

LUSH – A Video Retrospective With Miki Berenyi

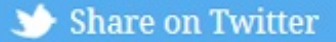
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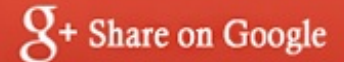
By Andy Von
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'Hey, ' if financial constraints and time were not an issue I'd be on my 10th LP and recording a Greatest Hits compilation with the Royal Philharmonic by now. I would love to make music again, but it's precisely those things that are stopping me! – Miki Berenyi (Lush) -2008

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Hurrah ! Yesterday, *finally*... **Lush** announced they are set to reform with 4AD releasing a vinyl reissue of Lush's 'best of' compilation **Ciao!** in November, a limited edition box set entitled **Chorus** at the beginning of December ahead of the comeback gig at London's Roundhouse for Friday 6th May 2016 (tickets [here](#)). It's certainly a topic we and other Lush fans have been nagging asking Emma Andreson, Miki Berenyi and Phil King about for a number of years and there were times when it genuinely seemed like it might never happen. Given Miki's statement in 2008 we asked her yesterday, why now felt like the right time for a Lush reunion

MIKI: "Honestly? It just seemed impossible before. Kids, work, life. If it had just been a matter of plugging in and playing one gig, that would have been fine, but I haven't played those songs in 20 years – it's taking me weeks to remember all the guitar parts and we haven't even started rehearsing yet! It's Catch 22 – this is way too much work to play just one show, but we simply didn't have the time before to commit to more dates."

VP: Did appearing on stage with the JAMC recently kind of feel like testing the water again

MIKI: Ach, it was a bit of fun. I think they really wanted the woman from Mad Men, but she couldn't make it. It was a real buzz, but it wasn't my gig so I could relax and just enjoy it. Whole other pressure doing a Lush gig!

VP: Now your kids are older are they excited/mortified/proud ... ?

MIKI: Mostly, uninterested!

A while back we did a Lush video retrospective in which Miki shared her thoughts and revealed the shocking reality and hard work, behind the glitz and glamour that goes into producing a music video.

Nothing Natural

"The 'Nothing Natural' video was an effing nightmare. I had to wear some ridiculous Barbarella-type sex-space outfit and had so much eye make-up on that my contact lenses were stinging my eyes. I seem to remember that the director wanted [Chris \(Acland\)](#) to wear some translucent shirt with Michaelangelo cherubs on it!!! In the end, the boys were there as background. Thing is, to be fair, we had no ideas of our own at all, and back in the 90s the solution was to offer directors a shitload of money to come up with something fabulous that MTV would play. Still, apparently Kurt Cobain saw the video and decided he liked Lush. So there's a brush with a legend, if nowt else. And I may look like a rabbit mannequin caught in a headlight, but Emma really does look fantastic!"

Ladykillers

"We filmed the 'Ladykillers' video in America. It was quite a big deal – loads of extras, sets etc, shooting in LA. Loads of wannabe types jostling for space. And in LA – you can just imagine, right? Still, I thought the director did a grand job. I know it's flashy and a lot of people thought we'd sold out, but it was dark and glamorous and had some

balls to it and I honestly thought he did a great job of capturing some of the malice in the song!”

‘Hypocrite’

‘Hypocrite’ was great fun. Again, we had actors and a set and it all seemed really over the top! Funnily enough, I remember the actors had a bus to eat and chill out on and – it was like the opposite of that scene in “Extras” – we went on there to try and be friendly and say hi and were told that we weren’t allowed on that bus as it was specifically for the actors and equity members. FINE!

Me and Phil had a go on the Waltzer and we both nearly threw up because the bloke kept it going for about 15 minutes – backwards, forwards, backwards again, on and on until we both had our hands over our mouths. But a whole day at the funfair and never having to queue. Well, who would want more? And I like this one a lot because Chris is genuinely having an absolute ball and it’s so nice to look at film of him so happy!”

Deluxe Version 1

“I remember us going to some field in the middle of nowhere and spending an entire day up a tree freezing our collective nuts and tits off (it was February). We got hoiked up into the branches and had our instruments precariously balanced around us. It actually doesn’t look that high up in the video but I swear, it was pretty dizzying and we nearly toppled off on several occasions.

Sometime around teatime we got a break to get the feeling back in our limbs before they sent us back up again. Steve, (Rippon – original bassist) however, was past the point of tolerance and went sprinting off like a rabbit from a trap muttering something about how there was no way they were getting him up that bloody tree again.”

Deluxe Version 2

“I’m guessing we must have filmed this after we got licensed to Warner Brothers in the US, for the Gala release (Scar, Mad Love and Sweetness and Light were not available there as individual releases – only on import). So we made a new video for De-Luxe.

I’m struggling to remember the details, but I think we were a bit reluctant about making it. We felt like we’d already made a video for the song, why did we have to make another one? Well, I guess it’s pretty obvious... Warners wanted something more MTV-friendly so basically you get about 80 per cent of the video featuring me, then about 18 per cent Emma and about 1 per cent each for the boys! I think it’s called TARGETED MARKETING.

That said, it was kind of fun to make. We were introverted and indie and so not into playing up to the camera that they had to employ every trick in the videomaker’s handbook to make it look interesting. Thus: flames, underwater swishing, strobes, projections, spinning platforms, cross fades, multi-imaging... THE LOT!!!”

500 – UK – Version 1

“It’s a song about a car – specifically the Fiat 500, which Emma coveted at the time, so much so she wrote a song about it!

The idea of the video was to spoof car ads from the time – I’m afraid I can’t remember which cars they advertised but one had a priest in it in Italy driving around Rome or something, another one had a bloke who had lost everything at the casino but still had his car, another one had a woman walking down the street having left her fiancée – chucking away the ring and all that – but she still has her car so that’s ok (possibly from the same series of ads as the casino guy). Can’t for the life of me remember what ad Emma in the vintage vehicle referred to – answers on a postcard if you can come up with it!

The much-loved and beautifully looked-after vintage Fiat was supplied by its owner, a great big muscle-bound guy with a ponytail who looked a bit like Steven Seagal. I remember being really surprised that a macho muscle man

like that would own and love such a dinky little quirky car!

Despite having passed my driving test some time during the recording of Lovelife, I'd never actually driven again since so consequently I was a total novice behind the wheel. The whole video was filmed at a racetrack (so we wouldn't have to worry about traffic) but even so I could only manage to drive around in 1st gear. At one point, the director wanted me to reverse up a hill. The car immediately careered off the road and into a trench. Poor Steven Seagal nearly had a heart attack.

Meanwhile, Chris got into a downer about having to play a priest and felt a total pillock. I think there was also an element of 'How come Phil gets to play the suave, James Bond-type (again!) and I have to be a fecking PRIEST?!' Meanwhile, I had to grin like a maniac in every shot and was smiling so hard the muscles in my face started to spasm."

500 – US – Version 2

"Is the 500 U.S. one the video in the desert? Yes, that was quite late on. Maybe the last video we shot? By then we were a bit blasé about it all. Yeah, yeah – off to the desert for a shoot. Extras, film sets, whatever. I think I became a lot more comfortable with being filmed by then, but maybe that's not such a good thing. Sorry to sound so perverse! I think it was a fun shoot, I have only good memories, I think! But there's something about the awkwardness of the early videos I suddenly find myself rather liking now, even though at the time I wished so much we could look more confident on camera! Now when I see us looking confident I just think ho-hum, another band groomed to perfection and giving it some. Sorry, no – I am being perverse. It's a good video – I just can't be objective about any of it!!!"

Single Girl

'Single Girl' was fun because we got to have our mates in the video so we were hanging out with friends all day. Mind you, I reckon each and every one of them probably felt like they never EVER wanted to hear Single Girl again – EVER. I think the people playing the bride and groom were both in 4 Weddings and a Funeral which was a big thing at the time."

"AT THIS POINT can I just say that each of these videos was a lot of fun to make and all the people involved were really, really nice so any moany tone is merely down to that fact that when I see myself on screen, nine times out of ten I just want to scream and cringe, I look so bloody stupid and contrived. There's an art to looking good and convincing on celluloid, and I don't have it!"

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