's fearful of the Irish reaction to "Army Dreamers". Ireland isn't mentioned in the song, and she inserted a reference to BFPO to divert attention; but let's face it, the song's a contemporary one with its mention of rock'n'roll and there ain't too many other places a young soldier is gonna get killed in action right now.

"It's the first song I've ever written in the studio," she says, when I ask her about it. "It's not specifically about Ireland, it's just putting the case of a mother in these circumstances, how incredibly sad it is for her. How she feels she should have been able to prevent it. If she'd bought him a guitar when he asked for one.

"Have you heard Roy's new album?" she says suddenly. Er, Roy? Oh, Harper, of course. They appear on each other's albums. He gets a dedication on the sleeve of *Never For Ever*: "Special thanks to Roy Harper for holding on to the poet in his music."

No, Kate, I haven't heard the album. "You should." Adrian Boot took it, took the sleeve photograph. "Actually," says Kate, sweetly, "I didn't like the sleeve." Adrian looks hurt. "The photograph was great, I just didn't like the sleeve," she reassures him.

A flood of chatter follows. Do I know Dave & Toni Arthur/What are the Dransfields doing now/Do I like the Bothy Band? "I've a very strong folk music influence," she says. "First songs I ever sang were dirty sea shanties. I'm very proud of it, I can't think of a nicer influence. Traditional music says a great deal about the country. English folk music is a lot different from Irish folk music, not only musically, but lyrically. I mean, that song 'She Moves Thro' The Fair': it sums up the Irish spirit. It's incredible, so moving."

Certainly her fascination for traditional ballads is the key to her more lurid storylines. "The Kick Inside" was inspired by the richly colourful ballad "Lucy Wan", in which a brother murders his sister when she becomes pregnant by him (though there are numerous variations). Kate's version has the sister committing suicide.

"Babooshka" is similarly based on a song called "Sovay Sovay". I tell her I'll listen to Roy Harper's album if she'll listen to an album called *Carolanne* by Carol Pegg, that includes a similar embellishment on "Lucy Wan".

My favourite track on the album is "The Wedding List".

"Oh, really?" she says bubbling, the little kid who's been given a puppy for Christmas. "That was based on a film, a Jeanne Moreau film I once saw on the telly, when a bride's husband was killed and she sought revenge for those responsible."

She spends the next 15 minutes relating the film's plot, ending in a breathless flourish. "It was an *amazing film*. Can't remember what it was called, though." [*The film, Truffaud's tribute to Alfred Hitchcock, is called La Mariée Était En Noir, or The Bride Wore Black.*]

Films and fiction, in fact, count for a ➡

ADRIAN BOOT/URBANIMAGE.TV

Bush in 1980: "I rarely write purely personal songs from experience"

prominent chunk of her inspiration. And whatever you feel about the histrionics and the wayward vocalising, you've got to concede that in a chart overflowing with grey music and tepid lyrics, the success of a colourful number like "Babooshka", for example, has to be healthy.

She's reticent to agree... "Well, it does always amaze me how songs get in the charts that are – I won't say rubbish, because they're not – but the sort of songs that so many people could write.

"I often find myself inspired by unusual, distorted, weird subjects, as opposed to things that are straightforward. It's a reflection of me, my liking for weirdness."

They don't come any weirder than "The Infant Kiss". This, she explains patiently, was based on a film, *The Innocents*, which had itself come out of the Henry James book, *The Turn Of The Screw*. A governess goes to stay with a man to look after his two children, who are possessed by the spirits of people who lived there before.

"Some people might think it's a song about... what's the word when older women fancy little boys?" Paedophilia? "Well, it's not actually that, and it would worry me if people mixed it up with that, as that's exactly what worries her so much. I find that distortion fascinating and quite sad. And frightening. The thought of someone old and evil being inside a young and pure shell, it's freaky."

Playing at the amateur psychiatrist, I contemplate whether she writes songs from fiction out of fear about exposing too much of herself.

"Whenever I base something on a book or a film I don't take a direct copy. I don't steal it. I'll put it through my personal experiences, and in some cases it becomes a very strange mixture of complete fiction and very, very personal fears within me.

"'The Infant Kiss' had to be done on a very intimate basis, it had to be a woman singing about her own fear, because it makes her so much more vulnerable. If it had just been an observation, saying, 'She's really frightened; she's worried,' you could never really tell what she was feeling. So I put it as coming through myself.

"I'm not actually thinking of myself falling in love with the little boy, I was putting myself in her place. Feeling what I do for children – I love children – and then suddenly seeing something in their eyes you don't want to see.

"It's like when a tiny kid turns round and says to you: 'You're a bastard' or 'Fuck off': it's instinctive to feel repulsed by it. I had to put that experience into a different situation.

Otherwise I'd be writing and singing about situations I've never experienced, and in order to be convincing, you have to have a certain amount of knowledge and conviction. It's a strange mixture, I know, but I rarely write purely personal songs from experience."

Exactly.

"I have done it. On the other albums more than this one. But I often wonder how valid it is to write a song purely about oneself. I worry about being too indulgent, and there is the thing about giving too much away.

"It doesn't worry me giving it to the public because I think the public understand how personal it is, but when you write a song for an album, it's up for everyone to pull apart. 'Fullhouse' was probably quite autobiographical, you know: talking about how hard I find it to cope with all the feelings I get, from paranoia, pressure, anger, that sort of thing.

"My feelings are in there, but they're probably disguised. I've really enjoyed artists

> "I've never actually shot anyone, but in a song I can do it!"

who indulge in personal writing. People like Leonard Cohen. I admire him, but I just can't stand listening to him. At the end of the album, you feel so depressed."

I tell her about Jackson Browne, whose wife committed suicide while he was recording *The Pretender*. She's agog.

"Well, I guess when you have something so extreme happen in your life you have to write about it. That's another reason why I tend to put my personal feelings into another situation, because you can come up with so much variance. I've never actually shot anyone, but in a song I can do it, and in some ways, it's much more exciting, more symbolic."

But you really live out your roles and fantasies. Playing the mother in "Army Dreamers". "Yeah, I seem to link on to mothers rather well. As I've grown up a bit, I've become very aware of observing my own mother trying to observe me. It's fascinating. When I was a kid I never really thought about her, about how she ticks. But I can be more objective now and I find it fascinating about mothers, that there's something in there, a kind of maternal passion which is there all the time, even when they're talking about cheese sandwiches. Sometimes it can be very possessive, sometimes it's very real."

Kate doesn't know when she'll be touring again. She enjoyed her one tour, and it gave her a thrill to choke the critics who'd suggested she'd be a disaster onstage, that she couldn't sing live. But it takes six months out of a year to rehearse and prepare for a tour the way she wants to do it, and will also cost her enormous amounts of money to stage.

"Not that I mind losing money on a tour – there are so many benefits from it – as long as we don't go bankrupt. We do want to tour again, we will tour again, because there are so many things we still want to do onstage, but we'll have to think about it very carefully as it will stop me doing a lot of other things."

ON THE PLANE back to London the next day, I ask her about Peter Gabriel. They did, after all, record together on "Games Without Frontiers", and I thought I'd detected a Gabriel influence on *Never For Ever*. I ask about Peter Gabriel and she talks about Pink Floyd.

"That last album of his was fantastic, but I don't know if it was a direct influence on me. He may have opened up bits in me I hadn't thought of, but a more direct influence was *The Wall*. It got to the point when I heard it I thought there's no point in writing songs any more because they'd said it all. You know, when something really gets you, it hits your creative centre and stops you creating... and after a couple of weeks, I realised that he hadn't done *everything*, there was lots he hadn't done.

"And after that, it became an inspiration. 'Breathing' was definitely inspired by the whole vibe I got from hearing that whole album, especially the third side. There's something about Pink Floyd that's pretty atomic anyway."

We part at Heathrow, she to the next leg of the *Never For Ever* promotion. There's a day of interviews ahead; personal appearances at record shops in Glasgow, Manchester, and London; various radio station interviews and a visit to a dealers' party in Birmingham, where she will personally meet the EMI employees who'll be flogging her new album. They, in turn, cream themselves stupid and get their photographs taken with the great lady. It's only rock'n'roll, but you've gotta know how to sell it.

ADRIAN BOOT/URBANIMAGE.TV

RELEASED: **5 SEPTEMBER 1980**

NEVER FOR EVER

Exciting new worlds open up, as Bush takes greater control. Involves ravishing symphonies, war requiems and an auspicious technological arrival – the Fairlight! *by* JIM WIRTH

THERE'S A SUBTLE distinction between the world knowing your name, and the world having your number. As brilliant as "Wuthering Heights" was, the concept of 'Kate Bush: crazy macrobiotic chick next door' was one that bedded into the consciousness remarkably quickly. Ripe for schoolyard imitation almost instantaneously, her entire schtick was summed up with cruel accuracy by a spate of parodies as the Tour Of Life marked the end of phase one of her career.

Dutch comedian Tineke Schouten reinterpreted the "Wuthering Heights" dance sequence as an advert for waterproof nail varnish, a typically Marcel Marceau-ish mime move accompanied with the line: "*Take a look at me/Can you see there's something special about my hands?*"

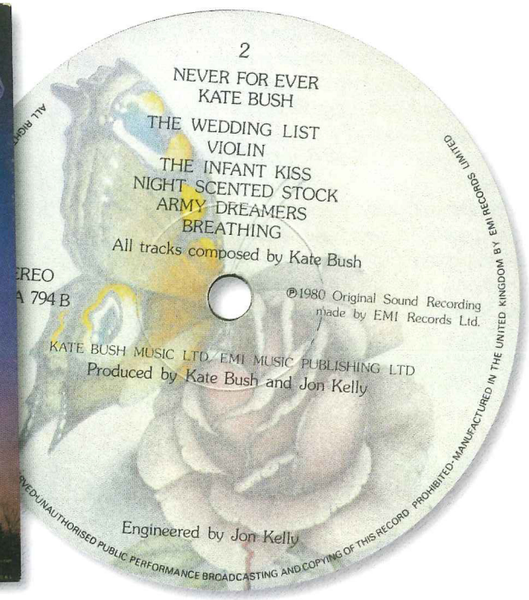
Crueller and more accurate, *Not The Nine O'Clock News*' "Oh England My Leotard" speared the combination of hippy whimsy and garish sexuality that represented Bush's early excesses, Pamela Stephenson reducing Bush's Lindsay Kemp dance routines to the basest kind of bump'n'grind. "*You buy my latest hits/Because you like my latex tits/And you're all trying hard/To get inside my, leotard, leotard, leotard.*"

Sure, it wasn't all accurate – contrary to *Not The Nine O'Clock News*' assertion, JPS girl Bush was anything but "a non-smoker" – but it was close enough for discomfort. Fully 21 when she started work on her third album, Bush was striving for a more radical makeover than a change of nail varnish.

> BUSH'S MOST SKITTISH WORK, LURCHING FROM LIGHT TO HEAVY, FLIPPANT TO PROFOUND

Never For Ever is not, perhaps, that sharp a change of direction (the real leap into the beyond comes with *The Dreaming* in 1982), but it was a breakthrough of sorts. The reluctant feminist notably broke down some industry barriers, coming up with the first album by a British female solo artist to top the UK chart, and indeed the first album by any female artist to enter the then all-important rankings at No 1. From a personal point of view, it was a greater success; as Bush told *Record Mirror* a year later, *Never For Ever* was, in terms of her albums, "the first one that I would actually hand over to people with a smile".

Tortuously multi-tracked together over an expanse of months, *Never For Ever* has a massive cast list of session musicians,



including notable newcomers John L Walters and Richard James Burgess – soon to have a big hit, "Einstein A Go-Go", with their group Landscape – who were brought in to demonstrate the power of the game-changing Fairlight sampling synthesiser, which is plastered over *Never For Ever* with varying degrees of subtlety. With Bush installed as co-producer for the first time, alongside Jon Kelly, she called the shots in a manner some of her intimates found bewildering. Musicians were rotated in a quest for the right feel, rather than technical precision, and even Bush's then boyfriend, bassist Del Palmer, found himself excluded from some tracks.

In a sense, the excitement at the new technical discovery and the huge array of options open to Bush shows. *Never For Ever* might be the most skittish of her albums, lurching giddily from light to heavy, flippant to profound, the old world to the new. The contents of Pandora's Box pouring indiscriminately out from under Bush's skirt on the dippy Donovan sleeve are a fair representation of the contents.

"A lot of people think it's hilarious that all the ideas are coming out from under my skirt. But the good and bad things pour out of me in the form of music," she told *Sounds*. "It's terrible, it comes out like diarrhoea! And it's to hint that so much of it comes from a sexual need, from inside me, though it could also be from my stomach, my side... excretions. We had to be careful with the title because of it, there was my skirt blowing about, but there couldn't be anything about 'wind' in it or that would make the whole album one big fart."

Bush felt her trump card was lead single "Breathing", narrated from the point of view of an unborn child fearful of being born in the midst of a nuclear winter. The closing track on *Never For Ever*, it sums up some of Bush's greatest strengths and worst excesses, but was certainly the track she felt most proud of.

"That's the best thing I've ever written," she told *Zig Zag*. "It's the best thing I've ever produced. I call that my little symphony, because I think every writer, whether they admit it or not, loves the idea of writing their own symphony.

"It's not from now," she added. "It's from a spirit that may exist in the future, a non-existent spiritual embryo who sees all and who's been round time and time again so they know what the world's all about. This time they don't want to come out, because they know they're not going to live. It's almost like the mother's stomach is a big window that's like a cinema screen, and they're seeing all this terrible chaos."

Performed with a brilliant mix of otherworldliness and human tenderness, it's a horribly affecting take on what was the headline issue of the age, Bush's killer opening line – "*Outside gets inside*" – superbly summing up the sense of personal space hideously exposed to the whims of infinitely bigger powers. Unfortunately, Bush daubs untidy Floyd graffiti over the closing crescendos, the combination of her "Great Gig In The Sky" wailing and the backing vocal chorus, "*What are we going to do without? ...we are all going to die without*" serving to rob "Breathing" of some of its subtle poise.

That untidy bit of Magic Markering may well, as Bush told *Sounds*, have been prompted by a visit from someone upstairs: "Someone from EMI came down and caught the '*in-out, in-out*' bit and said, 'You're not seriously thinking of releasing this, are you?' He really thought it was all pornographic!"

"Babooshka" – single number two and album opener – was a lot closer to the top shelves than "Breathing". A throwback in spirit to the original motherlode of pre-fame songs exhausted following the release of *Lionheart*, this tale of an ageing frump eager to "*test her husband*" by pretending to be a newer model with seemingly disastrous effects has a disturbingly *Daily Mail*-ish moral, and – like much of Bush's earlier work – sounds like Henry Cow reinterpreted by the BBC Light Orchestra.

Accusations of dubious taste might be cast in the direction of the manic "Violin" ("*Jigging along with the fiddle-dee-dee*" indeed), the *Pebble Mill At One* psychosis of "The Wedding List" and "Blow Away (For Bill)", the ill-measured tribute to lighting engineer Bill Duffield – killed in an accident at Poole Arts Centre during the Tour Of Life. Here, Bush takes comfort in the existence of some kind of rock'n'roll Valhalla ("*Hello Minnie [Riperton], Moony [Keith Moon], [Sid] Vicious, Buddy Holly, Sandy Denny*") but – cloying, twee – it sounds moderately hellish.

Redeemed by a strange, stately melody, "All We Ever Look For" is also weirdly lightweight, Bush contriving to stretch a truism the size of a fridge magnet about family ties into a giddy waltz, and seemingly wandering off on a whistle-stop philosophical quest halfway through. A *Raiders Of The Lost Ark*-worthy faux world music chant, meanwhile, is "Egypt"'s saving grace, Bush going a little too far to mumble the praises of somewhere she freely admitted she had never been.

Her sense of genuine adventure is more evident elsewhere. In musical terms, the flyaway "Delius (Song Of Summer)" is something else, Roland – the drum machine impishly credited for percussion on the sleeve – providing the ultra-basic backbeat for Bush's blissful refraction of Ken Russell's 1968 film about the composer in his final days, and how his amanuensis Eric Fenby managed to get his music down on to paper despite Delius being incapacitated by neurosyphilis. "All artists are thieves," Bush said of her habit of cannibalising the work of others. "You eat what you steal, digest it and it becomes a part of you." Even the interjections of her brother Paddy – playing the title role – cannot stop this being something small and beautiful of Bush's own.

Intimate in an altogether different way is "The Infant Kiss", which again was inspired by some late-night TV viewing – specifically 1961 British horror film *The Innocents*, in which Deborah Kerr is hired to be governess to two possessed, and disturbingly adult, children. "*What is this?/An infant kiss that sends my body trembling*," sings the alarmed Bush as she discovers what she explained was "a psychotic man inside this innocent child, a demon – and that's who this straight woman is feeling attracted to". With a fabulous, twisting melody line, and a vocal performance that occupies a repressed middle-ground between sighs of ecstasy and shrieks of disgust, it is an exploration of unsettling personal terrain, heralding the more extreme character studies to follow on *The Dreaming*.

The same goes for the final single taken off *Never For Ever*, even if only in the sense that "Army Dreamers" finds Bush using a 'funny' voice – an Irish accent, she would claim in all contemporary interviews, though you would be excused for thinking it was a bit more Pam Ayres. With the Fairlight sample of a gun loading acting as percussion hitched to a little mandolin twinkle melody, Bush's story of a mother dressing her dead soldier boy's grave is Bush at her most restrained, her theme of lives wasted, potential unfulfilled, delivered without rancour, save perhaps the half-irritated, half-remorseful flicker on "*Jesus Christ, he wasn't to know.*" "When it is something so heavy, if you disguise it in a light tune, it will be accepted, and then when it's actually realised it will probably hit home a lot harder," Bush noted in *ZigZag*. It is a method she has yet to deploy again with the same weapons-grade panache.

Like the best parts of *Never For Ever*, it also demonstrates a level of emotional maturity dazzling for someone who was still taking her laundry home for her mother to do most weekends, but it remains an inbetween record. *Record Mirror* reviewer Ronnie Gurr earned the lifelong opprobrium of Bush's most ardent followers for his largely negative write-up, characterising the auteur as a backdated hippy with ideas above her station. "Whereas the musical decor grows in stature with each spin, the lyrics and vocals, despite some of the laurels the girl has been granted in these spheres, are overblown," wrote the man who'd later be credited with signing the Stereophonics. "Bush's writing is quaint only for the fact that it sounds like it has surfaced from a bygone age."

He had a point. That lone reference to Sid Vicious aside, *Never For Ever* remains determinedly pre-punk; the credits include tributes to "Roy Harper for holding on to the poet in his music; Peter Gabriel for opening the windows", whereas Nick Price's artwork suggests that Bush's aesthetic was still fundamentally rooted in the Tyrannosaurus Rex whimsy and Roger Dean landscapes of her big brothers' record collections.

All of that was on the way out, though. *Never For Ever* is the sound of a skin being cautiously shed, an artist reaching the end of her larval phase and morphing into something more idiosyncratic.

"I feel there's just so much more to do that in so many ways this is like the first album again," Bush said at the time. "It's like a new beginning to grow from and that's very exciting. I hope people will like it, but it's certainly set a new stone for me to build upon."

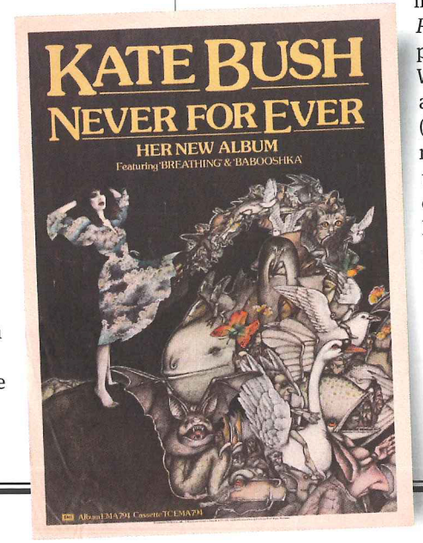
Back to that *Melody Maker* review: "Kate Bush is only 22 years old, yet she writes like a hoary old minstrel. She's a young girl and should get out more."

On *The Dreaming*, she would...

THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"For all its kitsch, its marshmallow mysticism, for all her inability to express a genuine emotional depth, Kate Bush's newest writing displays a pure, melodic gift to rival any but McCartney's."
PAUL DU NOYER, NME, 6/9/1980

"The album shows the dichotomy between fantasy and reality; the schizophrenia between the sedate, refined lady and the wild animal... Any doubts that this is not the best Bush album yet are firmly obliterated by the inspired unorthodoxy of the production..."
COLIN IRWIN, MM, 13/9/1980



KT Bush: *Melody Maker* cover session, September 1980

TRACKMARKS NEVER FOR EVER

1 Babooshka ★★★
2 Delius (Song Of Summer) ★★★★
3 Blow Away (For Bill) ★★
4 All We Ever Look For ★★★
5 Egypt ★★★
6 The Wedding List ★★★
7 Violin ★★
8 The Infant Kiss ★★★★★
9 Night Scented Stock ★★★★
10 Army Dreamers ★★★★★
11 Breathing ★★★★

Label: EMI
Produced by: Kate Bush, Jon Kelly
Recorded at: Abbey Road
Personnel: Kate Bush (piano, keys, vocals), Ian Bairnson (guitar, vocals), Brian Bath (guitar, vocals), Alan Murphy (guitar, bass), Paddy Bush (harmonica, mandolin, balalaika, vocals, sitar, koto, saw, mando), Kevin Burke (violin), Adam Sceaping (viol), Jo Sceaping (lironi), Duncan Mackay, Max Middleton, Larry Fast, Mike Moran (keys), John L Walters, Richard James Burgess (Fairlight), Del Palmer (bass, vocals), John Giblin (bass), Stuart Elliot (drums, bodhran), Preston Heyman (drums, vocals), Morris Pert, Roland (perc), Gary Hurst, Andrew Bryant, Roy Harper (vocals)
Highest chart position: UK 1; US n/a

"My music sophisticated? I'd rather you said that, than turd-like!"

Charming as ever, Kate Bush explains the genesis of *The Dreaming* to *NME*'s RICHARD COOK. Now, though, this "old-fashioned person" is beginning to show some polite exasperation with her treatment: how people don't see how she's changing; how promotion gets in the way of making art; how "the media just promoted me as a female body". Don't worry: she wants to do some shows next...

Still dreaming... Kate Bush in November 1982

BELLA PAUL/GAMMA/GAMMA/CAMERA PRESS

TAKEN FROM NME 23/10/1982

"I DON'T THINK I am eccentric as a person. When I get older, I might be. Maybe my music is a little eccentric sometimes. People can react as seriously as they want to. I'd like them to sit there with the lyrics in front of them and the record turned up really loud, giving themselves to it. A lot of people will listen to it, and a certain percentage will take time and effort to get into it."

Kate Bush is a small woman with a huge, protective smile. She has an even and unhurried style of conversation, but it is hard to get her to speak what might really be on her mind.

We bubbled along for 20 minutes until I took up the subject of her earliest incarnation, ruthlessly enshrined in the erotic trivia of *The Kick Inside* – no offence intended, ma'am – and a familiar block shutters her expression. She retreats into the rockspeak of albums and songs and images and progression without regret. Well, it's only *NME*. They've never carried a torch for me.

"I think I've always seen myself as someone who writes songs that go on an album. If there are any singles among them, then they can be chosen for that. But apart from 'Wuthering Heights', I was always an album-orientated artist. Even if my singles are more remembered."

You have no regard for those instantaneous qualities of the single? A rocket going up brilliantly for a moment?

"Each album is like a rocket. I build it up as much as I can, and see how high it goes. I'm never aware of any commercial value. I never sit down to write a single. Whenever I write, I'm challenging myself in some area. Everyone who creates something considers themself an artist in some way, don't they?"

I wonder whether you really want to do music – whether you'd rather do poetry or theatre or dance or...

"I'm doing that, as well, really, aren't I? Maybe it's wrong to see me as a pop personality. You're going to keep changing – 'Wuthering Heights' was a story with music and dancing, but I've changed so much since then. The things that the media most remember about me are those things. Some people see that I am changing, but... oh, not as many as the people who hang onto those singles. But I am beginning to be seen as an albums artist."

What's an albums artist?

"It's not being a pop personality or whatever it was you called me. I'm not interested in making singles. Maybe I will make some 'singles' one day..."

The Dreaming is an ornate, billowing record. Its songs are peculiarly ambitious: their grand design all but drives out the spirit of lowly pop music. The ghosts of famous men pace their dark corridors; great tunnels of sound emulate mighty and multi-levelled conceptions. Songs are sung in a multitude of voices, like a chattering, half-heard spirit-world. Bush's operatic entreaties are finally matched to music of a similar size and shape. At any one moment, *everything is going on*.

It's already a huge success. Despite the failure of the title song in single form – there are surely no singles on the record – Bush has found that her admirers have not gone away. I suggest to her some of the things it seems to be about, like the struggle between public and private faces, and the ability to disappear inside a recording; she is scarcely drawn. Not suspicious – simply not interested in the ambiguity and anatomy of music so intensely organised. Kate Bush is a dedicated artist.

Is she there?

"Primitive? I'm not sure about that word... Perhaps. There are traditional roots in it. Basic forms of music."

I think it's extremely sophisticated.

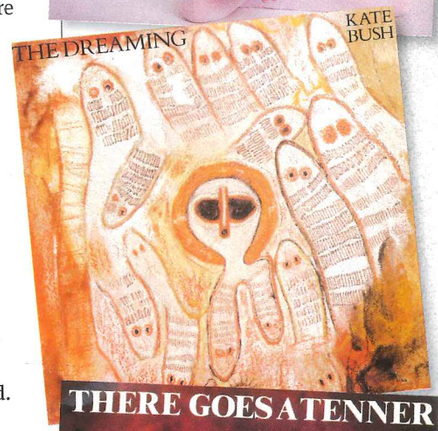
"Do you? Sophisticated? Well, I'd rather you say that, than turd-like.

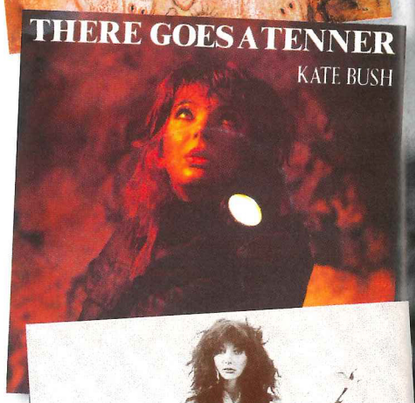
"I could explain some of it, if you want me to: 'Suspended In Gaffa' is reasonably autobiographical, which most of my songs aren't. It's about seeing something that you want – on any level – and not being able to get that thing unless you work hard and in the right way towards it. When I do that, I become aware of so many obstacles, and then I want the thing without the work. And then when you achieve it, you enter... a different level – everything will slightly change. It's like going into a time warp, which otherwise wouldn't have existed.

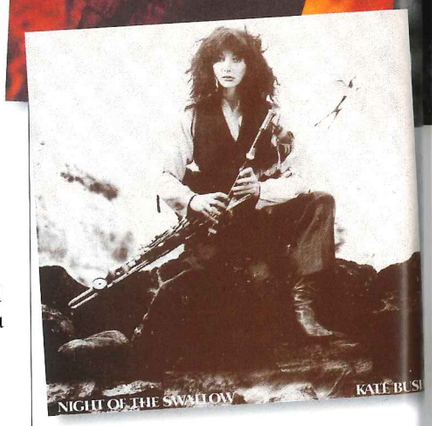
"Oh, yes, quite a few people have surmised that from listening to the song. But when you explain it like this, it doesn't sound like anything. The idea is much more valuable within the song than it is in my telling you about it. When you analyse it, it seems silly.

"'Leave It Open' is the idea of human beings being like cups – like receptive vessels. We open and shut ourselves at different times. It's very easy to let your ego go 'nag nag nag' when you should shut it. Or when you're very narrow-minded and you should be open. Finally, you should be able to control your levels of receptivity to a productive end.

"*The Dreaming* is very different from my first two records. Each time I do an LP, it feels like the last one was years and years before. The essence of what I'm playing has been there from the start; it's just that the expression has been changing. What I'm doing now is what I was trying to do four years ago. If I do a show, it will only be music from the last two albums.







"I wish I had a five-year plan, but I never plan too far ahead. I get into trouble because I always take longer to do things than I expect. That's why I knew I had to wait for another two albums' worth of material before doing another show.

"There are so many females that don't fit in any category at all. There're a lot of people that would love to pin them in those categories. When an image is created around a person – especially a female – there are so many presumptions thrown in. There are a lot of female artists who are stereotypes, and who neatly fall into those niches people talk about, but there's a lot who don't. When you mention traditional females, it sounds as though they have nothing within them – epitomes of a situation. Any singer is a human being working inside and letting all kinds of different energies come out.

"The labelling that comes with the creation of an image is always a disadvantage. When someone has done something very artistic, it won't be let out when they've been packaged. When a female is attractive – whether she emphasises it or not – she's automatically projected with sexual connotations. I don't think that happens so readily with me.

"When I started, it seemed that a lot of singers were singing as if they weren't even related to the lyrics. They'd sing about heartbreak, and keep a big smile on their faces. For me, the singer is the expression of the song. An image should be created for each song, or at least each record; the personality that goes with that particular music. But I don't think that will ever be seen by the majority of people who look at the pictures and see the so-called images come out.

"When I was first happening, the only other female on the level I was being promoted at, was Blondie. We were both being promoted on the basis of being female bodies as well as singers. I wasn't looked at as being a female singer-songwriter. People weren't even generally aware that I wrote my own songs or played the piano until maybe a year or so after that. The media just promoted me as a female body. It's like I've had to prove that I'm an artist inside a female body. The idea of the body as a vehicle is... just one of those things. But I'm someone who talks about music and songs.

"You gauge by feedback as to whether your voice inside is right. It says, 'Do this', and you have to see what other people say about it. The barrier against self-indulgence has to come from within yourself. You have to *see* other people's criticism to be able to do anything about it. You can get a different answer to a problem from everyone you know."

> "I have to create time to write now... I don't stop working"

Do you try too hard for mystery?

"I don't sit down and try to express mystery. I worry that I try too hard to create spontaneity. I can be singing a song of a calm person who suddenly becomes aggressive, and I try and reflect that vocally. Different ideas come across in different accents."

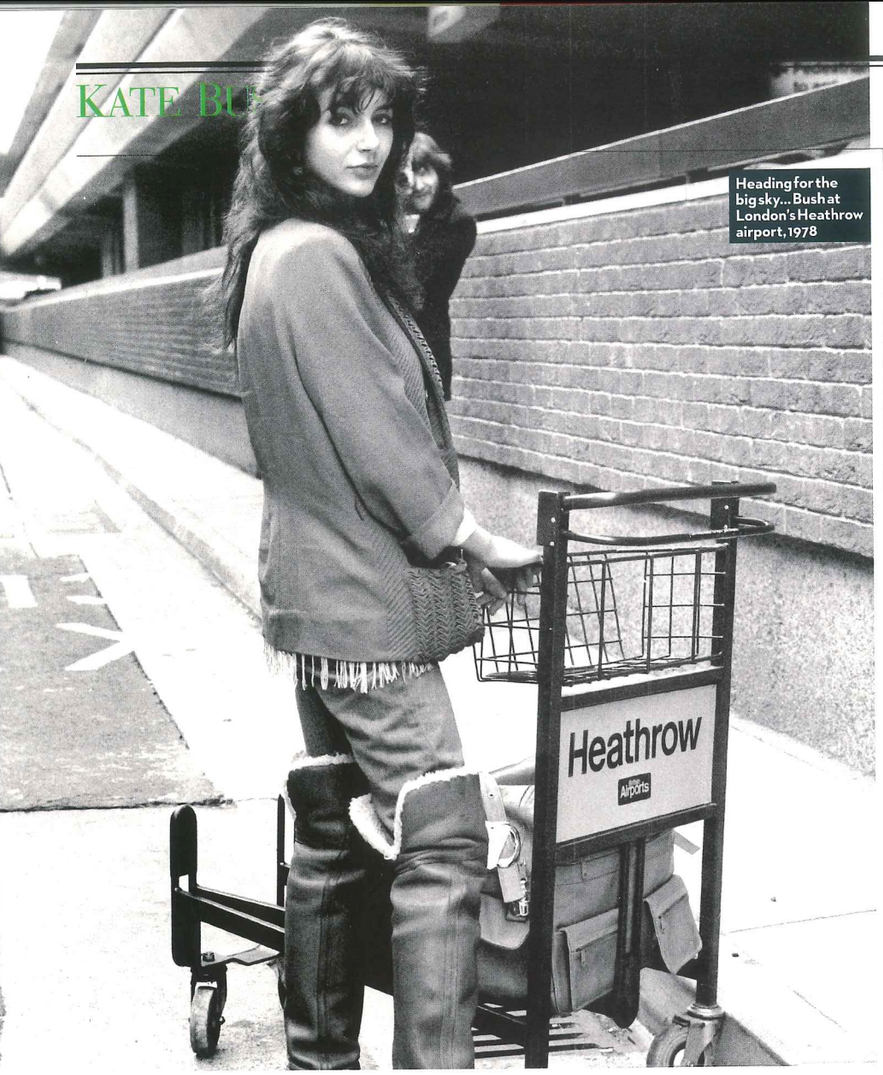
Is it worth playing a "message" song like "Breathing" in a medium which normally trivialises anything of issue status?

"There was a point in people's lives when the imminent prospect of war was scaring the shit out of them, and that resulted in a lot of anti-war songs. At that time, it was worthwhile. When I wrote 'Breathing', it seemed like people were sitting waiting for a nuclear bomb to go off. Nuclear power seemed like... Someone was getting set to blow us up without our consent. I felt I wanted to write a song about it.

"If it was something that was bothering ➡

Bush at EMI, Manchester Square, London, 1980

BRIAN RASIC/GETTY IMAGES



Heading for the big sky... Bush at London's Heathrow airport, 1978

PAUL FIEVEZ/ASSOCIATED NEWSPAPERS/REX

so many people, then, yes, I think it was worthwhile. Songs or films or little individuals don't do anything on a big level. Big things need bigger things to change them.

"There're loads of things I think about writing songs about which are too negative. There wouldn't be any point. They'd be too destructive and negative. And there are things which are too personal. I get loads of ideas that don't make me go, 'Ugh!', so I don't write about them.

"If I hear something I like, and I wish that my work could be like that because it sounds better, then it does influence me. Everything I like and respect, I suppose I move towards. It's hard to be specific when we don't know what pop music is. 'Pop' is just short for popular – it could even be popular classical music.

"But I realise how lucky I am. I realised, making *The Dreaming*, when I was able to get Eberhard Weber to play on one track, that I was so lucky because people you like and respect will want to work with you.

"Recovering from a brilliant start...? Recovering is quite a good word. Since it all started for me, it hasn't stopped. I'd no idea what was going to happen. I've no regrets in starting that way, in getting through so quickly – because you have to keep fighting anyway, and it made things quicker, not easier. If I hadn't got the encouragement I did... I don't know. I might not have had so much faith, really. Less confidence in getting involved. But it gets *harder*. Each time you do something you have all the knowledge and mistakes behind you, so you know more: you have more to think about.

> "It would worry me if I thought my art was being untruthful"

"I have to create time to write now. I don't stop working. I haven't really stopped since I began. If this album hadn't sold well, I'd still carry on in this direction. If I made a record which I didn't much like and it sold well, I'd still want to change the direction. When you're making an expression of yourself, you have to be happy with it. To do it and keep getting better – that's so hard.

"I travelled constantly for the first two years of my career. Much of it was incredibly sheltered, in that I only saw hotels, TV studios and aeroplanes. The few times that I've travelled on a social level have brought me minimal knowledge, really, about other places. I think I've learned more from the people than from the places.

"When I was about six, my parents took me and my brother to Australia. We stayed there a couple of months, and I'm sure a lot of stimulus came through. I suppose it's a very receptive age, isn't it?

"I suppose I'd count myself an old-fashioned person. I like to think I'm open-minded, but when it comes down to basic codes, I am old-fashioned. Everyone has vices. I have vices, but I don't think I've got any... glaring ones – is that what they're called?

"It would really worry me if I thought my art was being untruthful. Being true to something is the closest way to express things. But then in another way, the whole thing is untruthful – I'm being someone I'm not; I'm writing about situations I'll probably never be in. Behind it there has to be sincerity. Insincerity doesn't ring right; it has a nasty taste.

"The worst thing? The pressures, I suppose. They come in from so many different levels – from so many people – that they feel destructive towards me as a human being. Although it happens very rarely. And I have so little time to do things I want to."

Are you ever worried that you are absent from your art?

"Oh, no. I am expressing myself, but it's also something else – it's something that's coming through me. My intentions are to put across situations that aren't that close to me, but which are more interesting.

"It scares me that I work too hard. I can be so tired and involved in work that I'm not living on another level. It's a reality of the situation. I have to do things I don't want to, so that I can do what I want the rest of the time. It's that I don't seem to have time to myself.

"I want to do a show next. It'll take at least six months to prepare, because there'll be so many levels to it. The musical challenge will be the hardest I've set myself..."

A lot of people would like to see you sitting at a piano and singing a set of your songs.

"Not nearly as many. It would be too easy, as if I couldn't be bothered to prepare a proper show. It wouldn't do anything for the blend of movement and music. That is what I really want to do. Music and movement together in a modern sense. People like it that you're not taking the easy way out."

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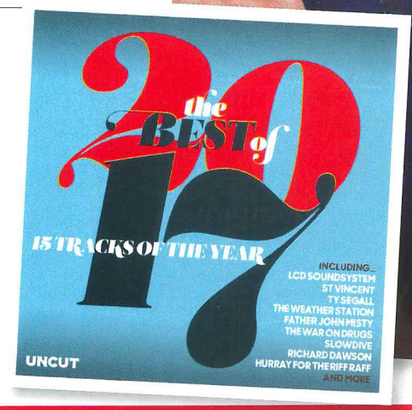

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RELEASED: **13 SEPTEMBER 1982**

THE DREAMING

Donkeys and didgeridoos. Celtic ballads and ethno-pop.
Heady experimentation and creative freedom.
A commercial flop – and a first masterpiece.
by ROB HUGHES

THE RECORD COMPANY, EMI, must have been rubbing their hands come the autumn of 1980. *Never For Ever* had given Bush her first No 1, the only time a British female solo artist had topped the UK album charts, and was busy going gold. Throngs of fans lined the streets when she did promo at record shops (the queue outside London's Virgin Megastore ran over 100 yards down Oxford St. It was a record, her bosses assumed, that finally marked the transition from precocious young talent to major pop star.

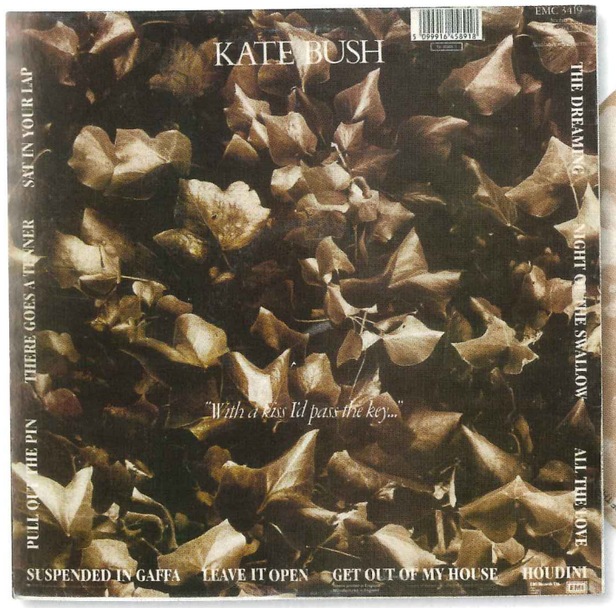
Not that she was remotely drawn to the middle ground. Instead, she'd already set her sights on a far more radical follow-up. "*The Dreaming* was my 'she's gone mad' album," Bush declared later. "I wanted to take control of everything and go for it." Taking control meant dispensing with the services of a producer for the first time and doing the job herself. Crucially, it was the beginning of Kate Bush the autonomous artist, directing operations by her own clock, assiduously poring over the details, roping in a horde of musicians and engineers to help realise the torrent of sounds in her head.

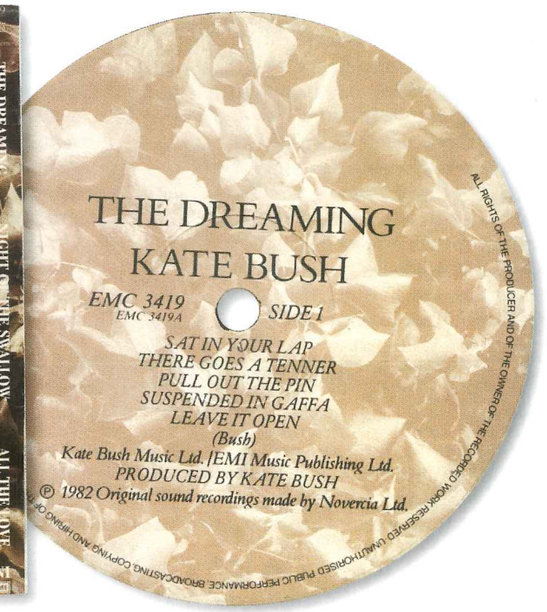
It was a quest for studio perfectionism that ate up time and money, to the extent that it took the best part of two years.

> THE PROCESS MAY HAVE BEEN EXHAUSTING, BUT *THE DREAMING* OFFERED BUSH A WINDOW TO THE FUTURE

Bush had barely paused for breath after finishing *Never For Ever*. By August 1980, still a month shy of the album's official release date, she was busily sketching ideas for *The Dreaming*. The first demo to arrive, inspired by Stevie Wonder, was "Sat In Your Lap", cut immediately after Bush had seen him at Wembley Arena. Driven by a brutal groove that bordered on the tribal, and released as a single in June 1981, the song introduced the key motifs of *The Dreaming* itself: hard rhythms, dense layers and liberal use of the Fairlight CMI synthesiser. The Fairlight had fast become Bush's favourite new toy. She started tinkering with it on *Never For Ever* – now it was as ubiquitous as her piano, offering an endless stream of sampling possibilities that spilled into her imagination.

"Sat In Your Lap" was engineered by Hugh Padgham at Townhouse Studios, where he'd previously worked with Bush during the making of Peter Gabriel's third album. What really struck her, she recalled later, was the gated drum sound that Padgham had conjured for Gabriel,





lending his rhythms a powerful slug. It was a physicality that Bush craved for her own record. And one that found a mirror in *The Dreaming*'s vocals, which swung from tender intonations to declamatory shrieks and howls. She envisioned the lead on "Sat In Your Lap", for instance, as "being sung from high on a hill on a windy day. The fool on the hill, the king of the castle."

The single peaked at No 11 in the UK charts, her highest placing since "Babooshka" the previous year, helped along by a typically Bush-like video which found her rollerskating in a dunce hat and being borne aloft by a Minotaur. By then she was ensconced in Abbey Road with Haydn Bendall (her third engineer after stints with Padgham and his assistant Nick Launay), working on backing tracks for the album.

It's hard to decipher an overriding theme to *The Dreaming*. On the surface, it's a series of unconnected narratives, a troubled fantasia of bungled heists ("There Goes A Tenner"), the destruction of Aboriginal land ("The Dreaming"), jungle warfare ("Pull Out The Pin") and people-smugglers on moonlit missions across Europe ("Night Of The Swallow"). These tales offer Bush the chance to immerse herself in a multitude of characters, the album teeming with different voices and sly affectations. But what seems to unite them all is a heightened sense of impending peril, the implication being that the thrill of the unknown is worth pursuing, no matter what the outcome.

It's something that finds a more personal echo in the less story-driven songs. Both "Sat In Your Lap" and the lovely "Suspended In Gaffa" address the notion that great art can only come about through hard sacrifice, hard graft and a fair bit of anxiety. The former attempts to pin down a creative muse – "*I've been doing it for years/My goal is moving near/It says, 'Look, I'm over here'/Then it up and disappears*" – while the latter suggests that the road to enlightenment, only ever glimpsed fleetingly, is a tough and arduous slog without any easy reassurances.

"Leave It Open" is delivered in a series of creepy, Fairlight-treated voices, its chorus equally unsettling: "*Harm is in us but power to arm.*" The basic message is shut up, think more. Factor in the desperation of "Get Out Of My House" (a discourse on retreating from human contact, written after reading Stephen King's *The Shining*) and *The Dreaming* paints a less-than-rosy worldview. "It was about how terribly cruel people could be, what we do to ourselves, what amount of loneliness we expose ourselves to," she told Germany's *Fachblatt Musikmagazin* in 1985. "It was a searching, questioning album and the music did tear you from one point to the next."

What resonates most is the sheer breadth of ambition. The album is woven in vivid textures and embroidered with rich detail, dominated by piano, Fairlight and the subtle inflections of chief bassist (and Bush's then partner) Del Palmer. It was, by some accounts, a trying time for various members of the session team, their patience stretched by countless retakes and layer upon layer of overdubs. Even Bush admitted that she sometimes became so entangled in the finer points that she lost sight of where she was heading.

Nevertheless, the results – part art-rock, part prog, pinches of classical and world music – suggest it was worth the labour.

"Night Of The Swallow" finds her indulging a long-standing passion for Irish music. Bush felt the song needed a ceilidh band for the choruses and intro. She duly packed herself off to Dublin and enlisted several names from Planxty (a longtime favourite since being introduced to their music by her eldest brother, John) and The Chieftains' fiddle player Seán Keane. Bill Whelan's arrangement for pipes and strings is just sublime. Guided by the gentle swoop of Bush's voice, the song disappears into a beautifully restrained Celtic reel.

Another favourite from her past was "Sun Arise", by Rolf Harris. *The Dreaming*'s title track, which detailed the exploitation of native Aboriginal turf by corporate bad boys, now provided an ideal opportunity to fulfil another wish. Harris, then still genially perceived as the nation's favourite Antipodean uncle, was brought in to add the didgeridoo that anchors the song to the earth. By way of introduction, he placed it next to Bush's ear and began to play. "I've never experienced a sound quite like it before," she remarked, adding with a flourish: "It was like a swarm of tiny velvet bees."

"The Dreaming" is almost cinematic, rumbling along to a tribal beat deep enough to shake the soil. Bush's brother Paddy ramps up the tension with the insistent rhythm of a bullroarer, while Kate affects a sneery Australian tone as the diggers move in: "*Erase the race that claim the place/And say we dig for ore/Or dangle devils in a bottle/And push them from the pull of the bush.*" It's a tactile piece of work flooded with imagery and colour, accentuated by the addition of wildlife mimic Percy Edwards, who does his best impressions of sheep, magpies and the odd dingo. And just in case there still wasn't enough going on, Bush opted to sample the sound of slamming doors and smashed marble.

The filmic theme runs throughout. In the case of "Pull Out The Pin", Bush even recalled sitting in front of the speakers in the studio, trying to envisage a Vietnamese forest, "humid and pulsating with life", the song starting in wide shot before closing in on a soldier tracking his American quarry. It's a curiously balletic tale of fetid warfare – replete with insect chatter, chopper blades and backing vocals from David Gilmour – that fades out with some *Scary Monsters*-ish guitar ambience (Bush briefly considered Tony Visconti for the producer's role on *The Dreaming*).

"Houdini" was inspired by the great magician's relationship with his wife, who would often be in on his elaborate escapes. Her great trick was to make melodrama of a parting kiss before he was bound up in a tank or box, surreptitiously passing Houdini a padlock key that had been concealed between her lips. Bush found the image almost unbearably romantic, to the extent that she concocted a story from both of their vantage points and re-enacted the key exchange on the album cover, with Palmer as Houdini. It's a gorgeous song, the string arrangement of Dave Lawson and Andrew Powell adding a dashing sweep of pre-war charm.

Anyone still hoping that *The Dreaming* might be *Never For Ever* Pt II, meanwhile, will have been shattered by its closing tune, "Get Out Of My House". It's easily the most paranoid moment here, its protagonist stalked by forces both unseen and sinister, despite being bolted in an empty mansion. Drums thump, voices wail. One of the last noises on the album is Bush's fearful approximation of a braying mule.

Donkeys and didgeridoos. Celtic ballads and ethno-pop. *The Dreaming* signalled the arrival of a new Kate Bush: rapturous, unbound, highly experimental. It's an album piled high, maybe overly high, with abstracts and inventions, as if she just couldn't bear to edit herself too rigorously. As such it sometimes teeters under its own weight. Ultimately though, it's richly rewarding and expressive, often exhilaratingly so.

There's no doubt that it's very much a product of the '80s, with the accent on synths, gated drums and Fairlight technology. Yet, like all the best records, it manages to transcend its own time. *The Dreaming* is a deep and curious album, intricate and endlessly mysterious, with an almost classical bearing. It is, in fact, Bush's first masterpiece.

Unfortunately, the paying punters didn't think so. Initial sales were encouraging, hoisting the album into the Top 3 of the charts, but it soon lost momentum. *The Dreaming* eventually shifted around 60,000 copies, a pale comparison next to her previous figures. It remains her lowest-selling album to date. Even an exhaustive round of promo and press couldn't nudge up the numbers.

"Sat In Your Lap" aside, the singles did badly too. "The Dreaming" crept just inside the Top 50; "There Goes A Tenner", for the first time in Bush's career, missed the charts completely.

EMI didn't like it, either. There were even rumours of them being so disgruntled that they considered rejecting the album. "The main thing I heard was 'uncommercial'", an indignant Bush told Radio 1's *Saturday Live* a year or so later. "The label that the press, the record company, put on it.

But for an uncommercial record to go straight in at No 3 in the charts seems ironic to me."

Reviewers, while complimentary, were mostly puzzled by her new direction. Future Pet Shop Boy Neil Tennant, then writing for *Smash Hits*, summed up the common consensus: "Very weird. She's obviously trying to become less commercial." A rare note of perspicacity was struck by *Melody Maker*'s Colin Irwin, who called the album "mind-boggling" and urged listeners to treat it with "patience and admiration". At the same time, however, he was realistic enough to predict that *The Dreaming* would likely be "an overwhelming flop".

If EMI were concerned about the trade-off between commercial pop star and serious artist, Bush was far less so. The process may have exhausted her to the point where she couldn't write again for four or five months, but *The Dreaming* offered her a window into the future. All she needed to do was take time off, get away from London and build her own studio out in the countryside. There she could fully engage in the kind of blue-sky creativity that she really thirsted for, regardless of hours or expense. It would be a full three years before she re-emerged.

THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"Always an artist of extremes, Bush has allowed her highly theatrical imagination to run riot, indulging all her musical fantasies, following her rampant instincts, and layering this LP with an astonishing array of shrieks and shudders."
COLIN IRWIN, MM, 11/9/1982

"Much as I'd like to drag her up from the depth of MediOcRity and say she's found the candyfloss and bubblegum appeal of once sadly boring acts like Dollar, I'm afraid to say she's missed the boat..."
LEYLA SANAI, NME, 11/9/1982

THE DREAMING IS WOVEN IN VIVID TEXTURES AND EMBROIDERED WITH RICH DETAIL

Signature sound: Bush signs a copy of *The Dreaming* at London's Virgin Megastore, September 14, 1982

TRACKMARKS THE DREAMING

1 Sat In Your Lap ★★★★★
2 There Goes A Tenner ★★★
3 Pull Out The Pin ★★★★
4 Suspended In Gaffa ★★★★★
5 Leave It Open ★★★★
6 The Dreaming ★★★★★
7 Night Of The Swallow ★★★★★
8 All The Love ★★★★
9 Houdini ★★★★
10 Get Out Of My House ★★★★

Label: EMI
Produced by: Kate Bush
Recorded at: Advision, Odyssey, Abbey Road and Townhouse studios
Personnel: Kate Bush (vocals, piano, strings, arranger, keyboards, Fairlight synthesiser), Brian Bath (electric guitar), Del Palmer, Jimmy Bain (bass), Preston Heyman, Stuart Elliott (drums), Dave Lawson (synclavier, synths), Danny Thompson (string bass), David Gilmour (backing vocals), Paddy Bush (strings, mandolin), Rolf Harris (didgeridoo), Percy Edwards (animal noises), Liam O'Flynn (penny whistle, Uilleann pipes), Seán Keane (fiddle), and various others...
Highest chart position: UK 3; US 157

"I have very strange dreams..." Kate Bush, 1985

"All I ever do is listen to the little voices inside me."

A studio of her own. An inspirational new dance teacher. An interest in archery. And a revelatory album called *Hounds Of Love*... These are the things that have been keeping Kate Bush busy, she tells *TED MICO*, as the real life and her dream world – where Keith Moon frequently comes round to tea – collapse into one another. That'll be a migraine, then...

Melody Maker
CLASH TO PLAY VICIOUS BENEFIT
Lizzy is the land of Oz
TAKEN FROM MELODY MAKER 24/08/1985

"Deeper meaning resides in the fairy tales told to me in my childhood than in the truth that is taught by life." – Schiller

JUST LIKE THE phoenix, really. Once every two years, she rises out of the ashes to once more bestow a touch of mysticism, a hint of myth, and a copious supply of inspired vision upon the burned-out landscape we call the charts.

She smiles. We shake hands. She's too polite to be a phoenix. Perhaps a Fairy Queen? Tommy [*photographer Tom Sheehan*] and I introduce ourselves at the doorway of her dance studio. "Yes, Tom," she beams, "you're looking better than the last time I saw you." Young Thomas looks flushed. They've only met once before – three years ago, briefly. Perhaps she does remember? "Oh yes, and I've met you before, as well," she smiles.

I explain this is not the case. I'm damn sure *I'd* remember. But she's adamant.

"Perhaps it was in another life," cries a whimsical voice from the room behind.

"Yes," she stares at me, considering the matter thoroughly. "It must have been in another life."

Bush in '85: the Lady Lucan of pop is back

OH DEARIE ME. She is serious. She is incredibly cordial. She is unbelievably beautiful. Over the past two years, the name Kate Bush has once more receded to the back of the common consciousness, joining the smouldering ember of the Buzzcocks, et al – set for the scrapyard. Yet once more she has confounded the rumour-mongers who had already pronounced her the Lady Lucan of pop, missing presumed dead. Once more she has created an album to besot and bewitch the coldest of hearts. Once more she has come out of her isolated refuge with the charm of a siren, and the innocence of a child. Ms Bush is incapable of growing old, she has merely grown up.

But what, you ask, has sister Kate been doing during this hiatus, this self-imposed exile? As usual, Kate explains much, but reveals precious little, slamming the doors of privacy with a single coy look.

"After the last album, I had to promote it, and that took me to the end of '82, so it hasn't really been that long. My life is quite extreme really; I go from a very isolated working situation, to going out and promoting my work and being very much a public creature. After you've been through months of that kind of over-exposure, you're left feeling a bit shellshocked. I needed to have some time off and go somewhere quite different to write this new album. I didn't want to produce it in the wake of *The Dreaming*."

A wise move. Music vogues move with such alacrity, that two years off can finish a career. In fact, such a time-span is the beginning and end of most groups' lifespans!

"I didn't bother thinking about that sort of thing. I spent the time seeing films, seeing friends, building my own studio, and doing things I hadn't had a chance to do for ages."

Things? You couldn't elaborate on what these strange, wondrous things would be. Trout fishing? Hang-gliding? Hamster hunting?

"I found an inspirational new dance teacher," Kate replies with growing enthusiasm. "The teacher's energy made me really enthusiastic about writing again."

And once again the conversation turns back to the studio. Kate talks about her beloved studio a great deal – a great deal more than she's willing to chat about herself. She really doesn't have any hobbies, mainly because they wouldn't be beneficial to her work – the subject around which her entire universe evolves. The one exception is an avid interest in archery. And even this she has turned toward work, with the cover shot of the new single, believing it to be symbolic of Cupid's bow – an image which ties the threads of the single together. And so, naturally, we turn to Kate's new album, *Hounds Of Love*, and the current success of the new single. Another new departure? Another rebirth? Another quest for new pastures?

"Yes, I wanted something new, and to begin with, it was extremely difficult. All the songs I seemed to write sounded too much like the last album. I've never seen any point in repeating things you've already done before. I think it's dangerous not to search for new ways of approaching songs. Too many people sit and think, 'It'll just come to me', instead of getting off their arses and going for it."

Kate, of course, is far too polite to name names. "If you get out and go for things, then those things will come to you. It's too easy to wait and expect things just to come to you."

A certain Mrs M Thatcher said similar words, but this time they ring with verity. Must be her smile. Kate's new studio, hidden away in the overgrown wilds of Kent, enables her to exorcise the ghosts of *The Dreaming* without sending EMI executives into prolonged thromboses over the expense of the operation.

"The pressure of knowing the astronomical amount studio time costs used to make me nervous about being too creative. You can't experiment forever, and I work very slowly. I feel a lot more relaxed emotionally now I have my own place to work and a home to go to."

Sitting on floor cushions, drinking cups of tea, I can't help thinking if things got any more relaxed, they'd be sound asleep. Speak more of the new material, Kate. Speak words of love...

"This time, I wrote a lot of songs and chose the best to put on the A-side of the album. I like to think there's not a song there that's padding. Sometimes people get the impression if you take a long time over something you're literally going over the same piece again and again, and instead of making it better, you're making it worse. I hate to think I've ever done that."

This striving for perfection might well be caused by fears about disappointing her audience or her pet cats. The longer the wait, the greater the expectation. "There are always so many voices telling me what to do, you can't listen to them. All I ever do is listen to the little voices inside. I don't want to disappoint the little voices that have been so good to me."

Of course not. The finely tuned songs that made the final selection on the album differ greatly from the diversions of previous albums. They are all love songs (sigh) using elemental imagery that form a cogent and cohesive panoply of emotion. A search and struggle to secure some sort of meaning. The discovery that although you can strip away everything from a person, there will always be a residue of love awaiting resurrection. Sounds mawkish, doesn't it? Jane Austen would have loved it. All those over-expressive vocals and delicate orchestrations channelled into such pathos. Sounds risible, doesn't it?

YET THE SONGS' style and eloquence rise above bathos through their haunting overtones. Phantasmagorical voices tilt the rose-coloured world off its trite axis with jagged eerie phrases. Outside observations are slanted metaphors revealing states of mind. No longer are we presented with the eclectic collage of *The Dreaming*, whose continual shifts and spirals allowed an escape with diversity. No longer is the entire story of Houdini crammed into three minutes, until a new fable takes up the torch. Now the texture is more subtle, the production more adroit, and the mesmerism unrelenting.

"The last album contained a lot of different energies. It did take people to lots of different places very quickly, and people found that difficult to take. This LP has more of a positive energy. It's a great deal more optimistic.

"I rather think of the album as two separate sides." How *astute*. "The A-side is really called 'Hounds Of Love', and the B-side is called 'The Ninth Wave'. The B-side is a story, and that took a lot more work – it couldn't be longer than half an hour, and it had to flow. This time when you get to the end of one track, what happens after it is very affected by what's come before. It's really difficult to work out the dynamics within seven tracks. The concept took a long time."

Whoops! There goes that word again. Concept – a word mauled by the memory of Floyd, flares, baked lentils and boredom. It took time to extract my nails from the ceiling and climb back down to earth. It took even longer to summon up the courage to ask what this concept might entail. Kate looks upset that I'm not jumping up and down with ecstasy.

"It's about someone who comes off a ship and they've been in the water all night by themselves, and it's about that person re-evaluating their life from a point which they've never been to before. It's about waking up from things and being reborn – going through something and coming out the other side very different."

Sounds suspiciously like "The Ancient Mariner" revisited...

"Oh no! It's completely different. It ends really positively – as things always should, if you have control."

And Kate certainly has that. From the writing, recording, performing, production of her tunes to the choreography on the accompanying video. As usual, the visual imagery is gleaned from a wide variety of sources: from the films of Godard, Herzog and Coppola, to [Peter Reich's] *A Book Of Dreams*, yet their accretion with Kate's own personal fears and desires is shrouded in mystery.

"There are many films that you don't think much of at the time, but weeks afterwards you get flashbacks of images. Sometimes films like *Don't Look Now* and *Kagemusha* have really haunted me. You don't necessarily steal images from films, but they are very potent and take you somewhere else – somewhere impossible to get to without that spark."

> "People think my songs are strange? Perhaps because I bathe in goat's milk!"

At this moment it is difficult to see how such a placid, genteel and downright normal musician could ever produce songs like "Get Out Of My House". Perhaps some strange transformation takes place when she is asleep?

"Yes, I have very strange dreams. Over the years I've collected the most incredible star cast. Very famous people come and visit me."

Curiouser and curiouser...

"Peter O'Toole came round to dinner last week and my mum met him and thought he was wonderful. Keith Moon often comes round for tea. I have a lot of vivid dreams, most of which I can't mention. The images I get from them sometimes bleed into songs."

Most of Kate's heroes like Oscar Wilde, the Pythons, Roxy Music, Billie Holiday and Hitchcock have all visited her, but her mum didn't like Hitchcock – maybe she was just frightened by him?

"Hitchcock was definitely a genius. His dreams must have been extraordinary. He must have plucked his ideas out of the sky, or had a private line to Mars."

Slowly, very slowly, we're edging closer to the point were the musician and her music bisect. "I think some people use music as a means of expressing what they feel about things which they can't express socially. I don't really know why people think my songs are strange. Perhaps because I bathe in goat's milk! It's not something you should ask me. My mom could help you more. It's probably something to do with my childhood."

I met Kate's mum in one of her dreams last Tuesday, but she didn't tell me much, either. The door slams shut again. Perhaps a choice of character from the scrolls of history might reveal more. "I would want to be Breughel, definitely." Things are starting to come into focus. Only a fool would have predicted Florence Nightingale – and Kate is nobody's fool. "His work is so real, and yet depicted in a fantastic way. It's so beautiful and elemental. And his faces are so haunting."

Much like the tunes of *Hounds Of Love*, in fact. Reality moved, divorced by one level through exotic fantasy, whose voice has the tender yet unnerving force of a nursery rhyme. "My most striking visions of reality always seem to come to me when I'm in such a strange situation, I feel 'this isn't real'. It's very simple. Simplicity is a thing few people dare to go for. They think it's too easy. In fact, it's the hardest thing to do. I like the hypnotic quality of nursery rhyme repetition. A lot of traditional music has that as a basis – that something tumbling, rolling and droning throughout. It's very primeval, getting back to when we were creatures of the earth rather than cement."

Things seemed to be going well – very well, until quite suddenly, just as Kate was recounting her favourite fairytales, she comes over all unnecessary. Lights flash, Kate wilts, and her world starts to spin in the opposite direction to everyone else's. "I'm terribly sorry, but I keep feeling worse and worse, and I don't know whether I can talk properly any more."

Her companion calls it overwork, the doctor calls it a severe migraine. We call it a day.

"I don't know what's come over me," she says – embarrassed. We shake hands. She smiles. "I'm sure we'll see each other again very soon."

Yes Kate, I sure hope we will. Probably in another life. We exited, floating through the nearest wall.

REX/BRENDAN BEIRNE

RELEASED: 16 SEPTEMBER 1985

HOUNDS OF LOVE

In rural seclusion, at a leisurely pace, a landmark album takes shape… *"I just know that something good is gonna happen!"*

by PIERS MARTIN

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO Kate Bush? Not a question fans expected to be asking halfway through 1985, and one that, by then, almost three years after the release of *The Dreaming*, must have provoked much hair-pulling from exasperated EMI executives. Already concerned that their cherished diva had lost her way with *The Dreaming* following four solid years of astonishing artistic and financial growth, the record label had agreed to let Bush once again produce her next album herself, on her own terms and in her own time.

So what on earth was taking so long? And, more to the point, now that the world of pop had been shaken up by Madonna, whose streetwise sneer made Bush's wide-eyed theatricality appear quaintly anachronistic, would anyone still care about this eccentric English girl?

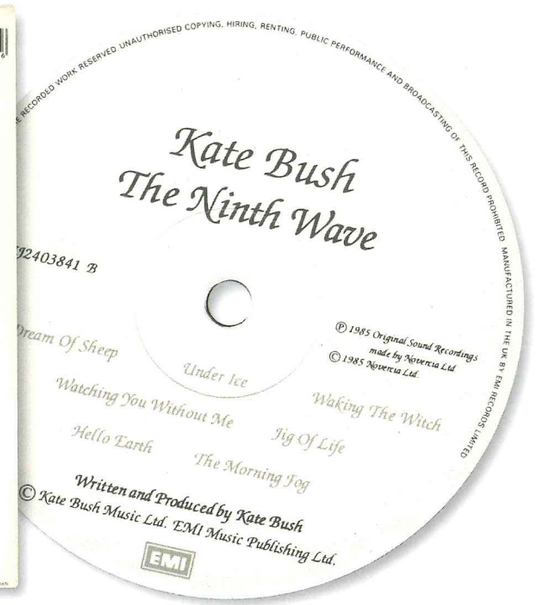
Bush, for one, was sure of herself and stood by *The Dreaming*, but the public's cool reaction to it perhaps made her think twice about the direction her new album might take. "For the first time I felt I was actually meeting resistance artistically," she told the BBC. "I felt the album had done very well to reach No 3, but I felt under a lot of pressure and I wanted to stay as close to my work as possible."

Retaining complete control was one thing, but a more fundamental change, a lifestyle shift, was needed for Bush to make any serious creative headway. Having promoted *The Dreaming* up to the end of 1982, in early '83 she and partner Del Palmer moved out of London into a 17th-Century farmhouse they'd bought in the Kent countryside, in the well-heeled commuter belt near Sevenoaks. Here, surrounded by fields, Bush was back in her element, tending her garden and growing vegetables, and taking up dance again.

> SHE COULD HAVE COVERED "THE BIRDIE SONG" AND THIS ALBUM WOULD STILL HAVE BEEN NO 1

That summer, with help from her father, she oversaw the construction of a 48-track studio in an old barn at the Bush family home at Wickham Farm in nearby Welling, where Kate had grown up. London life had begun to stifle Bush. In the studio, towards the end of *The Dreaming*, she'd found the smoky atmosphere oppressive and the routine bordering on tedious.

The recording costs were stacking up, too, and she realised she didn't want to be in a position in the future where she couldn't



indulge her whims because the meter was ticking away. In Kent, she could take as long as she liked in conditions conducive to creativity. "The pressure of knowing the astronomical amount studio time cost used to make me really nervous about being too creative," she explained to *Melody Maker*. "You can't experiment forever, and I work very, very slowly. I feel a lot more relaxed emotionally now that I have my own place to work and a home to go to."

Inspired by nature – here Bush could gaze out the window and observe clouds and fields, not people or buildings – and driven by a new energy derived from a few months spent attuning herself to the rural rhythm of the countryside, the songs that would form *Hounds Of Love* came easily, in particular its lead singles "Running Up That Hill", written one summer evening, and "Hounds Of Love". At home in her music room, relaxed in her own environment, she'd compose on piano and Fairlight while Palmer programmed patterns on a LinnDrum. They'd record direct to eight-track and then later transfer these songs to the studio in the barn for further development. In this way, by the time proper production on the album commenced at the barn in November '83, a good deal of the material was already at a fairly advanced stage. As Graeme Thomson notes in his Bush biography *Under The Ivy*, rather than used as a reference for a re-recording of a new version, Bush's original home-studio tracks tended to be the versions that were worked on and fleshed out in the studio by the small team of engineers – Palmer, Paul Hardiman, James Guthrie and Haydn Bendall – and musician friends, including bassist Youth.

In terms of bold ambition, *Hounds Of Love* is no less extravagant than its predecessor, but an altogether more commercial affair. Bush knew it had to be, and manages to achieve this without compromise, partly by focusing on the rhythmic quality of tracks like "Running Up That Hill" and "The Big Sky", the gated martial chug arranged by Palmer able to mesmerise even the casual admirer. "As a bass-player Del has a natural understanding of rhythms and he could get the patterns that I could hear in my head, so it's through him that we started off with the rhythmic basis that was then built upon and was very much what I wanted," Bush told Capital Radio's Tony Myatt two months after the album's release. "The development of rhythm in my music is perhaps one of the things that makes it obviously more available to people."

She divided the album into two distinct sides, "Hounds Of Love" and the seven-song conceptual suite "The Ninth Wave". The first half is loaded with five sensual and highly original pop songs, four of which were released as singles, that, lyrically, explored aspects of romantic and familial love and, musically, ravished the listener with sumptuous melody and a modern synthesised sound. More so than her other albums, *Hounds Of Love* feels of its time, its glamorous *Dynasty*-style cover shot of Bush in repose wrapped in purple chiffon perhaps alluding to Madonna's yuppie anthem "Material Girl" – although, considering Bush's detachment from the industry, possibly not – and its richly textured synthpop chiming, superficially at least, with the mid-'80s vogue for melodramatic MTV ballads and heroically coiffed barnets.

Bush even admitted to Myatt that "Running Up That Hill" was "a bit of a cliché at the moment" because it dealt with "the power of love", referring to recent hits by Jennifer Rush and Huey Lewis And The News, but in every other respect this track bore all the hallmarks of the producer's unorthodox approach. Originally titled "A Deal With God" – to her regret, EMI persuaded Bush to rename it on the grounds that many countries wouldn't give it airplay – in the song Bush imagines two lovers asking God to swap their roles so they can better understand each other. Built on a loop of a proto-techno drum pattern that's smothered in drone and digital chatter, Bush heightens the tension with stabs of Fairlight-filtered melody, layering voice, guitar and synthesiser as the release comes in waves of lush cacophony. Even for Bush it's an extraordinary song, and became her biggest UK hit since "Wuthering Heights", reaching No 3 in August '85 following her performance of it on *Wogan*. It also gave Bush her breakthrough in the US, after seven years of not really trying, hitting the *Billboard* Top 30.

As the first side progresses, the natural world gradually takes centre stage. On "Hounds Of Love" she conjures a galloping rhythm track to suggest the heart's impulsive pursuit of its quarry; that love, when it finds you, will rip you to pieces and there's nothing you can do about it. The *"It's in the trees, it's coming!"* sample at the start is taken from one of Bush's favourite vintage horror films, *Night Of The Demon*, from 1957. For "The Big Sky", Bush celebrates the great outdoors with childlike glee, gushing with delight at the shape of clouds, like a *Play School* presenter: *"That cloud looks like Ireland!... This cloud says, 'Noah, c'mon and build me an ark!'"* A deceptively complex track, the band produced three versions until they got it right, settling for one of those celebratory studio hoedowns often found on Talking Heads and Eurythmics records.

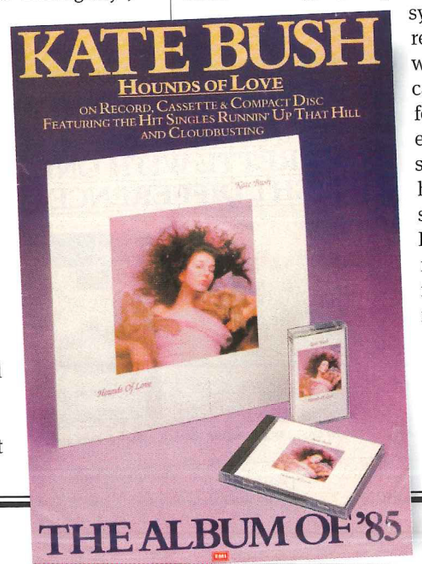
Ushered in by the sound of shattering glass and a queerly pitched Fairlight riff, and underpinned by an arching bass line by Youth, Bush sings the eerie lullaby "Mother Stands For Comfort" from the perspective of the mother of a murderer who's prepared to protect her son at all costs, even though she's being used by him; a sentiment shared with Hitchcock's *Psycho*. "The personality that sings this track is very unfeeling in a way. And the cold qualities of synths and machines were appropriate here," Bush said, adding, "A good sound is worth a lot, artistically."

In contrast, "Cloudbusting" explores the innocence and wonder of a son's relationship with his father. In this case, however, the father is the radical 20th-Century Austrian psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich, whose pioneering discovery of orgone energy led to his controversial work being banned in the US and to his incarceration and eventual death in jail. In order to combat "stagnant" orgone in the atmosphere, Reich developed a "cloudbusting" machine that would absorb orgone when pointed at clouds, in theory inducing precipitation. Bush came across his son Peter Reich's affectionate 1973 memoir *A Book Of Dreams* and was moved by the passages where Reich would go cloudbusting with his father, all of which she distilled into *Hounds Of Love*'s giddiest song, with its euphoric chorus of *"Ooh I just know that something good is gonna happen"*. Stranger still, Bush managed to convince Donald Sutherland to star as Reich Senior in the video for "Cloudbusting" while she played

THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"Here she's learned you can have control without sacrificing passion and it's the heavyweight rhythm department aided and abetted by some overly fussy arrangements that get the better of her. And a pox on the concept album."
COLIN IRWIN, MM, 21/9/1985

"Complex music it may well be, but Kate Bush will always have an ace card up her sleeve in that she consistently manages to make her records erotic, however depressing the lyrical content. The Bush voice drips with sex..."
JANE SOLANAS, NME, 21/9/1985



Bush in '85: queen of dream-pop

his son. Terry Gilliam devised the ornate cloudbusting contraption in the video. When Leeds ravers Utah Saints sampled the song for their 1991 hit "Something Good", Bush claimed she was "flattered" by the lift.

Bush had always envisioned *Hounds Of Love*'s second side, "The Ninth Wave", as a film, so when she staged her Before The Dawn concerts in August 2014, she performed the entire suite. On record, Bush's imagery here is so potent, her music so vividly evocative, that it creates for the listener a multi-dimensional sensory world encompassing Arthurian legend, Georgian folksong and Celtic mystery with ghoulish delight, offering a new definition of "dream-pop". This phantasmagoric narrative unfolds over seven quite audacious pieces structured to tell the traumatic tale of a woman washed overboard who, having been trapped under ice and suspected of being a witch, is rescued from a watery grave, and ends as a love letter to the planet and humanity. After the intentionally upbeat and comparatively conventional A-side, "The Ninth Wave" – its title taken from Tennyson's "The Holy Grail", its subject matter a recurring scenario in Bush's dreams – allows Bush to mix her more avant-garde notions of sound design with the pop form to fully realise her concept.

> KATE BUSH'S REPUTATION AS A VISIONARY POP STAR HAD BEEN RESTORED

Making the most of her Fairlight and the studio's 48 tracks but cleverly cloaking any excess in the final recordings, Bush used everything from her mother, her brothers, Robbie Coltrane, traditional Irish musicians and the sound of Pink Floyd's helicopter in *The Wall* to achieve her desired effect. That she manages to cram so much into these seven songs and still carves out such a compelling narrative without testing the patience of the listener says much about her skills as a producer.

"I never was so pleased to finish anything in my life," she told the BBC. "There were times I never thought it would be finished. It was just such a lot of work, all of it was so much work, you know, the lyrics, trying to piece the thing together."

Even more impressive, remember, is that this was Bush's comeback album, and she was shrewd enough to smuggle "The Ninth Wave" into the public consciousness on the back of "Running Up That Hill"'s popularity. Frankly, though, she could have covered "The Birdie Song" on Side Two and *Hounds Of Love* would still have entered the charts at No 1, such was the record's irresistible momentum. The album may have only temporarily knocked Madonna's *Like A Virgin* off the top spot, but Kate Bush's reputation as a visionary pop star had been restored.

TRACKMARKS HOUNDS OF LOVE

1 Running Up That Hill (A Deal With God) ★★★★★
2 Hounds Of Love ★★★★★
3 The Big Sky ★★★★
4 Mother Stands For Comfort ★★★★
5 Cloudbusting ★★★★

The Ninth Wave
6 And Dream Of Sheep ★★★
7 Under Ice ★★★★
8 Waking The Witch ★★★★
9 Watching You Without Me ★★★★
10 Jig Of Life ★★★★
11 Hello Earth ★★★★
12 The Morning Fog ★★★

Label: EMI
Produced by: Kate Bush
Recorded at: Wickham Farm home studio, Welling
Personnel includes: Kate Bush (vocals, piano, Fairlight CMI), Alan Murphy (guitar), Charlie Morgan (drums), Stuart Elliott (drums), Del Palmer (bass, backing vocals, programming), Paddy Bush (violin, balalaika), Youth (bass), Brian Tench (engineer), Bill Somerville-Large (engineer), Haydn Bendall (engineer), James Guthrie (engineer), Nigel Walker (engineer), Paul Hardimann (engineer)
Highest chart position: UK 1; US 33

"People shouldn't be fooled by the mystical hippy stuff. This girl is very, very tough."

Under the ivy of Wickham Farm, a masterpiece takes shape. With the help of Kate Bush's closest collaborators, GRAEME THOMSON takes a phantasmagorical trip into suburbia to learn the untold story of *Hounds Of Love*. How did Bush escape the "air of doom" and win back her confused fans without betraying her own stubborn muse? "When she got into the studio she was like a Yogi. She was completely lost to the world."

Kate reflects, New York, November 31, 1985

©NEAL PRESTON

"IT'S IN THE trees. It's coming!" The trail that leads eventually to *Hounds Of Love* began in late 1980. Then, Kate Bush found herself with a choice: whether to stick to the creative template that had rewarded her with Top 10 singles and hit albums, or to indulge her more experimental impulses. Her decision – to follow her latter instincts – would have consequences that impacted far along her career.

In May, 1981, Bush entered London's Townhouse Studios to start work on her fourth album, *The Dreaming*. She was, at that time, Britain's most popular female artist – her first album, 1978's *The Kick Inside*, had sold over a million copies on the back of her No 1 debut single, "Wuthering Heights". The follow-up, *Lionheart*, had been a rushed and somewhat unresolved act of consolidation, but the sonically inventive *Never For Ever*, released in 1980, marked another huge leap forwards. It not only made Bush the first British female solo artist ever to have a No 1 album in the UK charts, but it also gave her another memorable hit single in "Babooshka".

One of EMI's most profitable and prestigious acts, Bush accrued greater power each step of the way. By the time of *The Dreaming*, she was ready to produce herself, using a series of engineers on hand to help shape her ideas. And she had a lot of ideas. While dropping into sessions for Peter Gabriel's third album to sing on "Games Without Frontiers", Bush had been inspired by the record's gated drum sound pioneered at Townhouse Studios; at the same time she'd become infatuated with the Fairlight CMI, a synthesiser that enabled musicians to sample sounds and play them back, either direct from the keyboard or by programming a sequence of notes. It was a glimpse of the future, one of the first stirrings of the nascent digital age.

On *The Dreaming*, Bush envisaged combining these twin elements, applying a wide, wild palette of sounds to a foundation of hard rhythm. She abandoned the standard band-in-a-room approach and instead embarked on something more layered and opaque. She mic'ed up 12-foot long strips of corrugated iron to evoke the sound of cannons, or fed guitars through banks of harmonisers and reverb plates, sending the notes leaping up in octaves.

Hugh Padgham, the producer credited with creating the gated drum sound, engineered the album's early stages. "I couldn't bear it after a bit, actually," he says. "She didn't really have any idea of the sonics and didn't understand why, if you put 150 layers of things all together, you couldn't hear all of them. She didn't really want to listen. As far as I was concerned, when we were doing the sessions it sounded shit. It pissed me off."

But Nick Launay, fresh from recording PiL's *The Flowers Of Romance*, proved a better fit. He was only 20, and Bush was still just 22. "It really was like the kids are in control," he says. "No rules. The way she would communicate was very much like an excited kid: 'How do we make those characters and the feelings they have into music? Can we do this, can we do that?' It was absolutely great, but it got very confusing at times. I don't think she had any realisation of how complex her songs were – to her, they were very simple."

Living at the time in Eltham, south-east London, Bush felt an "air of doom" hanging over the city, and during the final *Dreaming* sessions with engineer Paul Hardiman the mood duly darkened. She had been troubled by the murder of John Lennon and a sense of paranoia wormed its way into "Leave It Open" (*"My door was never locked, until one day a trigger came – cocking"*) and "Get Out Of My House", a disturbing account of physical and psychological violation that doubled as a commentary on the invasive nature of fame. Stretching into 1982, the last two months of the sessions coincided with the Falklands War, and she emerged at ungodly hours to be greeted with increasingly grim news. Del Palmer, her longterm boyfriend, bass player and budding engineer, likened coming up from the windowless basement studio to surfacing from a submarine.

"Hounds Of Love is beyond an album – it's an opera"
JOHN LYDON

The studio became an inclement place to work, a hostile micro-climate of smoke, chocolate, Chinese takeaways and far too little sleep. Towards the end "she was exhausted," says Hardiman, who describes the final push as "hours of crippling tedium with occasional bursts of extreme excitement".

Together, they created a character called 'My Dad', which involved donning a ginger wig and a pair of polystyrene cups with the bottoms removed which, when fitted over the wig, helped delineate the sound. "In times of ear fatigue these helped hugely," says Hardiman, adding, "I am not making this up. They added focus."

With Del Palmer at the launch for *Hounds Of Love*, the Planetarium, London, 1985

BRENDAN BEIRNE /REX FEATURES; DAVIS FACTOR

THE ALBUM BUSH delivered to EMI in the summer of 1982 was a brilliant, baffling act of secession from the pop mainstream. There was no "Babooshka", no "Wow", nothing which offered a foothold in terms of commercial accessibility. The title track – the second single released from the album – featured Rolf Harris on didgeridoo and animal impersonator Percy Edwards pretending to be a sheep, while the album ended with Bush simulating a braying donkey.

"It got to the point of the nearest album we ever returned to the artist," says Brian Southall, the former head of artist development at the label. "There is a clause in all contracts that gives the record company the right to refuse, return, or object. From talks I had, that was the closest EMI got to returning an LP in my time. The trouble was, you couldn't go back to Kate and say, 'There's no three-minute pop single on here.' She'd say, 'I know, I didn't write one!' It wasn't part of her make-up to start with, but there was a danger of her falling off the radar."

Despite frequently being caricatured as an airy-fairy ingénue, Bush's business savvy and artistic intransigence was already legendary. Backed by robust self-belief – and a tight-knit cabal of family, accountants and lawyers – she was highly adept at getting her own way. "She ain't daft," says Southall. "People shouldn't be fooled by the mystical hippy stuff, this girl is very, very tough."

As far back as 1977, EMI had wanted "James And The Cold Gun" rather than "Wuthering Heights" to be her first single. "She didn't agree and nailed me to the floor," recalls former EMI MD Bob Mercer, the man who signed Bush to the label. When "Wuthering Heights" became an unlikely No 1, her resolve seemed like a stroke of genius, and bought her a freedom and a power she relished. "To be honest, I pretty much lay down after that," admits Mercer. "I realised what kind of artist I was dealing with and that my role here was to keep out of the way and not knock over the scenery. The attitude at EMI was always 'Whatever you want.' [*We*] let her march to her own beat."

Performing "There Goes A Tenner" on *Razzmatazz* in 1981

REX/SHUTTERSTOCK; GEORGE SCOTT

For the first time, EMI's largesse was put to the test. A single, "Sat In Your Lap", was released in June 1981, that would eventually appear on *The Dreaming*. With its multi-tracked choir of medieval Kates and thunder-clap electronic drums, it more than hinted at a contrary new direction. Arriving in September 1982, *The Dreaming* shifted only 60,000 copies, despite reaching No 3 in the charts; as a single, the title track limped to No 48 while the follow-up, "There Goes A Tenner", disappeared completely. Bush's career had never been about simple number-crunching, but these poor sales figures drew concern from the label. Bob Mercer had left EMI by 1980, and although new boss David Munns was another ally of Bush's, she later recalled that "for the first time I felt I was actually meeting resistance artistically".

If Bush was disappointed at public reaction to *The Dreaming*, she remained stubbornly sure of its merits, declaring it her favourite album, the first occasion where she'd come close to hearing her ambitions reflected back at her. Typically unyielding, she successfully resisted pressure from EMI to bring in an outside producer for the next LP – but she was aware that after *The Dreaming* she needed to deliver something not only artistically satisfying, but commercially viable.

BUSH'S FIRST INTENTION was to fill her life with a blast of clean, fresh air. In 1983 she and Del Palmer moved out of London into a 17th-Century farmhouse in the Kent countryside near Sevenoaks. "She bought the cottage, and suddenly you'd ring up and she'd be gardening," recalls Brian Southall. She spent the summer outdoors, stocking up on fresh fruit and vegetables, returned to regular dance instruction for the first time in years, and generally found inspiration in simple, natural things. "The stimulus of the countryside is fantastic," she said at the time. "I sit at my piano and watch skies moving and trees blowing and that's far more exciting than buildings and roads and millions of people."

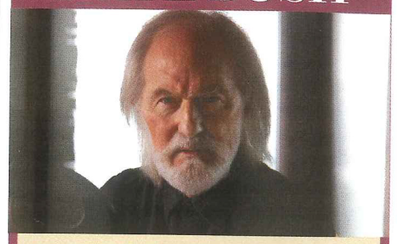
Rejuvenated by these changes, between the summer and autumn of 1983 she began working on new songs. Using piano, Fairlight and a Linn drum program, Bush and Palmer started recording at home straight to eight-track. These were not traditional demos, early scratchings to be referenced but ultimately discarded in favour of re-recorded versions. Instead, they were kept and built upon.

The first song to arrive was "Running Up That Hill", composed in a single summer evening in her music room, looking over the valley below. Originally called "A Deal With God", it spoke of Bush's impossible wish to *"swap places"* with her lover so each could understand what the other felt and desired. It had a wider artistic significance. Bush relished singing and performing in character and has always resisted being defined by her background, her looks and her gender. Craving a 360-degree perspective, "Running Up That Hill" was an affirmation of her desire to cover all possible angles of available experience.

Built from the rhythm up, it provided a thrilling way in to the new record. The track's most instantly recognisable components – the searing Fairlight riff, the rumbling electronic drums – were present from the very beginning. Paul Hardiman, who, alongside Palmer and Haydn Bendall, was again one of three principal engineers, first heard the song in October 1983 during an early meeting to discuss the new album.

"It wasn't a demo, it was a working start, and we carried on working on the original," he recalls. "Del had programmed the Linn drum part, the basis of which we kept. We spent time working on the Fairlight hook, but the idea was there, as was the wind-train sound and her guide vocal. It was obvious to me that Kate had finally found a groove. We worked a lot on the Fairlight ➡

WHY I LOVE KATE BUSH



ROY HARPER
(Backing vocals, 1980 single "Breathing")

"KATE understands not only the difficulties involved in writing songs, but also in presenting them in the way she wants them to be heard. She's dedicated to trying to recreate the original inspiration for the song in as faithful a way as possible. I know that she works on things until they're pretty near perfection, and she has such an amazing facility as a musician that her starting point is in advance of most people's finished work.

"I think that Kate is more of a realist than perhaps her work and reputation would at first indicate. She certainly isn't airy-fairy or some high-flown intellect. She has the intellect of a very intelligent writer.

"She leaves things in songs unsaid in a beautiful and meaningful way. You are left to discover the story and to imagine your own in it. I think that kind of subtlety endears her to people who appreciate what she does. There are whole stretches of [2005 *album*] *Aerial* like that, and songs like 'Cloudbusting' and 'The Man With The Child In His Eyes' epitomise that.

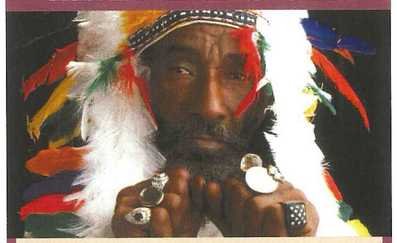
"Kate's songs have a strong visual element to them, and often the entertainment is to see both the candour and the twist in the visual narrative. She's a supremely generous person, and one of the greats of our time. Every man wants to be that *'man with the child in his eyes'*. I think a lot of us would be disappointed to know that it wasn't us."

INTERVIEW: NICK HASTED

part which, incredibly, reminded me of the synth line in 'Atmosphere Strut' by Cloud One. I was very happy to push the groove."

Official recording began on November 4, with the transfer of the rough 8-track recordings onto two 24-track masters. There was no shortage of quality material. "And Dream Of Sheep", "Under Ice", "Watching You Without Me" and "Hounds Of Love" had come quickly, the latter a definitive expression of one of Bush's recurring lyrical themes: the terror of being trapped by love. Portraying passion as a prowling beast with the singer its quivering quarry, Bush wanted the music to animate the lyrics. The rhythm track pounded like a heart in the throes of panic-stricken ecstasy, the scything strings added a manic element to the chase, and after three minutes of enthralling will-she-won't-she came the climax: *"I need la-la-la-la-la love!"*

WHY I LOVE KATE BUSH



LEE 'SCRATCH' PERRY

"I WAS LIVING IN England in the early 1980s when I started listening to her music. I think it was a girlfriend in Stanmore, Middlesex who first played me Kate Bush records. You could tell her music is coming from a pure place. Like an angel, she can be scary at first, but, like an angel, her voice is comforting. The music breathes, gently. It is calming. I no longer smoke weed, but you don't need to if you have Kate Bush. Her music is all the high you need.

"When I was curating the Meltdown Festival in 2002, I was asked what artists I'd like to perform. The first name on my list was Kate Bush. She politely said no because she wasn't touring. I don't think she ever plays live. But she remains one of my favourite singers of all time. And I'd love to work with her some time.

"The music industry is full of devils. But Kate Bush is the only angel left. Music must have a pure heart. It must have madness, it must have genius. That is why I love Kate Bush."

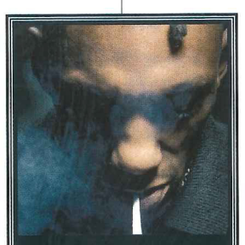
INTERVIEW: JOHN LEWIS

GEORGE SCOTT; TIMOTHY SACCENTI

Composition, clearly, wasn't going to be a problem. Despite the yawning gaps between albums, even today Bush often writes quickly and prolifically. Capturing the nuances of texture and mood, however, is more time-consuming. For the first time, she was fully in control on *Hounds Of Love*, having installed a 48-track studio in a barn at Wickham Farm, the 350-year-old farmhouse in Welling where she was raised and where her parents still lived. Protected from London's south-easterly sprawl by dense greenery and a high fence, the studio was a world apart, a place where Bush could create according to her natural rhythms rather than the exaggerated pace of the record industry.

"We had lovely times," says Haydn Bendall. "You walked through the garden into the kitchen: all the family's business and conversations took place around this huge kitchen table. [*Her brother*] Paddy was always around, and the two dogs were there, Bonnie and Clyde, the hounds of love on the album's cover. There were pigeons and doves all over the place, her dad smoking his pipe and her mum making sandwiches. It was idyllic."

As a child she had often retreated to the mouse-riddled barn, making her earliest musical forays on a dilapidated pump organ stored there. Later, she had installed a makeshift eight-track studio, demoing much of *Lionheart* there with her pre-fame pub combo, The KT Bush Band. Completed in the autumn of 1983, the new studio was an altogether more professional environment. The recording booth might once have been a stable, but now the place was crammed with hi-spec equipment. She was very much at home surrounded by technology, according to Bendall: "She'd come up with lots of suggestions like, 'Maybe we should compress that, maybe we should expand that, maybe we should gate that or put a pre-delay on the reverb.' And she had an incredible audio memory. She would remember a take that she did on a vocal where one particular word was great, or that on track 13 there was this great sound."



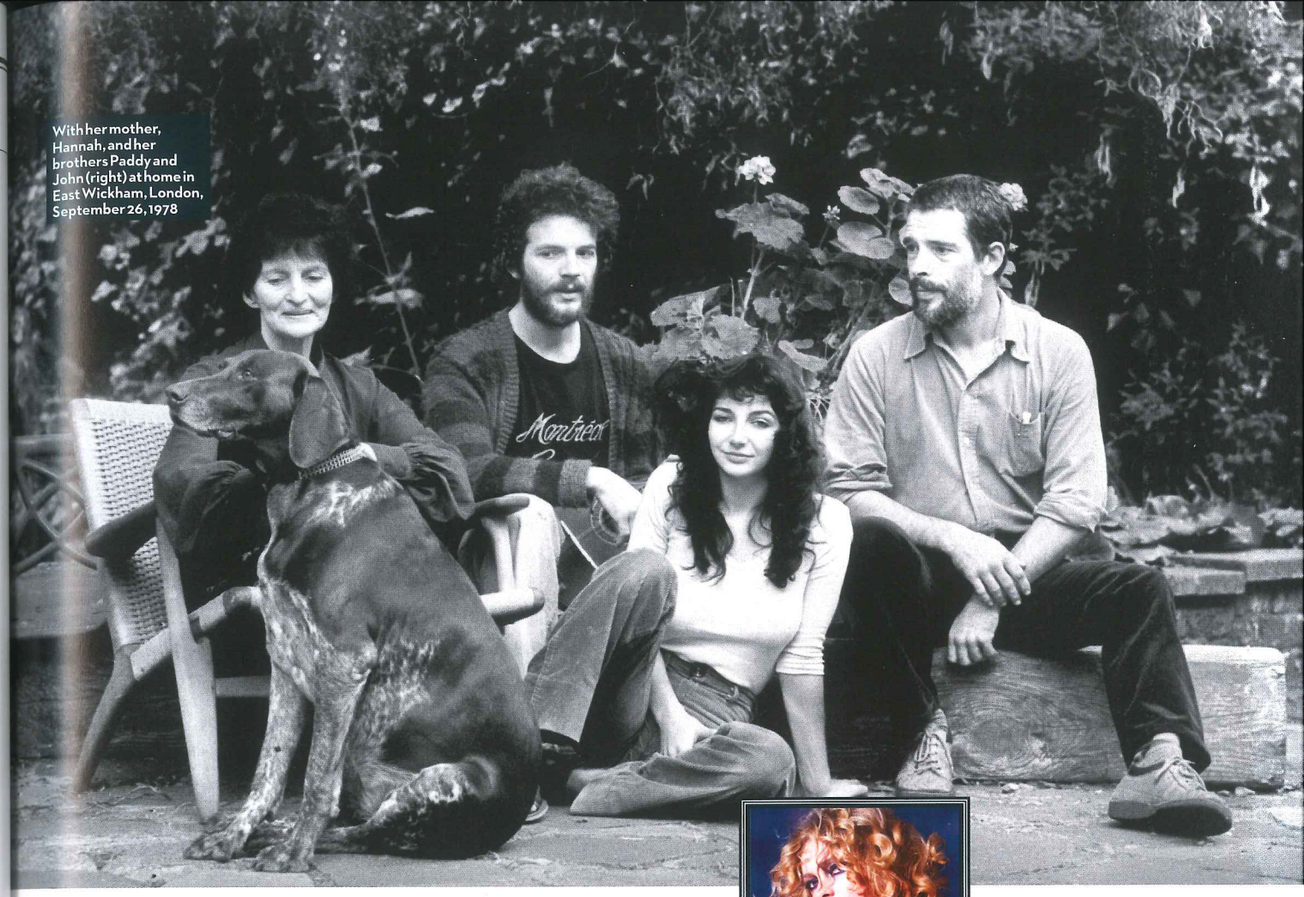
"Hounds Of Love is my bible. Her music sounds religious to me. She should be treasured more in this country than The Beatles..."
TRICKY

THERE WAS AN elemental force roaring through Bush's new music. If the defining lyric on the jittery, introverted *The Dreaming* had been *"harm is in us"*, on *Hounds Of Love* it was *"That cloud looks like Ireland!"*, from "The Big Sky". The album was filled with references to the natural world, not only in countless lyrical mentions of the sun, rain, wind and clouds, but also waves, sea, ice and storms. As soon as she had written the beautiful piano ballad "And Dream Of Sheep" and its darker companion piece "Under Ice", Bush foresaw a record with two distinct sides, one of strong individual 'up' songs and another of darker, interwoven pieces. Strung across seven tracks on the record's second side, "The Ninth Wave" recounted the tale of a girl cast adrift in the water at night following some undefined catastrophe, awaiting rescue, trapped between a waking nightmare and dreams. It distilled many of Bush's recurring obsessions: water, witchcraft, death, the supernatural, the power of the senses, the frail line between reality and fantasy.

"The Ninth Wave" appeared daunting – *Melody Maker*'s otherwise positive review shuddered in its boots at the mere idea of it – but in "And Dream Of Sheep", "Hello Earth" and "The Morning Fog" it contained some of her very finest, most awesomely affecting songs. Of course, it also featured chattering Geordies, harsh helicopter blades and violent witch-drowning, but that's the beauty of *Hounds Of Love*: the deeply emotional and thrillingly berserk sit side by side.

The narrative thread may have been somewhat tangled but, as a travelogue through the seemingly boundless expanses of Bush's own imagination, "The Ninth Wave" was compelling stuff. "When she got into the studio she was like a Yogi," observes friend and erstwhile dance partner Stewart Avon Arnold. "She was completely lost to the world." Lost to this world, perhaps, but clearly connected to some other realm. The title of "The Ninth Wave" was taken from a passage of Tennyson's 1869 poem "The Holy Grail", a reference that felt particularly resonant. Part pop record, part epic romantic poem, *Hounds Of Love* "has a mystical, bardic quality that's part of our ancient British tradition," says Youth, who lent his loping, leggy bass sound to "The Big Sky". "It's not overt, it's hidden, and I love that."

On the title track Bush evoked the Arthurian legend of the Lady Of The Lake, taking *"two steps on the water"* as symbolic hounds tore through the English countryside. "Waking The Witch" vividly dramatised medieval witch trials, while on "Under The Ivy", a heart-stopping piano ballad released as the B-side to "Running Up That Hill", she sang of *"the white rose"*, the ancient English heraldic symbol. On "Under Ice" she sounded like an ancient, malevolent Ice Queen sweeping down from some mythical northern kingdom. Such ancient allusions may not have been entirely conscious, but they were not coincidental. Rooted deep in its own history, with its 18th-Century rose garden thick with ivy and honeysuckle, Wickham Farm felt like a bridge to another, older world, and something similarly mythic seeped into the music.



With her mother, Hannah, and her brothers Paddy and John (right) at home in East Wickham, London, September 26, 1978

NO INVITES WERE extended to EMI execs during the sessions. Refining the methods used on *The Dreaming*, her working practices became even more isolated. Often she recorded for long periods with only Palmer and perhaps another engineer in the studio, calling in musicians to add live texture when required. It was a thoroughly modernist approach. "It gives the album a slightly futuristic atmosphere," says Youth. "She gave me some direction, let me do what I liked, then she chopped it up and arranged it in the Fairlight. It doesn't have that natural dynamic arrangement and progression that you have with musicians playing together – it's quite flat and modern. People work like that today all the time, but then it was quite unusual. It was about selection rather than musicianship, the currency of ideas reflected in the music rather than academic virtuosity."

Youth was there because Bush loved his former band, Killing Joke. She cast musical parts rather like a movie director casting cameos, hiring experts in their field – renowned conductor Richard Hickox, classical guitarist John Williams – alongside tried and trusted session men. Stuart Elliott, Bush's long-serving drummer, either added to the existing Linn drum patterns – on "Running Up That Hill" he simply overdubbed a snare part – or replaced them. Guitarist Alan Murphy made a particularly effective contribution to "Waking The Witch" and added explosive counterpoints on "Running Up That Hill", while bass was democratically deployed between Del, Eberhard Weber, Danny Thompson and Youth. "It was a fantastic experience," Youth recalls. "A driver turned up at my house, a nice guy in a Volvo, and we'd go down to the farm. I went down two or three times and it was very cosy. About 11 o'clock her mum would come in with cakes and tea and we'd have elevenses, and then we'd work until late afternoon, sometimes early evening."

"Hounds Of Love is the ultimate concept album"
ALISON GOLDFRAPP

Her parents and brothers Jay [*John*] and Paddy were always popping in and out, contributing ideas, playing instruments, singing and generally offering support. "We'd be there doing a track and suddenly Jay would turn up to say hello," says drummer Charlie Morgan. "Paddy would come in and start talking to Kate about a mandolin part he had an idea for, and Kate would say, 'OK, let's put that down tomorrow'. Then her mum would come in with a tray stacked high

CHRIS MOORHOUSE/EVENING STANDARD/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

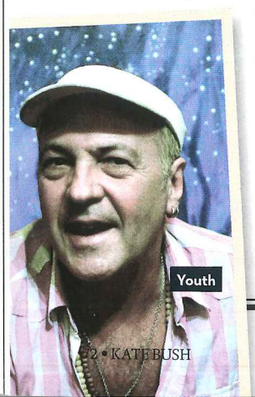
with teapots and cakes and we'd all have a cup of tea, and then Dad would come in and say, 'What are you going to eat tonight? I'll go and get a take out, what do you fancy, Indian or Chinese?' It was all so conducive to creativity."

The album sessions briefly moved to Ireland in the spring of 1984. Bush's mother, Hannah, hailed from County Waterford and her love of Irish music had gradually found its way into her daughter's work. Having used traditional instrumentation on *The Dreaming*, at Dublin's Windmill Lane she added bouzouki, pipes, fiddles and whistles. Dónal Lunny later recalled how Bush asked him to play the single whistle note at the end of "And Dream Of Sheep" for three straight hours until she heard the desired 'bend' in the note.

She was a notoriously hard taskmaster, often driving musicians to distraction trying to capture the atmosphere she wanted. "She would do lots and lots of takes and I could never understand why," says Max Middleton, who played organ on *Never For Ever*. "Normally with other musicians we'd do it again because it was too fast or slow or you're playing the wrong chord – something very definite – but she was looking for something nebulous that was hard to pinpoint. She wasn't doing it again out of sheer belligerence, she was looking for something that no-one else could see."

On her return to Wickham Farm she added more rhythm to the delirious "Jig Of Life", written and recorded in Ireland, filling 24 tracks with the clacking, beating and booming of assorted Irish percussive instruments. "I came back from that on cloud nine from being thrown the gauntlet and saying, 'OK, we're going to do something completely different here'," recalls drummer Charlie Morgan. "I think Stuart [Elliott] and I did some of the best stuff we ever did with Kate, because there were no rules or barriers. It was pure creativity."

"The Big Sky" was a prime example of her obsessive, ruthless approach to recording. The song underwent three dramatically different incarnations until it was right. "Kate would work on a track for ages and ages, it might cost a lot of money and time, but if she didn't like it she'd scrap it but still retain faith in the song and record it in a completely different way with different people," says engineer Haydn Bendall, who joined the sessions in the summer when Paul Hardiman had recording commitments elsewhere. Unlike Hugh Padgham, Bendall never felt Bush lost her way.



"She has an incredible, innate sense of what works for a song. She has an extremely clear impression of the atmosphere she wants to create, but how she achieves that involves experimentation. On *Hounds Of Love* we were using Fairlight and Linn drums a lot, and they'd come out with these funny little sounds which you might think weren't very interesting, and she'd say, 'Isn't that wonderful? Isn't that great?' She'd make it great, and that's the mark of a genius. She'd have a little kernel of an idea that would develop into a huge blossom. A very curious spirit, she wanted to find out about things, she was questing all the time."

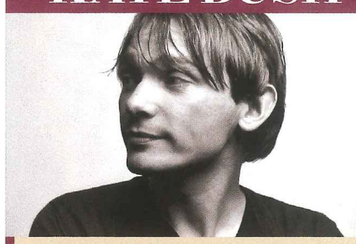
"Cloudbusting" was inspired by *A Book Of Dreams*, written in 1973 by Peter Reich about his father, Wilhelm Reich, the Austrian-American psychoanalyst who developed the cloudbuster machine – an eccentric contraption consisting of metal tubes and pipes placed in a large drum of water – which he claimed could form clouds and create rain, increasing the flow of Orgone, a 'primordial cosmic energy'. Reich's controversial experiments with the cloudbuster drew increasingly hostile attention from the US authorities until he was jailed in 1957 for contempt of court, dying of a heart attack a few months into his sentence, aged 60.

But rather than grappling with Reich's bizarre practices, Bush wrote a song about the touching relationship between a child and his mysterious, magical father, a man who made it rain. She sent an early treatment of the song to Peter Reich, "and when we were doing the vocal, she got a letter back from him saying he loved the idea of what she was doing," recalls Bendall. "Recording her voice on that was just fabulous. We're used to effects in the studio and computer graphics in films, but when Kate stands in front of the microphone and sings, it takes your breath away. It's a huge privilege. She's quite softly spoken and laughs a lot and is very joyous, but she takes on these different personae when she's singing. She's an actress as well as a singer."

Engineer Paul Hardiman remembers "endless vocals" on *Hounds Of Love*. No longer the squeaking, swooping girl easily parodied on *Not The Nine O'Clock News*, Bush now sang with primal power and awesome control, but capturing exactly the right tone was often a private and painstaking process. Several collaborators recall her smoking cannabis during recording sessions in the '70s and '80s – a means, perhaps, of combatting her sometimes acute self-consciousness. On *Hounds Of Love*, says Youth, "there was quite a lot of the 'exotics' going around. She's quite hippy-dippy, dreamy and out-there anyway, she's a romantic for sure. I was quite impressed that she actually likes to get out of her body a bit."

The first few months of '85 were spent adding texture and final atmospheric flourishes: soft spoken voices, steam train sounds, whirring helicopter blades borrowed from Pink Floyd's *The Wall*. It was an enormously complex record to mix and master. Ian Cooper, who cut every Bush album from *The Dreaming* to *The Red Shoes*, recalls, "*Hounds Of Love* took the longest.

WHY I LOVE KATE BUSH



DAVID BREWIS, FIELD MUSIC

"WE had her in the house from as far back as I can remember. My parents had *Hounds Of Love* and *The Whole Story*, and on one level her music appeals to a childlike nature. When you hear 'Babooshka' it's so exotic and fantastic for a child, you get sucked into it. Going back through those records having started playing music ourselves, it became something entirely different. The depth of something like *Hounds Of Love* is astounding, and I've gone past that LP and bought all the rest. I really love *The Dreaming*, it sounds like a striving for something. I haven't found a limit yet on what you can get from her music.

"I've got a lot of respect for people who don't make any more music than they need to, especially at a time when everything seems so tossed off. It's a shame that there's not more Kate Bush music, but the important thing is, she's still in control of what she does. Something like *Hounds Of Love* is perfectly realised according to an artist's dream of what it should be: she chose how her music should be from top to bottom."

INTERVIEW: GRAEME THOMSON

Live at the BPI Awards, 1986

I won't say it was a nightmare, but I remember the list of what I had to do rolling onto the floor. I think we were still doing it when it was released. I remember asking her when it was coming out and she said, 'It's out!' I said, 'Then why are we doing it?' and she said, 'I think we could still get this and that right'."

HOUNDS OF LOVE was launched at the London Planetarium on September 9, 1985. "Running Up That Hill" was already a Top 3 hit, Bush's biggest single since "Wuthering Heights". Almost fainting with relief at its hit potential, EMI had convinced her to change the original title from "A Deal With God" to avoid causing offence in overtly religious countries. Though unhappy about the decision, for once she put commerce before art. After the trials of *The Dreaming*, she realised that resisting would be akin to "cutting my own throat".

Despite a spectacular light show in the Laserium, press coverage of the album launch tended to focus on reports that a well-refreshed Youth had called Del Palmer a "wally". "I got drunk at the launch of *Hounds* and made some serious indiscretions," Youth admits.

Released the following week, *Hounds Of Love* went straight to No 1, knocking Madonna's *Like A Virgin* off the top spot. Its success had a certain inevitability to it. Bush's prolonged absence had been punctuated by media gossip about weight gain, nervous breakdowns, plastic surgery, drug addiction and rehab, but the collection of songs here successfully reignited media interest in the music itself. Where previously she had often been regarded by the music press with hostility as they struggled to fathom whether she was Patti Smith or Lynsey De Paul, *Hounds Of Love* brought consensus from both the influential music weeklies and the breezy pop mags. *Sounds* declared it "fucking brilliant. Dramatic, moving and wildly, unashamedly, beautifully romantic." *NME* pronounced Bush "a genius, the rarest solo artist this country's ever produced." *Smash Hits* gave it nine out of 10; *No 1* called it "a haunting collection of musical images" and then spoiled it all by declaring it "one for Marillion fans everywhere".

If *The Dreaming* had been uneasily ahead of its time, on *Hounds Of Love*, Bush seemed effortlessly attuned to the mood music of the mid-'80s: big hair, slick technology, irresistible hooks married to an insistent rhythmic pulse. Melodic and diamond hard, it was a bewitching alchemy of lean pop classicism and intrepid, occasionally unhinged experimentation. Not only was it a superb artistic statement, it was cleverly constructed, front-loaded with the most accessible songs before introducing the more demanding "Ninth Wave" material.

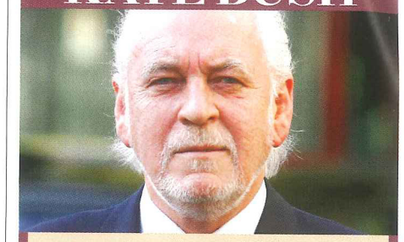
For a woman who had already developed a strong dislike of the media circus, Bush promoted the LP with surprising gusto, even if there was, inevitably, no tour. She'd harboured an aversion to playing live since the "Tour Of Life" in 1979, an enormously successful six-week European jaunt combining song, dance, theatre, mime and poetry, in many respects a high concept, lo-tech precursor to the multimedia stadia extravaganzas of the '80s and beyond.

On the 1979 tour, her lighting engineer Bill Duffield had died in a horrific 20-foot fall immediately after the opening show, which affected her deeply. More prosaically, the show had been hugely expensive and ran at a loss, while as a studio baby and a home-bird, the lifestyle certainly didn't suit her. She hated flying. She got nervous. She didn't crave crowds or adulation. As a perfectionist who leaned towards control-freakery, most likely she simply decided that the sheer weight of preparation involved in organising a tour, allied to the number of factors that could go wrong each night, was not the best use of her time and would do nothing to enhance her music. Nevertheless, footage of Bush in action reveals a supreme live performer, and her stage absence remains the great lack in her career: her former producer Jon Kelly describes it as simply "a tragedy, like a star dying early".

To promote *Hounds Of Love* she lip-synched on *Wogan* to "Running Up That Hill" and later made her first *Top Of The Pops* appearance since 1978. After that she seemed to be everywhere: undertaking countless press interviews and TV appearances, showing willing at the BPI awards and charity events. She also created four elaborate, eclectic videos, two of which she directed herself.

Bush had pursued and finally sweet-talked Donald Sutherland over dinner into agreeing to play Wilhelm Reich in the "Cloudbusting" video while she – perhaps the least

WHY I LOVE KATE BUSH



GARY BROOKER, PROCOL HARUM

(Organ, backing vocals, *The Red Shoes* and *Aerial*)

"I FIRST MET her at a Prince's Trust concert at London's Dominion. I was playing with Pete Townshend, Phil Collins, Midge Ure and Kate. She said she was going to do 'The Wedding List'. It was quite complicated, and I asked, 'What was that chord there?' She said, 'I've no idea!' She didn't have any recollection of how it went on record; she'd just done it.

"I've always enjoyed playing on her records. She expects a lot of the musicians she gets in, and I did things I'd never done before. On *The Red Shoes*, there were the bare bones of a track, and you had to make up what you thought would fit. She didn't have a perfectionist's iron grip in the sense of: 'These are the notes you will play.' She drew you in the direction she wanted to go.

"She comes across first as a woman and a mother these days. Sometimes I've told her I'm playing somewhere, and she's come along. She's not holed up. I don't blame her for being a bit defensive. She has been bombarded by the media from very young, when she had this huge No 1. She's one of our best. Kate hasn't made enough records. But that's up to her. Whatever she has done has been remarkable."

INTERVIEW: NICK HASTED

RICHARD YOUNG/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

convincing teenage boy in celluloid history – played his son. EMI's Brian Southall maintains that Sutherland "was in it in order to attract the American market. She was a great fan of his, but there was also, 'It's gonna be good for America.' From our point of view it wouldn't do any harm, although in the end it made no bloody difference. They don't get this stuff."

That wasn't quite true. Prior to *Hounds Of Love*, Bush was a marginal cult artist in the States, partly because she hadn't visited the country since a brief trip to perform on *Saturday Night Live* in 1978. "The only way to break America is to tour it, and Kate wasn't prepared to do that," says Southall. "She wasn't bothered." Her first promotional visit to the country for seven years in November 1985 went some way to redressing the balance. "Running Up That Hill" reached the *Billboard* Top 30, with *Hounds Of Love* peaking at No 30.

On the back of the album and its four Top 40 singles, Bush was ubiquitous in Britain throughout 1986. She reluctantly allowed EMI to release a compilation album, *The Whole Story*, which went on to sell six million copies. She also had a Top 10 hit with "Don't Give Up", her duet with Peter Gabriel. Adding her part at Gabriel's home studio at Ashcombe House, near Bath, later she felt she had "messed it up" and returned to sing it again. The set-up at Ashcombe was even more bucolic than Wickham Farm.

"The cattle barn was Peter's PA room, and we had a side room for the control room with cows peering in through the window," recalls producer Daniel Lanois. "Pretty makeshift, very West Country! She was a sweetheart to work with. It's a funny song to sing, as the time signature is odd and quite complex, but she managed to pull it off nicely. She's a great emotional singer, that really came across in the performance." And what about the much rumoured romance between the pair? "There was certainly nothing between her and Peter at that time," says Lanois. Spoilsport.

THE SUCCESS OF *Hounds Of Love* was hugely significant in determining the future of Bush's career. Had she so desired, she could have quickly recorded a follow-up, toured, accepted a dubious film role and become a global pop phenomenon. Instead, she followed a more remote path. Having amassed the kind of sales figures and critical hosannas that allow an artist to do whatever they want, Bush gratefully recognised the success of *Hounds Of Love* as a chance to disappear into her work. "EMI left me alone from that point," she later said. "It shut them up."

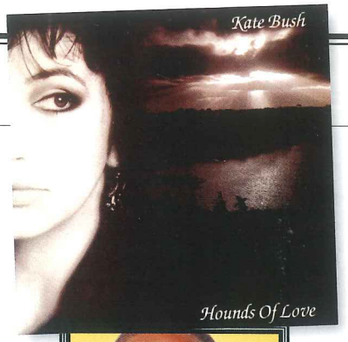
Ever since, she has recorded new material at her own pace in her own studio, releasing it with increasingly little fanfare or promotion and then promptly vanishing again for lengthy intervals. She may now be a negligible physical presence in the pop firmament, but 25 years after its completion, *Hounds Of Love* still casts a magical spell, and having a hand in its creation remains a high-water mark for all those involved.

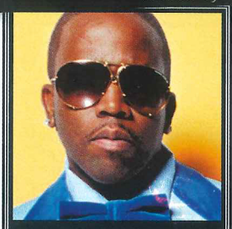
"I have very fond memories of that time," says Haydn Bendall. "It was fun and exciting, you knew you were involved in something really special. I felt it was something special then and I still do. Whenever I hear any of those tracks I get a thrill." Says Youth: "Take the old, almost druidic element, synergised with cutting-edge technology and a genius writer, and you get a classic album. It was a great honour to work with her."

Unlike many classic albums, though, *Hounds Of Love* is much more than a historical document. At a time when everyone seems desperate to show their hand, the innate sense of mystery feels more powerful and relevant than ever. A fiver says Joanna Newsom has studied the way in which it leads the listener into a mythical, self-contained world, while the mixture of its flat, futuristic samples, pagan symbolism and ancient, pounding rhythm echoes through the work of Fever Ray, Natasha Khan and Florence Welch. Indeed Bush has had an influence on almost every notable female artist of the past three decades, each indebted to her insistence on maintaining control, her boundless imagination, her determination to transcend accepted notions of femininity in both song and appearance.

Bush later called *Hounds Of Love* her most complete work. "In some ways it was the best and I was the happiest I'd been compared to making other albums. I had time to breathe and work creatively." Indeed, she has never sounded so imperious, or displayed such mastery of her talents, as she did on *Hounds Of Love*.

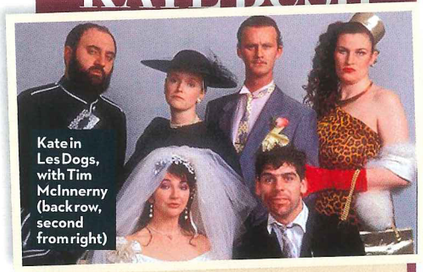
***Under The Ivy: The Life & Music Of Kate Bush**, by Graeme Thomson, is published by Omnibus*





"Hounds Of Love opened my mind up. I thought, 'Wow, she's so fucking deep!' I was infatuated with her. Still am"
BIG BOI, OUTKAST

WHY I LOVE KATE BUSH


Kate in Les Dogs, with Tim McInnerny (back row, second from right)

TIM McINNERNY

Co-star of "This Woman's Work" video, *The Comic Strip Presents... Les Dogs*

"KATE got in touch with me because she was a fan of *Blackadder*. I went to her house, and we sat in her kitchen. She has a very breathy, quiet voice, but it fills the room. It feels, talking to her, as though part of her brain is always engaged on something else. I think that's because she's a proper artist, and they never switch off. She's got an extraordinary aura about her. It's a quiet, gentle presence, but very steady, like a pulse in the room. On one level she's quite shy. But when she's working, she's very relaxed. It's when she's outside her own artistic world that I think she feels uncomfortable.

"Kate acted in *Les Dogs*, which was just nuts – very anarchic. She loved all that. She's got a dirty laugh – and that helps! Kate has that chameleon quality, she can seem fragile but she's tough as well. She's a genuine artist, in the way very few people in the music industry are. And it's harder for women. For her to survive and prosper as she has is a testament to her."

INTERVIEW: NICK HASTED

With collaborator Peter Gabriel, 1987

RICHARD YOUNG/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

New York, November 1985

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THE SENSUAL WORLD

"*Stepping out of the page into the sensual world...*" Bush gets down to this woman's work on her "most feminine album".

by JON DALE

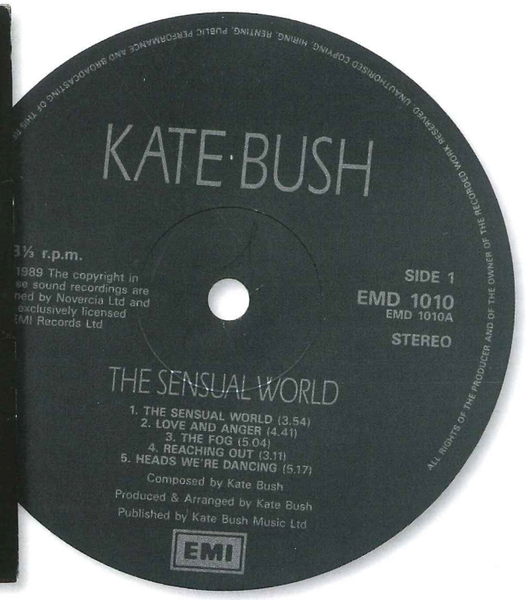
WITH 1985'S *HOUNDS Of Love*, Kate Bush marked out her territory: dramatic pop within a progressive rock cast; mystifying piano ballads whose intensity draws the air from the room; a bent toward the conceptual, the suite, the complex interaction of musical elements, the better to stretch song across a narrative arc. The experimentation of *The Dreaming* had liberated her from the sometimes jejune songs of her earlier years, and *Hounds Of Love* was a bold expression, an artist finding full command of her many powers.

It was also Bush at her most elemental – The "Ninth Wave" suite was waterlogged and oceanic. *The Sensual World* focused the lens on different elements, and musically, she was moving closer to the lunar. Bush also seemed to be inching closer and closer to address the feminine, away from her earlier pursuit of male role models – "The Ninth Wave", in particular, grappled both with the limitations of and the possibility of transcending female archetypes.

However, its follow-up, 1989's *The Sensual World* marked, for Bush, a very explicit exploration of femininity in music. In various interviews, she would refer to *The Sensual World* as her "most feminine album". Certainly, the album's title song, based on and building from Molly Bloom's soliloquy, one of the most startling sections of James Joyce's modernist masterpiece, *Ulysses*, clearly set out her intentions, and reflecting on the soliloquy itself, Bush would claim that she "found that original piece very female talking". But Bush has also always taken the dialectical turn in her music, and throughout the album, you can also trace a narrative arc of the male in response to the female, finding its fullest expression in the closing "This Woman's Work", which reflects the role of the father. *The Sensual World*, perhaps even more so than "The Ninth Wave", works as a cyclical whole.

> EVEN MORE SO THAN ANY OF HER PREVIOUS LPS, *THE SENSUAL WORLD* WORKS AS A CYCLICAL WHOLE

The four-year gap between *Hounds Of Love* and *The Sensual World* would also begin, in earnest, the common critical misreading of Bush as reclusive, that has haunted the latter half of her career (so far). A scan of her commitments between 1986 and 1989 give lie to this fabrication. While working on *The Sensual World*, a project which involved research trips both to



Ireland, to work with The Chieftains, and to Bulgaria, she also sang in duet with Peter Gabriel on hit single "Don't Give Up"; recorded a new single, "Experiment IV", and new vocals for "Wuthering Heights", both which complement her 1986 singles comp *The Whole Story*; appeared live both for Comic Relief and The Secret Policeman's Ball; and gave songs to two films in 1987, "Be Kind To My Mistakes" for Nicolas Roeg's *Castaway*, and most significantly, "This Woman's Work" for John Hughes' *She's Having A Baby*.

The Sensual World is an album of duality, of transformation, of cycles. It opens with sonorous bells, before a whip cracks in the corner of the soundscape, and "The Sensual World" itself eases quietly yet confidently into being. The song's history is complex. Bush had first heard the Molly Bloom soliloquy when it was recited by the late Irish actress Siobhán McKenna. Bush subsequently approached the Joyce estate for permission to use elements of the soliloquy as lyrics for "The Sensual World"; when refused by the estate, she wrote her own set of lyrics, with clear echoes of the soliloquy – the "*flower of the mountain*", the "*Andalusian girls*" and the repeated "*mmm yes*", in particular, all clearly echo the soliloquy. (When the Joyce estate gave her permission to use it on 2011's *Director's Cut*, the re-recorded song, retitled "Flower Of The Mountain", was nowhere near as powerful as Bush's original.)

Bloom's soliloquy, which with its lack of punctuation and its classic stream of consciousness, is a complex beast, as is the character of Molly Bloom herself. Joyce loosely based the character on his partner Nora Barnacle – the day on which *Ulysses* occurs, June 16, 1904, is said to be the first time Joyce and Barnacle stepped out together – and he saw the soliloquy as an "indispensable countersign" to *Ulysses*. Joyce reinforces (sometimes questionable) archetypes of the feminine throughout *Ulysses*, most often correlating women with the moon: they are seen as "glimpses of the moon" by Leopold Bloom, for example. Interestingly, Joyce also sees sacred music as "mooncarole", and the musicality of Molly Bloom's closing soliloquy is often read as "fluid and feminine, deracinated and polymorphic", as Suzette Henke says, though Molly is clearly also still bound by the male matrix of desire.

All of this offers rich material for Bush to play with. By anchoring the song in the repeated recitation of "*mmm yes*", she signals a relationship with Molly Bloom's final words: "yes I said yes I will Yes", lines which Joyce claimed were the "final and eternal feminine, affirmation to unending nascency". Elsewhere, Bush goes for less direct shadowing, treating the song as a way for the character to "*step out of/Off the page into the sensual world*", text coming to life through performance. The song pivots on simple, arcing chord shapes, with a keyboard arpeggio marking out a rhythmic tattoo as she weaves Uilleann pipes into rhapsodic melody. Unlike the stridency of "Running Up That Hill", the opener for *Hounds Of Love*, "The Sensual World" is more mysterious, understated, an entirely fitting opening for an album that's subtly charged, thinking through relationships and the passage of time in darker, more mottled hues.

It's followed by "Love And Anger", possibly the most confused, searching song on *The Sensual World*. Bush herself has acknowledged as such, telling biographer Rob Jovanovic that, "I just didn't know what I wanted to say. Really, it was a bugger, that song." There is indeed something indecisive about some of the production and arrangement on the song – it seems to peter out indistinctly, and David Gilmour's guitar solo edges dangerously close to hamminess. However, there's great strength in the dualities Bush works with in the lyrics: the "*love and anger*" finding echo in "*past and future*", "*stone and timber*", the "*little piece of rope*" that "*won't hold it together*", as the protagonist wavers between the inability to speak and the desire to "*let go of these feelings*". The image of "*two strings beating/Speaking in sympathy*", similarly, gestures toward the relational, as Bush uses the tuning of music, and through that, the world, to reflect the inter-personal tunings of relationships.

> THE ALBUM'S SECOND HALF IS ONE OF BUSH'S MOST INTENSE, EMOTIONALLY DRAINING SETS OF SONGS

From here, Bush steps back, with two songs about growing up: "The Fog" and "Reaching Out". The latter is perhaps the only misstep on *The Sensual World*. While still a strong song, it suffers for its relative bombast, which is all the more surprising given the presence of English minimalist composer Michael Nyman on string arrangements – though by this time, admittedly, his own compositions had taken on a decidedly more lyrical flourish. If "Reaching Out" looks at the inter-connection of child and parent, "*The push and pull of it all*", then "The Fog" is decidedly less clear, with the appearance of Bush's father, reciting "*Just put your feet down child/'Cos you're all grown up now*," a moment of distinction in a song that's intentionally, seductively murky, Michael Kamen's orchestra arrangements cloaking the song in ever more abstract shadings. Bush's opening laugh, in this context, is disarming in its warmth and openness.

"Heads We're Dancing" closes Side One – this still feels very much like an album to be experienced on vinyl, its deep undertow of duality reflected in the mirroring of the record's two sides – with one of Bush's great fabulist tales, of an unexpected, unaware encounter with Hitler on the dancefloor, in 1939 (Bush made little of the album's release in 1989, and thus the 50th anniversary of the encounter in the song). With Mick Karn on pointillist bass, elastic and stretched, the song edges close, at times, to the strangely rigid funk of Japan circa *Tin Drum*, and the song's coda is gorgeous, glinting notes dropping from the piano as strings warp and weft down low, leaking from the speakers.

The mediation of "Heads We're Dancing"'s events – notably, the protagonist only realises she was dancing with Hitler the following morning, when she "*saw the morning paper/There was a picture of you/A picture of you 'cross the front page*" – finds its echo in the opening song of Side Two, "Deeper Understanding", where Bush explores a shift from the inter-personal to inter-media: "*I was lonely, I was lost, without my little black box*". The binaries that play out in the song come across as a bit hackneyed, at first – when the computer 'speaks' in the chorus, the electronically treated voice is buttressed by the first appearance on the album of Trio Bulgarka, which plays at a contrast of modern and 'ancient' that positions the music of Trio Bulgarka firmly in the past, whereas Bulgarian traditional music is a living tradition. But the song overcomes this through the development of its peculiar emotional tenor – melancholy, with a strange sense of near-resignation, the rapture of the Bulgarian voices almost at right angles to the song's overarching tenor.

Trio Bulgarka would become increasingly significant throughout the second half of *The Sensual World*. Their music had only recently received wider purchase, particularly with the release of two volumes of the *Le Mystère Des Voix Bulgares* compilations on Nonesuch and 4AD – the latter's Ivo Watts-Russell had discovered traditional Bulgarian music thanks to another art-rock mainstay, Peter Murphy of Bauhaus. Their presence on three songs on Side Two significantly ramps up the emotional intensity of the album's final passage, and while it may not have the overarching conceptual consistency of, say, "The Ninth Wave" or "A Sky Of Honey", there's a good case to be made for the second half of *The Sensual World* as one of Bush's most intense, emotionally draining collections of songs. The only glitch in this theory is "Between A Man And A Woman", which still sounds slightly under-baked – its overly simplistic lyrics ("*You started taking sides/They started arguing*"... "*Stay out of this/You must not interfere*") reflect some of *The Sensual World*'s key threads, but is a rare case of longueurs.

"Never Be Mine", perhaps, trades in a similar simplicity, but the music is rapturous – Eberhard Weber's languid, twisting bass mapping out the contours of the song while Trio Bulgarka back Bush on one of her most assured performances across the album. The Trio also crack open the song toward the end, their voices weaving between Weber's plangent bass and oscillating, see-sawing keyboards, Spillane's Uilleann pipes marking out counter-melodies. And Trio Bulgarka reappears for the gorgeous opening to "Rocket's Tail", singing just with Bush. This moment alone justifies their appearance on the record, and Bush sounds as though she's leaping from the raw emotional candour of Trio Bulgarka, before the song breaks into a fiercely taut rock work-out, with Dave Gilmour making amends for earlier indulgences with playing that scours the sky in tandem with Yanka Rupkina's chillingly gorgeous vocal solo.

And on into "This Woman's Work", a song about which plenty of ink has already been spilled; what's left unsaid about the song, beyond the tenderness of Bush's performance, the way she manages to corral great drama from the subtlest of moves on the piano, is that its lyrics sketch a scenario that's archly traditional, almost problematically so, in terms of the relationship between the sexes. But for all those lines about how "*it's hard on the man... now starts/The craft of the father*", the real power of the song lies in its navigation of great silences, the way Bush builds from and then recedes back into the darkness, with almost preternatural skill at arrangement, a performance of great poise.

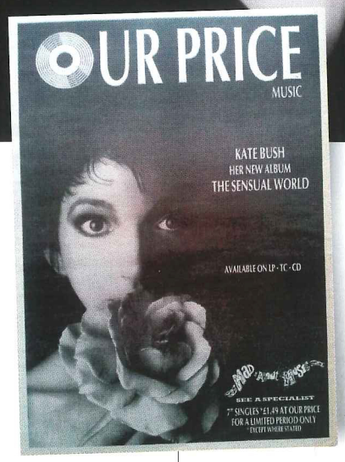
It also ends while hung in mid-air, Bush singing "*make it go away*", over the gentlest of piano. This suspension would become a trademark of her 'mature style', which begins with *The Sensual World*, detours across *The Red Shoes* and finds its full expression on *Aerial* and *50 Words For Snow*. You can hear in some of the songs here – the rolling gloom of "The Fog", the quietly insistent pulse of "The Sensual World" – some quite significant hints toward Bush's more recent form. And it's a beautiful thing to behold, pitching Bush toward a new voice, and a new song. KB

THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"The music is – at one go! – seamless and incongruously bizarre. We get the latest studio technology, natch, and we get Uilleann pipes. We get Bush playing the most Lionel Richie-type piano and we get her singing like she was a rare visitor to any known Earth language."
DAVID QUANTICK, NME, 21/10/1989

"The title track is the most feminine song ever recorded *and* ethereally androgynous. At no stage does its account of female sexuality exclude the man, or sneer..."
CHRIS ROBERTS, MM, 11/10/1989

Preternatural skill... Kate Bush in 1989



TRACKMARKS THE SENSUAL WORLD

1 The Sensual World ★★★★★
2 Love And Anger ★★★★
3 The Fog ★★★★
4 Reaching Out ★★★
5 Heads We're Dancing ★★★★
6 Deeper Understanding ★★★★
7 Between A Man & A Woman ★★★
8 Never Be Mine ★★★★
9 Rocket's Tail ★★★★
10 This Woman's Work ★★★★★

Label: EMI
Produced by: Kate Bush
Recorded at: Windmill Lane, Angel Studios, Abbey Road
Personnel includes: Kate Bush (vocals, piano, keys), Paddy Bush (mandolin, valiha, whips, tupan, bk vocals), Del Palmer (bass guitar, rhythm gtr, perc, Fairlight CMI), Trio Bulgarka (vocals), Dr Bush (dialogue), David Gilmour, Alan Murphy (gtr), John Giblin, Mick Karn, Eberhard Weber (bass), Stuart Elliott, Charlie Morgan (drums), Balanescu String Quartet, Nigel Kennedy (violin, viola), Davy Spillane (pipe, whistle, Uilleann pipes), Alan Stivell (Celtic harp, bk vocals), Michael Kamen, Bill Whelan, Michael Nyman (arrangements)
Highest chart position: UK 2; US 43

Peaching out: Kate at the time of *The Sensual World*, 1989

"Maybe we've lost touch with our instincts"

An unusually frank Kate Bush divulges the secrets of her Sensual World to *STEVE SUTHERLAND*. Also to be discussed: Hitler, Stephen Hawking, God, aliens, the Bulgarian "voices of angels", James Joyce, Madonna and the differences between men and women... "It's awful," she says, "what's happening to people's sense of their own sexuality."

AN HOUR BEFORE she tells me I have a lovely energy and just about makes my year, she apologises for keeping me waiting. "I just had to have a fag," she says, dogging a butt in the ashtray. "I was just dying for one."

Something isn't right here. I mean, I don't know who I thought Kate Bush would be when I walked into the downstairs room of Durrants Hotel where she is drinking tea, but I didn't think Kate Bush would smoke.

I think perhaps I was expecting her to be like Emma Thompson, a woman whose precocious talent has been critically downplayed because it springs from a privileged background rather than one of strife or suffering; a woman not so much otherworldly as cocooned from the weird old world for her own safety and sanity.

I think I still expected to meet a hippy nymph despite the evidence of my ears. Sitting in the foyer under the influence of her new LP, watching the first, solitary autumn leaf blow in off the street onto the Axminster, and reading symbolism into the American photographer asking for the price labels to be removed from the olde worlde mementoes on show in the Regency cabinets, I must have ignored the fact that only Prince has been more consistently intriguing, more exuberantly experimental, more willing to take risks for the sake of pure music in the '80s. Only the pneumatic *Purple Rain* pumped blood faster than *Hounds Of Love*, only *Around The World In A Day* repatterned the embroidery of pop with the same haughty disregard for convention as *The Sensual World*, her seventh album if you count the greatest hits compilation [*The Whole Story*].

I think I thought Kate Bush would be Green and ozone-friendly – all ballet shoes and Laura Ashley frocks. The St Michael's blouse and slacks, the tiny navy socks and no shoes, the Benson & Hedges freaked me out.

I think I thought of Kate Bush as a precious oasis in a tarnished world, a pearl cast before the swinish hordes. I guess I forgot Kate Bush is a genius.

"I think most people tend to think of me as the weird 'Wuthering Heights' singer – that is definitely the image that's stuck with most people, which I find extraordinary because it's... so long ago."

She laughs and, when she laughs, her cheeks dimple like a Disney chipmunk.

"Extraordinary is a very good word, I think. I don't know why people are still keen on... I don't know why people bother with me."

Really? "Really."

She's so small, it's extraordinary.

IT TOOK Kate Bush four years to make *The Sensual World*, and we've been given an hour to talk about it. Great. I think about telling Kate how surprised I am she's so small, or how shocked I am she smokes, but time is not on my side so I decide, instead, to tell her how delighted I am that she's come to the conclusion that the past and the future aren't beyond changing. The album sounds so optimistic in an era when absolutely everything appears to be falling apart.

"Oh, thank you! Thank you so much! That's really how I wanted it to be but, talking to a lot of friends and that, they feel it's a dark album."

I didn't think that at all...

"Oh, great."

...I thought some of the situations were dark, but the way they're resolved is optimistic.

"Oh, that's great. Thank you. Yes. That's really great. I'm so pleased you heard it like that. You see, for a lot of people it's so complicated to listen to, and that worries me, because I like the idea of people being able to listen to it easily and... uh... I don't want to confuse people but, for some people, it's very hard for them to even take it in, let alone sort of get anything out of it.

"I do think that art should be simple, you see. It shouldn't be complicated, and I think, in some ways, this has come across a bit complicated."

Maybe that's because, for me, the LP's about relationships – the relationship between language and emotion, the relationship between language and music, the relationship between emotion and music and how all this expresses, or more crucially fails to express, the relationship between people. And relationships, as we know, are never ever easy.

"How interesting. Could you give me an example?"

Well, in "Love And Anger" you say, *"It's so deep I don't think that I can speak about it,"* as if language betrays your aims, and then you go on to say, *"We could be like two strings beating/Speaking in sympathy,"* which suggests that music, rather than language, comes closest to expressing our emotions.

"Yeah! Actually, 'Love And Anger' was an incredibly difficult song for me to write and, when people ask me what it's about, I have to say I don't know, because it's not really a thought-out thing. It was so difficult for me to write that: in some ways, I think, it's about the process of writing the song: I can't find the words; I don't know what to say. This thing of a big, blank page, you know: it's so big... It's like it doesn't have edges around it, you could just start anywhere."

She studies her socks for a moment.

"Yes... um... I don't think I was conscious of it, but it's something I'm aware of when writing songs. There's such a lot you need to say through words. And it's a beautiful thing, language: actually being able to put words together and say something... maybe say two things in one line. But, like you say, it misses the mark so often."

You create your own language, too, don't you? It seems when you're at your most sexual, your most emotional, you emit... the only word I can find for it is 'noises', but that sounds too crude. Your *"Mmh yes"* on "The Sensual World" (the most heavenly sound ever on *Top Of The Pops*) and your *"Do-do-do-do-do"* in "Heads We're Dancing" are like cries that language has deserted you or, more positively, an attempt on your behalf to merge words and music, to create a new emotional language from a combination of meaning and sound. I remember you used to go "Wow!" when words failed you. It shivers me. It's thrilling.

"Well, I think that's a lovely thing to say... Yes, often words are sounds for me. I get a sound and I throw it in a song and I can't turn it into a word later because it's actually stated itself too strongly as a sound. Like, in 'Love And Anger', the bit that goes *'Mmh, mmh, mmh'* was there instantly and, in itself, it's really about not being able to express it differently. Do you know what I mean?"

Indeed I do. Liz of the Cocteau Twins does it all the time. She never sings a lyric as such, it's all noises. But somehow, the way you burst language, the tension that leads to the victory of sound over sense whips your music into another dimension. It's the frustration that gives your songs dynamic, and the way you remedy it that makes them attractive. Most of the *Sensual World* LP seems to be saying, "This can be worked out."

"Between A Man And A Woman" is almost a soap opera situation, with you trying to drive off any external interference which might ruin the chances of a relationship's natural growth. It's like you're saying we live in a fast culture – fast food, fast-edit TV, disposable pop, disposable sex – and, if we don't get instant gratification, we're not interested. You seem angry and determined.

"Well, that's nice, because when people ask me about this song, in terms of having to talk about it, it's rubbish. But yes, I think you're right, it is perhaps about how you actually have that choice sometimes, whether to interfere or not. You know, there's this tendency to want to leap in and take over and control: 'Oh, I know best!'; when I think a relationship is a very delicate balance: it's very easily tipped, and then needs to be refound again."

No matter how precarious, though, you think love's worth it, don't you? "Reaching Out" is full of danger – the child reaching out to feel the fire, for the hand that smacks... You endorse the instinct.

"Rocket's Tail" probably sums up what I'm getting at best. In the beginning, you scoff at someone else's romantic notion. They say they want to be the glorious rocket, and you say you only see *"A stick on fire/Alone on its journey/Home to the quickening ground/With no-one there to catch it."* But a verse later, you're putting on your pointed hat and strapping the stick to your back. It seems to me that love triumphs over cynicism and, whether you're dashed to the ground and destroyed by throwing yourself into a relationship or whether you survive doesn't matter. The risk, the vulnerability's worth taking. It's the only way you're alive, and anything's better than the loneliness of, say, "Deeper Understanding".

"Yeah! Yeah! There's a lot of that going on on the album, and I'm really pleased that you should hear it: like, 'It might not be easy, but there is a way of getting out of it, so try not to worry too much.'"

Perversely, you seem to revel in the mess our emotions can get us into. Having said all that about language wanting to be music, you then take some poor soul and allow music to mislead her into the most dangerous relationship of all. In "Heads We're Dancing", the girl surrenders to the rhythm and ends up dancing with Hitler!

(It's OK – she survives. The man wasn't Hitler when she danced with him, he was just a man. He became Hitler later. We all have the capacity for infinite evil. And infinite good.)

Even under these extreme circumstances, there's no regret. Again you're saying it's worth giving yourself up to another because anything's better than being alone. There are so many images of loneliness on the album...

"Yes, I think there are. I suppose, in relationships, there's a lot that can go wrong very quickly, and you have to work at them, which, I think, is something a lot of people aren't aware of until they grow up a bit. These things gradually reveal themselves to you, don't they?

"You're right – most of my songs are about relationships, probably always have been, really. That feels to me how things are, really: relationships towards other things and people, and how we actually

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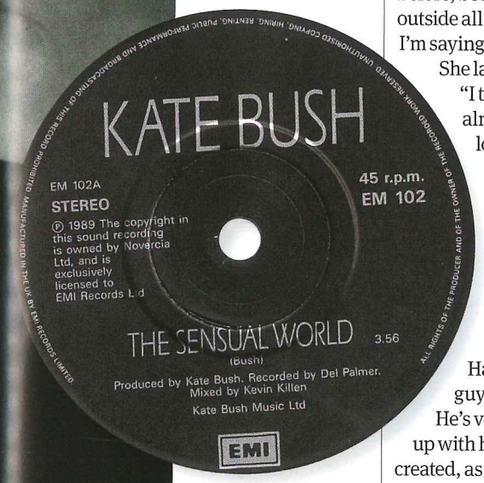
"Most people tend to think of me as the weird 'Wuthering Heights' singer"

1989: "I do think that art should be simple..."



manage to make these forms of contact..."

"Deeper Understanding" is the most extreme song on the album. How do you feel about the character who's so desperately, pathetically lonely, (s)he's formed an addictive relationship with a computer?

"Well, wherever you live, chances are you won't know your neighbours, you won't even know the person who lives next to you. But I see this song set in America, just because it's so much more extreme out there: people don't go out of their houses, they watch the television, they can shop from the television, they speak to people on the phone. If they want, they needn't have any form of human communication of a real kind at all, and I think that's being encouraged.

"You know, a couple of years ago there was a lot of news about how women were divorcing their husbands because they were spending all their time with their computers – they were in there all night. I suppose it's still happening. And this song is about this very intense relationship that developed, where this person spends all their time with computers. They talk to the computer and the computer talks back.

"I suppose I really liked the idea of deep, spiritual communication – deep love which should come from humans – coming from the last place you'd expect it to, the coldest piece of machinery. And yet I do feel there is a link. I do feel that, in some ways, computers could take us into a level of looking at ourselves that we've never seen before, because they could come in from outside all this... I'm not really sure what I'm saying..."

She laughs and takes a sip of tea.

"I think a lot of things in nature are almost programme-based, and a lot of things that we do are very mechanical, so maybe somehow going right through a computer, almost so that you come out the other side – going through all that science – will take us to something very spiritual but very earthy.

"I was very inspired by Stephen Hawking – have you heard about this guy? I think he was an Oxford scientist. He's very ill and, basically, he's coming up with how everything is created... or not created, as he sees it.

"I saw him on television, and it was so moving: this guy who's so close to the answer of it all, in a body that was desperately... it was going, and quickly. And he was fighting against the time he had left, and yet... here was this guy who was probably the closest to knowing it all, and he was speaking through this voice-processor. It was almost, for me, like hearing the voice of God.

"What he was saying was so spiritual, it was not like a scientist. It was someone saying, 'Well, look: it wasn't ever created and it won't end, it just is.' You know, this wonderful conceptualism is almost beyond words, because he's gone so far through the process. Words can't explain what he's discovered."

I find that a bit scary. I wonder if we want the answer?

"Well, I wonder if we'd understand it! Even if we knew the answer, we probably wouldn't understand it."

But if we ever found out, definitely, whether there's a God or not, it would be like definitely finding out there are aliens from outer space: the human race couldn't handle it, couldn't cope with not being the centre of the universe. And what if we found out there definitely isn't a God, what then? The truth would be too much to bear. The idea of death being an inconceivable nothing would drive us mad with the contemplation of extinction.

"We seem to be very much in the era of reason, and science is the ultimate example of that. The other side is the instinctive, which is not logical on any level. Perhaps it's the putting together of the two. You know, like what you were just saying there about aliens? Most people's response would be that it is just not possible because their reason says so, but then an instinctive person might feel, 'Yes, this is so', because it just feels right.'

"Maybe we've lost touch with our instincts, so it's become very important for us to work out logical explanations for things all the time, which I think is a bit of a shame, really."

> "Most of my songs are about relationships, always have been, really"

AFTER MONTHS OF experimentation, Kate Bush decided the Trio Bulgarka were the closest thing she'd ever heard to the voice of God. She first heard Yanka Rupkina, Eva Georgieva and Stoyanka Boneva – Bulgaria's foremost vocal trio – just after she'd finished *Hounds Of Love*, when her brother, Paddy, played her one of their few recordings available in Western Europe.

"I was devastated. Everyone I know who hears it is. At the time I didn't really think in terms of us working together but, the more I listened to it, the more I thought how wonderful it would be, and it seemed to gradually make more and more sense

➡ to try to get them involved in the album. Still, I needed a lot of time to gather the courage to do it. I was scared about it not working."

Did you think that you might cheapen their gift?

"Oh God, absolutely. It was a big responsibility. And what was so nice is that they really enjoyed the experience. I mean, when we first met them, they asked us into their house, and they'd made a big meal for us: it was a big social event, and yet we'd never met. And within minutes, someone said, 'Oh, why not sing them a song?' So Eva, the eldest one, picked up the phone, listened to the dialling tone, went 'Mmmmmmh,' and they all tuned to that, and just burst into song!

"They were sitting over the kitchen table and, within minutes, I was just completely taken by them and the tears just... And they loved this, because it meant that they'd got through. Everyone who was with me was really moved – you could see people just trying to wipe the tears away.

"When I was working on the song 'Deeper Understanding', the idea was that the verses were the person and the choruses were the computer talking to the person. I wanted this sound that would almost be like the voice of angels: something very ethereal, something deeply religious, rather than a mechanical thing. And we went through so many different processes, trying vocoders, lots of ways of affecting the voice, and eventually it led to the Trio Bulgarka.

"It made absolute sense – you know, this loving voice – because they have a certain quality: their music feels so old and deep. It's really powerful; such intense, deep music that, in some ways, I think is like the voice of angels."

It's as if they're possessed of it, rather than it's theirs.

"Yeah! Absolutely! Beautiful music! Old music like that is magical, and it can be preserved and kept. We must have lost so much of it all over the world. It must have just gone!"

If we take it as read that the album is concerned with relationships and the problems of communication and how these problems aren't insurmountable, I imagine working with the Trio Bulgarka must have put this to the test and enriched the LP through the experience of recording. I mean, I assume you couldn't talk to each other. I assume you had no mutual language, and yet you created together through music.

"Yeah, and it was extraordinary. They didn't speak a word of English and we didn't speak any Bulgarian, but we could communicate through music, so that absolutely transcended barriers. There were things we needed to translate but, generally, we communicated emotionally, and I just loved that. They'll come up and give you a big cuddle. They'll just come up and touch you and cuddle you, and you can go up and give them a big cuddle, and I really enjoyed that kind of communication, it felt very real and direct to me. I'd never experienced that kind of communication before. It's something we could do with more of. It's a lovely thing.

"They were over not long ago, and we hadn't seen each other for a while and, when the translator went out of the room, we all started chatting. I don't think any of us knew what the other one was talking about but everyone was talking at the same time, and we were all chatting away, about six of us in a room. Then the translator walked back in and suddenly everyone felt really self-conscious and shut up. It all went quiet and we all sat and looked at the floor. It was a really great moment, really great!"

APART FROM The Cure's sumptuously creepy "Lullaby", "The Sensual World" is surely unrivalled as the most seductive single released this year. Like her very first release, "Wuthering Heights", its inspiration lies in literature, but it expands on its theme with an insight and maturity which would have been unthinkable to the girl who rewrote Brontë.

> *"The Sensual World* was a chance for me to express myself in a female way"

"The Sensual World" is about Molly Bloom, the fountain of lust and life in James Joyce's dauntingly super-realist novel, *Ulysses*. It's a book that's defeated my attempts to read it again and again, and I confess to Kate that it gives me a hell of a lot of trouble.

"God, yes!"

Why Molly Bloom?

"Well, I just thought it was such an extraordinary piece of writing. It's so... ooh!... it's such a beautiful style. It's like trains of thought continually tumbling... you know, tumbling speech, and not kind of... 'stopped'. I first heard her speech being read years ago by... I'm pretty sure it was Siobhán McKenna. And it had such a femininity about it. That was my first exposure to it.

"And it just came together with this song. We'd written this piece of music in the studio, and I thought, 'What about putting the Molly Bloom speech together with this?' So I went and grabbed the book, and it worked perfectly. It just scanned – the whole song. But, unfortunately, when I applied for permission to use the words, they wouldn't let me.

"Obviously, I was very disappointed. It was completely their prerogative, you know, they don't have to give their permission. But it was very difficult for me, then, to reapproach the song. In some ways I wanted to just leave it off the album. But we'd put a lot of work into it – the Irish musicians had worked hard – so it was a matter of trying to rewrite the lyrics so it kept the same rhythmic sense, because the words are so rhythmic; and to keep the sense of sensuality as well, without using the Joyce lyrics. So it all kind of turned into this piece where Molly Bloom steps out of the book into real life, where she can actually reach out and touch things in the real world. In a lot of ways, because of their lack of co-operation, it transformed the track into something else."

With the Trio Bulgarka in 1989: "Like the voice of angels!"

When you say the Joyce piece had a "femininity" about it, what do you mean?

"It's difficult to put into words, but I think, on the last album, *Hounds Of Love*, particularly in the production, I wanted to try and get across a sense of power, and the way I related to that was very much what I consider very good male music – the kind of power I found there was not what I found in a lot of females' music.

"It's not that I was trying to write like a man or anything – but there was this level of approaching the album, soundwise, that I think had a male energy. But I didn't want to do that on this album. I wanted to do it as a woman, not as a woman working around a man's world. This all sounds awful!"

It's making sense.

"Oh, is it? Good! 'The Sensual World' was very much a chance for me to express myself as a female in a female way, and I found that original piece very positive female talking... That's the only way I can describe it."

It's like a sister piece to "This Woman's Work". "The Sensual World" is completely self-absorbed in its own erogenous pleasure, while "This Woman's Work", plaintively, over stark acoustic piano, reviews the man's side of the relationship and, really, pities him.

"John Hughes, the American director, was doing a film called *She's Having A Baby* – a great film, very nice and comic. And he had this scene which he wanted me to write a song for where it gets very heavy. The film's about this guy who gets married and he likes being a kid, really – very much up in the clouds – and she gets pregnant and they go into hospital, and she's rushed off because the baby's in the breach position.

"And suddenly there he is, just left in the waiting room by himself. It's probably the first time in his life he's had to grow up. It's a lovely piece of film, where he's looking back on their times together – there are scenes where they're decorating their flat, going for walks and things – and it was very much just a matter of telling the story in words – how, at times like that, you tend to go into something akin to guilt mode and think of all the things you should have done and you just didn't."

I think men are bigger babies than women. I don't think we grow up so fast.

"Maybe men can avoid more situations than women in terms of facing things. I guess there are things for women that are different and they tend to deal with life situations rather than the business world. God, this sounds so sexist..."

Not at all. Women give birth, they are physically part of the creative process. It's as if their orgasm grows and bears fruit, whereas men fuck and that's it – it's a release, something we get rid of rather than something we gain. Then it all builds up again, and we can't handle it. I think women are far stronger emotionally. Men can't cope with emotions. We get frustrated and aggressive and destructive because we can't express ourselves, whereas women seem to embody their feelings better. Something positive grows from them.

"Yes, I think you're right. It's very hard on all of us but, through the process of giving birth, I'm sure that women are much stronger than men, and it's incredibly hard on them that they should not be able to show their emotions when actually it's OK to be weak."

We men are confused. The trouble with the invention of the notion of sexism and the paranoia surrounding it is that the only way we can deal with it is based on a fallacy. We think that, just because women should quite rightly have equal rights and equal opportunities, the sexes are the same. But we're not – women are aliens to us, we don't understand you at all. You speak a different language altogether. We're different creatures entirely.

"Absolutely, I'm with you 100 per cent. I couldn't agree more. I think it's awful what's happening to people's sense of their own sexuality. Women are made to feel awkward about expressing themselves as women in a man's world, so, subconsciously, a lot of the time, they're behaving like men, because they don't know how strong they're supposed to be.

"Then again, women's lib has left men in a lot of areas where they don't know how to behave in case they get called sexist, a pig, or whatever. We are different, and we should be helping each other. Unfortunately there was such a lot of shit to get through, it was a battle, but I don't think it need be."

THE ALBUM SEEMS to be saying, "If you find yourself in a tricky situation, follow your instincts – just behave the way it feels right and at least you're being true to yourself, irrespective of the outcome."

"Yes, absolutely... and what an incredibly difficult thing to apply to life. I think there are some very good things going on to help us through. I must say, for me, the comedy in this country has been really educational. You know, Ben Elton and The Comic Strip – all ➡

KENNETH SAUNDERS

those people you can't really call alternative comedians anymore because they've become mainstream. I think they've really done a lot to stop it being fashionable to be humorous with sexist overtones.

"It used to be very hip to make fun of women. Old comedy was all about treating women as a threat and, therefore, making fun of them. And they've really changed a lot of that. They've done so much for men and women because now, in most circles, among people our age, if you make a sexist joke, it's considered tasteless. That's a fantastic step forward. And to see people like Dawn French and Jennifer Saunders out there doing comedy being women as women is brilliant.

"They're just out there doing it and, the more women can be strong enough to do that, the more it'll help everybody. It used to really scare me the way women were portrayed in comedy, and the way they behaved: either they were bitching off other women and being sexist themselves, or they were allowing themselves to be used as sex objects, either positively or negatively – they were either very beautiful or very stereotypically ugly. Women would just be batted around from these extremes, but that hold's been broken now and, as comedy's so much a part of our nature in this country, so much a part of our roots, to break old things like that is an incredible step."

What you've achieved musically is pretty incredible too – the way you can do exactly what you want exactly when you want without anyone interfering. You're very much admired for your independence, and most of the women I know who aspire to make a living making music would rather be you than, say, Madonna.

"Oh, really! Ha!"

You seem to live the life you want to, almost in a world of your own, whereas Madonna's constantly playing corporate games. She has to compete, you don't.

"I think I'm incredibly lucky to be in this position now, although it's not something I'm aware of without people sparking off my realisation.

"I think Madonna's very clever, and I think that she's very aware of what she's doing, don't you? I think that's the game she wants to play, and she seems to have her heart stuck on being an actress, and absolutely good luck to her because she's really... talk about on the frontline! She's such an exposed person. I would find that so difficult to live with.

"I guess I have fought for what I want, but you always have to do that. I am very lucky. But it's hard to keep up that level of concern, particularly when you feel the music business becoming very mercenary – there are so many things that encourage you to abuse it. It's so horrid. It's such a shame."

Do you listen to much pop music?

"Not much when I'm making albums. In the evenings I probably watch a film or comedies or something visual to take me away from my ears. But, in between albums, yeah – there's some great stuff. Johnny Lydon's new album is great, and I heard some tracks off the new Jeff Beck album and they were great, too. I think there's been some good, good music out there. Everyone in the music industry's been wearing black for, what, the last four years? I think everyone's in mourning for good music. It's a show of mourning – 'Look, here we are, where's the music?' And there's little snatches now, and that's exciting."

Are you hypersensitive to music? I mean, just because you make music that moves other people, that doesn't necessarily mean that music moves you.

"God, I'd love to think that my music could move people, because it doesn't happen to me often, but, when it has, it's a lovely experience. The Bulgarians did it to me, and Nigel Kennedy (who also plays on the album) sometimes makes me cry."

With David Gilmour in 1987

> "I have fought for what I want, but it's hard to keep up that level of concern..."

There are so many musical clichés, and you're breaking them down. Using Davy Spillane's Uilleann pipes and Dave Gilmour's guitar and the Trio, you've succeeded in creating a new, uncategorisable sort of music which isn't anything, it's just music. I think that's important, because it makes people open their ears to stuff. It enriches their lives.

"Well, that's lovely. What a really nice thing to say. Um... I think everything seems too easy to categorise, and... I think that's just such a lovely thing to say..."

It's like what you were saying about relationships – you've done it with music. You've given it time to grow, to see if it's compatible. It sounds natural, not cosmetic.

"Well, I think that's fantastic... that's just such a nice thing to say, that's really great... wonderful, absolutely wonderful. Because I think this is really what music is – a continual process of people experimenting, taking this and that and putting them together: all these experimental marriages. And when they work, I think that's such an important step, because then they've created a new music of a sort which then goes on to evolve.

"And, if it doesn't work, that's absolutely fine, too, because that shows you what doesn't work. So, if you feel this is a natural union, that's really good. I suppose I'd like to think that, as long as I care about making music, there will always be people out there who want to hear music that's cared for."

THE HOUR'S UP and Kate thanks me for saying such lovely things about her album. I thank her for making such a great album, and she thanks me for thanking her, and says I have a lovely energy, and... shucks... we blush a bit and shake hands, and I shuffle out of the room, out of her life, elated and embarrassed. Another relationship we just couldn't handle.

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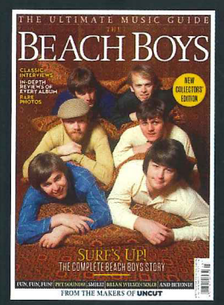

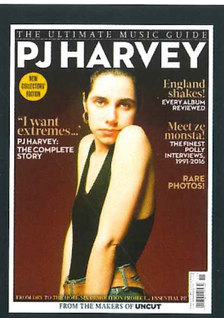

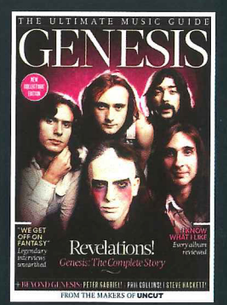

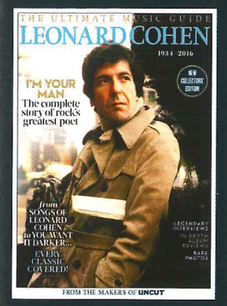

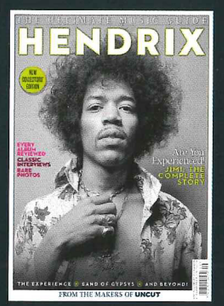

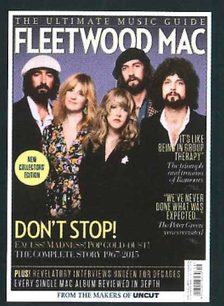

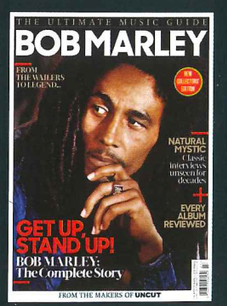

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THE RED SHOES

Matters of life and death preoccupy Bush on her restless seventh album. Also starring: Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck, Prince, Nigel Kennedy and Lenny Henry! *by* NICK HASTED

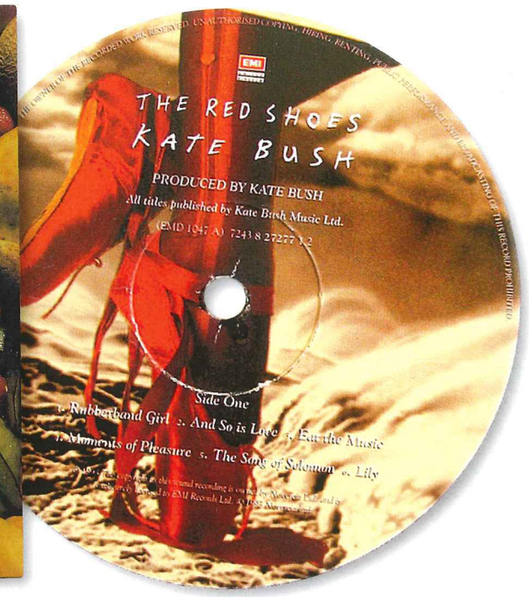
THE FOUR-YEAR WAIT – by now routine – for a follow-up to *The Sensual World* was unusually eventual for Kate Bush, though few of those events were good. Most traumatically, her mother Hannah died from cancer on February 14, 1992. Bush's determination to make music as she wished, insulated from worldly cares, had always seemed reliant on the mum who made sandwiches and tea as the musicians worked, before her dad brought the takeaways at night. The distractions and intrusions of being an international pop star had been neutralised by this unchanging, homely shield.

As well as the fundamental grief of losing a parent, which brother Paddy said left his family still "knocked sideways" a year later, Bush was left more exposed than before. It was the culmination of a series of deep losses: her guitarist Alan Murphy, suffering from Aids for some years, had suddenly deteriorated and died in 1989, just after *The Sensual World*'s release. One of Bush's dancers, Gary Hurst, also died of Aids, in 1990. *"I don't feel safe,"* she sang on "Lily". *"I feel that life has blown/A great big hole through me."* Those lyrics were written, like all of what became *The Red Shoes*, before her mother's death, and Bush's suffering still affected the making of an album that regularly grappled with loss.

HAVING ENDURED A SERIES OF DEEP LOSSES, BUSH'S SUFFERING AFFECTED THE MAKING OF THE LP

Murphy's death caused an immediate shift in priorities, as Bush downed tools for six months, mourning him and unable to contemplate making music. When she did begin demos at East Wickham Farm, a rougher, more organic record than *The Sensual World* was intended, based around drummer Stuart Elliott and bassist John Giblin playing with her in the studio. Memories of her crippling exhaustion after the Tour of Life had receded enough for her to even ponder playing live again, which the new songs were at first designed for. Exploratory rehearsals were held, after Bush rashly announced her about-turn to her Fan Club. The fans would have to wait a further two decades.

Losing Murphy also had a practical effect on Bush's work. Danny McIntosh would eventually replace him on guitar for much of *The Red Shoes*, with Bush even taking up electric guitar herself, amazing her band by learning it in a matter of days under McIntosh's



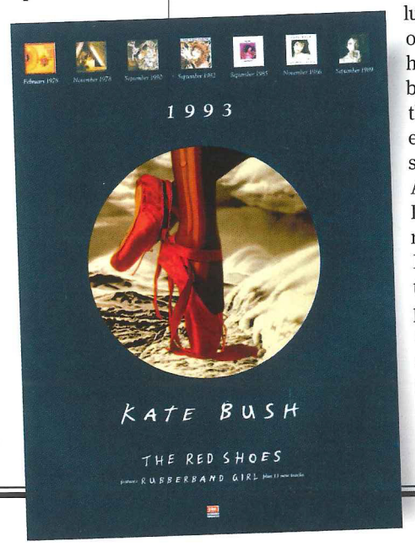
tutelage. The hole left by Murphy, though, invited other possibilities. A series of starry guests were invited to contribute on "a bit of a whim", she explained to *Melody Maker*'s Simon Reynolds. "I started to imagine, who was the best guitarist I could possibly have?" "And So Is Love" was defined by this thinking. "It took on a certain flavour – quite empty, slightly bluesy," she told Reynolds. So why not ask Eric Clapton to play on it? Bush loved Clapton's crunching blues-rock responses to her vocals, about being no longer young and carefree, and how *"life is sad"*. Those lines quote comparative mythologist Joseph Campbell. But the invitees who filled *The Red Shoes*' long castlist – Jeff Beck, Procol Harum's Gary Brooker, Prince, Lenny Henry, Nigel Kennedy and the Trio Bulgarka among them – though disparate, helped to make un-Bush-like, conventional music. It was often too smooth to fully realise the lyrics' very personal emotions and deep-set mythic codes.

The title track, though guest star-free, is an example of this slightly disappointing shortfall. It begins with Bush alone at the piano, imagining music running away with itself *"like horses galloping and running away"*. This leads her to think of Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger's *The Red Shoes* (1948), a much-loved adaptation of Hans Christian Andersen's fairytale about a girl possessed by ceaselessly dancing shoes, reset in the ballet world, where a ballerina's driven devotion to her art has similarly damaging consequences. Bush's all-consuming artistic urge, just beginning to loosen now, was a possible link to the story, though one she hasn't discussed.

Powell and Pressburger's very feminine, sensual modern fairytale anyway seemed an ideal inspiration. Bush even extended her fascination with it to *The Line, The Cross And The Curve*, the film she directed and starred in as an alternative to touring, with a cast including Miranda Richardson and her old dancing master, Lindsay Kemp. Bush's film retains the tale's classic meaning, with the need to dance being potentially fatal. The song, though, sees dancing as a glorious thing to be possessed by. Dancing long enough here will lift your eyes *"to God"*, and push past even music's limits. "Musically, I was just trying to get a sense of delirium," Bush told Simon Reynolds, "of something very circular and hypnotic, but building and building... transcending the normal". Another Paddy Bush arsenal of unusual instruments – mandola, whistles and musical bow here – add acoustic propulsion. Delirium, though, doesn't follow. It's by no means a bad track, but the full ecstatic lift-off of, say, "Running Up That Hill", isn't quite available on *The Red Shoes*.

Another brief but intense friendship Bush lost in this period was with Michael Powell. With his partner Pressburger, the great director was responsible for an almost magic realist strain in English cinema, pulsing with fantastic visions and heightened emotions, in films including not only *The Red Shoes*, but *A Matter Of Life And Death* and *Black Narcissus*. In "You're The One", Bush also declares, *"I know where I'm going,"* the title of Powell and Pressburger's most deeply romantic film, set on a storm-lashed Scottish isle. Bush had written to Powell, who was forced towards retirement after 1960's scandalous *Peeping Tom*, to ask if he'd be willing to work with her. He asked to hear her music, and a correspondence of cassettes and letters made them friends.

The most affecting memorial to this isn't "The Red Shoes", but a verse in "Moments Of Pleasure". It recalls a snowy Manhattan night when Bush met her ageing friend at a hotel. *"He meets us at the lift/ Like Douglas Fairbanks/Waving his walking stick,"* she sings with memorable affection, as Michael Kamen's strings swoop in and sweep the words upwards like something from Hollywood's Golden Age. *"But,"* Bush knows, *"he isn't well at all."* Powell died in 1990, aged 84. "Moments Of Pleasure" is an elegy with a light, antic touch, remembering Powell and everyone else Bush had lost at the time. She stripped the song back to its piano ballad roots for 2011's *Director's Cut* revision. The lush, conventional orchestrations here, though, by Kamen – then routinely employed by rock stars from Bryan Adams to Bob Dylan – are just right. Straight Hollywood tearjerking provides a conduit for emotions that the cluttered arrangements elsewhere often obscure.



THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"An utter masterpiece. It had *decked* me within four tracks and by the climax I was positively subterranean. And high as a Simon Dupree kite. If you only buy one record this year, you're probably very smart. And it'll be this."
CHRIS ROBERTS, MM, 30/10/1993

"*The Red Shoes* is a paradoxical thing. It's her most personal album to date, yet it's also her most accessible, in which the listener can identify directly with the pain she's trying to pull herself through."
TERRY STAUNTON, NME, 6/11/1993

It is also Bush's strongest lyric on the album, cutting between scenes with the cinematic bravura of a *"dive off a rock, into another moment"*. The song's metaphysical conceits are sophisticated and moving, giving back shared moments as a gift from the departed to the partner who survives. Most of the song is an intimate, conversational list of those private scenes. Her mother, alive when she recorded it, contributes a comforting aphorism about enduring love (*"Every old sock/ Needs an old shoe"*), sung by Bush with a poignancy which had grown by its release. Her lost friends seem to stand as ghosts in the studio as she warmly addresses them one last time, mostly by nicknames and secret codes: her Aunt Maureen, Alan Murphy, Gary Hurst, Powell, John Barrett (engineer on *The Dreaming* and *Never For Ever*), and Bill Duffield, who died on the Tour Of Life. When the song is played in *The Line, The Cross And The Curve*, actors playing the departed swirl past in a snowstorm, briefly touching her. Memories of loved ones are the reward she sets against her newly adult knowledge that *"Just being alive/It can really hurt."*

Among *The Red Shoes'* often unhelpful guest stars, the oddest is Lily Cornford, an East Londoner, 91 when the album was released, whose Maitreya School Of Healing practised colour healing – showing colours to spiritually salve those who came to her, as Bush did in the early '90s. Cornford starred in *The Line, The Cross And The Curve*'s video for "Lily". She also narrates a prayer at the song's start which, along with ritual symbols in the film, has led to much discussion on Bush fansites of Reverse Pentagram Rituals and Isis-worship. Any faith in the song was perhaps simpler, and predated Bush's friendship with Cornford. "I do believe in spirits," she told Kris Needs in 1980, "and I also believe that people communicate by much more than word of mouth. There are people sitting like beacons on tops of hills."

Cornford, too, she told Simon Reynolds in 1993, "believes very strongly in angels, in a way I'd not experienced before". She likened her friend's angels to the rooftop Berlin sentinels of Wim Wenders' *Wings Of Desire*. So the Catholic-schooled Bush calls on such angels in "Lily" to help heal the *"great big hole"* recent losses have left her with. There is a touch of earthy London realism in this ritualistic lyric, as Cornford suggests *"a pinch of salt"* should be applied to her words, as well as fire. It is still a prayer for protection, full of Biblical language. The warping sound effects behind Cornford's introduction even suggest *Exorcist*-style demons at the door. But the music's pounding swirl can't summon the same potency.

"Top Of The City" also lifts Bush *"up on the shoulders of angels"*, to view a London which seems hostile and frightening. There's a musically bare stillness when she reaches the rooftops, rarely achieved elsewhere in this restless album. *The Red Shoes*' migration away from its initial raw intentions is audible not only in the digital production which Bush later regretted (and toned down on its 2011 remaster). There is also a thick, steamy richness to "Big Stripey Lie" (in which Bush exclaims, *"Oh my God, it's a jungle in here!"*), "The Song of Solomon", and "Constellation Of The Heart". The Madagascan-flavoured "Eat The Music" (brother Paddy's influence again) aims for androgynous, ultra-sexual, carnival celebration, but its production leaves it muffled and lifeless. The Prince collaboration "Why Should I Love You?" sounds like a decent early '90s Prince track, toned down from the full-on Paisley makeover he returned to Bush without comment. It's as interesting for being part of another emotional strand running through parts of *The Red Shoes*. Bush's long-time boyfriend and musical partner Del Palmer remained in the control booth recording the LP. But by its end, that relationship too had been amicably lost. On closer "You're The One", with the help of Jeff Beck's fuzz-guitar and Gary Brooker's dreamy Hammond, Bush coos, goads, shrieks and howls at her *"honey"*, as she struggles to accept he isn't that any more.

The album's production, delayed at its start by Alan Murphy's death, was halted again when Hannah Bush died. "I couldn't possibly sing," her daughter recalled to *Vox*. "It was beyond me. It just hurt too much." When *The Red Shoes* was finally finished, Del Palmer was shocked that Bush signed off on their first pass at mastering it. It was a previously unthinkable lack of perfectionism. She applied that trait for several more months to writing, editing, directing and completing the soundtrack to *The Line, The Cross And The Curve*, only to later dismiss it as "bollocks". Then, after a brief promotional flurry, she went home and collapsed, utterly shattered.

THIS WAS HER LAST ATTEMPT AT RELATIVELY CONVENTIONAL POP MUSIC AND STARDOM

The Red Shoes' first single, "Rubberband Girl", optimistically declared, between its busy, springy layers of production, that Bush was *"bouncing back to life"*. In fact, this was her last attempt at relatively conventional pop music and stardom. She'd learned the lesson the ballerina in Michael Powell's *The Red Shoes* realises too late.

Life had battered her as she made this album. With the birth of her son, Bertie, as a further spur, for the next 12 years she would leave full-time music to live it.

The "Rubberband Girl" video, September 1993

TRACKMARKS THE RED SHOES

1 Rubberband Girl ★★★
2 And So Is Love ★★★
3 Eat The Music ★★★
4 Moments Of Pleasure ★★★★
5 Song Of Solomon ★★★
6 Lily ★★★
7 The Red Shoes ★★★
8 Top Of The City ★★★
9 Constellation Of The Heart ★★
10 Big Stripey Lie ★★★
11 Why Should I Love You? ★★★
12 You're The One ★★★

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Producer: Kate Bush
Recorded: Abbey Road
Personnel: Kate Bush (vocals, piano, keys, gtr, bass), Stuart Elliott (drums, perc), John Giblin (bass), Danny McIntosh, Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck (gtrs), Nigel Hitchcock (sax), Neil Sidwell (trombone), Paul Spong, Steve Sidwell (trumpet), Gary Brooker (Hammond), Prince (keys, gtr, bass, vocals), Michael Kamen (orch, conductor), Justin Vali (valiha, kabossy, vocals), Paddy Bush (valiha, fujare, singing bowls, bow, mandola, whistles, vocals), Charlie Morgan (perc), Trio Bulgarka (vocals), Nigel Kennedy (violin, viola), Gaumont D'Olivera (drums, perc, FX), Lily (narration), Lenny Henry, Colin Lloyd-Tucker (vocals)
Highest chart position: UK 2; US 28

RELEASED: 7 NOVEMBER 2005

AERIAL

We become panoramic! Rural raves, piano reveries, invocations of Pi and birdsong galore on Bush's most varied album.

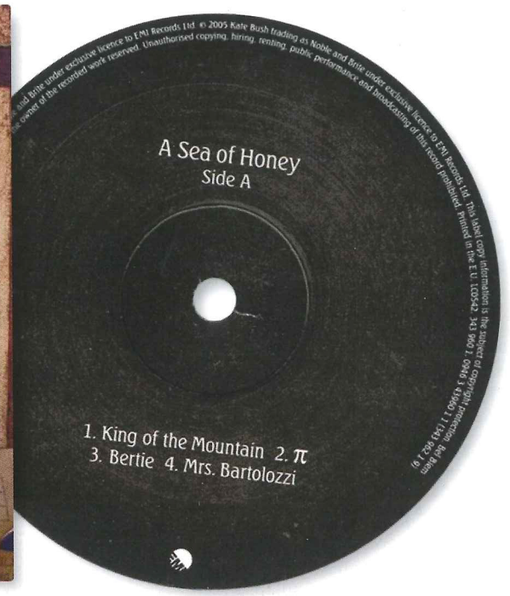
by MICHAEL BONNER

TO ROCK STARS of a certain disposition, 'getting it together in the country' provides the opportunity to reconnect with a restful and more bucolic environment. To the affluent middle classes, meanwhile, it marks the moment when city living is no longer tenable and a migration in pursuit of wider spaces, cleaner living and better schools is required.

But to Kate Bush, moving out of London offered both those things. In 1998, Bush, her partner Danny McIntosh and their newborn son, Albert, relocated to a former mill house situated on a small islet on the River Kennet in Berkshire. In the early 2000s, Bush also invested in another property, a coastal residence overlooking the sea near Chivelstone, on the southernmost tip of Devon. Mill houses, windswept clifftops, a young heir... admittedly, these might sound like plot elements from a Brontë novel, but Kate Bush's decision to absent herself from the public eye proved to be not only recuperative but also creatively inspiring. *Aerial* eulogised certain aspects of Bush's new life as a devoted mother – but it also truffled out a particularly English magic lying within her surroundings. Everything from birdsong to household chores were illuminated by Bush's imaginative powers. Young Bertie himself was memorialised in a Renaissance madrigal. An elderly brown jug evoked memories of Bush's cherished late mother. The sunsets out across the English Channel became transformed into an "Endless Sea Of Honey". Among the album's many phantasmagorical components were a labyrinth, a submerged city and a witchy incantation that bestows invisibility on its user. It was gratifying to discover that Bush's aesthetic remained as vivid as ever in the 12 years since she'd made *The Red Shoes*.

> HERE, BUSH IS CAVORTING WITH THE NEW DAWN, ALIVE WITH REBIRTH AND RENEWAL

In fact, *Aerial* amplified themes and traits Bush had explored on many previous records. *Lionheart*'s "*Mr P Pan whose tricks keep us on our toes*" appears to have morphed into another boy-sprite, Bertie, while one more "airy spirit" was summoned from Prospero's cave by the album's title. Structurally, meanwhile, *Aerial* echoes *Hounds Of Love*: the first disc, "A Sea Of Honey", collects seven unconnected songs, while the second,



subtitled "A Sky Of Honey", features a conceptual song-cycle tracing the arc of a day.

The first song on *Aerial*, "King Of The Mountain", was also the oldest. Interviewed on Radio 4's *Front Row* in November 2005, Bush admitted she had written the song "nine or ten years ago... then I probably didn't record anything again for maybe two or three years." A fanciful rumination on fame and lost innocence, the song pictures a carefree Elvis Presley, far away from prying eyes, tobogganing through a snowy wilderness on Charles Foster Kane's totemic sledge, Rosebud. Presley joined a small but elite group of historical dreamers and visionaries who appear in Bush's songs, among them Frederick Delius, Bess Houdini, Wilhelm Reich and – elsewhere on *Aerial* – Joan Of Arc. But more pertinently, "King Of The Mountain" demonstrated how Bush had moved forward creatively since 1993. She closed *The Red Shoes* with "You're The One", an anonymous ballad featuring some Big Guitar from Jeff Beck; *Aerial*, meanwhile, opens with a dubby Balearic chug plastered with big '80s rock drums and flimsy knots of synth.

Aerial represents the biggest stylistic jump in Bush's career – inevitable, perhaps, considering the amount of time that had passed since she last released music, and the attendant developments in technology during that period. But it doesn't always work; nailed to conventional structure, "King Of The Mountain" is one of the least adventurous songs on *Aerial*. At least "π" feels like Bush beginning to grapple with more unconventional musical ideas. That said, "π" never develops conceptually much beyond the initial premise of a "*sweet and gentle and sensitive man/With an obsessive nature and deep fascination/For numbers*": all Bush does is restate the formula for π and underline how much "*he does love his numbers*". Musically, though, it spins out into light jazz stylings, some fretless bass and rippling acoustic melodies.

"Bertie" is the only song on the album that's explicitly about her son. Cast as an Elizabethan madrigal – Eligio Quinteiro and Robin Jeffrey are credited with "renaissance guitar" and "renaissance percussion" – the song finds Bush rapturously cooing to her "*lovely, lovely, lovely, lovely Bertie*". For all its rather eccentric musical qualities, in many respects "Bertie" is central to understanding *Aerial*. After all, Bush put her career on hold to concentrate on her son's upbringing. But on a less prosaic level, it's possible that *Aerial* reflects Bertie's own childlike wonder at the natural world: "*Mummy, daddy, the day is full of birds*", he breathlessly announces later.

The piano-led "Mrs Bartolozzi" marks a shift into richer, more nuanced songwriting. Bush frontloads the song with dreary domestic details about cleaning mud off the carpet on a rainy Wednesday, but these unassuming qualities conspire to make the song's eventual shift into magic realism all the more vivid. The hypnotic oscillations of the washing machine induce a watery reverie in which an absent, much-missed individual is seemingly glimpsed close by – "*I think I see you standing outside/But it's just your shirt/Hanging on the washing line*". The song's strong emotional pull, however, recedes back into the washing machine drum and the song resolves itself into the language of bland advertising slogans: "*Make those cuffs and collars gleam/Everything clean and shiny*". A return to the humdrum, if you like. Its scope ranges from ineffable to domestic detail; its delivery delicately, unforgettably poignant.

"How To Be Invisible" feels less remarkable. Musically the least adventurous song on *Aerial*, its mid-tempo chug recalls generic FM rock – Texas, for some reason, spring to mind. That said, Bush's spell for invisibility is a jolly enough wheeze, whose instructions include "*take a pinch of keyhole/And fold yourself up/You cut along a dotted line/You think inside out*". "Joanni" finds Bush referring back to the chunky Balearic vibes of "King Of The Mountain" (although the drum patterns and lilting synths seem to have Neneh Cherry's "Manchild" as a reference). It is glossed by elegant string arrangements by Michael Kamen, in one of his last assignments. As with "Mrs Bartolozzi", the song is ostensibly a celebration of another female archetype – in this instance, Joan Of Arc – but Bush's subject remains inscrutable. We learn only that "*she looks so beautiful in her armour... And she never wears a ring on her finger*". It lacks the shading or romantic sweep of, say, "Houdini". As erratic as "A Sea Of Honey" often is, it ends, satisfyingly, with "A Coral Room" – a warm, intimate piano ballad reminiscent of "This Woman's Work" or "Moments Of Pleasure". The song is preoccupied with several ideas free-associated together – magical environments, Bush's mother, the passing of time, water. It opens with an undersea world – "*a city draped in net*" – before telescoping into a more intimate memory about Bush's mother, triggered by a brown milk jug, before shifting to a "*house draped in net/In a room filled with coral*". Coincidentally, there's an early Bush song called "Atlantis" about another submerged landscape "*covered in coral*", but "A Coral Room" has loftier aspirations. It is possible to admire Bush's innate sense of romance and drama at full tilt as it transitions through these disparate scenes and concepts.

Essentially, though, "A Coral Room" offers a tantalising glimpse of the more accomplished and ambitious structure at work on "An Endless Sky Of Honey". Originally titled "A Sky Of Honey", it ran across nine tracks, with the initial vinyl pressing splitting the music between six tracks on Side Three and the remaining three appearing on Side Four. Admittedly, it works better in the later incarnation as one fluid movement, loosely charting the passage of light from afternoon to sunset. But Bush is also attuned to other, rarified splendours of nature (another interpretation of 'aerial', evidently). The "Prelude" opens with birdsong – seagulls, blackbirds, wood pigeons are all identifiable – before segueing into the "Prologue": all it needs is a "Preface" to complete the set. "Prologue" revisits the piano refrain from "Mrs Bartolozzi" and finds Bush admiring the view from (presumably) Chivelstone out across the English Channel. "*Like the light in Italy/Lost its way across the sea*," she coos. "An Architect's Dream" and "The Painter's Link" (the latter featuring Rolf Harris) continue to explore the journey of light and its effects, in this instance, on a painter; it touches, too, on the creative process and how unexpected and random factors (in this case, a spot of rain) can themselves spontaneously generate new ideas.

Up until now, "An Endless Sky Of Honey" is typically pastoral; soft washes of piano or a sweet dewing of strings. "Sunset", meanwhile, rises in an urgent thrum of acoustic guitars. It's some of her richest writing, watching the light change over the land, "*sands sing in crimson, red and dust*". A celebration of the gloaming rendered in discreet jazzy stylings, "Somewhere In Between" finds Bush transfixed by the time "*where the shadows come to play/'Twixt the day and night/Dancing and skipping/Along a chink of light*", a potent though transitory time, which Bush marks with the mantra, "*Goodbye sun/Goodbye sun*" before Bertie interjects: "*Goodnight mum*". A Midsummer's night is celebrated in "Nocturn", a vivid dream sequence which takes place under "*a diamond night, a diamond sea/And a diamond sky*". The principal musicians who accompany Bush on *Aerial* – including McIntosh and Palmer – have up to this point largely been at their gentlest and most discretely responsive. But on "Nocturn" and the title track, they allow themselves the opportunity to cut loose a little. While Bush rejoices in the new day – "*I feel I want to be up on the roof*" – McIntosh in particular throws himself into the merriment delivering some spirited, if nevertheless relatively polite, guitar work that recalls Bush's old mentor, David Gilmour. There is a kind of pagan sensibility at work here in this final stretch, communing and cavorting with the new dawn, alive with rebirth and renewal.

Released in the winter of 2005, *Aerial*'s warm, summery qualities were at odds with the prevailing weather. Storms were recorded in Totnes, near the Bush residence at Chivelstone, on November 7, the day *Aerial* went on sale, with heavy snow arriving in the weeks that followed. But despite such meteorological misalignment, *Aerial* was dependable in other areas. Its mood and tone were consistent – though, curiously, it was Bush's most diverse album, morphing between jazz, electronica, prog, symphonic pop and rock. "Every time I make an album, I don't want it to be a continuation of what I've done before," she told *Front Row*. "It's very important for me that I feel that I'm doing something new."

THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"*Aerial* is a tour de force of chanting vocals, mind-bending sounds that come out of nowhere and lyrics that hit ravishingly romantic highs. It's a triumph"
ALEX NEEDHAM, NME, 12/12/2005

"...it's a magnificently quixotic attempt. *Aerial* is a madly ambitious, darkly despondent and goofily exuberant grand folly of a record; a reminder of an eccentric recklessness and grand aspiration so much British pop has lost."
STEPHEN TROUSSÉ, UNCUT, 12/2005

AERIAL REPRESENTS THE BIGGEST STYLISTIC JUMP IN KATE BUSH'S CAREER

Attuned to the splendours of nature... Bush in 2005

TRACKMARKS AERIAL

CD1
1 King Of The Mountain ★★★
2 π ★★★
3 Bertie ★★★
4 Mrs Bartolozzi ★★★★★
5 How To Be Invisible ★★★
6 Joanni ★★★
7 A Coral Room ★★★★★

CD2
1 Prelude ★★★★
2 Prologue ★★★★
3 An Architect's Dream ★★★
4 The Painter's Link ★★★
5 Sunset ★★★★
6 Aerial Tal ★★★
7 Somewhere In Between ★★★★
8 Nocturn ★★★★★
9 Aerial ★★★★★

Label: EMI
Produced by: Kate Bush
Recorded: Berkshire; Abbey Road, London
Personnel: Kate Bush (vocals, piano and keyboards), Peter Erskine, Stuart Elliott, Steve Sanger (drums), Eberhard Weber, John Giblin, Del Palmer (bass), Bosco D'Oliveira (perc), Dan McIntosh (guitars), Gary Brooker (Hammond organ), Rolf Harris (didgeridoo, and vocals as The Painter, a character in "A Sky Of Honey"), Lol Creme, Gary Brooker, Paddy Bush (backing vocals), Michael Wood (male vocal on "A Coral Room"), Chris Hall (accordion), Richard Campbell, Susan Pell (viols), Eligio Quinteiro (renaissance guitar), Robin Jeffrey (renaissance percussion), Albert McIntosh (The Sun, a character in "A Sky Of Honey"), Bill Dunne ("Bertie" string arrangement), Michael Kamen (orchestral arrangements), London Metropolitan Orchestra conducted by Michael Kamen at Abbey Road Studios
Highest chart position: UK 3; US 48

RELEASED: **16 MAY 2011**

DIRECTOR'S CUT

Take two! A mature Bush reworks the key songs of *The Sensual World* and *The Red Shoes*. An analogue upgrade, or unnecessary tinkering? *by* ROB YOUNG

IN THE WORLD of cinema, the appearance of a director's cut several years after the official release often suggests dissatisfaction with the first draft; raises the spectre of creative bust-ups behind the scenes; even a delayed revenge by the auteur upon the manipulative studio and producers.

When the news emerged that Kate Bush was unveiling her own *Director's Cut* in 2011, featuring 11 reworkings of tracks from the 'difficult' two albums *The Sensual World* and *The Red Shoes*, it was hard to fathom why such a gesture could be necessary, particularly since the waits between releases of new material were by now a decade-long or more. Were we being encouraged to think of Bush's earlier efforts as a false start, botched masterpieces, decisions forced upon her against her will? An admission, perhaps, that to her ears the first versions she committed and let loose were somehow compromised? That they were recorded during a personally fraught period and therefore tainted? Why, the most ardent fans would scream, tamper with perfection?

For this project, Bush re-recorded three tracks ("Rubberband Girl", "This Woman's Work" and "Moments Of Pleasure") from scratch. As for the rest, all have new lead vocals and most are tweaked, re-pitched and overdubbed in different ways, often with additional musicians. The overall impression is less of a mere remix, more like a familiar gallery after a significant re-hang. Many of the songs are in an entirely different key from their earlier incarnations – testimony perhaps to Bush's maturing larynx. And the new material was proudly announced as recorded with analogue technology, contributing to a pronounced softening, blurring of the edges of what 20 years previously was a rather bright, harsh recording ambience. This was most apparent on "Rubberband Girl", *Director's Cut*'s final track. Danny Thompson, twanging away on a wood bass, Dan McIntosh thrashing away on a honky tonk guitar, and Brendan Power's rootsy harmonica, put the song over like 1969-era Stones or The Who – that is, at least, until Bush's Tangerine Dream-y synth solo coasts over the top. The awkward mismatch of styles, and the feeling of packing a diminished punch set

THE BEST MOMENTS HERE ARE INFORMED BY TWO DECADES OF EXPERIENCE AND REFLECTION

against the original, is a sensation common to much of this collection.

In 1989, "The Sensual World" burst like a ripened fruit out of the beginning of its namesake album, with an adorable combination of serpentine Celtic pipes, the unearthly tones of the Trio Bulgarka and Bush's stream of consciousness adaptation of Molly Bloom's steamed-up monologue from James Joyce's *Ulysses*. On the retitled "Flower Of The Mountain", Bush was finally granted permission to quote Joyce verbatim, but her former opening line, "*Then I'm taking the kiss of seed cake back from his mouth/Going deep south, going down/Mmmm, yes*," makes a hands-down sexier pop lyric than Joyce's own, "*First I gave him the bit of seedcake out of my mouth/And it was leap year like now/yes...*" Although brother Paddy Bush's cane-swishing percussion is bumped up, Davy Spillane's Uilleann pipes are simply less forceful and alluring than they sounded on "The Sensual World"; the remix has shunted them down to play second fiddle to John Sheahan's, er, fiddle. Back in 1989, Bush spoke of her new lyrics allowing Molly Bloom to "step out of the book into real life". On "Flower Of The Mountain", Joyce's heroine slinks back inside the dust jacket.

Bush is in far better voice on "The Song Of Solomon". Again downplaying the Trio Bulgarka, "Solomon" emphasises the warmer, gospelised close harmony lines and adds expansive, oceanic flutter echo to the lead vocal. "Lily" – the second song in a row to draw heavily on religious imagery – returns to the compressed, claustrophobic drum acoustics familiar from *Aerial*'s "King Of The Mountain". It's Steve Gadd on the drum stool, and his beefy beats frame Bush's summoning of angelic forces with monumental power, abetted by the gospelised backing vocals of soul singer Mica Paris. The recurrence of spiritual references in the songs on this album shines a brighter spotlight on this aspect of Bush's development, suggesting as the '80s begat the '90s, she was undergoing some sort of spiritual evolution, even crisis, laden with the symbology of Christianity, apocryphal and apocalyptic thought. (Trio Bulgarka, she admitted, were the closest she had come to hearing the voice of the Big Guy In The Sky.)

"Deeper Understanding" dates from the pre-internet age, but its evocation of computer love and digital solitude rang truer after 22 years than in 1989. An odd yet utterly remarkable song in the first place, it receives by far the oddest re-rub on *Director's Cut*. Its gently pulsing synths – now erased entirely – were more effective the first time around; now the song eddies around a faintly Can-like patter of vaguely martial beats meandering in a laidback tattoo. Her son Bertie provides an angelic Auto-Tune voicing of the synthetic ether, like some replicant version of Aled Jones. A Mississippi harmonica solo punches its way to the fore, adding extra incongruity to the song's already bizarre admixture.

"The Red Shoes", in a distinctly lower key than the original, leaves the thudding kickdrum to do more of the woman's work in conveying the sheer elemental power of Celtic dance. Inspired in part by Bush's fascination with the Powell & Pressburger film of the same name, the song gestures towards ancient myths and legends about folk dances driving people to physical distraction. The sense of demonic possession is enhanced by her ectoplasmic elongations of the phrase "*You gotta dance*" at the end.

"This Woman's Work" – the "Sometimes It Snows In April"-style coda to *The Sensual World* – feels, if anything, more of an eavesdropped private moment in this total rethink: Kate alone with a tremulous electric piano. The song's structure, once relatively conventional, is here carefully shredded into tatters of rueful emotion, unresolved chords fusing with Bush's vocal that at points sounds genuinely wracked and alone. In the last half she's accompanied into the heart of the pain by a duet of digitally processed choirboys – Bertie again, and one Jacob Thorn.

The crackles of an LP run-out groove have been added to the start of "Moments Of Pleasure", the symphonically lush, rapturous orchestrated song from *The Red Shoes*. Stripped to a piano ballad, this all-new version dissolves more intensely from its opening moments of wonder at time passing, to its shellshocked intimations of mortality. With what appears to be a recently developed lisp, Bush's recall of her mother saying "*Every old sock needs a shoe*" releases more ghost memories, partners, friends and colleagues lost but remaining in the mind. Where once there was reverie, here there is a distinctly bittersweet sense of regret and absence.

Those sensations continue into a distinctly more minimalist version of "Never Be Mine". Opening with a piano riff that recalls, of all things, The Police's "Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic", the track is enhanced by new drum patterns played by Steve Gadd, and a yearning guitar monologue, which Bush's current partner Dan McIntosh keeps up throughout. Cold thoughts of unattainable desires are now re-couched in softer, warmer acoustics, making this one of *Director's Cut*'s better moments.

Next, a number that was once a plangent lover's last gasp, transformed into a final flare of dying passion. On *The Red Shoes*, "Top Of The City" was a love-hate hyperballad to London, one final throw of the dice at the end of a relationship, recorded with white-light digital clarity. The re-recording wears a slouchier hat in its verses, with an indolent backbeat, but rages into its surging crescendoes with splashy pomp-rock drums and power chords, Bush's voice grating with serrated desperation. Certainly one of the tracks that justifies its revamp, an intepretation informed by two further decades of experience and reflection.

As on "Top Of The City", the synthetic, fuzzy drum sounds on the original "And So Is Love" were removed in 2011, replaced by more organic, softer sounds, and once again, in a voice that emanates from deeper and lower in the body, Bush now sounds less vulnerable. The faders are pushed up to allow Gary Brooker's Hammond organ a larger presence in the frame, while Eric Clapton's guitar daubs the same shades of blue as before. After grooving, Traffic-style, for a few bars, the track bows out with an achingly brief funky flourish, and all that remains is for the album to wind up with the spirited rendition of "Rubberband Girl" mentioned previously.

THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"The best moments are the most unexpected, such as 'Top Of The City', which explodes into colour where preciously its sting was dulled. Her vocals now sound stately, and the impression is of a grande dame breathing new life into work made as an ingénue."
PRIYA ELAN, NME, 14/5/2011

"Here she sounds revitalised. After the intermission of *Aerial*, could this mark the real beginning of the second act of Kate Bush's brilliant career?"
STEPHEN TROUSSÉ, UNCUT, 6/2011

Cut! Kate Bush in 2011

In one of the most frequently reproduced press photos accompanying *Director's Cut*, Bush portrayed herself in less flattering terms than she ever had before. Clutching a pair of scissors and a length of celluloid in hands shrouded in black fingerless gloves, and with a manically loosened tie, she was made up to look sleeplessly obsessive, with kohl-slathered eyes that looked more Siouxsie Sioux than KT Bush. (She appeared in other shots as a half-dressed pierrot, as a director framing shots with her fingers in front of some two-dimensional shadow puppets, and completely blacked up, apart from the circle of her face.) Inside the booklet was a mini-portfolio of commissioned shots by Tim Walker, a *Vogue* photographer whose work typically depicts lavishly dilapidated grandeur.

The images are exquisitely stage-managed around what looks like a mansion full of magic. Fish- and raven-headed semi-nudes wander through the scenes carrying instruments or climbing ladders that lead to nowhere; illuminated chandeliers glide over polished tiled floors; a bat-winged gentleman embraces Kate in a battered black suit of armour in a dingy cellar; a flying weathervane lifts an enormous bird's nest upwards through a gap in the ceiling. Rather than 'illustrating' the tracks on the album, the images suggested the surreal interiorised filmic spaces of a Cocteau, Lynch or the ritualistic scenes of Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut*. They offered a reminder that the role of fantasy, surrealism and cinematic wonderment was still very present in Bush's musical imagination.

AFTER 22 YEARS, "DEEPER UNDERSTANDING" RINGS TRUER THAN ON ITS ORIGINAL RELEASE

The film terminology of the director's cut was, of course, perfectly appropriate for an artist for whom the cinema has always played such an inspirational role. Far from tightening up her earlier work or making peace with departed spirits, these sequences, re-shot in a more muted palette, have exchanged wide-eyed innocence for reflection and introversion. Had Bush now made her peace with these strange beasts? The answer was lost in the rush, later that same year, to appreciate her first entirely new opus for six years... KB

TRACKMARKS — DIRECTOR'S CUT

1 Flower Of The Mountain ★★★
2 Song Of Solomon ★★★★
3 Lily ★★★★
4 Deeper Understanding ★★★★
5 The Red Shoes ★★★★
6 This Woman's Work ★★★★★
7 Moments Of Pleasure ★★★★
8 Never Be Mine ★★★★
9 Top Of The City ★★★★★
10 And So Is Love ★★★
11 Rubberband Girl ★★★★

Label: Fish People/EMI
Produced by: Kate Bush
Personnel includes: Kate Bush (vocals, bk vocals, keys), Dan McIntosh (gtr), Steve Gadd (drums), Paddy Bush (perc, flute, mandola, mandolin, whistle, bow, bk vocals), John Giblin, Del Palmer, Danny Thompson, Eberhard Weber (bass), Nigel Kennedy (violin, viola), Eric Clapton (guitar), Gary Brooker (Hammond), Brendan Power (harm), Davy Spillane (pipes, whistle), Trio Bulgarka (vocals), Albert McIntosh (PC, bk vocals), Remi Butler, Jud Charlton, Lily Cornford, David Crofts, Terry Jones, Hazel Pethig (performers/narr), Mr Smith (conductor), Waynflete Chamber Choir
Highest chart position: UK 2; US 19

RELEASED: **21 NOVEMBER 2011**

50 WORDS FOR SNOW

Wenceslasaire! Spangladasha! Shnamistoflopp'n! Hot on the heels of *Director's Cut*, Kate Bush enters a winter wonderland. *by* JOHN MULVEY

EVER SINCE *Hounds Of Love*, Kate Bush has generally made her albums at a gentle, ruminative pace. Elevated acts of creation have intertwined with more modest domestic business; rhythms have been set and punctuated by births, marriages and deaths. Once the intense period of completion, release and strategically charming promotion has passed, Bush retreats again, by her own admission exhausted and unfocused. The gaps between albums become agonising: four years; four years; 12 years; six years.

After she completed the strange history project of *Director's Cut*, however, Bush found herself carried along by an uncharacteristic sense of momentum. *Director's Cut*, she told BBC 6 Music in November 2011, was "a really difficult album to make. As soon as I finished that there was this incredible sense of elation, because suddenly I could start from scratch. I could write new songs and I could go wherever I wanted... I wouldn't say easy, but [*50 Words For Snow*] wasn't a difficult album to make."

For the first time since the late '70s. Bush was working on overlapping projects. On the day Elton John recorded his vocals for "Snowed In At Wheeler Street", Bush was also conducting interviews to promote *Director's Cut*. The compositional methods, too, recalled that formative period. "In a way, this album is probably the most similar to [*The Kick Inside*]," she told 6 Music, "because so much of it was to do with sitting down at the piano and writing the songs before I went into the studio. With some other albums I've actually written in the studio, just put rough ideas down and then developed them."

> KATE BUSH HAS NEVER MADE A RECORD THAT'S SO ETHEREALLY DISDAINFUL OF CONVENTION

But if the gestation of *50 Words For Snow* suggested raw urgency, the finished album is something quite different. As the first three, piano-led songs unravel over 35 minutes, Bush has never sounded quite so unhurried, so meditative. "Snowflake", "Lake Tahoe" and "Misty" take their cues from "Mrs Bartolozzi" and "A Coral Room" on 2005's *Aerial*, and from the stripped-back and wistful version of "Moments Of Pleasure" on *Director's Cut*. Much of the meticulous, layered density of Bush's trademark sound has gone, if not the otherworldly potency.

Released on the UK on November 21, *50 Words For Snow* is a calculatedly seasonal album, though one that operates on a transcendentally different level to 1980's "December Will Be Magic Again". The air of enchantment remains, but the subject is transient moments; the brief lives of snowflakes and snowmen, uncanny visitations on frozen lakes, a humane love song for a yeti. An album, perhaps, about evanescence.

As with 2014's Before The Dawn show, Bush's son Bertie McIntosh, 13 at the time, takes a critical role. His is the first voice heard on the album as "Snowflake" begins; "*I was born in a cloud*," he sings, high and fragile, in a song that, it transpired, had been written for him. "He can reach these incredibly beautiful pure notes, very similar to a chorister," Bush said in her BBC 6 Music interview, "and quite soon he'll lose that voice as he starts to grow older. I wanted to try to capture his voice on tape at this point in the song that I really hoped would show him off, so I wrote the song for him, but also I was kind of drawing this parallel between the fleetingness of his voice, and the life of a snowflake."

Magnificently little happens in "Snowflake". Bush's simple, ebbing piano line cycles around and around, but it's the measure and space between the notes that's most striking, reminiscent of Keith Jarrett, or of Mark Hollis' 1998 solo album. When her voice responds to her son, it's with maternal protectiveness and reassurance: "*The world is so loud/Keep falling/I'll find you.*" The two voices reflect each other well, so much so that McIntosh, last heard Auto-Tuned and dehumanised on the *Director's Cut* version of "Deeper Understanding", resembles Bush being rechannelled through the larynx of an ingenuous choirboy.

More notably, the contrast of innocence and experience make it seem as if Bush's voice is not what it was. Where once it soared and ululated in such an untethered way, here it's often deeper, warmer, evoking a sort of curdled soulfulness. Bush's live performance in Before The Dawn would prove that her range remained impressive, but one of the marked poignancies of *50 Words For Snow* is that, while her subject matter is more ethereal than ever, she addresses it in much more human and earthy tones.

"Lake Tahoe" also finds Bush contracting out some high notes, in this case to two classical singers, Stefan Roberts and Michael Wood, whose Schubert-like passages alternate with bluesier ones sung by Bush. The lake, in Bush's telling, is haunted by the sort of ghost whose fate is rendered more moving by the mundanity of her actions: a woman in Victorian dress, calling for a lost dog named Snowflake; a house inadvertently abandoned, where "*The beds are made/The table is laid.*" The atmosphere is consistent with that of "Snowflake", but as "Lake Tahoe" slowly works itself out over 11 minutes, and Jonathan Tunick's heroically restrained orchestrations shadow Bush's piano moves, a key player moves to the fore: drummer Steve Gadd, whose CV (Steely Dan, Eric Clapton, James Brown, Paul McCartney, Paul Simon et al) provides a serendipitous link between *50 Words For Snow* and "50 Ways To Leave Your Lover".

Gadd is a newcomer to Bush's long-nurtured team, only arriving during the *Director's Cut* sessions, but on the outstanding "Misty", he joins Bush (piano) and Danny Thompson (double bass) in a tight, intuitive trio that best captures the untreated, live-sounding vibe of *50 Words For Snow*. For 13 and a half minutes, Gadd and Thompson help Bush achieve something extraordinary, even by her standards. "Misty" is a torch song, with gently kicking jazz undercurrents, that makes nuanced romantic currency out of a truly preposterous idea.

Even in the hinterlands of myth, the notion of sex with snowmen seems rather a neglected subject. Hans Christian Andersen tells of a snowman who, promisingly, falls in love, though the object of his affection turns out to be a stove rather than a mortal. One looks in vain for much evidence of an eroticised Frosty in, say, Angela Carter: evidently, such a combination of the twee and the sensuous is too much for most committed fabulists.

Bush, however, is not one to shirk that kind of creative challenge: "Misty" is a 14-minute love song to a snowman. Logic, at this point, would suggest that the snowman is actually a metaphor for a particularly short-lived lover, or a frigid one. The evidence, though, seems to demand a more literal explanation, corroborated by Bush in an interview with *The Quietus*. "I think in that particular song," she revealed, "obviously there is a sexual encounter going on."

When her narrator wakes after their "*one and only tryst*", then, Misty has melted away, leaving wet sheets and "*dead leaves, bits of twisted branches*" on her pillow. Should ambiguity remain, the album's front cover dissolves it utterly. A bas-relief, apparently made out of ice, portrays a snowman's puckered lips touching those of a young girl. Alone, "Misty" is one of Bush's greatest and most tender songs. As the climax of *50 Words For Snow*'s opening suite, following "Snowflake" and "Lake Tahoe", the underlying theme of fleeting beauty and pleasure is amplified to an even greater degree. From austere and absurd materials, the cumulative effect is remarkable.

It would, though, be expecting a little too much for even Bush to sustain such a heightened atmosphere for another half hour. Consequently, the second phase of *50 Words For Snow* is more diverse and less satisfying.

"Wild Man" is fine, a sensual pursuit of the yeti, though amidst a scree of esoteric reference – the "*Kangchenjunga Demon*", "*Metoh-Kangmi*" – the word "yeti" is never actually used. "I think we're very arrogant in our separation from the animal kingdom, and generally as a species we are enormously arrogant and aggressive," she told *The Quietus*.

Bush delivers her plea for tolerance of the natural world as a kind of incantatory, whispered rap, over music that's a sprung cousin to "Somewhere In Between" from *Aerial*. The chorus is shared by Andy Fairweather-Low; another musician from a generation, slightly older than Bush, that she has called on throughout her career.

That generation, often assumed to be conservative, has magically sounded radical in Bush's company. Not all dinosaurs, though, can be taught new tricks so easily. "Snowed In At Wheeler Street" charts the progress of two lovers who keep reconnecting at crisis points in history, and features Bush drawn into a stand-off with one of her earliest heroes, Elton John (contemporaneous interviews found her lavish in her praise, with particular reference to 1971's *Madman Across The Water*). The backing is nearly ambient, but Bush over-emotes, as if she is straining to match John's histrionics rather than forcing him to play her more subtle game.

At time of writing, the last image of Bush released to the press pictured her at John's wedding in December 2014, alongside the groom, Gary Barlow, Lulu and Ed Sheeran.

The spotlight is also shared on the title track, with Stephen Fry cast as Dr Joseph Yupik (Yupiks being an Eskimo tribe of Siberia and Alaska), goaded by Bush – "*Come on Joe, you've got 32 to go!*" – into finding 50 synonyms for snow; the oft-repeated claim that the Inuits actually did have that number of words for the white stuff being untrue, of course. The droll neologising – "*Wenceslasaire*", "*spangladasha*", "*shnamistoflopp'n*", "*Zhivagodamarbletash*" – is good fun, and the soft urgency of the music reiterates the genteel rave influence that crept into the second half of *Aerial*; a permafrosted yin to "A Sky Of Honey"'s summery yang. At the same time, the reliance on Fry's reputation as bibliophilic fount of all knowledge is a useful counterpoint to the myth of Bush being disconnected from the real world. "50 Words For Snow", for better or worse, feels like it could have been conceived while slumped in front of Fry's *QI* on a Friday night.

This, then, is the paradox of *50 Words For Snow*. Kate Bush has never made a record that seems so ethereally disdainful of convention as *50 Words For Snow*, of the parameters, themes and expectations of a simple pop song. But at the same time, she has never seemed so normal: a little indulgent to celebrity; acutely aware, in her use of her son, Roberts and Wood, of how time has brought a degree of mortal vulnerability to her voice. All things must pass – except, perhaps, seraphim.

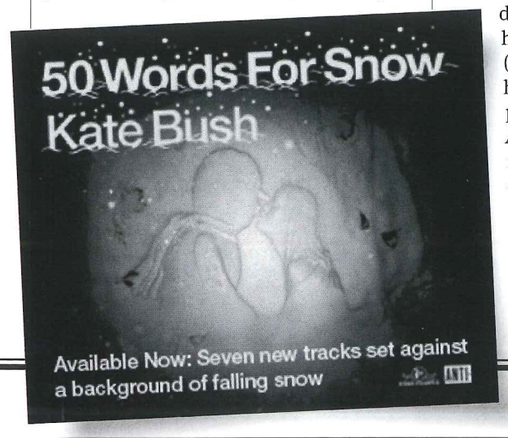
50 Words For Snow ends with another beautiful and glacial piano song, "Among Angels", where Bush identifies heavenly bodies clustered around her subject. "*If you need us, just call*," she consoles, "*Rest your weary world in their hands/Lay your broken laugh at their feet.*" It provides, too, an explicit link with *Director's Cut*, and Bush's remake of "Lily", its invocation of Gabriel and Raphael, Michael and Uriel. There is little of winter in "Among Angels" – in fact, the angels "*shimmer like mirrors in summer*" – which is probably why it became the only song from *50 Words For Snow* to be integrated into Before The Dawn; a gentle coda to end a pageant that had been opened, neatly enough, by "Lily".

Thematic incompatibility, rather than artistic disillusionment, almost certainly lay behind the decision to omit these songs. Nevertheless, *50 Words For Snow* signalled an alternative path that Bush could have taken with her return to live performance – if only Bertie's voice had never broken, things could have been so different...

THE CRITICS' VERDICT

"It is, perhaps, a blessing and a curse that Kate Bush can no longer be mistaken for an angel herself."
JOHN MULVEY, UNCUT, 12/2011

"In the cool atmosphere of opener 'Snowflake', the soft impact of piano and muffled drums conjures the feel of thick fluffy snowfall."
EMILY MACKAY, NME, 26/11/2011



Songs of glacial beauty... Bush in 2011

EVEN IN MYTH, THE NOTION OF SEX WITH SNOWMEN SEEMS RATHER A NEGLECTED SUBJECT...

TRACKMARKS 50 WORDS FOR SNOW

1 Snowflake ★★★★★
2 Lake Tahoe ★★★★★
3 Misty ★★★★★
4 Wild Man ★★★
5 Snowed In At Wheeler Street ★★
6 50 Words For Snow ★★★
7 Among Angels ★★★★

Label: EMI
Recorded at: AIR studios, London
Produced by: Kate Bush
Personnel: Kate Bush (vocals, bass, piano, keyboards), Dan McIntosh (guitar), Danny Thompson (bass), Del Palmer (bass, bells), John Giblin (bass), Steve Gadd (drums), Albert McIntosh (vocals), Andy Fairweather Low (vocals), Elton John (vocals), Michael Wood (vocals), Stefan Roberts (vocals), Stephen Fry (vocals), Jonathan Tunick (orchestra arrangements and conductor)
Highest chart position: UK 5; US 83

JOHN CARDER BUSH

RELEASED: **25 NOVEMBER 2016**

BEFORE THE DAWN

A waking dream: the extraordinary stage show, faithfully rendered in sound. *"You know what, I love you better..."*
by GRAEME THOMSON

IN THE IMMEDIATE aftermath of Kate Bush's return to live performance in August 2014, following an absence of 35 years, it was almost impossible to take an objective reading. Bushmania had taken hold in the lead-up to her run of 22 dates at London's Eventim Apollo. Every newspaper and magazine seemed awash with profiles, puff and feverish speculation; the BBC aired a new documentary; two photographic exhibitions opened in London; her songs were all over the radio, and most of her albums were heading back into the charts.

Expectations were not so much high as stratospheric. Oddness abounded. On the night on which I attended, a man along the row shook everybody's hand before the show began. Strangers hugged. Couples wept. This was most assuredly not Shed Seven reconvening at the Astoria.

Thankfully, 'Before The Dawn' was built to withstand such madness. Pivoting on two conceptual pieces, released 20 years apart, it was an intoxicating mix of music, theatre, film, art, puppetry and bad comedy. Revisiting 'The Ninth Wave', from her 1985 masterwork *Hounds Of Love*, and 'A Sky Of Honey', the second disc of her 2005 double *Aerial*, Bush took the audience to the depths of the ocean, through the arc of a summer's day, and finally into the air. There were shipwrecks, skeletal sea creatures, witch trials, helicopters, bird masks and Moorish walled cities. 'Before The Dawn' demanded complete immersion – no smartphones allowed, on pain of death, or at least expulsion – but our dutiful dedication was rewarded. At the end, we were decanted back into the west London night as though returning from some distant dream of a country.

> BUSH'S VOICE REMAINS A WONDER... THESE DAYS IT'S DEEPER AND HUSKIER...

Some of the shows were filmed, but even now there has been no word of a DVD or cinematic release. Perhaps the rigours of transferring stage magic to screen gold proved too exacting. Instead, after a cooling-off period of two years, *Before The Dawn* was presented as a purely musical experience. Released as download, triple-CD and quadruple vinyl, it documented the entire show, in sequence. For those invested in the historic drama surrounding Bush's return to live performance, it was a godsend. For those less committed

souls, it presented some challenges.

You could certainly spend time grumbling about what *Before The Dawn* isn't. It's definitively not Kate Bush exploring all corners of her criminally underperformed catalogue. Nothing here pre-dates 1985, and the vast majority of the 27 songs are taken from just two albums: *Hounds Of Love* and *Aerial*, alongside one each from *The Sensual World* and *50 Words For Snow*, and two from *The Red Shoes*. A new song, "Tawny Moon", is slotted into 'A Sky Of Honey', and it's good, a churning, mechanical piece of modern blues, sung gamely by Bush's teenage son Bertie McIntosh.

Rather than present one full show in its entirety, Bush chose to stitch together performances from throughout the run. This allows for the inclusion of a wonderful rehearsal version of "Never Be Mine", a piece of pastoral ECM restored to the running order after being dropped at the 11th hour. It appears during Act One, the part of 'Before The Dawn' which most resembles a conventional concert. This is the opening seven-song sequence where Bush ticks off some hits and performs them straight.

The rolling rhythm and quicksilver synthetic pulse of "Running Up That Hill" is beautifully realised, while a rapturous "Hounds Of Love" locates the taut, wolverine snap of the original. She toys with the chorus melody, throwing in a Turner-esque entreaty to *"tie me to the mast"*, a measured tinkering in keeping with the prevailing musical sensibility. Bush, the ultimate studio artist, opts for faithful reproductions of her oeuvre with just a few twists. Nothing has been re-recorded or overdubbed; presumably there was no need. The band of stellar sessionmen are supple, empathetic and meticulous, as is the chorus of supporting actors and singers recruited mainly from musical theatre. Among their ranks young Bertie, only 16 at the time, does a remarkably proficient job.

Bush's voice remains a wonder. These days it's deeper and huskier, cross-hatched with bluesy ululations and soulful stylings. On the opening "Lily", she sings like a lioness, drawing sparks from the words *"fire"* and *"darkness"* over a thick, plush groove. During a terrifically showbizzy "Top Of The City", she rises from a serene whisper to a banshee howl. Riding the chimeric reggae of "King Of The Mountain" she transitions from sensuous earth mother to lowering Prospero, summoning the tempest during the tumultuous, drum-heavy, propulsive climax.

This is a key moment in *Before The Dawn*, a hinge between the straight gig and the theatrics which follow. From now on, listening to the album is sometimes akin to hearing the soundtrack to a film being screened in another room. Act Two, 'The Ninth Wave', is particularly tricky in this regard. The conceptual suite about a woman lost at sea after a ship sinks lends itself to a sustained visual experience, but has to work harder on record. At Hammersmith, "Hello Earth" was staggeringly operatic, as dramatic and contemporary as any modern staging of 'The Ring' or 'Parsifal'. Here, it is merely – *merely* – a magnificent piece of music.

Similarly, onstage, "Astronomer's Call", co-written with novelist David Mitchell and voiced by Kevin Doyle, aka Molesley in *Downton Abbey*, was a technical necessity, a chance to lay out some slightly clumsy exposition while the stage was being reset. Arguably, there is no virtue in its being included here aside from historical accuracy. The same is true of a sub-*Outnumbered*, hammy am-dram domestic skit – *"shitty shitty bang bang"*, *"jellyvision"* and all – featuring Bertie McIntosh and Bob Harms. It has been shortened, but should probably have been removed entirely.

At times like these, *Before The Dawn* is unsure whether it's a cast recording of a West End musical or a live album. The music, however, is uniformly wonderful. On "Under Ice" the band lock into the song's oppressive, jagged rhythm, perfectly articulating its chilly claustrophobia. "Waking The Witch" becomes a frantic six-minute soul-funk work-out, stabs of organ and distorted guitar merging over the screams of the Witchmaster, played with terrifying plausibility by Jo Servi. "Jig Of Life" is all flinty Celtic rhythm, with Kevin McAlea – the sole remaining member from Bush's Tour Of Life band – excelling on the uilleann pipes. After the dark drama of "Hello Earth", "Morning Fog" arrives like light flooding the room. It's easeful and organic, burnished with acoustic guitar and accordion. Saved from the sea, Bush has slipped out of character and is restored to herself, murmuring like a newly woken lover. When she softly sings *"You know what, I love you better,"* the crowd embrace it as an affirmation of their enduring loyalty and cheer wildly. It's a lovely moment.

The meditative feel holds for the opening part of Act Three, 'A Sky Of Honey'. It's a more unified piece than 'The Ninth Wave', the songs eliding seamlessly, allowing for full immersion. The mood is slow, stoned, dream-like. "Prologue", a 10-minute tour de force dominated by Bush's rippling piano and John Giblin's lyrical bass, is lifted by a new, jubilant coda. *"Ding dong, ding dong, ding dong/Bring it on, break it down... summer!"* Bush sings, harmonising with the peal of distant bells. "An Architect's Dream" and "Somewhere In Between" are spotlit as slinky, sensuous explorations of the creative connections which occur in the liminal spaces. The sultry "Sunset" climbs towards a rattling flamenco climax, Mino Cinélu's percussive power pushing the song *"all the way up to the top of the night"*. As Bush sings in her most headily perfumed purr, the thought occurs that her voice has never sounded better. Her maverick instincts, too, remain on point. On "Aerial Tal" she mimics the song of the blackbird over a new-agey wash of synths.

It all leads to the rising, rhythmic 20-minute climax of "Nocturn" and "Aerial". Amid bells and birdsong, a new tension informs the music. Over an angry squall of guitar and a heavy artillery of bass and drums, Bush wails about her *"beautiful wings"* – shades of PJ Harvey here – as the music pushes up and up. It ends with frenzied chanting and what sounds like an explosion. Listeners may imagine Bush disappearing in a puff of smoke; in fact, she was hoisted into the air, black wings and all, airborne at last.

The encores wheel back to the show's no-concept beginnings. She sings "Among Angels" alone at the piano. Almost unspeakably intimate, it's a timely reminder that, for all the theatrics, if Bush were 'just' a singer she would still be utterly remarkable. This is followed by a celebratory "Cloudbusting" – another of her classics which you suddenly realise you've never heard performed live, whether by Bush or anybody else – which sounds like the best kind of circus music. Long and loose, it's a musical smile, *"like the sun coming out"*. And then it's over.

At the start of *Before The Dawn*, after the rousing crowd response to "Lily", Bush chirps, "Oh thank you, what a lovely welcome!" She says little else until the end of "Cloudbusting" when, clearly moved, she exclaims, "Oh my God! What a beautiful sight! Look at you all, I will always remember this." Above all else, the album seems to seek to honour that sentiment, a physical testament to an extraordinary shared moment between artist and audience.

There may have been an argument for excising the dramatic interludes, and perhaps even a handful of songs, in favour of something leaner and more sculpted. But that would be to bind Bush to the conventions she has spent an entire career challenging, and to misunderstand the ambition and intention behind *Before The Dawn*. What we have instead is an exhaustive audio souvenir of a momentous event, simply to remind us – and perhaps Bush, too – that it really did happen after all.

TRACKMARKS
BEFORE THE DAWN

1 Lily ★★★★
2 Hounds Of Love ★★★★
3 Joanni ★★★
4 Top Of The City ★★★★
5 Never Be Mine ★★★★
6 Running Up That Hill ★★★★★
7 King Of The Mountain ★★★★★
8 Astronomer's Call (Spoken Monologue) ★
9 And Dream Of Sheep ★★★★
10 Under Ice ★★★★
11 Waking The Witch ★★★★
12 Watching Them Without Her (Dialogue) ★
13 Watching You Without Me ★★★
14 Little Light ★★
15 Jig Of Life ★★★★
16 Hello Earth ★★★★★
17 The Morning Fog ★★★★
18 Prelude ★★★
19 Prologue ★★★★
20 An Architect's Dream ★★★★
21 The Painter's Link ★★★
22 Sunset ★★★★
23 Aerial Tal ★★★
24 Somewhere In Between ★★★★
25 Tawny Moon ★★★
26 Nocturn ★★★★
27 Aerial ★★★★★
28 Among Angels ★★★★★
29 Cloudbusting ★★★★

Label: Fish People/Rhino
Recorded at: Eventim Apollo, London, 2014
Produced by: Kate Bush
Personnel includes: Kate Bush (vocals, piano, keyboards), David Rhodes (guitar), Friðrik Karlsson (guitar, bouzouki, charango), John Giblin (bass, double bass), Jon Carin (keyboards, guitar, vocals, programming), Kevin McAlea (keyboards, accordion, uilleann pipes), Omar Hakim (drums), Mino Cinélu (percussion), Albert McIntosh, Jo Servi, Bob Harms, Sandra Marvin, Jacqui DuBois (Chorus)
Highest chart position: UK 4; US 121

A momentous event: Bush live at Hammersmith Apollo, London, August 24, 2014

JOHN GIBLIN
Bassist, Before The Dawn

THIS was clearly an incredibly complex and detailed show, musically and dramatically. What did the rehearsal process involve? It was very complex. Kate was under intense pressure from the off. Every element demanded her time and energy. Every detail was under Kate's control, always, and as the rehearsals developed, each of the elements would be vying for more and more of her time. Frustrating for all parties, as only one person knew the answers. That one person had to be there in the room for it to work.

Q&A

Were you aware that you were involved in something historic? From the moment I got the call saying, "I'm going to do some live gigs", I knew this was going to be something historic. Kate does nothing by halves. Everyone involved knew it.

The atmosphere in the audience on the night I attended was extraordinary, unlike any other show I've ever been to. What did it feel like from the stage? I would struggle to compare the energy of a Kate Bush concert to anything. Live Aid in Philadelphia [*with Simple Minds*] was perhaps on a par. On opening night it was euphoric, of course. This was no ordinary concert, but everyone concerned was a pro, and everyone knew their job. It was never going to be less than well-executed. That night we had a group party near to the concert venue. On the final night? I went home!

Were there any particular challenges presented by the more theatrical elements of the show? Timing! the timing of the cues, the ends, the song dynamics. If there was a technical hitch, we improvised.

You've worked with Kate Bush, on and off, for decades. How has her approach to making music changed in that time? [*The first time*] was "Breathing", which came out in 1980. Working with Kate for me was always, and still is, about the unspoken: "Gimme the energy. Gimme something to move the song on."

A rehearsal version of "Never Be Mine" is included on the album, but wasn't part of the show. Were any other songs that were rehearsed or considered but not performed? "Never Be Mine" was my baby. I was sad it was not in the show. I can't remember any other song. Kate was very focused, and very well-prepared.

The shows were filmed. Any word on when we might see 'Before The Dawn' on DVD or in cinemas? Only two nights were filmed. I know nothing more.

Do you think she might perform live again, or did you sense that this fulfilled her desire to return to the stage? Who knows what Kate is thinking? I certainly hope she does it again. ***INTERVIEW: GRAEME THOMSON***

KEN McKAY

"She's all about the art of it"

From theatrical teen prodigy, to pagan pop goddess, to wistful chronicler of the elements… Kate Bush's remarkable albums, dissected by many of her closest collaborators. "She always wants to make sure you're comfortable… She took care of me the way she tried to take care of these songs." *Interview by* GRAEME THOMSON

THE MELODRAMATIC DEBUT

THE KICK INSIDE

EMI, 1978. PRODUCED BY ANDREW POWELL

Recorded when Bush is just 18, this astonishingly accomplished, powerfully feminine record features musicians from Pilot and Cockney Rebel. Feeling her way in the studio, the songs – including the No 1 single "Wuthering Heights" – are already masterful.

ANDREW POWELL (PRODUCER): The selection process was difficult. I've still got about 100 songs on cassettes, some of which I still wish she'd done. "Wow" was on that list, which tells you the quality of what we kept off. "Wuthering Heights" was only written a few days before we went into the studio. Kate came around, sat down at my piano and played it. I said, "Um, yeah, I think we should use that!" It hit me straight away as really extraordinary.

IAN BAIRNSON (GUITAR): She had an endless supply of songs. She'd sit at the piano and say, "Might do this, might not." There was no formula, they were all truly original. So was she. She'd sing the lead vocal with one voice and do backing vocals as a completely different character. You'd think, 'There's a whole cast of people in there.'

POWELL: Everyone realised that this was no ordinary singer-songwriter. It was a fantastically creative atmosphere. We cut three tracks in the first day. We started off with "Moving" and it was done in two hours.

DAVID PATON (BASS): I remember us discussing the album: "It's so different, what will people think?" We thought it was great, but it was a shock when it did so well, so quickly.

SAMPLADELIC EXPLORATIONS

NEVER FOR EVER

EMI, 1980. PRODUCED BY KATE BUSH

Left unsatisfied by her second album, *Lionheart*, Bush breaks from Powell, retains Jon Kelly as co-producer, and dives into the endless sonic possibilities of the Fairlight digital sampler.

JON KELLY: I remember her saying, "Now we have control of what we do." I went to her flat in Brockley just after Christmas [*1979*] and she played me "Babooshka". I thought it was a single straight away. It had the rising chorus and that little piano motif from the very beginning. It had all the ingredients.

JOHN WALTERS (FAIRLIGHT): On "Babooshka" we created a huge mess in Abbey Road's Studio 2 – smashing glasses, sampling them and saving the noises as files in the Fairlight. Kate understood the implications of digital sampling that the Fairlight kicked into play, and grabbed the opportunity with both hands.

BAIRNSON: At one point I think she was confused. It's that thing about having too much choice. Synths, Fairlight, she had all these tools to play with and in some ways it was too much.

MAX MIDDLETON (ORGAN): She wasn't into dissecting music, she wanted it to come together naturally. She'd play the song, we'd watch her, and that was it. She sang "Violin" like she was performing onstage. It was 200 per cent effort every time. I was constantly impressed.

KELLY: There were fabulous sessions in Abbey Road. We played for days under no pressure, just for the joy of it. It was such a creative time.

A METICULOUS MASTERPIECE

THE DREAMING

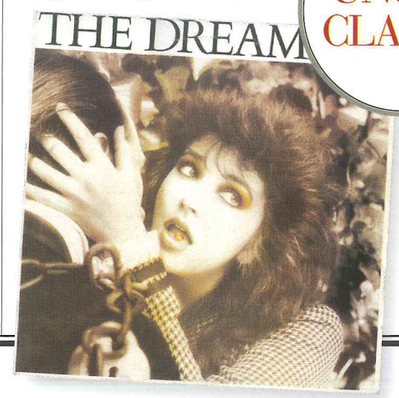
EMI, 1982. PRODUCED BY KATE BUSH

After a stuttering start with Hugh Padgham, Bush painstakingly pieces together her fourth album, working alongside a series of engineers. The results may be defiantly odd – donkey impersonations and Rolf Harris' didgeridoo are just two of many eccentricities – but this multi-layered, polyrhythmic and wildly experimental album remains a landmark work.

PAUL HARDIMAN (ENGINEER): She wanted to produce herself, to move on from possibly some rather safe studio sounds and just experiment. She had been building up to this, but EMI were very reluctant for her to have total control after what had been a successful run of albums.

NICK LAUNAY (ENGINEER): I don't remember anybody from EMI coming down. They were kept at arm's length. There was basically her, the musicians she chose, and an engineer. On a technical level, making that record had no rules, we could try everything that came to mind. We were both in the same place: "I wonder what this does?" It was an approach of plugging things in, seeing what it did, and working out how you use that to manipulate the instrument you're playing. The sound on "The Dreaming", this metallic sound, very dreamy and surreal, is actually a guitar and a piano going into a harmoniser – the note goes up and up and up in octaves until it's so high you can't hear it. We used that on quite a few songs.

UNCUT CLASSIC



HARDIMAN: Working on the album was hours of crippling tedium with bursts of extreme excitement. At times Kate was just exhausted. It was hard work, but hugely rewarding.

LAUNAY: Very often she'd come to do the take and each time she'd play the song slightly differently. It wouldn't be a case of the musicians getting annoyed, it would be a case of people laughing, rolling on the floor, saying to her, "No, no, when you get to that bit you're doing something different…" I did a lot of editing together of different takes and it got confusing at times. I don't think she had any realisation of how complex songs like "The Dreaming" were. To her they were very simple.

BRIAN BATH (GUITAR): At one point they got everyone – kids, engineers, about 50 of us – just going "Waaaah!" On "Pull Out The Pin", I got this ridiculous diminished guitar lick which just went all over the place, like a Jimmy Bryant thing. Kate loved it!
HARDIMAN: EMI were probably confused by the results. It sold OK, but more importantly it registered in the US and set up the recording and production of *Hounds Of Love*.

"KATE IS A PERFECTIONIST, BUT SHE ALSO LIKES A HAPPY ACCIDENT"

THE AVANT-GARDE POP RECORD
HOUNDS OF LOVE
EMI, 1985. PRODUCED BY KATE BUSH

Recorded at her new studio in the barn of her parents' farm in Welling, Kent, it's a peerless fusion of the commercial and creative. Side one is packed with hits, including "Cloudbusting" and "The Big Sky", while the second hosts the darkly conceptual "Ninth Wave" suite.
PAUL HARDIMAN: When I first heard "Running Up That Hill" it was obvious that Kate had finally found a groove. It wasn't a demo, we carried on working from Kate's original 24-track start. The whole album has an overall harder edge. We all felt it was already on its way to becoming a major album .
YOUTH (BASS): It was fantastic. At 11am her mum would come in with cakes and tea, then we'd work till late afternoon. Every musician would come down and play their parts separately, which gives it a slightly futuristic atmosphere. On "Big Sky" she let me do what I liked, then she chopped it up and arranged it on the Fairlight. She's after the currency of ideas reflected in the music, rather than academic virtuosity.
CHARLIE MORGAN (DRUMS): The whole "Ninth Wave" concept was outrageous – the second half of "Jig Of Life" is an entire 24-track of me playing different drums: lambeg, bodhran, you name it. I came back thinking, "What have I done today?" There were no rules or barriers, it was just pure creativity. And then her dad would come in and say, "I'll go and get a take-out. What do you fancy, some Indian or a Chinese?" Amazing.

ROMANCE AND WANDERLUST
THE SENSUAL WORLD
EMI, 1989. PRODUCED BY KATE BUSH

Bush's sixth album is a stately, autumnal slow-burner which largely lives up to its title. Among the many highlights are three tracks Bush recorded with Bulgarian folk singers Trio Bulgarka. It peaked at No 2 in the UK album chart.
JOE BOYD: Kate rang me and said she wanted to have Bulgarian harmonies on her new album. I told her that the best way to accomplish that would be to go to Sofia, so we went over and spent two days in a schoolroom with the Trio, her beatbox and a tape of the tracks. The ethnographer would suggest a folk melody that might work with a line of Kate's song, the arranger would come up with a harmony for it, and Kate would say yes or no. After working out the arrangements they all flew to London. Kate is a perfectionist, and those sessions were long and hard.
BORIMINA NEDEVA (MUSICIAN/TRANSLATOR): I don't think Kate completely understood what she was taking on when she started, but she's not afraid to try new things. In the end, most of the experimenting was done in the studio in London. On "Rocket's Tail", Yanka [*Rupkina, the Trio's senior vocalist*] came up with this solo at the end which was completely wild, out of the blue. She was absolutely improvising, which is very unusual, and Kate thought it was wonderful. Kate and Trio really bonded. They were so emotionally on the same wavelength there wasn't much need for words. Most of the time they would just communicate in sign language. Or hugs.

FROM TROUBLED TIMES...
THE RED SHOES
EMI, 1993. PRODUCED BY KATE BUSH

A soundtrack to tough times: the death of her mother and the end of her long-term relationship with engineer Del Palmer results in a patchy, overlong and oddly grounded record.
HAYDN BENDALL (ENGINEER): It was a very difficult time and I was aware of that more than anything. I didn't realise 'til later it had such an impact on the music. It was a weird, fractious time, and nothing really seemed to gel.
COLIN LLOYD-TUCKER (ENGINEER): She wasn't feeling that great, but she wouldn't give up. When we arrived to do "The Red Shoes", the night before she'd been up doing "Rubberband Girl". It was very raw, with just a guide vocal, and she was still working out lyrics. She had a verse which she kept repeating, and she said, "I'm going to write the words later." That was unusual – usually the song was complete when she started. Doing backing vocals was tough. We were literally sliding down the walls by the end of the session, every syllable had to be bang in time. She's a perfectionist, but she also likes a happy accident. On "The Red Shoes" me and Paddy [*Bush, Kate's brother*] both went into the same harmony, which was actually the wrong note, and she said, "That's fantastic! Leave it like that." She picks up on things like that.

Promoting her new LP *Hounds Of Love* at the London Planetarium, September 9, 1985

DAVE HOGAN/GETTY IMAGES

All wrapped up for *50 Words For Snow*, 2011

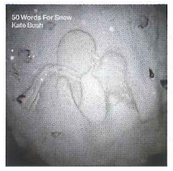
AT ONE WITH NATURE
AERIAL
EMI, 2005. PRODUCED BY KATE BUSH

Following a 12-year hiatus during which she became a mother, Bush returns with this spacious, organic double-album. The second disc traces the arc of a summer's day, each song threaded with birdsong.
TONY WADSWORTH (EX-EMI EXECUTIVE): It was pretty clear that her priority was her family. I thought there was a distinct possibility that I might get fired before anything came!
STEVE SANGER (DRUMS): On "Aerial" she explained that when this birdsong begins, that's when I start playing. That was a different day! There was a lot of tea, great food, great fun. It was the most creative thing I've done.
PETER ERSKINE (DRUMS): There was a lovely informality to it. The only direction I remember was her always asking me to get out my "lovely blue snare drum", a steel drum from Yamaha. It records terrifically, but she was also quite taken by the appearance. "OK Kate, I'll get that out."
WADSWORTH: The first listen was amazing. She was nervous. I went to the studio in her garden, she gave me a tracklisting, said "It's a bit long", and played the whole thing. I don't think I'd heard the human voice singing with birds before. I thought, 'God, she's still doing things that are incredibly original and yet seem absolutely natural.'

THE PAST, REWRITTEN
DIRECTOR'S CUT
FISH PEOPLE, 2011. PRODUCED BY KATE BUSH

An uncharacteristic backward glance by Bush. Reworking 11 songs from *The Sensual World* and *The Red Shoes*, she adds new vocals and instrumentation while stripping back much of the clutter.
STEVE GADD (DRUMS): She didn't want me to go back and listen to the originals, she wanted me to treat these recordings as new songs. She wanted fresh ears. Very interesting. It was just me, her and the track. "Rubberband Girl" might sound like a bar band in a room, but it's just me playing along to what was there. At times she encouraged me to really stretch out in a way that felt like we were just jamming, to be really free. I felt great that she finally got what she wanted for these songs.
MICA PARIS (VOCALS): I went down to her home in early 2010 and I remember her saying, "Don't tell anyone, Mica. Don't let anyone know I'm making an album." "Don't worry Kate, I won't!" When I heard the song she asked me to sing on, "Lily", I looked at her and said, "My God, that's a killer." Her vocal was so powerful. It was a long day. She knows exactly what she wants. Often it seems very unusual, then you hear the way she puts it all together and you think, 'Wow, she was right.' She's also very open to suggestion, which is a fantastic trait. A real sharing energy.

THE ONE WITH SNOWMAN SEX
50 WORDS FOR SNOW
FISH PEOPLE, 2011. PRODUCED BY KATE BUSH



Bush's latest album features seven long, slow, winter-themed songs set against a backdrop of swirling snow. The mood is gentle but the imaginative landscape is as vast as ever: yeti, amorous snowmen, Stephen Fry – they're all here.
STEVE GADD: There was some space between *Director's Cut* and the new album. When I went back, the first project was done and she was beginning the second one, though she might have had some ideas while we were working on the first record. We worked hard and, boy, we got some things done! With *50 Words...* sometimes it was just Kate playing piano and her vocal, and then the two of us together trying to construct a rhythm based on what was there now and what might be there thereafter. I've never done another project like it. She's so unafraid. She's all about the art of it. We never really talked about the concept, but I was amazed how she put this album together sonically and visually – not just the songs, but the photographs, images, themes. It's the whole package with her, and amazing to see. And she treated me great! She always wants to make sure you're comfortable, that you're not tired or hungry. She took care of me the way she tried to take care of these songs.

JOHN CARDER BUSH

RELEASED: 1978-2012

THE VIDEOS

Wind machines and rainmakers! Rollerskating harlequins, dunces and minotaurs! A pink blob exploding in Robbie Coltrane's face! The varied videos of a cinephile pop star.

BY JASON ANDERSON

FEW OF KATE BUSH'S qualities are more endearing than her willingness to stretch wide, reach far and aim high in service of her artistic visions... even if it means looking a little daft in the process. Her early music videos can be especially unforgiving in that regard, with Bush taking time to realise that gestural language and visual concepts that may have worked wonders on a live audience translated differently on camera. Though she could be as savvy as any performer who thrived in music video's golden age of the 1980s, she initially struggled to scale herself down for the small screen.

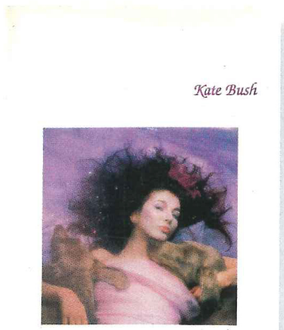
A lack of understanding of the potential of the music-video form was hardly the issue. Bush was an early and enthusiastic proponent, a fact she made perfectly clear when she donned a lacy dress and flitted through a mist-filled room in the iconic first clip for "Wuthering Heights". (In the alternate version for the US, she takes to the great outdoors whilst wearing a red dress more appropriate to her burgeoning if overly simplistic image as a Pre-Raphaelite siren.)

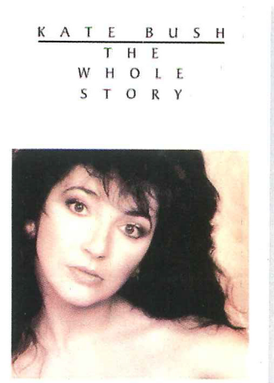
Bush would eventually assume a Kubrick-worthy degree of control over every aspect of her songs' visual companion pieces, directing almost all of her own clips from the mid-'80s onward. During her decades-long hiatus from performing live, film sets and soundstages became the principal realm for the floridly expressive performance style she developed under the tutelage of Lindsay Kemp. Yet the videos themselves sometimes left her precariously balanced on that thin line between fearless and foolish.

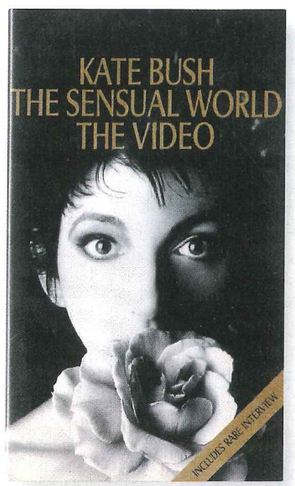
> "IT SEEMED NATURAL TO GET MORE INVOLVED IN WHAT I DID MUSICALLY AND VISUALLY"
> KATE BUSH

Then again, this high-wire act may be why so many of them retain their capacity to startle, long after slicker pop promos lost their flash. The experience of watching them now on Bush's website or YouTube channel – the only legitimate ways to see them, none of the many compilations having been reissued on DVD – may involve some cringeing at contrived choreography, stilted acting and the over-eager application of wind machines.

But in those alchemical instances when Bush and her collaborators found the means to amplify the song's visceral impact or emphasise its idiosyncratic sensibility – whether it's the ➡







frisky wit of "Babooshka", the harder-edged surrealism of "Sat in Your Lap", or the quieter anguish of "This Woman's Work" – it takes a stony-hearted viewer not to beam with pleasure or crumple into tears. (Binge-viewing at your workplace should be avoided if you're afraid of looking a little foolish yourself.)

"Cloudbusting" may be the most representative example of Bush's parallel career as a video star and maker, partially because its most maddening qualities are inseparable from those that remain so affecting. It's also a testament to the cinephile bent that's always been apparent in her work. As she said in the interview accompanying the video compilation for *The Sensual World*, "I suppose I've always been interested in the visual side of things, always loved film – it just seems natural to get more and more involved in what I did musically and visually."

A Monty Python devotee, she had a special passion for the films of the troupe's resident animator turned big-screen facilitator, Terry Gilliam. After Bush befriended Gilliam, the two conceived and storyboarded the video for *Hounds Of Love*'s second single. They enlisted Julian Doyle, Gilliam's editor and second-unit director, to direct the clip, which owed not a little to Gilliam's look for *Brazil*.

Like many of Bush's videos, this one came pre-equipped with a strong storyline. The narrative was inspired by *A Book Of Dreams*, Peter Reich's memoir about his childhood with his father, the renegade psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich. In Bush's take on the events surrounding the elder Reich's controversial attempts to develop a rainmaking machine, she presents a rather kindlier figure than the many detractors of the orgone-obsessed scientist and Nazi-baiting sexual revolutionary may have recognised.

Having greatly admired the Canadian actor's performance in *Don't Look Now* – whose director Nicolas Roeg became another of Bush's filmmaker pals – Bush doggedly pursued Donald Sutherland for the part of Wilhelm, getting him a script through mutual friends after his agent initially rebuffed her. Sutherland was already in the UK filming *Revolution*, *Chariots Of Fire* director Hugh Hudson's disastrous box-office flop. Perhaps eager to put that ordeal behind him, Sutherland joined Bush and the crew for three days of shooting in Oxfordshire.

The result stands as one of the most dramatically compelling, visually exquisite and ultimately heartbreaking videos in the history of the medium, in spite of one not-inconsiderable flaw; Bush's utter inability to pass as a 13-year-old boy. Her wig of spiky red hair and those phony freckles do as few favours as her ensemble of Christmas jumper and dungarees. "I looked a bit like Coco the clown," she'd later admit.

Thankfully, Sutherland seems content to carry the show in the scenes of Wilhelm and Peter working on their strange contraption, before the scientist is spirited away by sinister, dark-coated officials. But as strained as Bush's grinning can be in her efforts to show Peter's awe of his father, she rises to the occasion in the moments that matter most, conveying the boy's bewilderment as his father is driven away and his elation at the machine's success.

Ubiquitous on music channels for months despite its seven-minute length, "Cloudbusting" is the most fully realised example of one of the two chief varieties within Bush's video output: the narrative-oriented piece that essentially functioned as a short film. The roster of self-directed descendants would include "Experiment IV," a creepy horror vignette about the quest for "*a sound that could kill someone*", with cameos by Hugh Laurie and Dawn French, and "Deeper Understanding", starring Robbie Coltrane as a man who falls in love with a computer program with disastrous results, one of which involves murdering Noel Fielding. As further proof of her creative affinity with comedy folk, she enlisted Comic Strip head honcho Peter Richardson to direct "This Woman's Work".

Bush established her other variety of video with the Kemp-inspired, dance-based clips for "Wuthering Heights" and other early efforts, directed by Keith "Keef" MacMillan, the photographer, sleeve designer and pioneering video maker whose achievements ranged from shooting the first Black Sabbath album cover to creating *The Chart Show*. Together, they developed a visual identity for Bush that was remarkably coherent despite her eagerness to flit between various personae, starting with the wide-eyed Cathy of "Wuthering Heights". If the soft-focus look for "The Man With The Child In His Eyes" and lusty humour of "Babooshka" made them ripe for parody, their genteel eroticism now seems more palatable than, say, the cheesy softcore of Godley & Crème's career-launching clip for Duran Duran's "Girls On Film". Other clips would deploy variations on the choreography used for the Tour Of Life. More can be seen in the Christmas special that aired at the end of 1979 and was last rebroadcast by BBC 4 in 2009 – it too remains unavailable on DVD.

The MacMillan era was also remarkable for the rapid leaps in sophistication from the relatively straightforward staging of "Wow" to the weirder, wilder likes of "Army Dreamers" and "Breathing". In the latter, Bush's psychodrama of imperilled embryos and nuclear fallout is accentuated by similarly eerie shots of the singer confined in plastic bubbles and getting painfully irradiated alongside her green-faced bandmates.

From there, it was a short jump to the Bizarroworld represented by *The Dreaming*'s quartet of videos. Bush continued to use a dance-oriented approach to portray an assortment of characters, but the objectives became more cryptic. For instance, the meaning of the post-apocalyptic, Aussie-accented hoedown in "The Dreaming" was anyone's guess. The rollerskating harlequins, dunces and minotaurs in "Sat In Your Lap" provoked further consternation, as did "There Goes A Tenner"'s approximation of a German Expressionist heist movie. Even the promo for the gentle "Suspended In Gaffa" is odder than it ought to be, thanks to Bush's *Starlost*-style get-up and a mysterious interlude in which Bush embraces her mother Hannah. Like "Sat In Your Lap," it was directed by Brian Wiseman, who also edited the *Live At The Hammersmith Odeon* concert video.

With *Hounds Of Love* and *The Sensual World* came a series of videos that synthesised Bush's commitment to dance with the narrative mode that emerged in full force with "Cloudbusting". "Running Up That Hill" remains a triumph by any measure – indeed, there may be no other music video that so powerfully demonstrate dance's ability to convey both story and emotion. Working closely with director David Garfath – another of Gilliam's team on *Time Bandits* and *Brazil* – and choreographer Diane Grey, Bush sought to create "an almost classical piece of dance, filmed as well as possible". That meant adopting far more fluid camerawork and a far more cinematic style of editing than were used in comparatively clunky predecessors like "The Dreaming". The video also benefited from a greater degree of sophistication in the costuming and design, with Bush and dance partner Michael Hervieu looking like they could very well swap places thanks to their matching grey Japanese hakamas.

In the interview for *The Sensual World* video, Bush called Alfred Hitchcock "a tremendous influence on me whenever I'm making a video – he's the ultimate reference point." Her self-directed clip for *Hounds Of Love*'s title track is an especially rapturous and stylish homage, that essentially reconfigures *The 39 Steps* as a confetti-strewn, fedora-filled dance drama by Twyla Tharp. She scored another creative high with "The Big Sky", which could very well have been sunk by its goofier excesses (Bush's silver suit, dry ice and spotlights galore, some guy in a Superman outfit) but is carried by its spirit of exuberance and the constant giddy movement of performers and camera alike. With its almost chaotic yet utterly captivating staging, it's the closest indication to what a successor to Tour Of Life might have been like.

The next closest is "Love And Anger", which combined a gaggle of ballerinas and a guest spot by David Gilmour in similarly wind-strewn circumstances four years later. The other two videos for *The Sensual World* confirm just how keen Bush's understanding of the medium had become. In place of her virginal Cathy 11 years before, there is Bush's ravishing Molly Bloom for the title track, let loose from the pages of *Ulysses* and savouring every aspect of her newly corporeal form. Just as potent was the moving melodrama of "This Woman's Work", in which Bush does her best to relieve the waiting-room worries of a husband played by *Blackadder*'s Tim McInnerny.

By the end of the '80s, Bush seemed just as capable of translating her ideas into visual forms as she did into musical ones. That's why her lengthiest and most ambitious foray into the world of cinema – *The Line, The Cross And The Curve*, a 43-minute fantasia built around songs for *The Red Shoes* and inspired by the fleet-footed 1948 film classic that gave the album its name – was such a grave misstep. Save for the suitably supple choreography for the "Rubberband Girl" sequence that opens the action, nothing goes as it ought to for its writer, director and star. Giving a stilted and implausible performance despite the fact that she's supposed to be playing herself, Bush is badly outflanked in her scenes with Miranda Richardson. The actress repurposes her *Crying Game* accent for her role as a ballerina who has apparently escaped from Michael Powell's original film and who promptly tricks Bush into relieving her of a pair of cursed shoes that won't stop dancing. After travelling through a mirror into a fantastical realm, Bush shakes the hex with the help of a pasty-faced figure played by Lindsay Kemp.

The thin, confusing narrative wouldn't be such a liability if the musical sequences weren't so drab. Only the fruit-squishing frenzy in "Eat The Music" shows signs of vitality, especially in the version released without the irritatingly repetitious shots of Richardson dashing down a dark tunnel. (A third version was made for the US due to worries over the potentially racist connotations of the original's images of black men dancing with watermelons.) It was as if she'd forgotten how to speak the language that she'd mastered only a few years before – even her dancing seemed less confident.

Despite a premiere at the London Film Festival and a theatrical run, *The Line, The Cross And The Curve* was judged a disappointment by all concerned. ("A load of bollocks" was its creator's assessment.) Even so, its failure didn't snuff out all of her enthusiasm for filmmaking. Though more modestly scaled than "Cloudbusting" – as every video must be now that budgets reflect the form's vastly diminished value as promotional tool – the handful of videos that surfaced after her return boast some of the old bravura. What's more, with their embrace of new modes like short animations and narrative works in which she leaves the acting to the professionals, they mark out paths different than the two varieties that dead-ended at *The Line, The Cross And The Curve*.

Perhaps with that end in mind, Bush leaves most of the dancing to the digitally generated Elvis suit in "King Of The Mountain", though she still moves as elegantly as her bulky coat will allow. A cautionary tale about online addiction and virtual intimacy, "Deeper Understanding" would qualify as her weirdest video since "Experiment IV" even if it didn't feature the sight of a pink blob exploding across the face of Robbie Coltrane.

Even more adventurous are the animated pieces created for *50 Words For Snow*, especially "Eider Falls At Lake Tahoe", an elegant shadow-puppetry piece scored to a five-minute excerpt of "Lake Tahoe". Directed by Bush with cinematography by Roger Pratt (another Gilliam compatriot) and puppets by Robert Allsopp, the piece is striking enough to suggest she still has places to venture with her filmmaking, places beyond what she may otherwise convey in her lyrics or her movements.

VIDEO COMPILATIONS

1. The Single File **VHS, 1983**
2. The Hair Of The Hound **VHS, 1986**
3. The Whole Story **VHS, 1986** (reissued in 1994 on laserdisc and VCD with videos for "Rubberband Girl", "Moments Of Pleasure" and an alternate version of "Wow")
4. The Sensual World **VHS, 1989**
5. The Line, The Cross And The Curve **VHS, 1994**

Dunce music: Bush on the "Sat In Your Lap" shoot, 1981

THE VIDEOS THAT HAVE SURFACED AFTER BUSH'S RETURN BOAST SOME OF HER OLD BRAVURA

Birthday Kate... At home, 1979

THE KATE BUSH MISCELLANY

From her singles and collaborators, to her guest appearances and rarities... | BY MARK BENTLEY

The Singles Discography

THE WHOLE STORY doesn't really tell it. That ambitiously titled 1986 anthology, the best-known survey of Kate Bush's work, hit No 1 and spent 91 weeks in the UK charts. And while it collated most of her singles, its 12-track running order made no allowance for some key releases – including "Hammer Horror", "December Will Be Magic Again", or anything from the "On Stage" EP. And what's more – not a B-side in sight!

Bush has always been fairly generous with additional material for the B-sides. They are a significant part of her recorded legacy, from "Lord Of The Reedy River" to "Under The Ivy". Even in the remix-obsessed late '80s – when many artists were simply churning out a through-the-motions 'dub' mix on the flipside – Kate found space for gems such as "The Confrontation" and "Be Kind To My Mistakes".

Two collections are available that include the rarities. First up, you'll need to source at some expense *The Single File 1978-1983* – a lovely reproduction boxset of 7" singles and the live EP ("It's a greatest hits, I suppose, but a nicer way of doing it", Kate told Radio 1 at the time). But that only takes you to 1983. *This Woman's Work: Anthology 1978-1990*, is the best option, but again, it'll cost you. This is a munificent boxset anthology of the six albums, plus discs collecting B-sides and international one-offs. Even that doesn't catch it all: it excludes "Dreamtime", "The Confrontation" and a handful of instrumentals and remixes.

With that in mind, here's an up-to-date singles discography, including the standalone, non-UK releases. Hopefully, this is the whole story: the tale of her astonishing career, duets, collaborations, covers and charitable one-offs. Twenty-nine UK hit singles, including seven Top 10s, and one No 1. Let's start with that one, shall we?

WUTHERING HEIGHTS/KITE
EMI 7"
JAN 1978
UK NO 1

THE MAN WITH THE CHILD IN HIS EYES/MOVING
EMI 7", MAY 1978
UK NO 6

HAMMER HORROR/ COFFEE HOMEGROUND
EMI 7"
NOV 1978. UK NO 44

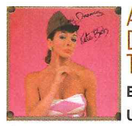
WOW/ FULLHOUSE
EMI 7"
MAR 1979
UK NO 14

ON STAGE EP
EMI 7"/GATEFOLD
SEPT 1979
UK NO 10

Tracklisting: Them Heavy People/ Don't Push Your Foot On The Heartbrake/James And The Cold Gun/L'Amour Looks Something Like You

BREATHING/THE EMPTY BULLRING
EMI 7"
APRIL 1980
UK NO 16

BABOOSHKA/ RAN-TAN WALTZ
EMI 7"
JUNE 1980
UK NO 5



ARMY DREAMERS/ DELIUS/PASSING THROUGH AIR
EMI 7", SEPT 1980
UK NO 16

DECEMBER WILL BE MAGIC AGAIN/ WARM & SOOTHING
EMI 7", NOV 1980
UK NO 29

SAT IN YOUR LAP/ LORD OF THE REEDY RIVER
EMI 7", JUNE 1981
UK NO 11

THE DREAMING/ DREAMTIME
EMI 7"
JULY 1982
UK NO 48

THERE GOES A TENNER/NE T'EN FUI PAS
EMI 7", NOV 1982
DID NOT CHART

RUNNING UP THAT HILL/ UNDER THE IVY
EMI 7"/GATEFOLD/12", AUG 1985. UK NO 6

12" tracklisting: Running Up That Hill (12" Mix)/Under The Ivy/ Running Up That Hill (Instrumental)

Note: the first single to bear the KB catalogue number – and her first ever 12" single – this was issued as EMI KB1. It was also Kate's biggest-ever hit in the US, reaching No 30.

CLOUDBUSTING/ BURNING BRIDGE
EMI 7"/12", OCT 1985
UK NO 20

12" tracklisting: Cloudbusting (Organon Mix)/ Burning Bridge/My Lagan Love

HOUNDS OF LOVE/THE HANDSOME CABIN BOY
EMI 7"/12", FEB 1986
UK NO 18

12" tracklisting: Hounds Of Love/ Jig Of Life/The Handsome Cabin Boy

THE BIG SKY/NOT THIS TIME
EMI 7"/12", APRIL 1986. UK NO 37

12" tracklisting: The Big Sky (Meteorological Mix)/ Not This Time/The Morning Fog. Also released as a picture disc

DON'T GIVE UP/ IN YOUR EYES (PETER GABRIEL/ KATE BUSH)
VIRGIN 7"/12", OCT 1986. UK NO 9

12": Don't Give Up/In Your Eyes (Special Mix)/This Is The Picture

EXPERIMENT IV/WUTHERING HEIGHTS (NEW VOCAL)
EMI 7"/12", OCT 1986. UK NO 23

12" tracklisting: Experiment IV (12" Mix)/Wuthering Heights (New Vocal)/December Will Be Magic Again

THE SENSUAL WORLD/WALK STRAIGHT DOWN THE MIDDLE
EMI 7"/CASSETTE/ CD/12", SEPT 1989. UK NO 12

12"/CD single tracklisting The Sensual World (Album Version)/ The Sensual World (Instrumental)/ Walk Straight Down The Middle

Also available in 'double groove edition'

THIS WOMAN'S WORK/BE KIND TO MY MISTAKES
EMI 7"/PIC DISC/ CASSETTE/CD/12"
NOV 1989. UK NO 25

12"/CD tracklisting: This Woman's Work/Be Kind To My Mistakes/I'm Still Waiting

LOVE AND ANGER/KEN
EMI 7"/PIC DISC/CASSETTE/CD/12"
FEB 1990. UK NO 38

12"/CD tracklisting: Love And Anger/Ken/The Confrontation/One Last Look Around The House Before We Go...

ROCKET MAN/ CANDLE IN THE WIND
MERCURY 7"/PIC DISC/CASSETTE/ CD/12", SEPT 1991. UK NO 12

From Elton John tribute album, Two Rooms

12"/CD tracklisting: Rocket Man/ Candle In The Wind/Candle In The Wind (Instrumental)

RUBBERBAND GIRL/BIG STRIPEY LIE
EMI 7"/PIC DISC/ CASSETTE/CD/12"
SEPT 1993. UK NO 12

12"/CD tracklisting: Rubberband Girl (Extended Mix)/Rubberband Girl/Big Stripey Lie

MOMENTS OF PLEASURE/ MOMENTS OF PLEASURE (INSTRUMENTAL)
EMI CASSETTE/12"/TWIN CD RELEASE, NOV 1993. UK NO 26

12" issue: Moments Of Pleasure/ Moments Of Pleasure (Instrumental)/Home For Christmas

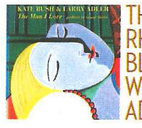
CD issue: Moments Of Pleasure/ Show A Little Devotion/December Will Be Magic Again/Experiment IV

Ltd CD issue: Moments Of Pleasure/December Will Be Magic Again/Experiment IV

THE RED SHOES/YOU WANT ALCHEMY
EMI 7"/PIC DISC/ CASSETTE/TWIN CD APRIL 1994. UK NO. 21

CD1 tracklisting The Red Shoes/ You Want Alchemy/Cloudbusting (Video Mix)/This Woman's Work

CD2 tracklisting: Shoedance (The Red Shoes Dance Mix)/The Big Sky/Running Up That Hill (12" Version)



THE MAN I LOVE/ RHAPSODY IN BLUE (EDIT) – WITH LARRY ADLER
MERCURY 7", CD, 1994. UK 27

A collaboration with harmonica maestro Larry Adler, taken from tribute LP The Glory Of Gershwin. B-side and CD tracks credited to Adler and George Martin.

AND SO IS LOVE/ RUBBERBAND GIRL (US MIX)
EMI 7"/PIC DISC/ CASSETTE/TWIN CD, NOV 1994. UK NO 26

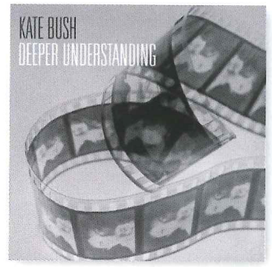
CD1 tracklisting: And So Is Love/ Rubberband Girl (US Mix)/Eat The Music (12" Mix)

Limited edition with three prints from The Line, The Cross & The Curve

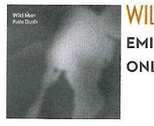
KING OF THE MOUNTAIN/ SEXUAL HEALING
EMI CD, DOWNLOAD, 7" VINYL PICTURE DISC, OCT 2005. UK NO 4

LYRA
EMI, DOWNLOAD ONLY, NOV 2007

From the soundtrack to The Golden Compass, featuring Oxford's Magdalen College Choir



DEEPER UNDERSTANDING (DIRECTOR'S CUT)
EMI, DOWNLOAD ONLY, APRIL 2011



WILD MAN
EMI, DOWNLOAD ONLY, OCT 2011

LAKE TAHOE/ AMONG ANGELS
EMI, APRIL 2012

Limited edition 10" vinyl picture disc

RUNNING UP THAT HILL (A DEAL WITH GOD) (2012 REMIX)
EMI, DOWNLOAD ONLY, AUGUST 2012. UK NO 6

AND DREAM OF SHEEP
FISH PEOPLE, DOWNLOAD ONLY, NOVEMBER 2016

An automatic freebie for those who had pre-ordered Before The Dawn

TV TIMES/WWW.TIMEINCUKCONTENT.COM

The International Singles

The UK didn't get it all: some unique material was issued in selected global territories, and as a result, all are prized collectors' items...

MOVING/WUTHERING HEIGHTS

TOSHIBA EMI MUSIC JAPAN, FEBRUARY 1978

THEM HEAVY PEOPLE/ THE MAN WITH THE CHILD IN HIS EYES

EMI MUSIC JAPAN, MAY 1978

These Japan-only issues have great picture sleeves: this issue is fabulously billed as 'From Her Mysterious Album' The Kick Inside...

STRANGE PHENOMENA/ WOW

EMI BRAZIL, JUNE 1979

A Brazil-only single, released – as with many singles in that territory – at 33 RPM.

SYMPHONY IN BLUE/ FULLHOUSE

EMI MUSIC JAPAN, JUNE 1979

The track one, Side One Lionheart track was chosen as a single in Japan. In Canada, where it received a spiffing blue vinyl issue, "Hammer Horror" is the flipside.

NIGHT OF THE SWALLOW/ HOUDINI

EMI (IRELAND), NOVEMBER 1983

An Ireland-only release for one of The Dreaming's most memorable cuts.

NE T'ENFUIS PAS/UN BAISER D'ENFANT

EMI FRANCE/CANADA, JULY 1983

The French language (and incorrectly spelled) B-side to "There Goes A Tenner" translates as "Don't Run Away". "Ne T'Enfuis Pas" was released as a single in France and Canada in July 1983, with "Un Baiser D'Enfant" on the flip; a French-language version of Never For Ever's "The Infant Kiss".

EAT THE MUSIC EP

EMI US/EUROPE, SEPTEMBER 1993

US tracklisting: Eat The Music/Eat The Music (12" Version)/Big Stripey Lie/Candle In The Wind

European tracklisting: Eat The Music/ Eat The Music (12" Version)/You Want Alchemy/ Shoedance (The Red Shoes Dance Mix)

With Del Palmer, London, 1991

The inner circle

Kate's key collaborators

DANNY MCINTOSH

Key roles: *guitar, domestic bliss*

Kate first met her husband – and father to Bertie – in 1992, when he began work on *The Red Shoes*, and has been a constant presence since. His previous life featured session work with Dollar and Amii Stewart, and McIntosh played and sang in Arista-signed '70s rockers Bandit, with Jim "Hi Ho Silver" Diamond and future AC/DC bassist Cliff Williams.

PADDY BUSH

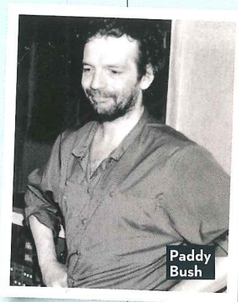
Key roles: *multi-instrumentalist, big brother*

An original member of the KT Bush Band, Kate's older brother is a master of many instruments, including guitar, mandolin, koto, sitar, balalaika, and – of course – whip. He features on every album up to *Aerial*. Paddy is cited as the only European to have mastered the Malagasy (gloss: Madagascan) instrument the Marovana, a suitcase-shaped box zither used in traditional rituals.

DEL PALMER

Key roles: *bass, engineering, former partner*

Kate's partner from the late 1970s to the early 1990s, Del plays bass on all her albums from *Lionheart* to *The Sensual World*, and is credited as audio engineer on recent recordings. Like Paddy, he was a member of the KT Bush band. His former outfit Conkers was signed to Cube Records in the early 1970s.



Paddy Bush

IAN BAIRNSON

Key roles: *guitar*

The man who played *that* solo on "Wuthering Heights" features on Kate's first four albums. Previously, Bairnson had worked as a session guitarist, and in '70s popsters Pilot. His many studio and live credits include Wings, the Alan Parsons Project, Steve Harley, Bucks Fizz, David Sylvian, Esther Ofarim and Beverley Craven.

JOHN GIBLIN

Key roles: *bass, double bass*

Celebrated Scottish bassist, whose distinctive, jazz-inflected playing features on some classic albums including *Peter Gabriel* (1980), Phil Collins' *Face Value*, Scott Walker's *Tilt* and John Martyn's *Grace And Danger*. Giblin plays on *Never For Ever*, and all Kate's output post-*Sensual World*.

ALAN MURPHY

Key roles: *guitar*

A collaborator from *Never For Ever* through the 1980s, Murphy was a versatile guitarist whose work features on releases from Scritti Politti and Level 42 to Mike & The Mechanics and Joan Armatrading. The empty chair, guitar and candle seen in Kate's "Rocket Man" video is a tribute to Murphy, who died of an AIDS-related illness in 1989.

FAIRLIGHT CMI

Key role: *defining Kate's '80s*

The Fairlight Computer Musical Interface made its first commercial appearance on record on *Never For Ever*, and Kate's mastery of this digital sampling device helped create the signature sounds of *The Dreaming* and *Hounds Of Love*. The Fairlight could model an 8 or 16-bit sample, and represented bleeding-edge tech for the '80s. With a retail price of over £20,000, its commercial life was limited; the parent company later went bust.

The Fairlight CMI

RICHARD YOUNG/REX, SSPL/GETTY IMAGES

Them Heavy People

Kate's guest appearances

...with PETER GABRIEL

Kate adds vocals on "No Self Control" and of course "Games Without Frontiers" on Gabriel's 1980 LP (the 'melty face' one) and "Don't Give Up" on *So* (1986)

...with ROY HARPER

Vocals on "You" on *The Unknown Soldier* (1980) and "Once" on *Once* (1990). They also duet on Kate's 1979 TV special, singing "Another Day"

...with PRINCE

Returning the favour for "Why Should I Love You" on *The Red Shoes*, Kate appears with TAFKAP – as he most definitely was back then – on *Emancipation* (1997), adding vocals to "My Computer"

...with BIG COUNTRY! MIDGE URE! GO WEST!

Kate sings on the title track of Big Country's *The Seer* (1986), and on Midge Ure's "Sister And Brother" (*Answers To Nothing*, 1988). That's her, too, on Go West's 1987 No 76 hit "The King Is Dead", uncredited.

...with ALAN STIVELL

Kate's sole production work for another artist appears on the vaunted Breton harpist's *Again* (1990). She helms "Kimiad". Stivell purists complain it sounds too much like a Bush track; surely a good thing?

...with VARIOUS ARTISTS

Appearances on one-offs include: a verse on Ferry Aid's "Let It Be" (1987), a line on the "Spirit Of The Forest" extravaganza – alongside Joni, XTC, Bonnie Raitt, Brian Wilson and Fish – in 1989, and "Mná Na H'Eireann", in Gaelic, for *Common Ground: Voices Of Modern Irish Music*. That comp is also worth seeking out for cuts from Tim & Neil Finn, Elvis Costello and Bono & Adam Clayton.

Running up that bill!

A brief guide to collecting Kate Bush

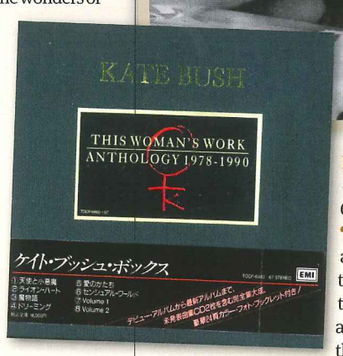
"SEE HOW THE man reaches out *instinctively/For what he cannot have...*" As with any major artist with international appeal, there's an awful lot of Kate out there, and trawling the planet for rare records and memorabilia can be a deeply serious, deeply expensive business. The good news for beginners is that – thanks to the wonders of the internet – you can still pick up original singles and albums relatively inexpensively. In the UK, Kate's standard singles and albums were big sellers, and widely available. Indeed, the thrifty among you might be able to source all the UK single releases, rare B-sides and all, for far less than the price of the boxset, **This Woman's Work**. Mint vinyl copies of that opus have sold online for up to $1000.

Let's do the maths: a standard UK 7" or CD single – even rarer ones like **"Hammer Horror"**, or "December..." – are still available secondhand for well under a fiver. Typically, you would expect to pay around £10 for the 12" issues. Later '80s and '90s limited-editions are still easy to find, and (dare we say it) still affordable.

Multiple copies of the 12" picture disc issue of **"Rubberband Girl"** are being sold on eBay at time of writing for around £15, while the **"Love And Anger"** 12", containing three non-album cuts, can be yours for £11.99. Original issues of the vinyl albums (up to **The Sensual World**) are not hard to find on vinyl, but prices have risen markedly in the past few years. An excellent copy of **The Kick Inside**, once a charity shop classic, shouldn't set you back more than a tenner. Great-condition copies of **The Dreaming** and **Hounds Of Love** start around £15 these days – at least when we've seen them in the field at record fairs, and when listed by record dealers.

So what makes the big money? The most famous collectable for Fish People is probably the withdrawn UK **"Eat The Music"/"Big Stripey Lie"** 7"; some sources claim only 17 copies are known to exist. They turn up on eBay every couple of years – in 2006, one copy made £2250. As noted, **This Woman's Work** is a big ticket item – the vinyl version regularly makes £400+. **The Single File** 7" boxset is understandably less, and one sold in early 2017 for a bargainous £90. Promos and acetates are scarce, and therefore desirable: the UK acetate of **"Babooshka"** sold for $700 in summer 2014. A reportedly "godly rare" 10" acetate of **"Moments Of Pleasure"** hit £400 in 2016.

The one-off international releases attract a great deal of attention, as they often combine the winning formula of rare picture sleeves, with unique issues. It's for this reason that the Irish 7" of **"Night Of The Swallow"** is worth maybe £180, and a Japanese four-track white label promo **"Moving"/"Them Heavy People"** made $999 in early 2017. The blue vinyl Canadian issue of **"Symphony In Blue"** is another hot item – $150+ in today's market. Sometimes, the albums had different artwork too: a mint copy of the Uruguayan issue of **The Kick Inside** sold for nearly $500 in 2013.



Any authenticated, autographed items – or those with a provable personal connection – will add value, naturally. Signed albums can still be bought for as little as £50. Kate's annual **Christmas cards**, with their characteristically elegant artwork, and usually handwritten by the lady herself, are another to look out for. £300+ should get you one of those. One other item of note: a **Snoopy** toy, with handwritten note, donated by Kate to a charity auction in 1980. It cost the seller £70, and made them £290 two decades later.

With Kate, the visuals are important; hence the interest in original record shop promotional posters. Good examples include the **"She's Here – Lionheart"** from 1978 or **The Red Shoes** in-store promo display (a 24" fold-out cardboard stand). Press kits, radio edits, album samplers, badges... all this is catnip for Kate fans. You'll find an intriguing, independent and informative blog on these oddities at *theworldofkatebush.blogspot.co.uk*.

Anything related to Kate's brief live adventures is desirable. A rare 16" x 23" poster for her 1979 tour has a pricetag over £150+. The A4 tour programme, with postcards, newsletter and notepad, has got to be worth £60 of anyone's money. And if you were lucky enough to catch 2014's **Before The Dawn** extravaganza, I hope you bought a programme, and kept your ticket stub, as the collectors' market for live ephemera is growing. In the meantime, get involved and grab a genuine piece of 'Before The Dawn' confetti, released during the 'Ninth Wave' section of the show – and hoovered up by certain enterprising individuals. You can find them on eBay, for £2 or so each. Meanwhile, one seller is offering a 'Before The Dawn' programme, used ticket, poster, and three pieces of said confetti for a Buy-It-Now price of £149.99. *"Guide them to me..."*

Signing albums at the launch of *Never For Ever*, Virgin Megastore, September 1980

JEFF MORRIS/ASSOCIATED NEWSPAPERS/REX

STOP ME

IF YOU'VE HEARD THIS ONE BEFORE

STEVE SUTHERLAND logs rare sightings of a truly unpredictable Kate Bush, from Watford discotheques to High Barnet music rooms. Pass the Lemsip!

ONE OF MY many pleasures, when I used to work for music publications, was the occasional opportunity to do what the industry likes to call "research", and to meet the readers. In *Uncut*'s case, this usually meant gathering in some far-flung faux-front room scenario well stocked with cold beers and warm sandwiches and quizzing readers about their gigging habits and undying fondness for all things Paul Weller (barring, of course, The Style Council).

And so it was that, on a dank November night in the early 2000s, ex-*Uncut* editor Allan Jones and I found ourselves holed up somewhere in Staines with a bunch of genially leery characters recounting their own past personal encounters with rock stars and their like. One bloke drove a taxi and recalled how he had a surprisingly down-to-earth Ziggy-era David Bowie in the back of his cab once. Dave, apparently, was a very stingy tipper.

Another had shared a beer and a fag or two with Stevie Marriott when his post-Small Faces and Humble Pie outfit, Packet Of Three, were doing the rounds of South London locals. The bloke still had one of Stevie's fag butts actually, a prize possession, on his mantelpiece at home.

The stories poured forth but the stunner, the one that stopped everyone in their tracks and easily one-upped the rest, was when some chap claimed somewhat casually, "Yeah, I chatted up that Kate Bush once." The room fell silent. "In some disco in Watford. She was at the bar. Would have gotten off with her, too, but the missus was waiting in the car outside."

Kate Bush! In some disco in Watford! Needless to say, the inquisition was on. What was she like. ("A little darlin'.") What was she wearing ("C'mon, some sequinny thing. Can't remember now."). There was much sighing over an opportunity missed.

I recall this tale not just to illustrate how a room full of 55-year-old geezers who would happily argue for hours over whether Malcolm Owen of The Ruts was a better frontman than The Members' Nicky Tesco (he was, by the way) would completely fall into line over their appreciation of said Ms Bush, but to also show how you could – and, it seems, can – never take anything about her for granted.

Kate Bush, January 1984

> KATE WAS DRESSED IN A LONG SWEATER, AS IF TO SAY, 'THIS IS AS NEAR INVISIBLE AS I CAN GET NOW'

Far from a Watford disco, my own first encounter with Kate Bush was a case in point. It was early in January 1984 and myself and photographer Tom Sheehan, both fans, were duly dispatched to High Barnet where, in some posh music room full of timpani and the like, we were to spend a jovial hour taking her picture and talking to her about the rather unimaginatively titled *The Single File*, a collection, obviously, of her singles to date. More to the point, we were intent on celebrating her chops as a visual artist and were keen to talk about the video collection that accompanied the music, video being the hot new thing at the time.

So Tom and I waited. And waited. And eventually there she was, dressed 'down' as they say, in a long nondescript sweater pulled almost up to her nose as if to say, "This is as near invisible as I can get right now. Go away." She was nice enough but hardly forthcoming. Initial pleasantries exchanged, we got down to the taking of photographs which always happened first because all photographers are paranoid. "You can always make up the words if we run out of time," Tom would always admonish me when I moaned about it. "But I can't make up the smudges."

So there I was, holding up the top of a double bass, a Herculean task out of shot, while Sheehan snapped away at Kate crouched around the bass' body. I think she tried to smile once or twice but in all honesty she looked thoroughly miserable.

The shots, as always, seemed to take a year, but at last Tom was through and Kate, announcing she had the snuffles, made her excuses and rejoined to another room for a Lemsip or suchlike. Guess what? She never came back.

Ten minutes or so after her not-grand-at-all-non-sweeping exit, someone from the record company came in to inform us that Kate was feeling unwell and wasn't up to doing an interview or, indeed, anything else at the moment.

Anyway, that's what made my second encounter with Kate Bush – the one you can re-read in this special issue – so surprising. I'm not going to say she was a veritable talk-your-legs-off David Lee Roth, but from the time she stubbed out that surprising fag, complimented me on my aura or whatever it is she said and got down to brass tacks about James Joyce and the like, she was an utter delight – chatty, a good listener and a great laugher as well.

Obviously I wouldn't profess any great insight into what makes Ms Bush tick having only met her twice – both occasions a long time ago now – but, taking into account the two very different Kate Bushs I met way back when, I'm probably the only person, bar her band and close family, who wasn't that surprised by her sudden return to the stage last year.

Like I said, you should never take her for granted.

Steve Sutherland

ILPO MUSTO/REX; TERRY BEASLEY

KATE BUSH

The *Ultimate Music Guide* to a genius on her own remarkable trajectory. We just know that something good is going to happen!

JOHN CARDER BUSH

Including...

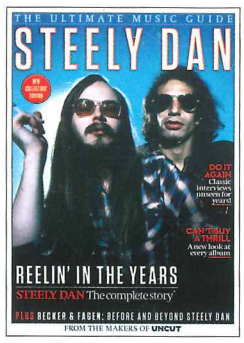
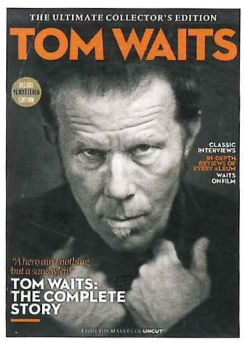
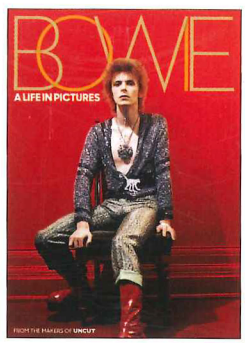
"YOU SHOULD CLUB PEOPLE OVER THE HEAD WITH WHAT YOU BELIEVE IN!"

A dramatic new star asserts herself

"I FIND MYSELF INSPIRED BY UNUSUAL, DISTORTED, WEIRD SUBJECTS..."

Inside the strange world of Kate Bush

"THIS GIRL IS VERY, VERY TOUGH"

The true story of *Hounds Of Love*

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