

Out On The Wiley Windy Moor...

By Michelle Duffy Catherine Bush recorded her first demo under the financial guidance of Dave Gilmour from Pink Floyd. Presenting it with shaky hands to giants EMI, they signed her and she quickly issued her first single. The self penned 'Wuthering Heights' went straight to number making her the very first British female solo artist to accomplish this feat. Followed only a month later by her release of her first album, 'The Kick Inside,' went almost achieved equal success by placing itself at number three in the album chart. An album written totally by her, she had already been well experienced in singing and writing. Forming her first band titled KT Bush with her brother, Paddy at the tender age of sixteen, she had already been composing on her piano since she was eleven. A pure child prodigy, she was destined to become the strangest, most curious of all female artists to tread the musical ground. Boldly walking the very male path of art rock, she was self assured and focused to the very last penned note. Studying music, dance and mime, she incorporated these art forms into her every movement both musically and visually. The latter, perhaps fitting her operatic voice, she used visual dress to accentuate her music leaving the viewer mesmerised at such a performance of dance as well as voice. Her creativeness was originally inspired by her love of all that was the occult and the supernatural. Collaborating with her passion for classic literature, she chose to use classical heroines for the themes of her earlier songs. Theatrical epics were what she actually produced, probably wasted on the general buying public at the time, she managed to touch a chord and drew into her a still and very attentive audience. Casting a drifting shadow of mystery around her being, she was shy, thoughtful and deeply sensitive when being interviewed, a situation she was far from comfortable with. Touring very little, she, over the years became introverted and felt awkward as though her place in the world had been and gone. Building a fortress around herself, she apparently, although briefly, changed her name to Kathy from Wuthering Heights. (Yet it does not take too much thought to work out that this name was a shortening of her own name anyway..) Feeling disillusioned with the world and the music industry she felt that her music did not have a place and she curled herself up in a little ball to the world and 'disappeared' for over a decade. Eventually coming to the surface by the nagging voices of surrounding influences, she conducted herself into writing suddenly, a new album, 'Aerial,' again, a mythical character but this time, her recognition was for her composing and her ability to surprise with the most extraordinary prose and music to fit. Not so much now gawped at for her striking beauty as a young woman. Now she was older, stronger and more a legend with starry eyes looking now up at her, rather than those early years where it had very much been the other way round. Self designing her own studio at her home, she spent hour after hour perfecting sounds and effects for her records. She craved for the ability to create a visual effect through music to plant an idea into the listener's head. She accomplished this by using her knowledge on classic literature. Having that imaginative brain herself, she found it easy to use descriptions of not just scenes in her music but recreating feelings and emotions of those characters who were devised so many years before her time. Catherine Bush from Bexleyheath in Kent had written her own first album from start to finish marking the start of a career that made her into the most influential British female artist of the twentieth century and beyond. Moving on to this featured album, it includes the number one 'Wuthering Heights,' from February 1978 and 'The Man With The Child In His Eyes,' which reached number 6 in June the same year. Both songs featuring the fantastical lyrics that she was quickly becoming famous for, and also her voice swooping up and down like a fun fair ride made her vocals more often than not difficult to follow. May it be then a blessed relief to us to find the lyrics written down on the back cover. It is advisable to read these words through thoroughly before attempting to understand the album through playing it. Once fully educated, we can proceed with the album in hand. The first track is titled 'Moving,' and it promptly introduces us to the sounds of whales, are we surprised? No, this is a Kate Bush album after all and we should be prepared for anything. What we do hear throughout the album is a prominent piano by her fair hand as well as a vast array of instruments all cunningly conceived on intelligent keyboards. Whilst focusing on inspiration from Celtic and Eastern sounds, we find this theme amongst the tracks. Even the front cover shows our heroine dangling from a kite with a red dragon fiercely portrayed on it and to the left, we see a giant eyeball, although, who's it is, remains a mystery. With Mr Gilmour at her side, she boldly stepped in the public eye with this album which was recognised more as a personal diary of all her accomplishments in composing to date. Never afraid to experiment with styles and textures of music, she was the first female artist to walk into a predominately man's prog rock territory. This first track is fundamentally flat in chord and solemn in lyric. What we are immediately struck with is the clarity of her translucent voice. What we can't understand is the words. I actually found that this feat was just as difficult listening through headphones! Her voice has a natural four octave range so to keep up with what she is actually singing about is difficult beyond belief. This track is soothing when perhaps the opening track to an album should require some more energy. A strong drum backing together with electronic keyboards surround the song with drifting and winding depths of feeling. Again, we have to remember that this is an album for Kate Bush, damn what the public thinkah, those whales again. 'The Saxophone Song,' opens with out us actually realising. Sounding like the continuation of the previous track, its feature is that Pink Floyd sound. What we do discover is that her voice sounds like that of a twelve year old, primitive and faint, but yet handling its work well. Produced by the firm hand of out hero Dave Gilmour, a song about saxophones probably isn't out of the ordinary for a man whose band is obsessed with the instrument. I do believe Pink Floyd's 'Wish You Were Here', designed the entire album around what appeared to be just a saxophone. Again, what we find to be residential PF is the endless rolling theme of a bizarre instrumental breaks towards the end of the track. Rather meaningless and perhaps unfitting on a Kate Bush album, but yet peacefully at home on a concept Pink Floyd EP. 'Strange Phenomena' appears to be on the same theme as the previous two tracks. Her vocals are however, on a catty theme and we await for the slightest mieow! Perhaps the backing vocals weren't Kate at all, but a small litter of kittens allowed to roam freely around the studio. The rain drop effect of the piano is entrancing however, since up until now her voice has been soothing and transparent, she extends now into a theatrical trance using her voice as an acting tool, rather like that of a musical piece featured in an Andrew Lloyd Webber show. The theme takes on different shapes and styles in the same vein and the music shifts and changes tempos which we still find easy to keep up with. Yet, this strange mysterious piece unfolds in our ears then without warning, whole track fades out as quickly as it faded in.

Perhaps 'Kite' and the previous track should have swapped titles as this is basically a blind mixing of a Specials backing, Barbara Dickson and a little Stevie Wonder as a side order. The alley cat vocals of Kate whine and whinge throughout the track and leaves a bitter taste in one's mouth. The opening lines are of somewhat a disordered understanding, 'Beelzebub is aching in my belly-o, my feet are heavy and I'm rooted in my wellios' We wonder who the devil she got herself together to compose the next two tracks. An extreme effect of the previous track, we imagine her curling her body around the microphone stand, twisting and turning in a Gothic dance. This theme is generally a grunge reggae effect. These tracks we find, as the album rolls on, become more experimental as if she is dipping her toes in our ears to see what she can get away with before we find it too diverse to cope with. 'The Man With The Child In His Eyes,' is a stripped down idea of what Kate Bush would sound like if she ditched the floaty scarves, makeup and thigh length boots and stood alone with microphone in jeans and scruffy trainers. This track practically slams us in the face after the gradual climb into insanity from the previous songs. Like a blank canvas, she suddenly presents us her in her naked form vocally. Simple we can feel her song and her words seep over us like syrup. This is how Kate Bush should be heard. Without the poise of the fancy backings, she expresses herself most deeply in this type of song, simply because there is no scope to be anything else to us. 'Wuthering Heights,' is not just a song about a slightly abnormal girl called Kathy and some dopey bloke called Heathcliff who was more interested in looking moody and shouting a lot than he was in Kathy. Personally I don't know why she bothered with him, and the idea of a pop song written about a classic, depressing, full of consumption novel seemed, at the time to be rather extreme and incomprehensible. However, Miss Bush pulled it off. We now want to run across the foggy open hills across the damp sodden ground with flounced skirts and scratched bare legs from all that heather. It is time to fantasise and dream deep and heavy and launch ourselves into all that is unreal. This track was pure musical escapism. We detested the staginess of her usual vocals whereas, this track, although in character of a fictional tragic love story, we delight in her performance as Kathy. The super intelligent keyboards along with its player being Duncan Mackay and hugging percussion and Celeste, gives the impression of a forty two piece orchestra with all the trimmings. The presence of Mike Oldfield is strongly felt in the instrumental break fading out the track after a long performance centre stage. This track was the very key of the door that was the gateway to the massive career of Kate Bush. We will all be remembered for one thing and this was it for her. Self penned and all her own work, she got her number one in Feb 1978 only a month before this album was released to present a fairly reasonable number 3. It appeared again some years later as a vocal B side to a track called 'Experiment IV' in November 1986. The next track takes on a rock theme which rather takes us by the curlies. 'James And The Cold Gun,' for some incredibly sad reason doesn't actually suit her. It is almost like asking the very young Aled Jones to sing a Suzie Quattro song. Kate's voice is far too prissy and doesn't carry the balls for this song. We wonder what it is actually doing here. Hey, what's this? Has Rick Wakeman just walked in with a keyboard under his arm? Bless her, she did put as much of herself into this track by flicking each lyric up at the ends and her favourite paw licking feature in her lyrics, but perhaps this might have been a good time to either take a walk round the block, sit under a parked car or scrounge a saucer of milk. Just as she stops singing, we actually get to here a pretty good backing track. I felt sorry for the poor musicians who would have done a better job if this track had been purely instrumental. Poor Kate, she was never meant to be a rock chick, so we forgive her just this once, just please Kate, don't do it again. 'Feel It' is much suited to her cat like approach to her songs. Dreamy and solely accompanied by piano, she can dance a waltz around the room with this instrument. I do believe she was probably born sitting at a piano and singing a love song this was the only style that ever actually suited her. Such classic lines reflect the type of person she was and probably still is, 'a little nervous laughter, locking the door, my stockings fall onto the floor' such timeless lyrics that never fail to sink into one's conscience. I begin to feel that this heavy presence of Pink Floyd didn't do much for her at all in this album and it is brief episodes like this track, that we hear Bush for the singer that she really is.. On the same theme but a little on a lighter note, the next track, 'Oh To Be In Love,' is about the right borderline for Miss Kate. She really shouldn't delve any deeper into the rocky anthems that are best left to a singer like Pat Benetar. Having said that, this and the following track were firm live favourites. Let's hope the arrangements for these songs were better on stage. Kate's voice was always far too delicate for anything to harsh. What we don't find in these final tracks is the same rawness and energy as in the first opening track from this album. She, admittedly resolves to entertain us by using her dreamy, fantasy style which she does best. Her brother's mandolin gives the track a Spanish theme although probably not fitting but it somehow does give the track a fuller sound. What we find is little touches that no other female artists used. We're no, however sure about the 'ho, ho's' that appear as backing tracks for the chorus, but they do compliment her extraordinary vocal range that even young choir boys can only dream about. 'L'amour Looks Something Like You,' is fairly self explanatory and needs no further description on the subject front. What we are looking for is something other than what we've endured on the last previous tracks. Kate quickly resorts to stretching her vocal chords to an extreme extent but very little else happens. Don't get me wrong, there was nothing dull and momentous about Miss Bush, but one found that an entire album of her and her music only was pretty heavy going and one had to be in the right frame of mind to withstand such torture on a vocal scale. At first her wonderful, trill vocals are a novelty, however, after several ballads all sounding the same as the last but on a different arrangement, then it does become similar to pulling teeth. With this particular song, I will leave it with one thought for you as a line from the song.. '...all the time I find I'm living in that evening, with that feeling of sticky love inside' That, was anyone's guess. 'Them Heavy People' is perhaps just a track with bad grammar, but it doesn't sound too bad on initial hearing. Again, we can hear the slight rustle of something on a Jamaican front that, it has to be said again, doesn't suit. She was, I feel a female version of Bryan Ferry. He could grasp the style and the feeling of a ballad instantly and give it such depth of emotion that his ballads were really quite incredible, but give him something on a lighter, rockier note, and he sounded as though he was being dipped up and down in a hot barrel of tar. For this on a female hand, we find Kate in the same bucket of the black stuff they put on roads. 'Room For Life,' opens and we are almost gagging for room to breathe from this album, however, actually this song is about being pregnant. Bought, as many millions of copies were, on the assumption that all the tracks were just going to be off shoots of the soaring highs and lows of 'Wuthering Heights,' we are

disappointed particularly when someone has received a set of bongos as a birthday present and brought them into the studio and has a little play in the background while the others are recording. It rambles on without a thought for its listener and we feel perhaps that it was about time this little cat went out for a walk around the block this calypso theme really does nothing for the litter of kittens she has as backing vocalists.. Perhaps there were no parked cars outside the studio that afternoon to go and hide under waiting for an engine to start before making a bolt of safety 'The Kick Inside,' opens and we feel the urge to hum an INXS track and can't think why A song, I believe is about a poor young girl who has become pregnant by her brother, a strong subject for a singer to cover, especially when reminding ourselves of this being of the seventies. The thing that strikes me at the end of this album apart from utter joy, is the lack of lyrics on each track according to the lyrics on the back sleeve. I guess we should feel that we have been spoilt with over powering instrumentals. If only that had been the case, I feel no need to feel overly struck by any instruments, perhaps a hit over the head with a collection of percussion items might have had a more powerful impact. Suddenly the track finishes. Do you think she heard us? Idiosyncratic art rock is probably, as you can gather is not my scene and will all fairness Kate Bush, her work towards the mid to late eighties was strong, powerful and transporting to levels of effects and layers of sounds so beyond our dreams and sometimes, nightmares if we can get passed these strange, prima Donna ballerina days then everything would be justified. I guess, in conclusion, what we find the most hard to believe that this young woman who gave us this far less than average album, also gave us the entrancing and demon filled, 'Running Up That Hill' Sadly, for sometime after the glitz of the seventies stardom she had received, she became ridiculed and laughed at for her eccentricities. Wanting to be taken seriously as an artist, her come back about a year or so ago ignited more public praise and recognition that she could ever have hoped for. After fading out like an old has been star, she gingerly blew the dust off her shoulders and set out to make a name for herself once more. Not as strikingly beautiful, she appears today like a reflection of your younger child's pre school teacher, or perhaps that nice woman who lives across the road who's husband goes out to work every day in his clean Mondeo.. Time has not worn well on our Kate, but she was, the one and only songstress of her time whether we liked it or not. For those infancy years, I feel that the very tragedy of Kate Bush was the fact that 'her time' was several hundred years ago. With that decade of solitary confinement behind her, she can only hope to equal her popularity today. An achievement that I feel is beyond those dizzy, 'Wutherin Heights' Kate Bush; Vocals/Keyboards

Paddy Bush; Mandolin

Del Palmer; Bass

Ian Bairnson; guitar

Duncan Mackay; Keyboards with Andrew Powell

Stuart Elliott; drums

David Paton; bass

Morris Pert; percussion

Brian Bath; guitar. Recorded at AIR London Studios; July/August 1975 and 1977 Bought at a record fair, Brighton, East Sussex, four pounds 2004

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About the Author

Michelle is a freelance writer in England and owner of the websites, <http://www.generationsounds.co.uk>, <http://nevermindthebloggers.bravehost.com> and their successful sister, 'Never Mind The Bloggers' at <http://paperback-writer29.tripod.com> She has been writing over the last year, for five major consumer websites across the world and is one of the only two music category advisors for one website in the U.K. Her websites promote young, amateur and professional bands/artists and their fan clubs whilst also reviewing them for local and world wide promotion. She has also recently launched the blogs; 'The Ramblings Of An Old Rocker,' 'Bohemian Waffle,' 'The Rhythm Rock And Blues Machine' and 'The Moped's Musings' and 'Generation Sound Suite.' She is currently working on two shops selling her music styled artwork and now sells on Ebay. Article Source: http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Michelle_Duffy

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