

Lush at The Warfield | San Francisco, California | 4/24/2016 (Concert Review + Photos)

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Jason DeBord

4/26/2016



"I hope it wasn't a massive hassle for you to come a week later... I'm sorry if it was... it fucking was for us!" Miki from shoegaze pioneers Lush at The Warfield in San Francisco on Sunday night, for their show that was rescheduled from the week before due to visa issues coming to the U.S. for Coachella and a handful of headlining shows California, the Pacific Northwest and Vancouver. The band just released their first new music in 20 years, *EP Blind Spot*, this month, and their sprawling set list of music new and old kept the packed crowd transfixed on the stage for the duration of the show. Best known as "a 90s band", music of that era is being rediscovered of late and it was awesome to see the band come back to the music scene to begin again in a different era. Prior to recent months (including an appearance at Coachella), the band last performed way back in 1996. You wouldn't know it from their show, as they appeared relaxed, comfortable, and happy to play in front of their fans.

Who: [Lush](#)

Supporting: [Tamaryn](#)

Supporting: [DJ Aaron Axelsen](#)

Venue: [The Warfield](#)

Where: San Francisco, California

Promoter: [Goldenvoice](#)

When: April 24, 2016

Seating: General Admission (with photo pass)

This event was held by Goldenvoice at The Warfield in San Francisco. I arrived shortly before doors, and there was a very long line-up of fans hoping to secure spots up in front of the GA floor or other choice locations throughout the venue. The band seemed to draw out a number of fans who put time and effort into traveling for the rare reformation of the band, so there was significant buzz in the air.



DJ Aaron Axelsen

San Francisco Bay Area music scene fixture Aaron Axelsen was in the house, perched up in the balcony area spinning tracks to bring the place to life in advance of the two live performances to follow and bridging those live sets. He's one of my favorite live DJs, so of course his work was stellar as always. Be sure to keep tabs on his own shows at [Popscene](#) – he's always finding out what's what way in advance of the rest of us...

Below are some photos of Aaron Axelsen doing his DJ thing... (click any image to open a virtual lightroom with higher resolution versions of each photo):



Tamaryn

Tamaryn played the first set of the night, flanked by guitar and bass players on a barely lit stage. Her set included of songs from her latest album, *Cranekiss*.

Her style of music is a bit of a challenge to categorize... I can see how she was chosen to support Lush as there is a bit of that shoegaze vibe going on, but maybe bent toward dream and noise pop, with the heavy low frequency keeping anything pop weighted down.

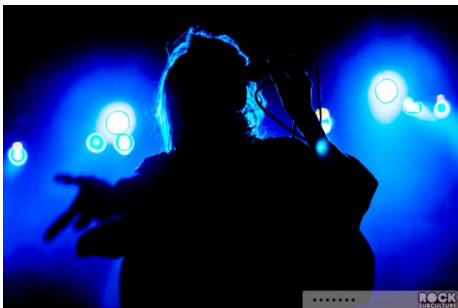
She did a great job creating an atmosphere for Lush to step in and build on throughout the rest of the night...

Setlist:

- I Won't Be Found
- Sugar Fix
- Cranekiss
- Softcore
- Fade Away Slow

Below are some photos of Tamaryn performing on stage (click any image to open a virtual lightroom with higher resolution versions of each photo):













Lush

Members:

- Miki Berenyi (vocals, guitar)
- Emma Anderson (vocals, guitar)
- Phil King (bass)
- Justin Welch (drums)

Lush was born in London in 1988 by Meriel “Miki” Berenvi and Emma Anderson (childhood friends). Original bass player Steve Rippon was replaced by Phil King in 1990. Tragically, original drummer Chris Acland took his own life in 1996, the same year the group disbanded.

The band is credited as being pioneers of what was ultimately called “shoegaze”, though they evolved over the years and also created works that were more aligned with Brit Pop as well.

They signed to legendary independent record label 4AD in 1989, ultimately releasing three albums and several EPs and singles (as well as an early “mini-album”).

With their new resurgence, 4AD has released a vinyl reissue of Lush’s “Best Of” compilation, *Ciao!* as well as a limited edition 5-disc box set, *Chorus.*, featuring all three studio albums, the early compilation, and B-sides and rarities.

Their new single, “Out Of Control” ([listen on YouTube here](#)) is so in the style of Lush that it picks up right where they left off, sounding just as they did 20 years ago.

My first impression with Lush was their 1992 album, *Spooky*. I thought it shared some similarities with Cocteau Twins, but at the same time was altogether different.

I was a huge fan of their label, 4AD, which during that time (before the World Wide Web truly became the World Wide Web), 4AD was almost like a music curator... all of these artists on their label were unique and wonderful and it was like a stamp of cool and quality at the time. If there was a new band on 4AD, it was worth checking out. 4AD

meant something.

My own personal tastes have always been fueled more by vocal-driven music with lots of changes, and I would say Lush didn't quite fit. The vocals were mixed in with the tapestry of sound. So a lot of their work was more "cinematic"-like, sounding more like something you'd here on a movie soundtrack rather than something you'd sing along to... which was very innovative and different at the time. Kind of like some of The Cure songs but with singing toned down or stripped away.

But there was enough variety in even *Spooky* that some songs took a different approach, like "For Love", which maybe had more traditional pop underpinnings, or later on *Lovelife* with "Ciao!", which hearkened back to Animotion's "Obsession" and "Don't You Want Me".

Lovelife also gave us "Ladykillers", maybe their most popular and poppy song.

I was surprised and thrilled to hear the band were coming back together, though maybe not completely shocked as we seem to be coming into a 90s-era music resurgence, so it makes some sense too.

Thought I listened to them back in the 90s, I never did have a chance to see them perform live, so I was really looking forward to this show.

As noted, the original date had to be rescheduled due to their visa issues coming into the U.S. the week prior.

The line-up consisted of Miki, Emma, and Phil, and Justin Welch is now with them on drums (the original drummer for another favorite 90s band, Elastica).

Prior to them coming on to the stage, I was impressed by the number of songs on the set list...

Setlist:

- De-Luxe
- Breeze
- Kiss Chase
- Hypocrite
- Lovelife
- Thoughtforms
- Light From a Dead Star
- Undertow
- Lit Up
- Etheriel
- Scarlet
- For Love
- Out of Control
- Ladykillers
- Downer
- Sweetness and Light

Encore:

- Stray
- Desire Lines
- Leaves Me Cold

Live, they really sounded quite close to the studio recordings. Their stage presence matches the music as you might expect, with each player at their position, doing their thing in an English, mellow sort of manner.

The crowd seemed to get all that they were hoping for with this show, and bodes well for Lush continuing on in creating new music and building on their loyal fan base.

Below are some photos of Lush performing on stage (click any image to open a virtual lightroom with higher resolution versions of each photo):

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