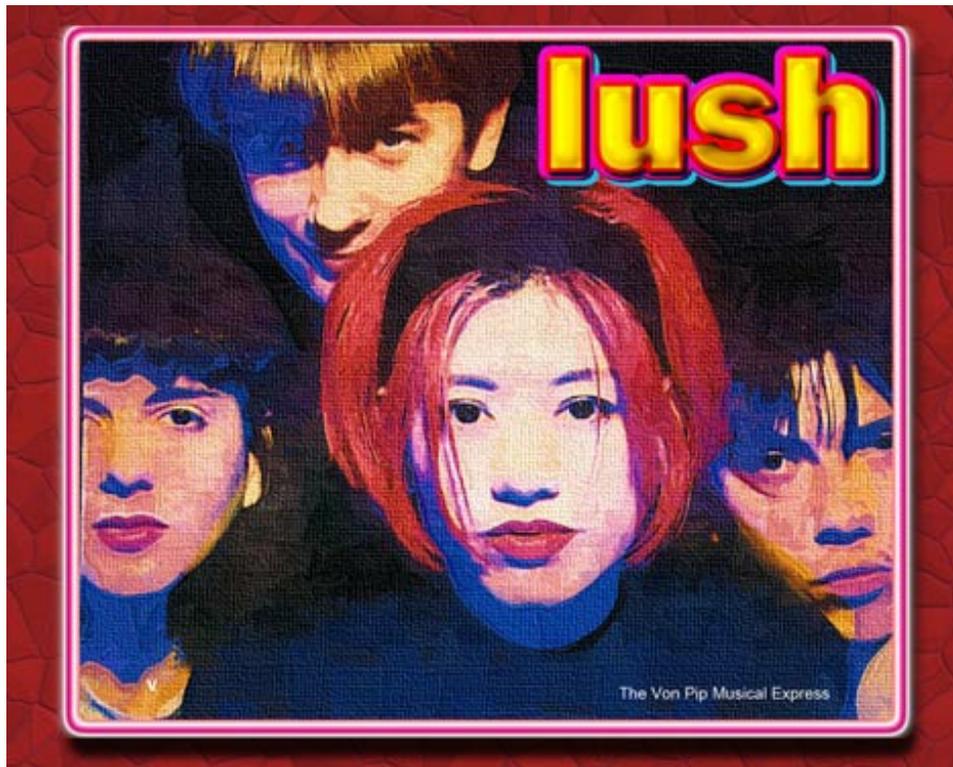


# Lush-Mad Love-Twenty Years On !

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5/16/2010



“Deluxe” by Lush

Ever felt unappreciated, resigned to the fact that no matter what you do certain people will always be waiting to pour scorn upon your head? This was certainly how lead singer Miki Berenyi appeared to feel with regard to how the music press treated Lush. Despite her often feisty displays during interviews you sensed that, as the bands days were heading towards a tragic conclusion, this attitude was replaced



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by a miasma of beleaguered acceptance. Yet twenty years on since the bands seminal ‘Mad Love’ EP , Miki, whilst obviously not losing any sleep over it, still finds the bands treatment somewhat baffling. Their many fans will tell you they are one of the greatest bands ever, as fantastic live as they were on record, yet they were without doubt, after an initial flirtation with the music press, never really given their due by many critics. Maybe the problem was the fact that they were actually too nice to be in such a shark infested business, too open and honest and not as intensely po-faced as some bands who emerged from Britain’s burgeoning ‘Shoegaze’ scene . Maybe they committed the cardinal sin of initially appearing to actually enjoy what they did? Often seen at other bands gigs, members of Lush were deemed to be major players in part of a rather daft Melody Maker invention known somewhat sniffily as ‘the scene that celebrates its self’. Lush’s bassist Phil King (who replaced Steve Rippon after ‘Mad Love’ was recorded) put the media treatment Lush received into perspective when he told us “ *I think that maybe because we lived in London and would be seen at a lot of shows, the press kind of took us for granted. There was no mystery because we were so ubiquitous. Also because we were seen out I think they felt we never worked. I always found it funny in the US as the press there seemed fascinated by the English music press and would always quiz us on it.*”

In our 2008 interview Miki also spoke about the capricious nature of the press thus “ *I remember the Melody Maker*

reviewing 'Split' and slagging us off because (apparently) all our songs were light, jangly things about fluffy clouds and fairies. Meanwhile, reviewing the same album, the NME complained that our lyrics were too depressing (covering child abuse and parental death) and didn't fit the sparkly, light melodies. I guess what I'm saying is that we couldn't do right for doing wrong." Personally I'd always put this sort of fickle wankery down to the arsey hipster fellating London based music press, who combined old school misogyny and indie elitism with a good old fashioned "build 'em up then knock em down" sensibility much loved by our more unsavoury tabloid newspapers.

I suppose the problem with journalists perpetuating unwarranted myths is that people start to believe in them, indeed myths that are believed tend to become accepted as truths. And whilst I don't subscribe to Alan McGee's view that My Bloody Valentine were a joke band, or that he used them as a piece of McLaren style situationalism to see just how far he could push hype, the fact remains that MBV's legacy has been hugely overblown in much the same way that Lush's musical contribution has been seriously underplayed. And that I'm afraid is down to the press.

It's been 20 years since Lush released their Robin Guthrie produced 'Mad Love' EP and so maybe it's time to re-evaluate Lush's musical legacy. Let's just hope any such re-appraisal won't be peppered with tiresome elitist blather about Brit-pop or accusations of 'selling out', a charge often levelled at the bands final album, 'Lovelife'. As Miki said when discussing the album – "Is 'Ladykillers' more commercial than 'Hypocrite?' Is 'Desire Lines' more shadowy than 'Last Night?' Is 'I've Been Here Before' a throwaway exercise in jazz lite whereas 'Lit Up' is a trawl through the underbelly of discordance rivalling the darkest periods of Miles Davis?"

The [Quietus](#) website has recently put forward a convincing case for Lush's legacy to be given the credit it deserves and hopefully this may signal that people are finally coming around to the view, that actually Lush were rather f\*\*king brilliant. And so with 2010, being 'Mad Love's' anniversary we spoke to Emma, Miki and Steve about their memories surrounding the recording of the EP and asked the question many Lush fans have been desperate to put to them. . . what about a reunion?

**VP: What do you recall about the period of time when you recorded 'Mad Love', was it an exciting time, full of wide-eyed optimism ?**

**EMMA:** It was really enjoyable and a very easy session. We recorded it in The Church which was Dave Stewart's studio and it was mixed at September Sound which was The Cocteau Twins' one. Unlike when we did 'Spooky' with Robin, we completed it all quite quickly and without too much tinkering and, yes, things did seem to be going very well at that time.

**STEVE:** It was fun being a proper musician, but I think I'd read enough about the music biz not to be starry-eyed about it. Recording sessions were fun to begin with, learning how a real studio worked etc. Doing our first European tour in Jan-Feb 1990 was great, travelling around Holland, France & Germany and meeting all these foreigners who'd actually heard of us was a hoot. It was the closest I've come to being on holiday for a living.

**VP: Did you enjoy working with Robin ? ... How did he come to be involved?**

**EMMA:** I had actually met Robin prior to our involvement with 4AD. I had worked for Jeff Barrett (who now runs Heavenly) and he knew Robin and told me to send a demo to him, which I did. We met up (with a pregnant Liz) in a pub on the Kilburn High Road and he said he loved the songs. So we asked him to produce 'Mad Love'. You might think it was obvious as he was on 4AD too then but at the time but the relationship was quite strained between The Cocteau Twins and the label so actually Ivo trod carefully! Working with him on 'Mad Love' was pretty straightforward and Robin is a lovely guy with a very dry sense of humour. Unfortunately working on 'Spooky' wasn't so easy but that's another story!

**VP: How did you decide which songs would be on the EP ?**

**EMMA:** I think they were just the newest ones we had plus we thought 'Thoughtforms' should get the Robin Guthrie treatment. We weren't that prolific but we were very economic with our songs so whenever we had songs to record,

we did.

**VP: Miki, Mad Love contains your song “*Leaves Me Cold*”, what’s the song about, I’ve had my own**



## **interpretation for years which is probably all wrong**

**MIKI:** I think it's a bit of a shame telling people exactly what a song is about because, if it's a song they like, they've invariably come up with a much better interpretation that is probably relevant to their own lives and therefore makes the song much more meaningful and personal to them.

However, I will satisfy your curiosity. BASICALLY I had a really filthy dream about someone who I never ever thought of 'in that way' and it freaked me out a bit because I just couldn't get the dream out of my head and so every time I saw them it would make me shudder at the very thought but it had also made me fall a bit in love (lust) with them because I just couldn't shake how passionate the dream had been.

**VP: Do you feel “Mad Love” was the first time we heard what we might call the “Lush sound”**

**EMMA:** No, I think “Scar’ pretty much displayed that too but in a rawer state.

**VP: Emma, you filmed two videos for “De-luxe” ....do bands find filming promo videos a rather dreary affair, or was it fun being one of your first ?**

**EMMA:** Those 2 were OK – yes the first one in the tree was the first video we had ever done so it was quite exciting. It's a very indie video but OK all the same. The second one was done for the USA and we really liked making it and the finished result was pretty good. It all depends on the director really and their ideas. The worst video we ever did was the US version of '500' – bad day and BAD video.

**VP: Steve, Miki told me that during the video shoot for Deluxe you'd had enough of precariously dangling on tree branches and disappeared ....! What are your recollections?**

**STEVE:** I don't remember that at all but it sounds like something I'd do, I was always prone to wandering off by myself and coming back to find people fretting about where I'd been. Usually looking for second-hand record shops, actually, and if I found one I'd be even later getting back. I do remember it was freezing cold doing that video out in the middle of nowhere in Kent in January, but I also remember someone told us it was where the Beatles did their Strawberry Fields Forever promo, so that was exciting for a lifelong Beatle fan like me.

**VP: Steve, What are your abiding memories of being in Lush, any regrets about leaving when you did ?**

**STEVE:** It was great fun, I loved it all really, and I only left because I'd have preferred to be doing my own songs, only nobody was interested in them, and I could see all the things we'd done that were exciting the first time round (making records, videos, radio sessions, touring Europe, Japan & the States etc) were going to get progressively less fun the more often we did them. Especially the amount of times they ended up touring America. So no, I think I left at the right time, although I do think I was probably a bit jealous of them still being in the band around 1995 when I'd started working in a computer firm in Dublin and they seemed to be living it up at the dawn of Britpop. But even if they'd asked me to re-join then I don't think I would have, as it would've involved moving back to London, which I never wanted to do. But I have loads of great memories from that time, and I still think of Miki & Emma as my alternative sisters, even though I haven't seen them for years (although I'm hoping to next month).

**VP: You must get tired of answering this but Emma & Miki, you've mentioned previously that a Lush reunion was mooted but due to the “c\*\*ntish flakiness” of some parties things didn't really take off . Although you all have jobs and Emma's a new mum now, do you think you'd ever consider it again if**

## somebody genuinely made an offer.

**EMMA:** Erm – that was Miki’s quote and not the whole reason we didn’t reform (she was referring to one promoter). The money and offers just weren’t there that year and we couldn’t take the risk of the outlay without making that back and then some. At the time we were thinking about it I had a very stressful full-time job and would have had to do all the rehearsing and playing in my 4-week holiday allowance which I think would have left me as a nervous wreck! If the money was right then, yes, we would do it but I think promoters would have to come to us so we would be in the driving seat. Who knows what may happen in the future but, yes, for the time being a reformation looks unlikely.

**MIKI:** Yes, I’m afraid that the honest answer is not unless we were offered an awful lot of money. I have enough trouble finding the time to answer these questions let alone relearn the entire Lush back catalogue, rehearse with a new drummer and actually schedule time to play the gigs. So if we did it, I would have to stop work, and if I stop work, then how do I pay the bills?

To be fair to the c\*nty flake, he wasn’t the only one who pissed us about (although he was the only one who deserves to have a resilient object booted up his backside). One agent after another (well, three) promised the world and then had to admit rather shamefacedly that it wasn’t really happening. They scratched their heads, they didn’t understand, but the promoters just weren’t that keen.

In the words of Les McQueen, *“It’s a sh\*t business”*.

## Links

[Light From A Dead Star Site](#)

[Miki Berenyi Fan Site](#)

[Lush Live Site](#)

[Myspace](#)

[Miki Interview 2008](#)

[Emma Anderson Interview 2008](#)

[Phil King interview 2009](#)

## Wallpaper

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## Video

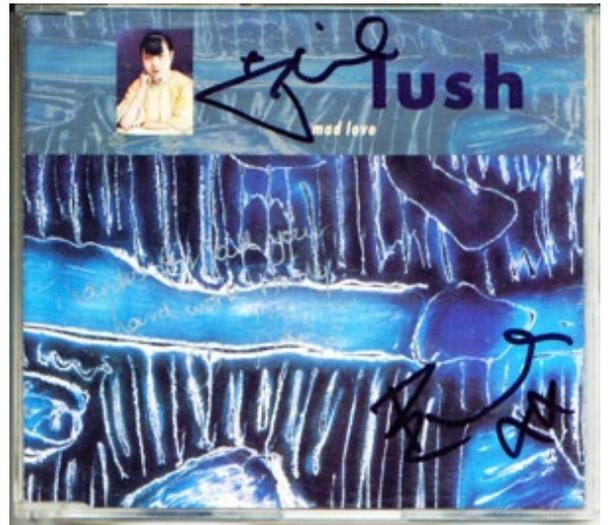
*“De-luxe” (original)* By Lush

*“De-luxe” (version 2)* By Lush

*“Leaves Me Cold”* By Lush (*Live France 1990*)

*“Thoughtforms”* By Lush (*live at Roskilde Festival 1991*)

Signed EP



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