

New book explores Kate Bush's debut album

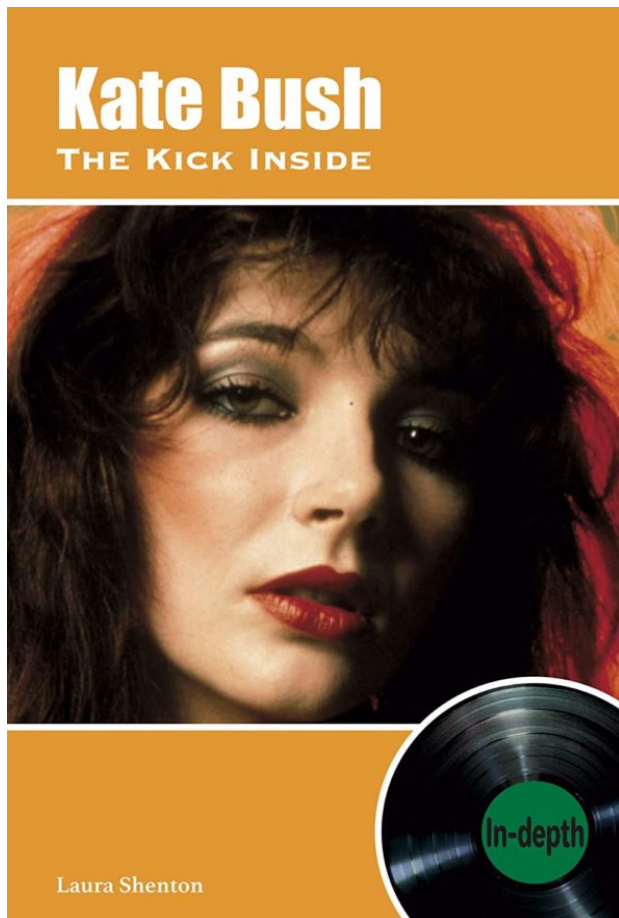
Kate Bush signed a record deal 45 years ago, a new book explores her first album The Kick Inside.

I was fortunate to have a music loving uncle who was more like an older brother growing up in Edinburgh. I first heard the wonderfully strange music of Kate Bush as a youngster and was compelled by albums such as The Kick Inside and Lionheart.

My uncle worked for a glazier in the Southside, his boss quickly shunned the idea of him wandering down to a Kate Bush signing of her latest album Never Forever in September 1980. It would be a different kind of Wuthering Heights for Terry who would often complain of vertigo. He also missed Kate's one and only Edinburgh gig at the Usher Hall in Edinburgh back in April 1979.

I was fortunate to see her at Hammersmith for her run of Before The Dawn dates in 2014 but I could only get one ticket, we don't talk about that but it was a pleasure to talk to Laura Shenton about her recent book Kate Bush: The Kick Inside In-Depth. Certainly no slouch Laura's second Kate Bush book

will be released this coming July.



Released in November 1977, Wuthering Heights was in the charts when Bush was still a teenager. “It’s nostalgic in a way”, explained Laura talking of her initial interest in Bush. “I’m a lot younger than the generation that heard Wuthering Heights when it came out. When I was a kid my parents had the single in a box of records. It sold well so is a common single and I later got a copy of the album The Kick Inside and seriously got into it and loved it in my teens.”

Undoubtedly 1977 was a fine vintage, the single was released in the same year as David Bowie’s Berlin masterpiece Low and the Sex Pistols Never Mind Bollocks. Shenton points to the importance of Lindsay Kemp, an early mentor for Bowie who he shared a Drummond Street flat with when in Edinburgh during the early 70s.

She said: “Ironically at the time there was more effort and more dance training than formal music. Kemp was a massively

big deal for the dance side of things, it influenced the choreography and the training for the tour in 1979. Again it wasn't formal training but kind of pay as you go."

Undoubtedly Bush benefited from her musical family, like many others Shenton was drawn to the unlimited lyrical themes married to an arresting vocal range. Shenton continued: "There's nothing banal on the album, it's a very atmospheric record and the subject matter deals with motherhood, the womb, the paranormal, literary themes, femininity etc, she doesn't go for the obvious type of love song. I remember hearing Kite the b-side to Wuthering Heights as child which referred to Beelzebub, I didn't even know what it meant."

The compelling nature of the work and Bush's avoidance of zeitgeist topics has provided The Kick Inside with a timeless relevance. Her art could often be disturbing and knock you out your comfort zone. The Dreaming remains a difficult album for many to digest, once again Shenton was drawn to this often bizarre albeit singular work.



Laura Shenton

Laura said: "Not all fans rate it highly, I felt unlike Hounds of Love there is need to preserve its legacy, it felt more urgent as its overlooked and there's a lot to be said about that record. I wanted to offer an objective commentary."

She also pointed out that Bush, even since her teens, wasn't pliable when it came to decisions about her career. Laura continued: "She took control when the record company wanted to release James and the Cold Gun as her first single, she told them 'no' and that it would be Wuthering Heights. Those who worked with Kate have spoke about how she knew what she wanted, she was very head strong when others higher up in the industry wanted her to go in another direction."

Despite that it didn't stop journalists interviewing her mother, a move that Shenton suggests "speaks volumes, she later spoke for herself and confidently so, that tells us a story about how some people might have seen her. If it was a guy like long haired 70s rocker no one would have thought to speak to the mother."

Kate Bush: The Kick Inside In-Depth by Laura Shenton is out now

Kate Bush: The Dreaming In-Depth will be published in July