



Pearson

Kate Bush: *Hounds of Love* – ‘Cloudbusting’, ‘And Dream of Sheep’ and ‘Under Ice’ (for component 3: Appraising)

Background information and performance circumstances

The composer

Kate Bush was born in Kent, in 1958. Her early music came to the attention of Dave Gilmour (guitarist with Pink Floyd) who recommended her to the record company EMI, who signed Kate at 16.

The first single release from her first album – ‘Wuthering Heights’ – became a national and international success, bringing her first (and so far only) UK number 1. She was also the first British female artist to top the UK album charts, with *Never for Ever*.

Her songs are often inspired by literary or historical sources, as in ‘Wuthering Heights’, which is based on Emily Bronte’s novel. Her musical roots and inspirations are similarly eclectic, ranging through progressive rock, folk, ethnic styles, electronica and classical forms. She also received training in dance and mime, art-forms which she has used extensively in her stage and video work.

Artists who have appeared on her albums include Elton John, Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck, David Gilmour, Nigel Kennedy and Prince.

The piece

Hounds of Love (a concept album) was Kate Bush’s fifth studio album (released in 1985), and the second that she had produced. It was recorded in her own studio, in the grounds of her home, as studio fees for her previous albums had been very high.

The album features her as composer, performer and producer, working with more or less complete control. Kate sings lead vocals and plays piano and Fairlight CMI (Computer Musical Instrument – an early sampler/sequencer/synthesiser). Her brother Paddy plays violin, balalaika and sings harmony vocals on ‘Under Ice’.

Other regular collaborators also appear – Del Palmer (bass), Alan Murphy (guitar) and Stuart Elliott and Charlie Morgan (drums).

The album uses a typically wide range of additional instruments and performers – Irish musicians Donal Lunny (bouzouki), John Sheahan (whistles) and Liam O’Flynn (uilleann pipes), the Medici String Sextet, the Richard Hickox Singers and classical guitarist John Williams.

Vinyl albums (and cassettes) were produced with two sides, a physical division which is mirrored in the contrast between the more up-tempo ‘poppy’ songs of side one (concluding with ‘Cloudbusting’) and the more ‘arty’-related songs which make up side two, which Bush has called *The Ninth Wave*.

‘Cloudbusting’, too, has an extra-musical inspiration, being based on the relationship between the psychoanalyst/inventor Wilhelm Reich, and his son, Peter. His theories on the capturing of a mysterious energy, called *Orgone*, led him to believe that he could cure humanity’s ills, and also create rain (using machines called Cloudbusters). His attempt to market and publicise his inventions led to his imprisonment for two years for fraud in 1956.

Kate Bush managed to persuade the actor Donald Sutherland to appear in the video for ‘Cloudbusting’. The video, shot at the ancient White Horse at Uffington, is still available on YouTube, and features a cloudbusting machine, Reich’s arrest and Kate’s (rather unconvincing (?)) appearance as Reich’s son.

The Ninth Wave evokes the feelings and experiences of an individual drifting alone on the sea at night:

- ‘And Dream of Sheep’ – drifting in the sea, awaiting rescue
- ‘Under Ice’ – in a dream-like state the narrator is skating on ice, alone. In a *doppelganger*-like moment she sees herself under the ice.

Performing forces and their handling

Two main elements are common to the three tracks here:

- Kate Bush’s distinctive voice
- The use of cutting-edge music technology, in the form of the **Fairlight CMI**. This instrument could not only sample and reproduce sounds, but could also act as a sequencer and synthesiser as well.

Two tracks show her liking for instruments and combinations not normally used in pop music:

- A classical string sextet in ‘Cloudbusting’
- The Irish folk instruments bouzouki and whistles in ‘And Dream of Sheep’.

‘Cloudbusting’

- Most conventional use of instruments, but still lacking some of the traditional backing instruments of rock and pop styles:
 - No bass guitar
 - No electric guitar
 - Restrained use of drums/percussion.

- Main accompaniment here is the string sextet:
 - **Short staccato chords**, creating a strong crotchet pulse (reminiscent of the strings in the Beatles' 'Eleanor Rigby')
 - **Violin riff** signals the start of the chorus each time (bar 18)
 - **Violin countermelody** (in octaves) in verse 2 (bar 34).
- Keyboard-triggered **Fairlight samples**:
 - **Treated vocal sample** used as a backing ostinato to the bridge section (bars 11–17)
 - **Two sampled tracks** used as the melody and accompanying chords for the instrumental section (bars 65–80)
 - **Sampled steam engine sounds** used to 'cover' the final chord and to create an ending.
- **Bush's vocals** feature throughout:
 - **Range of a tenth** (G# below middle C–B above) – mostly in mid-range
 - **Syllabic setting of the words.**
- **Wordless** (nonsense syllables) **backing singers** sing in counterpoint with the lead vocals during the outro/coda (bar 111).
- **Drums/Percussion used sparingly** – perhaps most notable is the 'military' snare drum part towards the end of the song.
- Kate's brother, Paddy, plays a very brief **balalaika line** (bars 8–9).

'And Dream of Sheep'

- Dominated by the **voice and piano textures** reminiscent of ballads from early in Bush's career.
- **Bouzouki** (played by Irish musician Donal Lunny) adds decorating lines to verse 2 (bar 20) and also plays in the second instrumental link section, and in the outro/coda.
- **Irish whistle** (John Sheahan) is multi-tracked during the outro/coda. (It is said to have taken three hours for the player to get the required degree of 'bend' on notes during the recording session.)
- **The piano style**:
 - More dramatic and 'involved' during the verse, using a wider range of the keyboard
 - 'Vamped' chords during the refrain.
- A **spoken vocal sample** is used, in the style of the radio shipping forecast, rather similar to some of the sound sonic objects in Pink Floyd's *The Wall* (bar 15).
- The final phrase uses word-painting, as the vocal line descends to the words 'deeper and deeper'.

'Under Ice'

- All accompaniment here is **synthesised/sampled sound** produced through the Fairlight CMI. (Perhaps the composer preferred the bleaker/colder sound of sampled strings to the 'live' sounds used on 'Cloudbusting'?)
- Lead vocal uses a **low tessitura** throughout.
- **Vocal range limited to a perfect fifth** (A below middle C to E above) except for the 'cry' in the last phrase.
- **Lead vocals** are harmonised by a **lower, quieter male voice** during the refrain sections until bar 49, where additional voices join in to make three parts.

- The lead vocal is mainly **syllabic**, but there are **melismas** (e.g. at bars 27–28, ‘trees’)
- A higher register phrase at bars 53–57 combines a melisma with a slide downwards to the final note (word-painting).
- The last sound heard is a sustained vocal sample, with a moving filter frequency used to create an effect similar to the vocal harmonics of Mongolian throat singers.

Structure

All three songs here do contain some or all of the familiar ingredients of popular song structure:

- Verses
- Refrains or choruses
- Contrasting instrumental or bridge sections
- Introductions and/or outros or codas.

However, the aesthetic here is far from the highly formalised 3-minute pop song of the 1980s à la Stock, Aitken and Waterman, being closer in some respects to the pretensions of progressive rock and in others to the narrative forms of musical theatre.

‘Cloudbusting’, at 5 minutes, is considerably longer than most single releases, and the version that accompanies the video is nearly 7 minutes.

‘And Dream of Sheep’ and ‘Under Ice’, being parts of a seven-song cycle, are relatively short, at 2’45” and 2’21” respectively. The two songs follow one another, and there is also some related material in common.

‘Cloudbusting’

- Extended conventional song structure.
- Lacks an introduction but has a long outro/coda.
- Uses the common device of going straight to a final chorus after the instrumental, rather than going into a third verse.
- In a modal C# minor.

Verse 1	Bars 1–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead vocal and homorhythmic strings • Regular change of metre to 6/4 (really 3/2) • Based on a two-bar repeated chord sequence • Three repetitions of a new melodic idea • Vocal sample figure added • Begins with violin riff • Vocals sing short ‘hook idea’ three times • More continuous, stepwise line (bars 27–29) • Drums enter (but not very dramatically) bar 18 • Violin countermelody in octaves bar 34
Bridge	Bars 11–17	
Chorus	Bars 18–33	
Verse 2	Bars 34–43	
Bridge 2	Bars 44–50	
Chorus	Bars 51–68	

Instrumental	Bars 69–80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percussion returns • Keyboard 2 begins its 'solo' line during last four bars, underneath vocals • Based on the four-bar chord sequence of the chorus • Melodic line is fairly restrained, consisting of long, held notes joined by quaver figures • Upward leap at bar 73 and descending sixth at bar 74 are noticeable • Adds a 'military' snare drum line • Bar 95 – string accompaniment becomes more active • Longest section of the song which has an improvisatory feel to it • Keyboard 2 repeats material from the instrumental • Lead vocal adds material from end of chorus at bar 105, then the 'hook' at bars 130, 132 • Backing vocals add a wordless figure every four bars from bar 111
Chorus	Bars 81–98	
Outro/Coda	Bars 99–136	

'And Dream of Sheep'

- Also lacks an introduction.

Verse	Bars 1–7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice and piano only • Prominent rising fifths in vocal line • Minor tonality (C# minor again) • Seven-bar phrase (2+2+3) • Moves to E (relative major) • Simpler piano chordal style over a tonic pedal • Melody more restricted in range – based around a minor third • Uses chord sequence from refrain • 'Shipping forecast' sample • Vocal line slightly varied here • Bouzouki decorations added bars 20–23 • Third phrase added here to extend section • Bouzouki replaces 'shipping forecast' • Based on chord sequence of refrain (bars 8–12) • Repeated vocal idea • Addition of multi-tracked whistle and occasional bouzouki • Pause at bar 47 • Vocal line continues as above • Accompaniment taken from bars 36–40 • Bar 51 extended to five beats for dramatic effect • Ambiguous final chord • Vocals finish on dominant note • Rit. over last two bars
Bridge	Bars 8–19	
Verse 2	Bars 20–26	
Bridge 2	Bars 27–40	
Outro/Coda	Bars 41–46 Bars 47–53	

'Under Ice'

- Through-composed, with little clarity of verse/chorus structure.
- Quite short, at 2'21".
- Least conventional in structure, melodically, although it is based on repetition of ideas.
- In the following table the terms 'verse' and refrain' are used in their most basic sense.
- Bars 5–14 form a repeated structure, which is the basis for the piece. Unusually, this structure is not defined by the melody, but by the accompaniment figures and by the changes of time signature and rhythm.

Introduction	Bars 1–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modal A minor • Re-iterated A octave in the bass • Accompaniment ostinato in fifths • Ostinato idea continues in accompaniment
Verse 1	Bars 5–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No vocals here • Change of metre to 3/4 at bar 7
Refrain 1	Bars 9–14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses ♩ rhythm (from accompaniment) – rhythmically displaced in bars 12–13
Verse 2	Bars 15–18 Bars 19–24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melody uses pentatonic shapes • Lead vocal harmonised by lower voice • Distant 'out of key' cry at bar 23
Verse 3	Bars 25–28	
Refrain 3	Bars 29–34 Bars 35–40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension of refrain
Verse 4	Bars 41–44	
Refrain 4	Bars 44–49	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harmonised parts become more audible • Third part added in bar 49
Outro/Coda	Bars 50–58	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dialogue between lead vocal ('It's me') and 3-part backing vocals • Final high 'cry' from vocals at bar 53 • Whispered 'wake up'

Texture

- As with most songs, the function of the texture is to support and emphasise the melody and lyrics, creating a melody-dominated homophony.

'Cloudbusting'

- **Homorhythmic** string chords articulate a crotchet pulse for most of the song, broken only (for effect) at the end of the bridge sections (bars 17, 50).

- **String countermelody** doubled in octaves added in verse 2.
- **Vocal sample** idea added to texture during bridge sections.
- More **polyphonic** feel in **chorus**, where violin riff acts as a counterpoint to the vocal phrases.
- Silence used for impact in bars 17 and 50.
- Outro/Coda features polyphonic interplay of three lines (although rarely all three together):
 - Lead vocals
 - Instrumental line in keyboard 2
 - Wordless backing vocals.

‘And Dream of Sheep’

- Focus very much on vocal line here.
- Piano is more active/involved in verses – wider ranging arpeggios and some doubling of the vocals.
- Chorus is accompanied by much plainer, mid-range block chords.
- **Tonic bass pedal** (E) appears in several sections here (e.g. bars 8–12 and 15–16).

‘Under Ice’

- **Articulated bass pedal** textures used throughout.
- **Ostinato open fifth textures** used frequently over the bass (e.g. bars 3–4).
- **Dialogue** between lead and backing vocals in coda (bars 50–58).
- **Homorhythmic** vocal parts in refrain, using  rhythm.

Tonality

- Kate Bush’s musical language is tonal, but not straightforwardly diatonic and functional.
- The tonality is always clear, but is often modally inflected in the choice of chords and progressions.
- There is little evidence of tonality being used to define structure here.

‘Cloudbusting’

- Modal C# minor with no changes of key.

‘And Dream of Sheep’

- Verses in modal C# minor.
- Choruses in E major (relative major).
- Ends (a little inconclusively) in E major.

‘Under Ice’

- Modal A minor.
- No key changes.
- Finishes on an ambiguous Asus2 chord.

Harmony

- Kate Bush's harmonic language is clearly based on the main elements of the diatonic functional system.
- Being musically self-taught, she does not feel constrained by functional relationships and progressions:
 - Very few perfect cadences (the exception here is the perfect cadence in E major which closes the chorus section of 'And Dream of Sheep')
 - Progressions based on primary chords are rare.
- Much use of repeated chord sequences, usually two or four bars in length.
- Chord palate is widened by the use of **added note and extension chords**, **sus chords**, and **slash chords**.

'Cloudbusting'

- Verse and outro/coda based around a modal chord sequence, moving by step and using seventh and ninth chords. Note how the Badd⁹ subtonic (\flat VII) chord acts as a substitute dominant at the end of the sequence:
 - C#m⁷-B^{add9}-A^{6/9}-B^{add9}.
- Chorus and Instrumental based on similar sequence (A^{6/9} and F#^{7(sus4)} contain the same notes):
 - C#m⁷-B^{add9}-F#^{7(sus4)}-B^{add9}.

'And Dream of Sheep'

- Opens with another modal sequence
 - C#m⁷-F#m/A-B (note the roots a fifth apart).
 - This can be interpreted a I-IV \flat - \flat VII progression in C# minor, using the subtonic once more, or perhaps as an extended VI-II \flat -V progression in E major, the key of the chorus
- The chorus uses a **conventional I-II-V-I** progression, in E major, over a **tonic bass pedal**.

'Under Ice'

- This piece uses a repeated chord sequence. Note the movement by **thirds** up and down here
 - F^{maj7#4}-Dm⁹-A^(sus2)-Am/C.
- The chords here are all taken from the **scale of A natural minor** apart from the occasional D major chord (bars 22-23, 49-53), which uses an F#.

Melody

Kate Bush's melodies are known for their free-flowing, quirky, unpredictable nature. They tend to be constructed in short phrases, not always equal in length, and can sound improvised. Repetition is a key feature and larger intervals (greater than a fifth) are often given some prominence

'Cloudbusting'

- Begins with a **triadic shape** (G#-B-E), but as the harmony here is C#m⁷, the notes picked out include an unprepared seventh and thus the effect is not at all that of the (apparent) major triad.

- **Chorus 'hook'** uses:
 - Rising fifth
 - Rapid repeated notes
 - Syncopated anticipation.
- Violin riff in chorus uses simple stepwise, repetitive, material.
- Backing vocal figure in the outro/coda features:
 - A rising **minor seventh leap** from tonic to flattened leading note
 - A stepwise fall to (alternating) **supertonic** and **subdominant** notes.

'And Dream of Sheep'

- Verse opens with two **rising fifths** (which could be considered a **melodic sequence**).
- Chorus features oscillating **minor third** between B and G#.
- Coda/Outro uses a repeated figure:
 - **Rising major sixth** from the lower dominant (B)
 - Falls by step back to the starting note or to the tonic
 - **Word-painting** used on the final phrase 'they take me deeper'
 - Song finishes on an '**unresolved**' **dominant note**.

'Under Ice'

- Melodic range is more restricted here:
 - Many short phrases, often featuring repeated notes or small, stepwise movements
 - Perhaps intended to suggest a feeling of entrapment?
- Short, staccato refrain-like ideas.
- **Quasi-pentatonic** shapes used in the more lyrical melodic sections (bars 15–18).
- Mostly **small range** (perfect fifth) but higher in last phrase (and including a sinking **portamento** effect).

Rhythm, tempo and metre

The pieces involve regular and planned **changes of metre** perhaps showing the influence of progressive rock bands popular during Kate Bush's formative years. Vocal lines contain frequent **syncopations**, **anticipations** and **retardation/suspensions** (although not prepared in the traditional manner). A sense of pulse is strong and rarely absent.

'Cloudbusting'

- Fast medium tempo throughout ($\text{♩}=112$), with strong sense of pulse.
- Metre is mostly 4/4 in verse and chorus, but with bars of 6/4 used to extend phrases.
- Bridge uses 3/2 metre for variety (notated in transcription as 6/4).
- ♩♩ rhythm used extensively.
- Chorus hook uses **anticipatory syncopation** and **rapid repeated notes**.

- Accompanying string rhythms become more active towards the end, replace the third beat with alternate quavers and semiquavers.

‘And Dream of Sheep’

- **Slow ballad** tempo (♩=80).
- Mostly 4/4 metre, with 2/4 bars used to extend phrases at bars 11 and 32 and a 5/4 bar used for dramatic effect at bar 51.
- Verse and chorus openings both use **syncopation**.
- Vocal material often starts **after the first beat of the bar**.
- Final vocal idea (outro/coda):
 - Has an **anacrusis** pick-up
 - Uses **triplets, ties** and **Lombardic rhythms** in the last five bars
 - Ends with a **ritardando**.

‘Under Ice’

- Begins very slowly at ♩=65, but accelerates to ♩=100 and then to 108.
- Last four bars slow down again.
- ‘Obsessive’ crotchet pulse articulated constantly in the bass.
- Uses a **repeated ten-bar rhythmic unit** as the basis for the piece (see bars 5–14)
 - 4/4 x2 3/4 x 5 4/4 x3.
- Accompaniment ostinato (first heard in bars 3–4) uses  rhythm, repeated and rhythmically displaced, to create a 3+3+2 cross-rhythm across two bars of 4/4.
- Vocal refrain uses the  of the ostinato accompaniment – unifying the rhythmic language of the piece.