

Deborah M. Withers, *Adventures in Kate Bush and Theory*, published by HammerOn Press

Adventures in Kate Bush and Theory by Deborah M. Withers is a new book providing the first ever in-depth engagement with the philosophy of Kate Bush's music. It will be published on March 15th 2010.

Adventures in Kate Bush and Theory will present Kate Bush as you have never seen her before. Here is the polymorphously perverse Kate, the witchy Kate, the queer Kate; the Kate who moves beyond the mime.

Since Bush burst into the public eye in 1978, her fans and admirers have been fascinated by the endless mysteries of her music. She is a pop star whose brain and imagination have inspired, delighted and comforted millions. Former Sex Pistol John Lydon recently said that Bush 'supplies me with all the clues and it's up to me put the answers together.' *Adventures in Kate Bush and Theory* is one personal response to these clues. Written by a queer woman in her late 20s, its answers are delivered in a unique way.

Drawing on cutting edge feminist philosophy, critical theory and queer studies, *Adventures in Kate Bush and Theory* makes theory accessible to new audiences. Through analysis of the music, film, video and dance of Kate Bush, it breaks down boundaries between the academic and popular, showing that theory can be sordid, funny and relevant – despite what most people think.

The book has been described by Radio DJ Mark Radcliffe as “an in-depth labour of love from a genuine Bush fanatic” and acclaimed international artist and scholar Allyson Mitchell as “a weaving of theory, historical data, imagination and activism tied with astute observation and wry wit... Cultural Studies has met its match in a readable stretch of the boundaries of theory and genres”.

Author biography

Deborah M. Withers has been interpreting and telling stories about Kate Bush's music for most of the noughties. She even has a PhD on the subject. *Adventures in Kate Bush and Theory* is her first book.

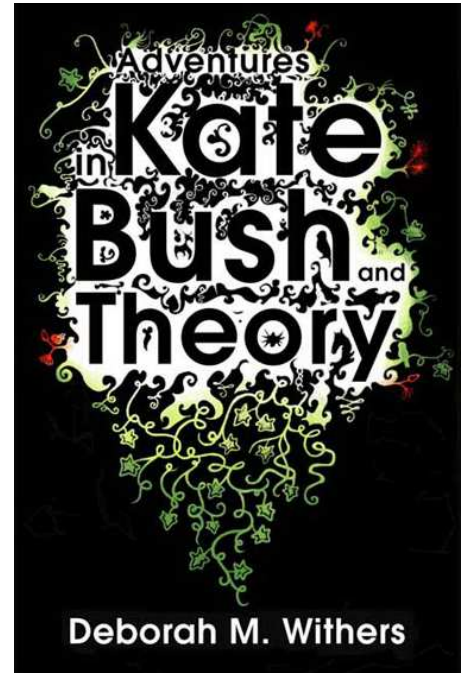
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Author Question and Answer: Deborah M. Withers

Why did you decide to write *Adventures in Kate Bush and Theory*?

Adventures in Kate Bush and Theory is a popular re-interpretation of my PhD thesis. After working hard on the ideas for many years in an academic context, I decided that I wanted more people to be able to read and enjoy my thoughts about her art. I have spent the past year re-writing the book with a more popular audience in mind, and *Adventures in Kate Bush and Theory* is the product of this.

Do you think that taking a theoretical approach to Bush's music will put people off?



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Undoubtedly including “theory” in the title will immediately suggest to people that the book is a weighty tome, but I can assure you that this is not the case. It is important to remember that “adventures” is also in the title. I want readers to roam with me through Kate Bush’s music, unlocking the codes that are within them. Theory is one of the instruments I use to crack these codes. It is a tool that should be available for everyone to use.

It's not just another academic book then, which no one will be able to understand?

No. By writing the book I also wanted to rejuvenate critical theory, using it to tell jokes and stories while making it accessible to new audiences. These are things you can rarely get away with in academic writing. So often academic writing remains in that context; written in complicated language that is alienating to many people. As a consequence it isn't seen as relevant to people's lives.

What will the book tell us about Kate Bush's music that we don't already know?

Much of the commentary you find about Kate Bush is written by white men, usually middle aged, who have been fans of her music since she first became famous in the late 70s. My perspective is different. As a queer woman in her late 20s I am sensitive to the queerer, and downright weird, aspects of Bush's music. These are often neglected in journalism and critique that want to emphasise other points about Bush's art.

You have set up your own publishing company to publish *Adventures in Kate Bush and Theory*. What are your reasons for doing this?

The current economic climate has forced many creative people to take the initiative and do things themselves. Setting up HammerOn Press is partly a reflection of this. Also, self-publishing today is economically feasible. Whereas in the past self-publishing a book would have meant printing 1,000 - 2,000 books to stand a chance of recuperating costs, now you do not need to print any at all. With Print on Demand technology a book is simply printed when someone wants to buy a copy.

In short, self-publishing books is now so easy that there is no good reason why not to do it. This is particularly true if you want to publish a niche title, like my book, which mainstream publishers would not pick up because it is too much of a risk. While the late 1970s saw the emergence of a culture of musicians and bands taking up a do it yourself (DIY) philosophy in order to release records, we can see a similar thing happening with literature today and the rise of indie authorship.