

The Dreaming — Kate Bush

Album Review by Ignacio Lopez



Introduction to the Artist

Kate Bush is an English singer-songwriter, producer and a visionary artist known for her theatrical voice, poetic lyrics, eccentric performances, and experimental production. Born on July 30, 1958 in Bexleyheath, Kent, she displayed remarkable musical talent from a young age, writing hundreds of songs by her early teens.

Kate Bush got noticed by David Gilmour, who was a close friend of her oldest brother—John Carder Bush. After he listened to her tape-recorded demos, he saw something special about her and invited her to go to a studio to produce polished demos. She quickly got signed by EMI records through this connection. Even before her debut, the industry could recognize her rare artistic potential.

She decided to drop out of high school at the age of sixteen to pursue her music career full time. Her parents were very supportive of this. Her label was also very supportive because unlike today, labels back then were more focused on the artistry than numbers so they took the risk and waited for her for three years to come up with more material. This is something labels would never do nowadays because you

basically have to be an influencer to get signed (which doesn't make sense at all because the purpose of a label is to market the product too).

EMI records wasn't supportive only on that aspect—they gave her full control over her master recordings and a budget for elaborate photo sessions, dance training, and theatrical classes to help her refine her stage persona. She was obviously loved by EMI records.

At the age of nineteen years old, she released her 1978 debut single, “Wuthering Heights”, which made her the first woman in UK history to top the UK singles charts for four weeks with a fully self-written song. Soon after, she released her debut album “The Kick Inside”.

Background of The Dreaming

Released in 1982, *The Dreaming* was Kate Bush's fourth studio album and her first as sole producer. After the commercial success of *Never for Ever* (1980), she wanted to take total creative control over her sound, vision, and storytelling.

Armed with the Fairlight CMI, an early digital sampler, she spent nearly two years crafting the record. The album marked a turning point in her career by rejecting mainstream and label expectations in favor of a more experimental sound with dense production layers, narrative-driven songs, and genre-blending.



Reception & Legacy

Upon its release, *The Dreaming* received mixed reactions and confused both critics and fans. Some critics described it as “very weird”, “unlistenable”, or as her “she’s gone mad” album, but it also received positive feedback. It wasn't a commercial failure, but was Kate Bush's lowest-selling album to date. Despite the critics, *The Dreaming* was a pioneering work that inspired the music of the 80s and future art pop/rock

music. Artists like Bjork and Fiona Apple have mentioned *The Dreaming* as one of their favourite albums and inspirations for their own music.

Tracklist Review

Sat In Your Lap 10/10

First song on the album and we're off to a strong start. This song explores the frustration of seeking knowledge and the desire for quick answers or success which is an unconventional theme for a song and what makes it stand out. Another thing that makes the song really unique is its use of percussion, syncopation, and polyrhythms in a tribal or primal way. The song is aggressive, mad, and chaotic which really sets the tone for the rest of the album. I give this song a 10/10 because the tribal percussion is just amazing, and because the song is chaotic, which I love in my music.

There Goes A Tenner 7/10

This song is amazing. It is about a bungled bank robbery told through the perspective of the offender who's afraid and anxious. It was one of the singles for the album but didn't chart or had commercial success. I personally think that this song shouldn't have been a single in the first place because, despite it being really interesting, there are better tracks. That's why I give it a 7/10.



Pull Out The Pin 10/10

Personally, this is my second favourite song on the album and one of the reasons for that is the chaos of the song with many voices stepping on top of each other or the many tracks that live in a similar frequency range. The song is told from the perspective of soldiers from the Vietcong fighting against the American soldiers and literally sniffing them out before killing them. The phrase "Pull Out The Pin" refers to the safety

pin of a grenade being removed. Kate Bush got the inspiration for this song from a documentary as usual. I give this song a 10/10 not just because of the striking lyrics and inspiration but also for the musical content, production choices, arrangements, vocal phrasing, and more.

Suspended In Gaffa 8/10

The song is about having a glimpse of something profound but being stuck or held back unless you decide to chase it. "Gaffa" is a reference to gaffer tape which symbolises an obstacle in the song, keeping the character desiring their freedom. The song is mostly on $\frac{3}{4}$ time signature which gives it that theatrical essence. It's also the most streamed song on the album. I give it an 8/10.

Leave It Open 10/10

This is my favourite song not just on the album but out of Kate Bush's entire discography. It is such an underrated prog rock song that even her fans don't recognize. But I think it really stands out in her discography because it is messy, chaotic, raw, aggressive and bold. The song is literally just about showing your weird side to the world or letting the door open for it to come out. I give it a 10/10 because I can't go higher.



The Dreaming 9/10

The song is about the destruction of Aboriginal Australian lands and culture by white colonists for uranium mining. The song is amazing and innovative not just in its theme, but its sound and dense production too. The song features instruments such as the didgeridoo and animal sounds for atmosphere. I give this song a 9/10 because I love music that sounds primal.

Night Of The Swallow 10/10

I find this song one of the most interesting in the album because it is a dialogue story between a couple where the man has been hired to do an illegal job flying a plane but his lover threatens to turn him in if he goes away on that mission. It is not only the storytelling that makes this song great but also the use of pipes and Irish celtic instruments. I give it a 10/10.

All The Love 9/10

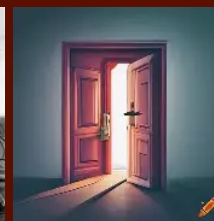
The song is deeply emotional, focused on loneliness, regret, and unexpressed love. It is very unique in sound, featuring a choirboy singing in the distance, as well as voices saying 'goodbye' through an old tape recorder or answering machine, which gives the song a ghostly feel, along with its eerie piano. I give it a 9/10.

Houdini 9/10

Houdini is a dramatic and cinematic song that tells the story of the famous magician Harry Houdini from the perspective of his grieving wife, Bess. Harry was a really famous magician during the 20s that, before his death, made a promise to his wife — he would try to contact her from beyond the grave with the secret code 'Rosabelle believe'. After his death in 1926, Bess held annual rituals every Halloween to try and contact him. Even though she never managed to reconnect, in the song she does. The song feels like a miniature stage play set to music, so I give it a 9/10. I would give it an extra point, but because I've listened to it so many times, I just haven't replayed it in a while.

Get Out Of My House 10/10

I have absolute love for this song. It is a tense and unsettling track where Kate expresses anger, fear, and paranoia. It tells the story of someone feeling invaded in their personal space. The track also features a male vocalist that wants to enter but the woman just won't let him in. Its eerie production and primal vocal phrasing make the listener feel trapped in the world of this song. You can also hear an intense backing vocal screaming desperately the song title like she's just witnessed a murder. It's simply a 10/10.



My Conclusion

