



ROCK

LUSH

**Gala
(4AD)**

Here's proof positive that brilliance sometimes arrives in a beautiful package, crammed with hopeless ebullience. That collective of musical people called Lush is one of the most vibrant things happening right

now in the Indie nation. For those who like the fabric of music to be bound tight with intricate knots - and also for those who need more than just a quick fix of Lush's intoxication - here's 'Gala', a compilation of all the band's recorded output spanning two singles and an EP. For fans and completists there are a few other clever little odds 'n' sods thrown in as well, just for good measure

At the core of Lush's unique songwriting ability are vocalist Miki Berenyi (she of the flaming red hair) and guitarist Emma Anderson, and together they loop hazy vocals through hard-edged fractured melodies, evoking an unstructured sense of bliss even for the most jaded listener.

The beauty of 'Gala' is its chronological nature, and hearing the band's sound develop has a fascination all of its own. There are the sparse arrangements of the 'Scar' EP, so reminiscent of many a pretender to My Bloody Valentine's unclaimed throne.

Even in their early days, though, Lush already boasted songs that were worth remembering. Great things were hinted at by 'Etheriel' and 'Thoughtforms' - chilly tunes with a warm centre.

Subsequent Lush offerings consolidated their initial promise, and now heady, expansive songs burst out of the vinyl like riotously-coloured musical fractals.

Among the new material 'De-Luxe' stands out, its beauty spun in no small part by Robin Guthrie's succulent production. Lush really seem at home with this track; and it truly shows them at their most bloom-laden. The cover of Abba's 'Hey Hey Helen' marks a fun return to a more obvious indie-pop sound, but the overall impression is of a pleasant diffusion in their music, a sense of peace and contentment that, like a warm bed, you don't want to be parted from.

How can one be more descriptive? Lush are brilliant, swooping, hazy - but maybe just a little lazy. For lack of a proper debut album, this stop-gap will have to suffice, but knowing where Lush stand now, they're certain to deliver even more amazing goods in months to come. They're a dream that's only just begun to come true. (9)

Susan Corrigan



