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Lush

From Reluctance to Reunion

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Back in 2014, when Lush's Miki Berenyi and Emma Anderson [spoke with Under the Radar](#) about the band's seminal albums *Split* and *Lovelife*, the idea of getting the band back together was something of a pipe dream. The London outfit, which formed out of friendship in the late '80s, rode a wave of shoegaze and Britpop to success in the decade that followed. But after disbanding in the wake of the suicide of founding drummer Chris Acland in 1996, Berenyi and Anderson moved on—they had children and got day jobs. Other than Anderson's stint in Sing-Sing in the late '90s and early '00s, they had been out of music completely.

"It's so difficult," said Berenyi at the time. "There's part of me that thinks that it would be nice or it would be fun. I don't know. I feel very confused about the issue, if I'm honest. I don't play music. I'm not in a band. I haven't been

since Lush. The actual logistics of getting it together are pretty phenomenal. It scares me a bit."

For Anderson, a single mother who found herself moving around a bit in the years prior, the demands of life made reformation tricky: "Having a young child is very, very time-consuming and exhausting and there's not a lot of brain space for anything else right now," she said at the time. "But who knows? Maybe one day. Never say never. I still feel young enough, I think."

Well, the day has finally come. After recently reissuing the band's best-of set, *Ciao!*, as well as its entire discography with B-sides and rarities in the box set *Chorus*, Lush has released its first new music in 20 years, the *Blind Spot* EP. The band also will embark on a tour of Europe and America in the spring, summer, and fall.

"None of the things that were stopping me went away," says Berenyi, today. "I work. I've still got a family. So it's not like, 'Great, the kids are grown up and moved out, so now I have time.'" She partly credits the increased interest in '90s shoegaze, including the reuniting of some of her contemporaries. "You think, 'Okay, people are actually interested,' or 'There is an audience there of people who still feel fond of us.' I wasn't convinced of that. I just thought, 'Hell, if we did it, who's going to be interested, *really?*'"

Lush initially considered a reunion eight years ago. It was proposed as a live show-only situation, but the idea never really got off the ground. This time, it was important for Berenyi, Anderson, bassist Phil King, and Justin Welch (Spitfire, Elastica), who sits in on drums for the late Acland, to come to the reunion with new music. The first song written was the EP's opening track, "Out of Control," a piece which Anderson had written a year ago as part of a publishing deal where she was asked to write songs for other artists. Anderson brought the music, new lyrics were written by Berenyi, and the result is a track that sounds like it could have come off Lush's first studio album, *Spooky*.

For Berenyi's part, before she entered in fully, she still had some old demons to exorcize. The specter of Acland still loomed large.

"It wasn't stopping me from reforming or wanting to reform, but there was a feeling that I'd done this 20 years ago and had a brilliant time doing it, and I'm going to go back to it, and it's not going to be the same, because there's a massive part that's missing, which is Chris," she says. "How can it possibly be as good as it was if that person is not there? I wondered whether I could actually enjoy this and do it without him, or whether it would just be a wholly quite depressing experience, constantly feeling that there's a sense of loss. So I needed to write about Chris, because there was no way around that."

"Lost Boy," Berenyi's tribute to Acland, is a swirling metaphysical remembrance that pays perfect homage in song to the person whose life and liveliness were so much a part of Lush.

In all, *Blind Spot* was constructed via a long-distance writing collaboration among Berenyi, Anderson, King, and co-producer Daniel Hunt (Ladytron). Songs were then banged out in the studio in a brief couple of weeks. The band initially questioned whether they could recapture past magic, and *Blind Spot* answers that question with a resounding yes. So successful were the new songs that the band plan to continue writing and hope for a full album of new music in the future. But recently, Berenyi and Anderson have been more concerned with tour preparation.

"There was definitely muscle memory, which was really weird," says Anderson of rehearsals for the tour. "Not for all the songs, but for some of them, especially the ones I've played lots, like 'Sweetness and Light.' My arms and fingers were just doing things without me thinking about it. It was really odd."

For all the heartache and pain at the end of Lush's first tenure, Berenyi, for one, is reinvigorated, refreshed. And while old friendships are revived, this is a new Lush.

"I think of what we were as quite a different thing, and it's not just because of Chris," says Berenyi. "All of us are older. It's a different world and a different way of doing the band. It's not our entire lives now. I always think that we survived quite a lot, because first and foremost, we're friends. We didn't get together because we were amazing

musicians. We got together because we were friends and we got on with each other, and it was a bit of an adventure. The music, while absolutely at the core of it, wasn't the only thing holding us together... Now me and Emma and Phil are friends, and we got Justin in, but it's not the same. I don't see it as, 'Oh it's just Lush doing another album.' It feels like a different band, really. With a different attitude."

[Note: This article originally appeared in *Under the Radar's* [May/June 2016 Issue](#), which is out now. This is its debut online.]

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Also read our two 2014 interviews with Berenyi and Anderson on their albums [Split](#) and [Lovelife](#), in which they discussed both albums in depth and the challenges of reforming. Plus read [our 2007 interview with Berenyi](#), which at the time was her first interview in a decade, since Lush's breakup.