

*"One of the few modern bands I truly consider to be great, an inspiration to me and all the members of Co&Ca. This is important."*  
- Claudio Sanchez of Coheed and Cambria



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## Lunch Money!

# Lydia Lunch

by Shelton Hull

Jacksonville got a treat on June 21, when Lydia Lunch played here for the first time in three years. Lunch's work as writer, musician, actor, and spoken-word performer stands out among the best of the last quarter-century. Her work deals with abuse, exploitation, fraud and manipulation, the instruments of control. Lunch's humor is cold and sharp, like an icicle through the sternum.

Not physically imposing, but surely in personality; no matter how familiar you get, she gets you again like the first listen. She stands onstage, swaying slightly in time with her speech-rhythms, placid and Zen-like as her voice unfolds in perpetual explosion like a combustion engine. Her voice is a musical thing that wails in tight, loose, billowing spirals around a solid core of content.

I've never heard anyone read longer sentences than Lydia Lunch. The words just roll and roll until you wonder if she's using some kind of circular breathing scheme. But she isn't. She does have more wind than the average person, but she uses it so well. You can see and hear her quick inhalations between sentence fragments, perfectly timed so as not to disrupt the rhythm.

After the show, she signed autographs, conversed with fans and media, and posed for photos. Very nice, approachable.

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**First thing I'd like to know is, did you have a good time tonight?**

No. I don't like the stage. I couldn't see anyone, so I couldn't make any contact, so it's like speaking into a void, which I'm used to after all this time... It's not the audience I didn't like, it's just the stage lights, gets a bit discombobulating.

**Tell me about some of the really cool women you've worked with.**



JK Potter



[Queen of Siam \(Reis\)](#)



[Honeymoon in Red](#)



[8 Eyed Spy](#)

Karen Finley, Exene Cervenka, Wanda Coleman, Kim Gordon. Uhh... who else? Genevieve McGluckland, who is in *These Immortal Souls* and played on *Honeymoon In Red*. That's a handful.

### **What can men do to get a better understanding of women?**

Well, I think that a lot of the men that came here tonight probably already have a better understanding, because they wouldn't be at my show to get their balls broken. And I wasn't breakin' balls tonight, I was actually talkin' about lickin' balls tonight, so I've kinda come over to the other side. I did a lot of ranting about men in the past, and political tirades, but not against individual men, because it's men in positions of power that have always been my target, and that's corporations and politicians.

So what the average man can do, and the average man at my show has probably already done it, they've accepted a bit of intermingling with their more feminine sides. They understand the abuse that their sex has endlessly perpetrated against the planet, and perpetrates against unique, individual, or different men. And that's what I tried to address in my last piece: now, finally, there's getting to be a little media attention about the bullying that boys have to take, young boys, just as far as the Beauty Quotient, or "Why aren't you into sports?" The playing field is so extreme and competitive, and we're used to it as women, being forced to compete with impossible icons like models or Playmates or movie stars. It's just taken for granted that women have to conquer that false competition that's out there, but only now is the media giving lip-service to the fact that men are suffering similar fates. Especially the younger generations, raised by single mothers, seeing more acutely, more quickly, with more intelligence, the world issues and how they're so male-perpetrated -- and they have been for centuries. In my previous political tirade, I'm not only rejecting and insulting the here and now, but the centuries of abuse the whole planet has suffered at the hands of kings, feudals, heads of state, war-mongers, etc. I've never had a personal beef with men, and especially not the individual man. It's men in positions of power.

All we can do as people, not men or women, is to understand that we have to integrate within ourselves, because we're so socialized: boys with backyard war games, act like a man, be tough, hide your emotions, don't cry. What's interesting is that when I saw *Saving Private Ryan*, it gave me a better understanding of how men of the past 50 years turned into the assholes that they were, and I don't mean your generation. Until the Vietnam War, men went to war and fought in war, and it's not as if every man wanted to go to war, our fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers. Patriotism is a disease, because that means that we're better than them and we have a right to kill them. But until the Vietnam War, men were not allowed to talk about war; they came home with the burden of war and nightmare of war, which we can't comprehend because we've never faced it. The horror of battle -- and they didn't talk about it. They told their sons, when they fell down and scraped their knees or got hit in the head with a baseball or got beaten up in the schoolyard. "Be tough and act like a

fuckin' man." It's only because they've swallowed so much the horror of war.

The Vietnam War ended that dynamic. People started complaining -- not only did we complain about the war and the bullshit patriotism was, but Vietnam vets that came back were abused, were rejected, and also were complaining, because they knew intellectually they had come to a point where the horror cannot go on. They didn't want to be there. Patriotism was already a fuckin' bullshit concept. Vietnam changed a lot of things; *Saving Private Ryan* made me see how, just within this century, where the break started, why your generation is already more integrated with their sensitive side and understand the problem that we suffer under as a planet. So you're maybe not so terrified of a political harangue I make, though I wasn't talking about politics tonight, in so many words.

### **Your work always strikes me as inherently political...**

Well, it's political because I deal very aggressively with sex from a feminine standpoint, in almost a male fashion, which is unheard of... I always deal aggressively with whatever subject I was conquering. Even still, to this day, in spite of "Riot Grrl," whatever that meant. Whatever format you get into creating in, man or woman, is great. I was disappointed with Riot Grrl - not as a communal affront, revolution community, but by the fact that I didn't see very much diversified formatting - which, if I would've had any imprint on culture, it would be women completely diversifying and not... playing... bad... punk rock music to try to get the politics across. Drop the music.

So, even post-Riot Grrl, there isn't enough aggressive female speech, music, politics, and that's kind of befuddling. But then we just had the Seattle (WTO) demonstrations and the Washington, DC demonstrations of anarchists, both male and female, that gives me great hope, because I'm in LA now and the Democratic convention is coming up in two months, so I'm very excited about the possibilities that could foster. And that's beautiful; that's kind of just a natural eruption of people being sick of the fucking bullshit and lies and hypocrisy that this country has force-fed every fuckin' occupant since its incarnation.

### **Floyd-Lionel: (of *Blast*) Don't you feel that anarchy is in the dark ages?**

Of course it's in the dark ages, and I can't speak for the anarchists' action that just happened or will happen at the Democratic Convention, other than: at least it was organized, it called people's attention to the issues, where better to fuckin' upheave than the World Trade Organization? Did it do anything, ultimately? It doesn't matter. Better to cause controversy than to sit at home and go "Everything's fucked and I can't do anything about it." The problem is hooliganism, on any level, is not the best method of getting your point across. We're a violent country, and sometimes the only way to fight violence is with violence, but it really has never, historically, made a big difference. Usually the only people that end up getting hurt are those battered by the police batons,

maced in the face, or the negative repercussions from the few that just go wild and rampage, whether it's the LA Lakers thing that happened when they destroyed a few blocks around the Staples Center in LA after the NBA finals three days ago, which is so completely ridiculous.

I think we need a new philosophy. I think we need a global philosophy that really wakes up to the issues. We really need to take a global step backwards, especially America, because we are just [into] massacres. There's so many levels that we are not addressing in politics today, because everything is about capitalism, and it's only really a very small handful of countries that base their daily routine and future lifestyle on fuckin' capitalism, but we're more powerful. As the mega-mergers happen, the individual falls to the wayside, and the smaller countries get swallowed up, and hence we have the situation we have now. There are those who think they know what the issue is, but I've spoken for ten years on political issues. When I first started speaking about prison issues, there were only 900,000 people in prison. Now there's 2.2 million, and most of that is petty drug charges, and most of that is black men, and most of that now is teenagers -- the Gestapo warehousing of others is big business. It's forcing the disenfranchised to have no other choice, due to the situation of not being helped at all, and being warehoused anyway into unfortunate social positions, setting them up so they have no choice, out of poverty and desperation, to commit crimes, for which they're locked away now for longer than they ever have been.

**I've always felt that one of the keys to uplifting society is to elect more women.**

If we look at Scandinavia, which are the only countries in the world that have a complete 50-50 gender split in positions of power and politics, they're autonomous, they're more ecologically-minded, environmentally friendly, there's very little spousal abuse. There is drug abuse, but it's not rampant like here. There is no homelessness, there's health care, there's day care, there's incredible education, and they're the only countries that have an equal gender split in positions of power.

**Floyd-Lionel: There's higher suicide rates...**

I think that's light deprivation from winters that are six months long. That's just SAD -- Seasonal Affliction Disorder, and you know what? You're allowed to fuckin' kill yourself, but I don't want to see you murdered. I don't want to see you incarcerated, but if you wanted to kill yourself, that's your fuckin' right. It's not somebody else's right to decide you're gonna die, especially in this state. "The Death Belt" is what I call my Southern tours.

**What do you think of Hillary Clinton? I don't have a chance to vote in New York, but I think it's a good thing in general. I figure, a chick is better than a guy...**

Any time around. She's done enough pro-health care propaganda, and I think she's held up under the nightmare of her life under scrutiny very well.

**The number of Americans without health care has increased by a third since she first tried to implement a universal system in 1994, which many regard as a fiasco even though it was a very good idea.**

She's gotta get in. We need more women all around, and people just have got to be more interested in politics, which is now as boring as possible with the bore that is Gore and the nightmare that is Bush. Gore is far better than Bush, because at least he's human somewhere under his animatronic exterior. We cannot allow the Bush to repeat what he's done. It's gonna be a sad day for all of us, and he's got a lot of fuckin' deaths on his conscience already [144, at last count], but he's too stupid to even feel guilt. He's too stupid to feel guilt, Bush, and that's scary. A man that cannot feel guilt is not a man at all.

**One more question: what are your views on pornography?**

I think that we need more pornography, not less. We need more alternative pornography, more pornography for queers, lesbians, punks, art whores. We need more femme-centric pornography, more intellectual pornography. The face of porn has already changed so much in the last ten years. I equate it with this: if you went into Virgin Megastore and didn't know anything about music, you'd probably get 50 records you hated. Same in porn, although the ratio's smaller. So there is good porn out there, there are good companies out there... I think we need porn that's just more psychologically and intellectually stimulating. Because sex should not be a taboo. I don't like the people that are making pornography, for the most part, but that's why we (especially women) have a need to make more pornography, because sex should not be denied us. Pleasure is the first thing they steal from us, no matter who or what we are. As women, this is what we have to reclaim. You can call it "erotica," "pornography," the term doesn't bother me. I find it hilarious because it's always the men that look idiotic, it's not the women that look dumb in porno. The men act like idiots, chasing after that golden elixir which is, you know, the voodoo of pussy. Women are beautiful, they're getting paid and most women like to fuck. Let's face facts: we need better pornography; not less, better. And women need to distribute it. Alright, I gotta go.

**May I have a hug?**

Of course! ■

**MUSIC>MEDIA>THOUGHT**

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