

How Lush Came Back

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Backstage ahead of [Lush's](#) sold-out show at London's Roundhouse last Friday, there's an almost palpable excitement—and rightfully so. While a handful of gigs earlier this year set the tone of the Lush reunion, no one can deny the grandeur of this proper comeback on the shoegazing dream-poppers' home turf. It's been two decades since they disbanded amid turmoil (their original drummer, Chris Acland, sadly took his own life in 1996), but the remaining members of Lush—singer/guitarist Miki Berenyi, guitarist Emma Anderson, and bassist Phil King—have given real purpose to this recent regrouping by releasing [Blind Spot](#), a remarkable EP of entirely new music. Later that evening, the EP's lead single, “[Out Of Control](#),” seamlessly melds with the rest of the set of old favorites. This ability to seamlessly connect the past and the present is part of what makes this particular reunion live up to even the most hardcore fans' expectations. But for now, looking back comes with the territory of this kind of tour, so we sat down with Berenyi, Anderson, and King before the London show to do just that.

Pitchfork: I think to fans it always felt like you were the band that wouldn't reunite.

Emma Anderson: We did look at it a few years ago, and the time just wasn't right. Actually, even the interest didn't seem to be there. I don't know if it's because music goes in cycles, and something happened in the last couple of years where our music is a bit more appreciated.

Miki Berenyi: I haven't been playing at all, so it's not just whether it would be uncool or whether it would work or if anyone would be interested. Even the practicality of just getting it together seemed so insurmountable for a long time. With Chris gone, even on a practical level that meant finding someone else to play the drums. It's not even like, “OK, we were all in the band, we're all still doing music in one shape or form.”

I remember reading an interview with Miki from about 10 years ago where you were asked if you'd ever get back together and you were basically like, “No, I don't have the red hair anymore, I have kids, the illusion is gone.”

MB: Because I haven't been in a band, I wasn't in that zone. I'm just a mom that needs to pick up her kids from school. I just don't remember what it is you do, what you wear. Even just doing photo sessions where you think, “I just don't remember how to do this.”

Phil King: Especially when you're older. When you're younger and you're trying to look cool, it's just your normal face. The best photos now seem to be if we're laughing.

EA: With a bit of Photoshop.

Other than that, what do you think is the biggest difference between being Lush then and Lush now?

MB: For one thing, Lush was our only job then. We want it to be great, and we put a lot of energy into it, but it can't take over everything like it did back in the day.

EA: The musical landscape as well. Especially in England, we had music press that was quite bitchy and tabloid, and that's gone.

Do you find it easier to exist as a British band, now that that sort of press doesn't exist as much anymore?

MB: We're in a lucky position, because we're coming back. I mean, fuck knows what it's like if you're starting out and trying to actually get that attention in the first place. But I think in that respect, press-wise, it's just infinitely better for us. It's not like, “Oh, *here we go*”—actually, that's more internet trolls.

EA: Oh yeah, *The Guardian* comments section. It's just a game, isn't it?

MB: But it's interesting that that's what the press used to be like. That was the level that we used to get from the music press—like, "They're pathetic!" That used to *be* the bloody press!

When did you make the decision to record new music?

EA: We made that decision quite early on. We did think it would be great to come back with new music, because most bands don't. Especially for me, I really like writing songs and making records so there was an extra appeal to the reunion.

MB: We wrote "Out of Control," and that was one of the first bits of the whole reunion process.

PK: That was even before we started rehearsing.

EA: It was a year before we actually went into the studio.

You could put your new songs on any one of your old records, especially the earlier ones. It's an interesting development, because your last LP, 1996's *Lovelife*, was such a no-holds-barred pop record.

MB: None of it was ever planned. The songs on *Lovelife* were maybe influenced by what was going on at the time. We wanted to have a go at making a much more upbeat pop album. No swirly-whirly. There are still some on there though, that with a different treatment would have fit on our other records.

PK: Well, even "Hypocrite" [off 1994's *Split*] could have been on *Lovelife*.

MB: Exactly. We did these quite heavily-produced albums, and after that fucking endless touring, suddenly we actually could play these songs pretty competently, and almost wanted show that off. But I always say, had we carried on, our next album would have probably would have gone back to what we were doing before.

More so than during Lush's initial run, in recent years there are more women musicians in the mainstream who rightfully want to explicitly explore feminism in their work. Through songs like "Single Girl," "Hypocrite," and "Ladykillers," it always seemed evident that Lush were coming from an empowering place. I'm curious what you think of the musical environment surrounding feminism now, versus then.

MB: We came from a background that was very openly feminist. There was no shame in saying you're a feminist. I remember sitting in this class at North London Poly, probably about 12 of us there, and the lecturer went around the room and asked us, "Would you consider yourself a feminist?" Every single one of these women said no. And I was like, "Well yeah, obviously." Because we were into left wing music, there was no shame in it. But in the broader world, it does seem like, "Oh, I don't want to be labeled as some sort of dungaree'd harridan," or something.

EA: You have to reclaim that.

PK: Musically we all grew up with bands with strong women in them, anyway—*Siouxsie*, Poly Styrene, the *Slits*. It was normal. There was no "women in rock."

Almost all of the reunited bands I've spoken to in the past few years have said the same thing: "We're all better musicians now than we were in our twenties." Do you feel similarly?

MB: I have to say, our kind of music was always a struggle live. Quiet vocals and really loud drums and guitars, it was quite tricky. It still can be. I'm slightly amazed that other bands say that, because I'm still like, "Oh God, what am I doing?"