



“When a music video titled ‘So Much’ showed up on YouTube last week, it confirmed something that had been rumored for months: Love Riot, one of Baltimore’s best bands from the 1990s (and probably ever), is back.”

- Dan Rodricks, The Baltimore Fishbowl

Love Riot, in its current incarnation, can trace its origins to Beyond Words, a late-80s new wave quintet popular in metro Baltimore-DC. When the band (and new wave) had run its course, the group’s core – vocalist Lisa Mathews, guitarist Mikel Gehl and bassist Mark Evanko – decided to switch gears, recruiting Willem Elsevier on violin and mandolin and reforming in 1993 as Love Riot, an acoustic quartet.

With the emphasis now placed firmly on Willem’s strings and Lisa’s voice, Love Riot recorded a self-titled cassette release featuring soaring melodies and poetic lyrics, with tracks like “Orbit” and “Killing Time” hinting at what was to come. And things would come quickly.

A year later, the band submitted their cassette to Yamaha’s *MusicQuest*, an international Battle of the Bands with over 25,000 bands, winning the US competition before traveling to Japan to compete in the finals where they were ultimately awarded the grand prize.

Flush with prize money and musical gear, the band went into the studio to record their second release *Muscle*, produced by Eric “Roscoe” Ambel, (Bottle Rockets, Del Lords, Joan Jett), capturing the band’s early, predominantly acoustic vibe. Next came *Maybe She Will*, again with Eric Ambel producing, an album with sharp songwriting and a bigger, more modern sound.

Bolstered by new addition Ron Campbell on drums, Lisa started playing electric guitar, gradually moving the band away from the purely acoustic sound they’d started with, but without sacrificing the light and shade dynamics that were the band’s hallmark. As critic J.D. Considine wrote of them at the time, “Rock and roll isn’t just kid stuff. It can be brash and boisterous, sure, but it can also be smart, subtle and sophisticated. Like Love Riot.”

Maybe She Will was well-received, and the band toured on healthy radio play, gracing the stages of LA's House of Blues, Nashville's Exit In, DC's Nightclub 930, NYC's Bottom Line, SXSW, even Lilith Fair when the festival came to Maryland. Along the way the band opened for 10,000 Maniacs, G. Love, Wilco, Marshall Crenshaw, Los Straitjackets and Alex Chilton, among others, while Lisa kept fans informed with her Riot Stuff newsletter, an ambitious multi-page mailer, with pictures of the band on the road, at work and play, coupled with notes from her journal.

Love Riot songs were heard (if you listened really hard) in a few movies and TV shows, but all the placements paled in comparison to their appearance – as themselves – in the Peabody Award-winning Subway episode of NBC's *Homicide - Life On the Street*, where they were filmed busking in the subway, performing their song “Killing Time”. To celebrate (and capitalize on) their *Homicide* appearance, Love Riot released *Killing Time*, a four-song EP featuring a new recording of the title song, alongside signature love songs like “Satisfied” and “Find Me There.”

Their next release *Heaven Can Wait* found the band turning up to eleven, with songs like “I'm Not Dead,” “Wrecking Ball,” “Say Goodnight,” and the title track cranking up not just the volume but the passion. They'd gotten as far as tracking a few new songs for a follow-up when Lisa found out she was pregnant, sending the band on a 25-year hiatus.

Unwilling to abandon music, however, new mom Lisa started getting together with guitarist and new dad Mikel, whose son was born not long after Lisa's daughter. Inspired by their children and the wonders of parenthood, the two formed Milkshake, a rock band for kids, a project whose success exceeded their wildest dreams, including a Grammy nomination, videos on PBS KIDS, Nick Jr. and the Emmy-winning *ToddWorld*, not to mention live appearances from Maine to Mexico.

But as their respective kids grew into young adulthood, the inspiration for new Milkshake music slowly waned, and 2025 found both Lisa and Mikel at loose ends, musically speaking. One day, driving around with her daughter Jesse, Lisa played a Love Riot song on Apple Music. Jesse started raving about the song, and Lisa joked about getting the band back together. “Mom! I would totally come see Love Riot! It's great!”

And though it may have started as a joke, and improbable as it seems twenty-six years after their last show, the original Love Riot lineup of Lisa and Mikel, Mark, Willem and Ron has returned. They've married and re-married, raised families, travelled, lived. Some of their daughters and sons play music, play in bands, and all of them love music.

“I know it sounds crazy,” Lisa says. “But the funny thing is, it's like we hardly missed a beat when we started playing together after all this time. It feels so good to be with my musical brothers again.”

A new album, *Better Now* - their first in 26 years - is set for early 2026 release. The album will feature six new songs, along with the five songs Love Riot recorded before their long break, providing a musical bridge between then and now.

“TRANSCENDS GENRE LABELS. THIS IS EVERY BIT AS MUCH ROCK MUSIC AS IT IS ANYTHING ELSE. IT'S ALIVE ...LIMITLESS PASSION, IMPRESSIVE ARTISTRY, DYNAMICS AND DEPTH. LISA MATHEWS REALLY SOUNDS LIKE NO ONE ELSE.” - CLEVELAND SCENE

WWW.LOVERIOTBAND.COM

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT
LISAMATHEWS@ME.COM

DISCOGRAPHY

Love Riot (cassette release) – 1993
Muscle – 1995
Maybe She Will – 1996
Killing Time EP – 1997
Heaven Can Wait – 1999
Better Now - 2026 (Spring release)