

# Acoustic Heads Up

# KATE DOUBLEDAY

She's a lone parent with a career, but she also writes and performs with her own band. *Acoustic* introduces the free-spirited musician, single mum and professional gardener, Kate Doubleday.

## Who and what have inspired and influenced you?

There was always a lot of music around me when I was growing up, from The Carpenters to La Bohème opera. Later on I was very inspired by Stevie Wonder, Nina Simone and Bobby McFerrin, and also by the Belgian a cappella group Zap Mama and the beautiful Bulgarian singers Le Mystere Des Voix Bulgares. I was always drawn to music, like having a really good friend. I found singing really cathartic, and I could never really imagine that my life would not involve singing as an important part of it.

## What are your fondest musical memories?

When I was 21 I travelled to West Africa with my good friend and singer Sarah Winton to learn more about West African music. I

loved the sense of community there and the way in which music is such an integral part of life. It evoked a real sense of *Belonging*, the title of my new CD, which explores my understanding of this word. I also have fond memories of performing at the Ragley Green Fair, where we blended our songs amidst the gentle humming of two very kind people who pedalled their bicycles to power our PA system.

## Do you regard yourself as a 'world music' artist?

I'm not keen on labels and leave that for others to decide. I was once asked what language I was speaking in my songs. I thought this was very funny as I was playing with vocal sounds – this is something we do as toddlers before the world gets serious

with words. I love to cross the boundaries with words and sounds, and in many ways I feel that music is a very special and universal playground. If you place yourself into a category the music is less free somehow.

## Have you gained any particular insights through having a mixed-race child?

We still have a long way to go, I believe, before we end the prejudice surrounding cross-cultural relationships and their children. My daughter and I learn from each other every single day.

## So how do you juggle your commitment to your music with the demands of having a day job and being a lone parent?

It hasn't been easy, especially when my daughter was very young. I wasn't able to do lots of gigs and I had to adopt a more long-term plan for my career. I am very lucky though, in that I love my day job as a gardener and working outdoors is a real tonic – somehow it feeds its way into the music too. Being self-employed allows me to make commitments to my music as and when.

## What guitar(s) do you play?

A steel-strung Olympia Tacoma.

## Have you experimented with your guitar to personalise your sound?

I like playing lots of arpeggios and I've been trying out some African guitar styles. I'm saving my pennies for a South African oil can guitar.

## How do you get gigs?

Mostly by badgering promoters, and also by putting on my own events through our label, Copper Records, in gardens and unusual venues.

## What gear do you take?

My SM58 microphone, a very old leather drum case full of reclaimed copper percussion, and some Vocalzone singing sweets.

## What are you up to at the moment?

I'm working on my third album, *Free-falling*, and finding myself more and more interested in bird life. I'm also busy creating wildlife gardens.

## What are your aspirations, musically?

I would love to tour South Africa with the band and work with a community choir. I also want to build a sustainable vehicle for the band to tour in.

**Graham Hazelwood**



## Kate's Advice

Follow your instincts!

## Genre

Airy African-influenced folk/roots

## Web Links

[www.katedoubleday.com](http://www.katedoubleday.com)  
[www.myspace.com/katedoubleday](http://www.myspace.com/katedoubleday)