

## BEFORE THE DAWN

A few issues ago, our Editor Jeremy wrote that you knew a music gig was good if you were still humming the tunes the next day. Well - over a week has passed since I was lucky enough to see the legendary Kate Bush, *writes Four Shires' Sarah*, and I still can't shake the music out of my head.

'Before the Dawn' is Kate Bush's first tour in over thirty years and with only 22 dates available, ticket buying was a frenzied fifteen minutes before they were all snatched up. For those who had been waiting for this event for decades - myself and my mother Di included - it was almost as if Kate had heard our wishes.

Held at the Hammersmith Apollo in London, the audience was just over three thousand people; a staggeringly small amount considering how many arena seats could have been sold had Kate Bush been that kind of performer. However, having experienced the intimate theatre venue and connection with the music, it's clear that Kate Bush will never be that kind of performer.

The audience seemed to fall loudly in love the second she stepped on stage, walking barefoot to the rhythm of drums and clad in long black fringing. No backs touched the seats, and I (needlessly) worried whether we'd be able to hear her first song for the loud cheering. The only pause of silence from the audience came as she finished her opening track Lily, in which - much to everyone's uproarious approval - one gentleman bellowed at the top of his lungs, 'Kate, you're beautiful!'

Our beloved performer was bashful at such sheer emotional response, and launched into Hounds of Love with nothing but a quick 'thank you' in between. It seemed a baffling stance to us, the audience. Kate's voice was as powerful and clear as her first recording, expelling out of her like waves, and her directive vision was absorbing.

The first few songs were performed simply and as a performance it seemed minimalist, introducing us to her band and backing vocalists (including her sixteen year old son, Bertie McIntosh). We were unprepared, then, for an ear-shattering crash of thunder as the theatre was pitched into darkness. A ghostly light came on and strange



people with large fish-bone headpieces crept onto the stage. It was eerie, utterly entrancing, and very telling that the rest of the performance would be like nothing we had seen from a music 'gig' before.

Act after act of huge set pieces, puppeteers and projections carried the audience through a stormy ocean, a blizzard and a hypnotising English sunrise. At one climactic point Kate bursts through a set of giant wooden doors, flying in on wires with a set of feathered wings that seemed to have been borne from her shoulders.

The show seemed never-ending as each song was transported from the small stage with its own complete world of artistry. It closed with a final swoop as Cloudbusting delivered an incredibly uplifting encore. Each stage member stood by Kate (percussionists, dancers, singers) and grinned ear to ear as the audience drowned them out with their own volunteered vocals.

As a show, it was awesome in the very true sense of the word. As a performer, Kate Bush has proved that she is as inimitable as ever. We can only hope that this won't be the last we see of her. ♣