

Words and Deeds

**Tracey Thorn in Conversation with Dave Haslam
Liverpool Sound City Conference May 2013**

Beautiful, witty and charming (but enough about Dave Haslam), Tracey Thorn held the audience mesmerised from the start of her 'in conversation' hour; the bloke next to me actually muttered, "I've loved her for 25 years", as she entered the room.

Facilitated by some insightful – and, judging from the reams of notes, well-researched – questions from Haslam (writer, broadcaster, lecturer, ex-Hacienda DJ, and more), Thorn, currently promoting her memoir, *Bedsit Disco Queen*, was frank about issues including self-image and stage fright, and the changing nature of feminism – through 80s radicalism, 90s lad mag backlash, to its re-imagined re-emergence today.

The only slightly waspish (but still very funny) note was struck when – talking about her active Twitter presence – Thorn mentioned the exasperating frequency with which her followers around the world tweet to ask when *Everything but the Girl* will be appearing in their country. Those days are over and her quiet but determined acceptance of the past makes her the epitome of mindfulness, living in the moment, enabling her to be gracious about the majority of the people with whom she has worked (apart from Paul Weller – read the book!).

When the call came for audience questions, I just had to ask about the Radio 4 *Book of the Week* process – was she able to choose what was serialised, or was it purely the BBC's decision? Not only was it the latter but, she informed us, eliciting gasps of amazement, they made her audition to read it! Her justification for this – "For all they knew, I might not have known where to place a comma" (paraphrasing slightly) – was not only further evidence of her graciousness, it also endeared her to me forever (someone who understands the importance of commas – in the spoken word!). I think I'm in love.

Let me turn your deeds into words