



Lush: two glorious years!

THE STORY OF THE BOOZE

LUSH

Gala (4AD LP/Cassette/CD)

WHILE THE rest of the world (the pop world at least) has spent the best part of the last 12 months going Manc dance crazy, a quiet little quartet from South London have been simmering in their own little soup bowls and whetting our appetites for things to come.

A mini-album and a couple of EPs have found their way to our tables, with an apparent disregard for the popular recipes and flavours of the month that have threatened to stifle our listening pleasure.

Lush have crept up on us and taken us all by surprise. From the humble beginnings of 'Scar', through 'Mad Love' and the glorious 'Sweetness And Light' single, they have whispered sweet somethings in our ears and are ready to stake their claim as one of the best groups of 1990.

"Are Lush the new Abba?" screamed an NME front

cover a couple of months ago. What a ludicrous notion, they've many a musical milestone to chalk up before they would even be allowed to lace Agnetha's satin boots. But they *do* possess the same sparkle and base understanding of pop music, which sadly eludes so many others.

'Gala' is the story so far, practically in reverse chronological order. Essentially put together for the as-yet untapped American and Japanese markets, it is enticingly being made available in Britain as a limited edition. When the initial stocks run out, 'Gala' will clean up in the import shops, as it is undoubtedly one of maybe a dozen (probably less) albums from this year that everyone should own.

Like their label chums Cocteau Twins, Lush will be saddled with the tag "ethereal" for some time to come, which is just lazy. There is no single word, no single influence. The 'Mad Love' EP hints at points of

reference as diverse as REM and Tracey Thorn's Marine Girls, while 'Scar' swoops and dives between Pixies and early Banshees. 'Sweetness And Light' is pure Lush.

'Gala' has the added bonus of a hard-to-find alternative version of 'Scarlet' and, best of all, a stupendous cover of Abba's 'Hey Hey Helen'. Not for Lush the obviousness of re-working 'Waterloo' or 'Knowing Me, Knowing You' – they pick on an obscure album track and make it their own.

Anyone with taste will have the bulk of this album already in their collection. Johnny-Come-Latelys will jump at the chance to plug the gap while claiming they were there from Day One. It's a delicious starter and the main course next year is bound to be something special. (8)

Terry Staunton