

Live Review: Lush at The Roxy, April 25, 2016

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What's another few days of waiting when your return is already 20 years in the making? Originally slotted as the first U.S. date of their comeback, the traditional club warm up before Coachella, Lush's gig Monday night at the Roxy ended up as their "warm down" show, their last date of this initial West Coast/Coachella tour, shuffled back to the end after a visa snafu delayed their arrival.



Even before the first gloriously chorused chord is strummed, it's clear the sell out room is won over. The love in the room is intense. A nice mix of well-preserved older scenester types and youngins pack the room to the gills. It's almost bonus then, that the revered London band was able to rekindle their dreamy signature sound to great effect once again. The dueling effected guitars of Miki Berenyi and Emma Anderson were right on point, the prior's breezy vocals atop the miasma (though occasionally buried in the mix, wouldn't have minded turning her up a bit). All in all, a tight, energetic set showcasing the wide range of sonics and song arrangements of their classic 4AD catalog.



Between songs, Miki is clearly enjoying herself, chatty as ever, lamenting the decision to wear tights in this hot room, among other small talk. She's still very much the cheeky wit the old weekly music rags could always rely on for a tasty quote. She makes various pockets of room feel either young or old when she notes they last graced this stage was way the hell back in 1991. (Two nights, double headlining with Ride no less.) Emma Anderson on lead guitar is the familiar calm presence to her right, playing her crafty lines with a steady hand. Phil King is back on bass duty with his own subdued presence, holding down the low end authoritatively. Justin Welch, late of Elastica, the newbie to the gang on drums passes his audition with flying colors with some tight, tasty playing.



The well received set centered around the early gauzy, chiming sonics of the 1989 e.p. compilation *Gala* – “De-Luxe,” “Etheriel,” “Sweetness and Light,” among others, here in fine form – and the leaner, thornier pop stuff from 1994’s *Split* - “Desire Lines,” “Hypocrite,” “Undertow” as standouts – while dropping in hits like “Ladykillers” and “For Love” from other albums. The charming new single “Out of Control” jangles right into the set seamlessly (the full new 4-song *Blind Spot* e.p. is an excellent return offering.)



Finally stepping up for their turn at the plate in the 90’s U.K. indie act reunion game, following the likes of, well, you know the list well by now – My Bloody Valentine, Slowdive, Ride, maybe throw in a Loop and a Swervedriver – Lush’s demise was in a different category from those peers. They didn’t fizzle out gradually, break apart due to acrimony, go on indefinite hiatus. In fact didn’t really choose to end their initial incarnation, but were instead

extinguished suddenly by the circumstance of the death of their drummer, Chris Acland in 1996. A second, unplanned but audience-demanded encore of “Monochrome” is dedicated to him; it’s clear his spirit will be with the band on their return. They’ll be back playing the [Fonda Theater September 25](#).



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