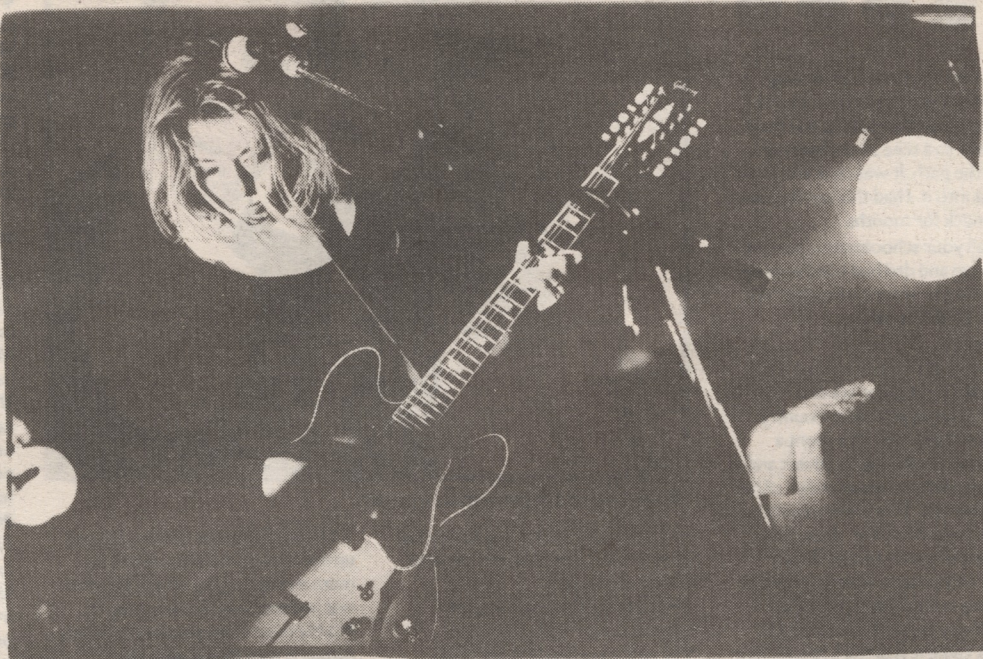


LUSH ADO ABOUT NOTHING



PICTURES: TIM PATON

LUSH NORTH LONDON POLYTECHNIC

ISN'T ANYTHING, to coin a phrase. I am standing in a foolishly grand college hall, gazing at a brick wall. And that brick wall is called Lush.

It isn't anything. It's like going to a wedding and not knowing anyone; it's like the M6; it's like eating to live; watching the popular Lush Group play their songs live onstage is like drowning in a sea of indifference. I ain't seen nothin' yet.

'LET'S ROCK', for f---'s sake, as Radio Fab FM's 'Smashie' might say, thrusting that lever forward with intent. And I'm not averse to a bit of shoe-auditing music; there is a distinct charm to having your concert entertainment wash over you and, if nothing else, it is an antidote to the Heavy Metal pantomime — but the atonal, lacklustre carriageway of noise that is Lush has been rollin' along, unchallenged, for too long now and it's time that questions were asked in the House.

Like, why do so many students hold Lush to their collective, badge-covered bosom? Is it the cerebral, post-adolescent dope-cake lyrics — "*Drink In your eyes/ Drink In your sighs/ Grass In my thighs*" ('De-luxe') — I think not, since you can't hear them (the record company faxed me those). Is it the 4AD connection, the arch collectability of their over-worked packaging? Could be. But I'm inclined to believe that the kids like Lush because they're great blokes even though they're not strictly blokes.

Hey! Call me controversial, but having soaked up the full Lush live experience, I can see no other hook upon which to hang my incomprehension. Do male students get off on bored-looking

chicks these days? Miki may have day-glo hair and an interesting wetsuit on, but she's clearly fed up of this four-London-gigs-in-four-days marathon — BUT NOT AS FED UP AS EMMA! Emma can't even find the wherewithal to sneer, she's not even bothering to hold the neck of her guitar whilst playing, and only Status Quo do this (true!). All hail Chris the drummer who, by comparison, sells his house and kids and has a tattoo for the sake of showmanship.

The aptly-named 'De-luxe' leaps in a thousand colours from the general malaise, having all the definition and drama that This Charming Music can offer, but it is but one chink in the wall.

Do I delight in seeing through the Empresses' New Clothes, while so many studes around me find something to mentally undress? I do not. We all know Lush are, as Michael Barrymore says, 'Allwoyt!', it's just that many other less printable, have-a-go, symmetrical bands write better (and more) songs and the off-duty academic audience obviously isn't prepared to study anything in the evening.

Andrew Collins



Going out in a blaze of very little glory

Listless Lush: are they taking the Miki?

enough, despite his eager fretwork. Five songs are spread across the evening, with Olu Rowe providing the only vocal work of the night on 'Habibi', and they tread the finest of lines between ambient charm and blandness.

The Orb's 'Get Mellow!' muse makes a strange transition to the live stage. Essentially low-key Techno stuff, it strikes the right chord with the audience, who — partly due to large amounts of chemical inducement, one assumes — strike up a feverish frugging pace.

Felix The Cat performs his acrobatics on the backdrop behind the long-haired ensemble onstage and as they run through their 'Adventures Beyond The Ultraworld' LP, with no perceptible peaks or troughs, they maintain a solid but ultimately soulless pace.

Iestyn George

KITCHENS OF DISTINCTION LONDON ULU

THREE YEARS and two albums down the line, by most contemporary yardsticks the Kitchens should be smoking pipes and sizing up the zimmer-frames. But then they've never had any truck with the unholy pop biz-rag trade alliance that periodically takes a stranglehold on our nation's youth, preferring instead the increasingly radical approach of making great music, untouched by the prevailing hoo-hah.

Why are the Kitchens destined to be unfashionably unfashionable? Basically, because they're cynical, they don't care anyway and, erm, Patrick's shirts. Tonight the Kitchens Of Distinction singer is sporting an incredible cloth concoction that makes the new

Arsenal away strip look positively austere, and wipes the floor with guitarist Julian's tame spotted effort.

With no new product to tout, this is a Thanks For The Support This Year show. It's an All Yer Faves workout from Tooting's finest — and who's complaining? Stacked together in one hunky batch, the Kitchens have a pretty staggering back catalogue — the impulsive melodrama of 'Railwayed', the improbably euphoric 'Gorgeous Love', the still spine-tingling 'In A Cave' . . . and then some, most notably the reworked 'Four Men' and 'Drive That Fast', chocka with Welsh wizardry.

Kitchens Of Distinction bow out with 'Prize' and, as with every previous song, a girl in a New Model Army T-shirt gawks in rapt devotion and mouths every word. Why stare at your shoes when you can gaze at the stars?

Keith Cameron