

# Lush

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Lush  
Fonda Theater  
Hollywood  
By Lucky  
Photography by Alex Kinnan

My love affair with the band Lush steams back to the early nineties when I regularly haunted the Sunset Strip. I pretty much had free reign back in those days, bouncing from club to club as they all had an open door policy when it came to the Luckster. Being a DJ at The Rainbow Bar and Grill and a semi regular performing musician, I was entitled membership in the who's who of Hollywood and thus just came and went as I chose.



Due to the fact that my best bro and accomplice in all matters musical, Thomas, was the manager at The Roxy, I hung out there the most and saw an array of amazing acts. One such night I wondered in to check out a double bill of English bands that were in town. Lush and Ride. They played two nights at the club and took turns headlining if my memory serves. I hopped in on night one and returned the second because they were just that good. I became a forever fan of both bands and have followed each of their careers with a keen ear and eye.

Hugely into Lush, I wore out copies of *Gala*, *Spooky* and *Split*, but I must admit my obsession did wane a tad upon the release of *Loveline*, less likely to do with the album and more than likely due to the fact that I had developed quite a drug addiction and spent most free hours peeking out of the blinds for the imaginary swat team that was about to break in at any moment. Paranoia may destroy ya.

Fast-forward like what, 25 years, and Lush delights many a fan with news that the band will reform, and, release new material. Scoring social media I soon discovered that Lush would be returning to, of all places, the Roxy and tickets soon would be on sale. The morning of the release I was poised at the helm ready to click "purchase", and upon doing so, I ended up on a page that stated tickets were no longer available. Sold out in a nanosecond. But thanks to human kindness that still does exist in the world, I scored a ticket the night of the Roxy show thanks to a complete stranger (Hi Kalisa!) whom had seen my desperate plea posts. I made it in the club just minutes before Lush hit the stage and stood basically in shock upon seeing the band once more.

Needless to say, many a disappointed fan was not as lucky as I and was unable to attend the Los Angeles show. Lush soon soothed their wounds with the announcement that they would be back in the fall, playing a larger venue providing an opportunity for others to bare witness. This time I scored tickets with ease and tucked them away for the summer.

"Time sure flies, what happened to summer?" I contemplated to myself as I stood under the Fonda marquee, awaiting photographer Alex Kinnan to arrive. Thanks to our new friend at Grandstand, photo access had been provided and with tickets in hand we were good to go. On the floor and up front post haste was the action plan, but intrigue at the merch stand slowed things a tad. I do love a good band tee and anything else that may be an object of desire, plenty of that sort at the booth and all about.



I staked my claim and set in for the agonizing wait, which turned out enjoyable thanks to opener Tamaryn. Tamaryn

is a New Zealand born artist whom, if the Internet can be trusted, currently resides in the chaotic hubbub of New York. Together with guitarist and bassist, they created sonic beauty. The trio utilized a drum machine, which I normally am not fond of, but strangely it seemed apropos. Not being familiar with her music prior to the set, everything was a first helping for me, but that exposure alone has spurred me to seek out additional works for future enjoyment. A great choice for support and providing a natural progression to what followed.

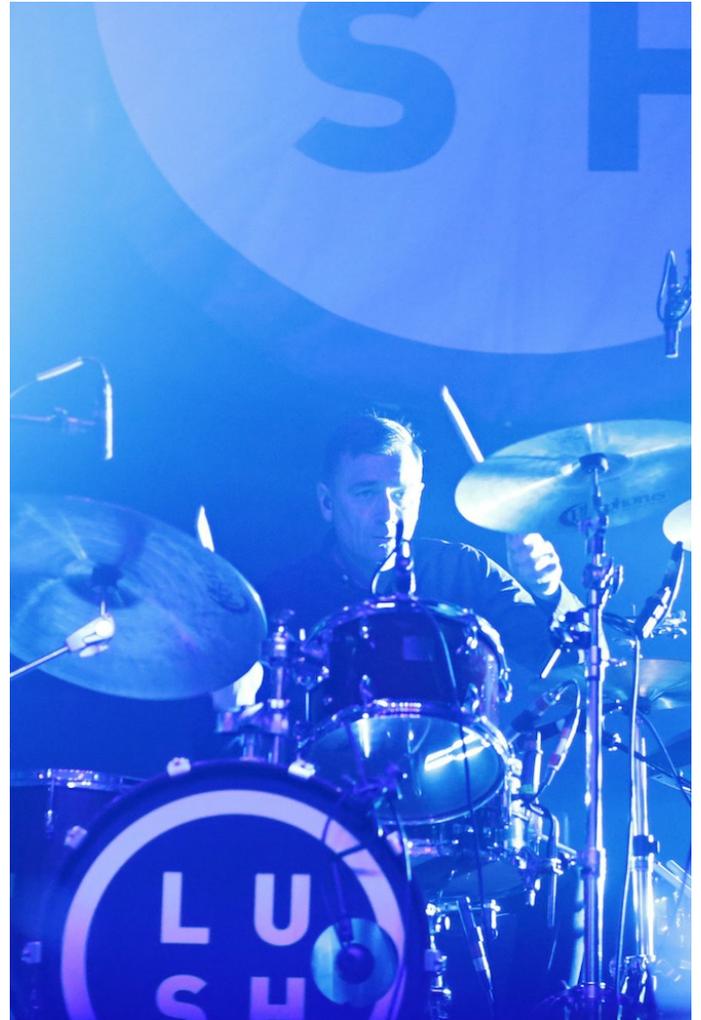
After a brief recess, I was in place and ready for what was to come. The Fonda's red velvet curtain parted and the public address system blared Lush's chosen intro music. Within seconds the band took the stage to the roaring glee of the masses, and after a polite hello from Miki, our senses were taken hold. Emma's ascending arpeggio led the charge for "Deluxe", a fitting opener, as it was, at least for me, one of the first Lush tracks that endeared. So too for many I imagine.

"Breeze" followed suit with atmospheric aplomb, occurring to me the magnificence of the bands ability to recreate the magic of bygone, showmanship taking backseat to what truly was and should be, the music. Miki's vocals were almost ghostly additives to dreamlike euphoria, painting imagery in our minds eye.

Miki, mindful of the three song photo ops, quipped concern for age and reflection and asked photographers to "be kind". Me thinks she needn't worry. "Kiss Chase" ensued with Miki providing solid form via her Gibson tobacco burst 12-string, leading me to wonder if that guitar is veteran of the bands historic run or if it in fact is a later acquisition. Either way it is a class instrument.

The hard hitting punker "Hypocrite" sounded off. In the pocket assault and battery accentuated by Justin Welch's tight percussion. Justin played true to groundwork set by the beloved Chris Ackland throughout the set, but didn't strictly adhere at times as his own musical personality shone through as well, definitely an ace fit for Lush.

A sweet blend of Emma and Miki's vocals constituted "Loveline" with Emma's standout single note guitar passages being the life force of the tune. "Loveline" always stirred non-describable emotions and hearing it live had no less effect. Phil King, always the consummate professional, secretly held things together with catchy bass runs and subtle fills that at times might go unnoticed. With so much happening, you really have to pay attention. You're hearing them; you might just not know you are.





Tripping back to Lush's first U.K. mini-album "Scar", Lush performed "Thoughtforms" featuring Emma's seemingly psychedelic lyrics and guitar trajectory. The crowd seemed mesmerized by the swirling guitar kaleidoscope of sound offset on the two four by Justin and Phil's synchronization.

With a snap, Justin triggered the introductory chime of "Light from a Dead Star". A sad, but wondrous lyric sung by Miki, which left me a tad pensive. So many memories, that's the thing really, about music, memories cling and flood in upon a listen.

Lush enchanted the mass with "Desire Lines", after which Miki remarked that it was a long time to go without a drag.

Made me twitch a tad, but together we would endure. “Lit Up”, one of my favorite Anderson penned compositions, what with a positive spin on a not so happy situation, always makes me smile with it’s light and delicate structure, due in part I believe to Miki’s glorious twelve string. I need to get me one of those.

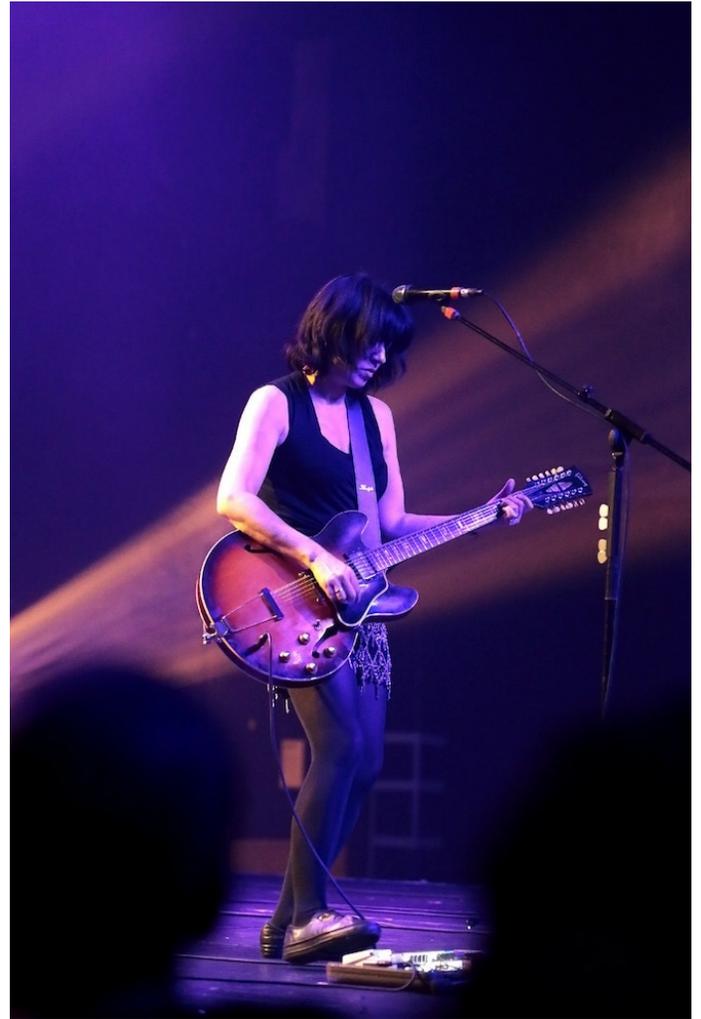
“Scarlet” and “Etheriel”, both long-standing fan favorites, came complete with guitar resonate and crystal clear accentuation. “Scarlet” always had a quintessential English sound to me. Not really sure if others agree, but in my dreamlike, it captured a far away feel. Places unknown.

Phil rolled with the signature bass riff for “Undertow” as Emma hit the expression pedal bringing her Fender Thinline to the forefront. “For Love” was wonderment. I have always loved Emma and Miki’s call and response deliveries on that song.

As mentioned earlier, Lush release a new EP last April of this year and from said EP they performed “Out of Control”. I am sure Lush fans would agree that the material on the new EP ranks right next to classic Lush material. “Rosebud” from the Blind Spot EP has become one of my favorite Lush entities and I was secretly hoping the band had added it to the set list. Sadly that didn’t happen.

The sole representation from Lovelife was of course “Lady Killers”, which always stands out a bit from the rest of the lot as the track was created when Lush made a bit of a turn in musical direction. Still, it was fun and full of punch. Surely it was a sure-fire crowd pleaser.

With the end drawing near, Lush pulled “Downer” and “Sweetness and Light” out of their arsenal. “Sweetness and



"Light" is considered one of the band's biggest successes and one I listened to obsessively back in the day. Justin was dead on with the song's requisite drum rolls, and Emma, whom seemingly always breaks out her Stratocaster for this number, soared above the clouds, thanks in part due to the heavy flange effect used.

Being the end of the set list proper, the band left the stage. But we knew better, and after a short break Lush returned for what proved to be a heaping helping of encore. I was trying to remember just what the band hadn't played yet, and was surprised I had forgotten about "Stray". Fortunately Lush had not. Short and extremely hypnotic, the song left some in attendance dazed, I being one, but not for long as I was restored sensibility by the impact of "Nothing Natural", a fine representation of the fact that Lush can really rock. "Leaves Me Cold" capped it off and once again Lush departed to a roar of appreciation.

We wanted more, and were not sure when we might get it. Thankfully the group responded with one last number, the thought provoking, "Monochrome", and then, they were gone. Alex and I hung out a bit after the show, as I was kind of hoping to get a chance to say hello to Emma, but alas that was not meant to be. So Alex and I headed out into the night, each going our separate way down the Hollywood Boulevard of broken dreams.









Tamaryn





