The Insatiable Ones

Issue 6, September 2021

Artwork by Marie-Eve Racine

THE INSATIABLE ONES

Photos from top: Samantha and Brett by Samantha Hand, Amanda and Mat by Carrie Pennock, Inge and Neil by Merie, Rachel and Simon by Rachel Apps, Wendy and Richard by Gerlinde Koeppel.

Editor:
Samantha Hand

Co-Editor:
Amanda Blazier

Copy Editor:
Inge Klinkers

Layout & Design:
Rachel Apps

Photo Editor:
Wendy Baeten

Insatiable Ones Logo Design:
Marie-Eve Racine

Front Cover Artwork:
Rachel Apps

Back Cover Artwork:
Monica Colias

The greatest possible care was taken in designing and compiling *The Insatiable Ones Fanzine*. All rights reserved. No part of these pages, either text or image, may be used for any purpose other than personal use. In no event will the editorial team be liable for the consequences arising out of or in connection with the information and images in this fanzine.

What were you doing 25 years ago? Do you remember the first time you heard *Coming Up*?

For me, I'd say it's the album that defines the '90s—spending many carefree days wandering through the London streets in search of vintage clothing. I remember the day I found some black, flared cords in Camden Market just like Brett's. There wasn't a proper changing room, just a velour curtain half-hung but it all added to the vibe and the excitement.

We were Suedettes. To me, our trademark was black hair, a vintage chic style and an attitude to match. It felt like we could rule the world. Hazy recollections of the B-sides gig at the Forum. Happily leaving my partner drinking solo in the Bull and Gate as I only had one ticket. And oh, what a gig!! The only time Suede have ever played 'Sam'. Then discovering after the gig that my treasured beige vintage faux leather coat was smeared with lipstick and pen. And vague flashbacks that it was actually deserved as I'd forced my way to the front of the gig.

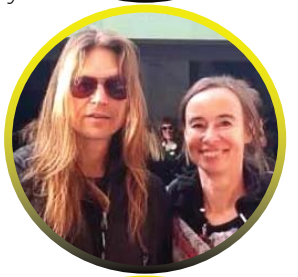
Here I am, supposedly all grown up cherishing these memories, these songs that became the soundtrack to those years. I was Keeley Hawes. I was Brett. Yet still I was myself. And I regret nothing. 'Saturday Night' being the song we'd sing as we left those smoke-filled night clubs and stumbled onto the streets feeling the London air on our faces and feeling invincible. Oh whatever makes her happy.

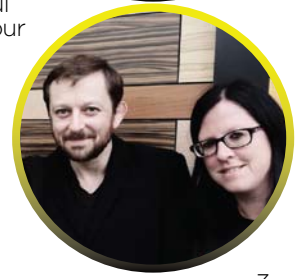
Celebrations have already started with the incredible *Coming Up* documentary produced and directed by the wonderful Mike Christie. Much excitement as the tour has been rescheduled. And you know the score, if ever Suede play 'Sam' again ...

We are going to celebrate the hell out of the 25th anniversary of this classic album.

Please join me for the unforgettable ride.

Samantha Hand





the insatiable ones

INTERROGATE BRETT ANDERSON

Back in the spring, fans were invited to submit their questions to Brett. He very kindly waded through all the expressions of devotion to find them, and here are his answers. As many of you said, we are extremely grateful to Brett for taking the time, and also to each and every one of you who took part.

i'm talking to you

© Photo by Andy Willsher

Thank you so much for giving us the opportunity to ask our questions! I know that you are looking forward to getting up on stage again, and I would like to know which song you feel most excited about playing when that day is finally here?

Pia Tejland, Sweden

I'm most excited about playing new songs to be honest. The latest batch are hard-wired for shouting out from a sweaty little stage.

Will the *Coming Up* dates in November be the next gigs the band will play?

Rachel Apps, Chesham

They will probably be the first gigs the band play but maybe not the first gig I play. He says cryptically. {This interview was conducted in April 2021 and plans may have changed.}

What can you tell us about the new record?

Amanda Blazier, North Wales

To quote Thomas Hobbes, it's 'nasty, brutish and short.'

What has your inspiration been during the writing process of the new album?

Sarah Jareck, New York

The inspiration has been very much about trying to capture some of the energy and rage which we manage to harness live, and transfer that into the recording. Before the world changed with last year's lockdown restrictions, we had planned to somehow involve the fans in the making of the record, to record it partly live to give the band something to play off rather than just each other. The record is very much about that connection—the tactile force of live music and the way that the artist and the audience merge and interconnect. It's ironic therefore that we recorded it in the most paranoid and sterile conditions imaginable in the middle of a national lockdown. The idea behind the fan's iPhone home recordings was to bring back some of that connectivity to the record. When you all hear it, I think it will make sense.

The journey has been twisty, but I often think it's the deviation from one's original ideas that actually yields the interesting stuff and that records which end up being exactly like the artist intended are somehow a little bereft. It's in the bends of the path that the jewels lay hidden.

(continued from page 5)

You mentioned that the *Death Songbook* project helped to remind you how much you love music. Is there anything in particular that you have missed about live performances; maybe something you weren't expecting to miss?

Daryl Griss, Lincolnshire

I didn't realise until I was away from it for so long how much I would miss playing live. As a performer I am increasingly defined by my performances, and so losing that can instigate something of an identity crisis. Basically, I'm a shallow fuck who feels worthless unless someone is trying to publicly tear his clothes off.

If you had to define the next album with one word, what would it be?

Alberto Ballesteros, Spain

Noisy

Since you've covered Brel (although Bowie cover) with the Paraorchestra, are you now considering covering a Jacques Brel song yourself? And if so, which one have you got in mind?

Valerie Noel, Belgium

I love 'Quand On N'a Que l'Amour'. One of the few YouTube rabbit holes I go down is watching old black and white videos of Brel sweating and emoting his way through songs in French TV studios in the early '60s. One of the greatest. The man could really inhabit a role.

We are all eagerly awaiting Suede 9! If it won't give too much away, what is your favourite lyric from this next masterpiece, and what was your thought process behind this lyric?

Carrie Pennock, London

And our lives too will pass and fade like this moment / our clothes are like an anthem for sorrow / the words we use are like future ghosts

Given what has happened in the last year, when you do eventually return to the stage will you still be 'mingling' with the audience 'Drowners' style?

Simon Lemcke, Brighton

I have an idea for a stage production which plays with exactly that idea—the merging of the band and the audience in the way that parallels the flow between person and persona. It's early days yet but I want to try something unconventional this time, even if it's just for a few promotional shows. Looking back at what we did with* Night Thoughts *I was proud that we pushed the envelope a little. I felt* The Blue Hour *tour was a little too conservative.

I would like to congratulate you on that amazing project with Charles Hazlewood and the Paraorchestra. Among the people you've worked with, who do you admire the most and why?

Wendy Baeten, Belgium

Well Charlie is a fantastic role model for anyone who is driven and creative. What he has achieved with the Paraorchestra is so inspiring.

'Basically, I'm a shallow fuck who feels worthless unless someone is trying to publicly tear his clothes off'

The way you connect with the audience and always give 110% during the live shows is really special and I wanted to thank you for that and ask where that work ethic to never let us down comes from, because there are a lot of bands out there that just seem to phone it in?

Axel Ramos, Los Angeles

Like most artists I'm a brittle blend of arrogance and insecurity and so stepping on stage has always been very much about trying to suppress and control the terror. At first this manifests as inept skittishness, but when you learn to channel the fear you can harness it and use it to feed the drama.

If you could only perform the same song over and over for the rest of your career, what would it be?

Juliet Eckford, New Zealand

We've already done that. It's called 'Animal Nitrate'.

Do you miss the songs that you've written and now don't perform? Having solo and Tears songs of such a high standard 'up your sleeve', are there any you'd like to perform again?

Jonathan Marriott, Wellingborough

It's a good question. There are a couple of solo songs that are very dear to me—'Hymn' from* Slow Attack *and 'Unsung' from* Black Rainbows *especially. It was lovely to perform the latter for the* Death Songbook *thing.

'It's essential that it feels fresh, even if that freshness is incremental and subtle rather than revolutionary'

How would you see the future sound of Suede in 10 years time? Sounding more like 'Asbestos' with its summery, low tempo California sound, or like the darkest and heaviest moments in *The Blue Hour*?

Luís Madureira Pinto, Portugal

It's fun to speculate but I couldn't even tell you what the next album will sound like, let alone one in 10 years time. The beauty of all this is that you are finding out things about yourself as you go along.

What's your favourite Suede single artwork and your favourite Suede album artwork and why?

Samantha Hand, Reading

I'm not sure if we ever bettered the 'Drowners' single artwork to be honest, there's something both provocative and sly about it. It seems to almost sum up the band itself. As for album sleeves, the* Sci-Fi Lullabies *one is pretty special.

I recently listened to the performance with Nadine Shah and was amazed at how your voices complemented each other. Reviewing your solo discography and with Suede, I have realised how few collaborations there have been with guest artists, but how interesting at the same time. Is there any possibility of new collaborations on the new album or future concerts?

Josep Mira, Spain

I'm always a bit suspicious of collaborations—they date very quickly and I can always detect the hand of the management team. I've never been a music biz networker, all that crap sickens me so the ones I've done have just sort of happened. Nadine was absolutely lovely to work with. She's the real deal—talented, charismatic, funny and sharp as a whip. Oh, and what a voice.

Would you ever consider the risk of a radical musical departure from Suede's previous output and would you have faith in Suede's fanbase to embrace something new and different?

Wayne Robert, South London

It's an interesting question. How far can a band stray from the thing that makes them, well, them. Looking at it historically I think it's a shame that* Head Music *didn't quite work. It was an attempt at doing something different but unfortunately its relative failure left a sour taste in our mouths and possibly made us wary of straying too far from our USP. It's much harder for bands (as opposed to solo artists) to radically change what they do and when they try, I think it's rare that it doesn't come across as self-conscious. I think we are very aware though that we need to always be expanding the limits of what we do. The tone of the last two albums has been one of finding new ways to be Suede. Of course there will always be familiar reference points that we return to, but unless I thought we were moving forward I couldn't do this anymore so it's essential that it feels fresh, even if that freshness is incremental and subtle rather than revolutionary.

(continued from page 7)

If you had to re-record any released Suede track, what would it be and why?

Graeme Thomson, Stirlingshire

For years I kind of hated the production and varispeeding on 'Trash' but I've learnt to love it despite its flaws. I always thought there was a different, more soulful song trying to get out that most people have never really heard but I suppose the flimsiness of the production is somehow fitting with the theme.

'The new record has lots of very introspective reflections on my flaws and failures and disorders'

Throughout your musical career, is there a day in particular you would relive and why that one?

Purdey Fava, Malta

The comeback show at the Albert Hall in 2010 was rather wonderful so I'd be happy to relive that on a loop.

If you could go back in time, would you change anything about Suede, and what would that be?

Irem Odabas, Turkey

I regret not being fully focussed on albums 4 and 5. Because I took my eye off the ball in those years we slid out of the mainstream and never really recovered in career terms. Sadly, even if we make the best music of our lives now, the audience is always going to be smaller and the reach less. God that sounds bleak.

How has your song-writing changed over time? How much is influenced by getting older and having perhaps less time for it, how much by other things (developing as an artist etc)?

Kati Keturi, Finland

Well, I could never have written an album with the kind of themes that* Night Thoughts *had when I was a young man. The new record has lots of very introspective reflections on my flaws and failures and disorders. I think that over the years I've learned to embrace weakness.

You've said several times that you'd rather not explain the exact meaning of songs or lyrics in particular (it being the artist's job to deepen the mystery, not to explain it, as in the words of Francis Bacon). Did you ever feel completely misunderstood though? Did it ever happen to you to find out that people perceive the opposite of your thoughts or intentions?

Adriana Udrea, Bucharest

I just think that there's something a bit crap and David Brent about explaining lyrics. You can talk about inspiration points but pinning a concrete 'meaning' to a song is just so reductive, so I'd rather not bother. To be honest, sometimes I myself don't even know what the songs are about and I quite like that—how the meaning reveals itself sometimes over years. I love how it's all so subjective and fluid. Some songs obviously have concrete meanings for the writer, but some will just be impressionistic. I often throw phrases and words around to create a sense of atmosphere and make no apologies for that. It's like painting with different colours; you're learning to create a response in the listener by evoking feelings which aren't always married to meaning. The writer has to let go of the song at some point and give it to the listener who breathes new life into it with their own subjective interpretation and at that point the artist relinquishes their own personal dominion.

***Yes, I think feeling misunderstood is inevitable when you allow the media to create a persona for you. The foppish sybarite that I somehow became to some people in the '90s was genuinely alien to me. It's a fascinating and sometimes terrifying process that I tried to explore and investigate in* AWTBD.

Tell me everything behind my favourite Suede track 'High Rising'.

Mark Schreiner, Lincoln, Nebraska

I remember writing my parts to Bernard's cassette demo in the Britannia Hotel in Manchester when we were on tour in 1993. At the risk of contradicting everything I said in the previous answer, the song was inspired by my friend Alan. I think I go into it in more detail in* Coal Black Mornings. *Oh, and the 'snare' sound at the end was achieved by banging a tea tray.

You mentioned Nureyev on the lyrics of 'Whipsnade', but is classical or contemporary dance something you appreciate? And if so, who is (or was) a particular dancer you admire the most?

Taciana Lima, Brazil

I think Nureyev was just a kind of cultural gesture in that song. The only dancer that has really moved me is Michael Clark because he seems to break through the stuffiness of the genre. The work he did with The Fall was just brilliant because it was so subversive and unexpected. My wife is a ballet obsessive though and is often taking me to Covent Garden where I am ashamed to say I sometimes sit feeling slightly underwhelmed needing the loo.

What is the purpose of 'Life Is Golden' and how did it come about? Because from a song it became a letter of help in every way.

Regina Alonso, Mexico

'Life Is Golden' is I think the best song we have written since reforming and possibly the most meaningful to me personally of all Suede songs. It was written as a message of strength and love to my son. It says that no matter what happens I will always be there for him, even after I'm gone. I love how it has been adopted by the fans and how they have taken it to their hearts. That moment at Cambridge on* The Blue Hour *tour was genuinely wonderful and I love that things like that are still happening in Suedeworld and that my golden memories of being in a band aren't just limited to a few months in the '90s.

Could you recommend a Suede song or any of your songs to me so that I can put it in my wedding playlist? I need some professional opinions.

Tina Caff, China

'This Time' is quite romantic I think in a kind of optimistic, breezy sort of way.

Can you remember what you were whispering at the start of 'The Living Dead' please?

Leo Collett, Exeter

Phonetics I'm afraid. I love that a bit of whispering creates such intrigue which, of course, is the purpose. Sometimes the feel and atmosphere of words is just as important as the meaning. This is what journalists often misunderstand about lyric writing. Prose is about the text, song-writing is about the subtext.

Can you discuss the relationship between the very early (pre-Bernard?) composition 'This World Needs A Father' mentioned in *CBM* and the Anderson-Butler 'Wild Ones' B-side of the same name please? Are they evolved versions of the same song or did you just like the title and re-use it?

David Barnett, Lonely Town

'"Life Is Golden" is possibly the most meaningful to me personally of all Suede songs'

It was just a title which I liked so I recycled. I'm always doing it.* Bloodsports *was the name of an old song, 'Still Life' was the title of about three different songs before it found its home. The list goes on. What the public hear is the proverbial tip of the iceberg. For every song which is released there are a whole sorry family of aborted ghost-runts that never quite make it.

(continued from page 9)

If you were asked to do The Brits again, possibly lifetime achievement, would you do it?
Alison Raymond-Baines, Notts

Only if Sam Fox and Mick Fleetwood were to co-present again.

Why do you include vans so often in your lyrics?
Nik Seth, Sheffield

Do I? Maybe it's the white van man in me trying to get out.

How old do you feel?
Fred Featham, Greece

53

How have you done anything you wouldn't normally do, during lockdown? Apart from home schooling and going stir crazy like the rest of us.
Siobhan Blakey, London

Well I never did learn Japanese but Richard and I managed to write the key song for the new album which will probably be the first single, so purely subjectively it may have all been worth it just for that.

In the beginning of 2019 you stated in an interview with *Idler* how nowadays there's never any time for people to be bored because there's always a screen where they can scroll their boredom away, effectively stopping them from tapping into their inner creativity. During the lockdowns people got sucked into their screens possibly more than ever, fighting their boredom. How has the past year impacted your creativity; has 2020 in any way acted as a creative force, a muse, to you? Did you, in terms of creativity, get any positives out of a very difficult situation?
Inge Klinkers, The Netherlands

I have a slight fear of answering questions about this as the subject seems so ubiquitous. I have a feeling that we are going to be inundated with people's laboured 'responses to lockdown' over the next few years as the whole thing takes on the kind of smothering weight that the dull and circular debate about Brexit did a few years ago. These days I try and avoid any whiff of the zeitgeist, so respectfully I'll leave those questions but if you want me to sum it up I will probably remember it as a time of claustrophobia, despair and kitchen discos.

'Richard and I managed to write the key song for the new album, so purely subjectively it may have been all worth it just for that'

Love your solo works, each and every one of those beautiful words, but my favourite song is 'Europe Is Our Playground'. I just thought that was the dizzy heights of stardom. Could you please tell me if you felt as if you were finally hitting 'The Big Time?' Oceans of love.
Ann Gordon, Toronto

I like that you've managed to use as many Suede titles as possible in your question but unfortunately I don't really know what you are asking!

First some context: in 1994 I ended up getting engaged to my girlfriend whilst battling with my sexuality and sinking very low as I felt forced to be something I wasn't. Suede music and specifically *Dog Man Star* and its themes kept me going. Fast forward 20 years to 2014 and I was diagnosed HIV+ and clung back to Suede music and specifically, again *DMS*. It pretty much saved me twice (*Coming Up* helped me through my mother's death in 1997). What feelings, thoughts and emotions are invoked in you when you hear how much Suede and your music really, tangibly, support and help fans through the difficult times life throws at us?
Michael Jackson (but don't hold that against me), Lausanne, Switzerland

I'm always humbled that I've become part of the tapestry of people's lives so thanks for sharing that. I'm happy that the songs have helped you.

What's the most crazy, hilarious moment you have ever experienced with Suede? You probably have countless, but you always have that one special moment, that one, if you think back to it, it immediately puts a smile on your face. Let's just call it the 'I almost pissed my pants' moment.
Claudine B. Van Cauwenberge, Belgium

The single funniest moment of being in the band was during a gig in New York in the early '90s when Mat fell down a hole in the stage during the epic finale of 'To The Birds' and had to finish the gig playing his bass up near his chin like Mark King. It still makes me chuckle thinking about it.

If you were to write a children's book, what would it be about and how will it end?
Michal Kadari, Israel

I'm often amazed at how bad most children's books are. If I was a proper writer I'd be seething with jealousy when you think about the effort they must take versus the potential sales if you strike the right note. Having said that, Julia Donaldson does possess a rare gift for pithy, concise and incredibly clever storytelling. **The Gruffalo** ***is a work of minor genius up there with Lewis Carroll and Roald Dahl.***

If you could choose to be one character from a book or a film who would you be and why?
Danielle Lewis, High Wycombe

The oddballs and the villains are always the most interesting so most of the characters I like are sour and slightly desperate (Stephen Wraysford, Meursault, Briony Tallis, etc., etc.). But if I had to be someone fictional it would be Clarence from the cartoon of the same name.

'The really powerful seeds you can plant for your children are more the example that you yourself set for them'

When researching/writing your books, how accurate did you find your early childhood/early adulthood recollections actually were, and how many people did you involve in fact-checking?
Ian Gillis, Peterborough

The only person I showed rough drafts to was my sister, who helped me sift through some of the hazier childhood memories.

Do you have a vinyl record collection?
Susan Spencer, Aylesbury

Never been that interested in things to be honest. I don't know or care what kind of car I drive, that doesn't seem the point. I don't know or care what kind of microphone I use, that doesn't seem the point. Equally the technology that the music I love comes from, doesn't really seem the point either. Apologies to the vinyl junkies out there, I get that these things matter to people.

What's your guilty pleasure?
Shawndra Hayes-Budgen, Milton Keynes

After Eights

Do you encourage your sons musically?
Lin Page, Alcester

They both play the drums (like a lyric from 'Young Men') but the last thing I want to be is some sort of pushy parent and I think music especially has to be discovered for oneself. The really powerful seeds you can plant for your children are more the example that you yourself set for them.

Have you ever been asked to appear on the likes of *Strictly Come Dancing, Great British Bake Off, I'm A Celebrity,* etc., and if you had to appear on one to save Suedeworld which would you choose?
Winnie Ayers, Southall

I have but my response is always that they'd have to offer me enough money to retire on because it would mean the end of my career. Thankfully they never do.

(continued from page 11)

Why did the band persistently ignore fans from Eastern Europe and Balkans for decades (to be more specific fans in Serbia) and never visited the area until 2014 when they played a short festival gig? Were they afraid or not aware of the existence of the region? I hope that the answer would not be that they were not invited. Thank you.
Nicola Radisic, Serbia

At the risk of sounding prickly there seems to be a huge misunderstanding about how this whole thing works. I think some people assume bands sit around planning global tours based solely on where they would like to visit. Maybe some do, but the reality for most is much less romantic I'm afraid. It's a simple question of economics—whether promoters will offer enough of a fee to offset the cost of touring. So before anyone asks this is the reason we haven't been to the States for yonks—it just doesn't work financially for us and until we get an offer big enough we won't be coming. Sorry.

Would you like to come back to Mexico?
Sophia Valencia, Mexico

Yes, can I stay at your house?

What is your favourite place (street, park, etc.) in London?
Mel Bennett, Barnsley

As I get older, London becomes a city of ghosts. Virtually every street in W2/W11/W8 reminds me of a chapter or episode in my life. I love sitting eating lunch in Kildare Gardens behind Westbourne Grove, Ladbroke Square Gardens is truly magical, Hornton Street in Kensington is the last place I saw my mum, Poundland on Portobello is a favourite haunt of mine and Lucian's (cheap toys, great Halloween tat), and Artesian Village will always be special for me as I lived there for 30 years of my life and wrote countless Suede songs in Moorhouse Road and Northumberland Place and Ledbury Road. Sometimes though I jokingly tell my wife that when I die she can just chuck my ashes out to be collected by the binmen but really I'd like them scattered over the meadowy bit of Hyde Park just north of the Serpentine (and a national day of mourning of course).

When was the last time you found yourself dancing in front of the mirror at home? To what song?
Noèlia Buenafuente, Barcelona

My son loves dancing and is actually very good at it, so we often have family kitchen discos. If I've had a few G+T's I'll find myself dancing to one of his songs like 'Goblins From Mars' before I wrestle control of the iPod and manage to restore sanity with a bit of 'She Sells Sanctuary' or 'Pull Up To The Bumper'. Well, these bloody kids need to be educated.

'Virtually every street in W2/W11/W8 reminds me of a chapter or episode in my life'

If you weren't allowed your own hair, which member of Suede would you swap hair with, from what era and why?
Muz Haque, Warwickshire

Simon's purple hair from the mid-'90s was pretty great.

My husband turns 50 in a month and I need good advice regarding a present. You turned 50 a couple of years ago and I thought you might have a good idea for a present for a man his age. In the light of the fanbase's age I think your answer could be of great interest for others as well.
Maria Kongsgaard, Denmark

I think one of those battery-operated nose and ear hair trimmer things is pretty useful when you get to 50.

What's your daily diet as a vegetarian?
Chris, China

Mainly meat in the shape of broccoli.

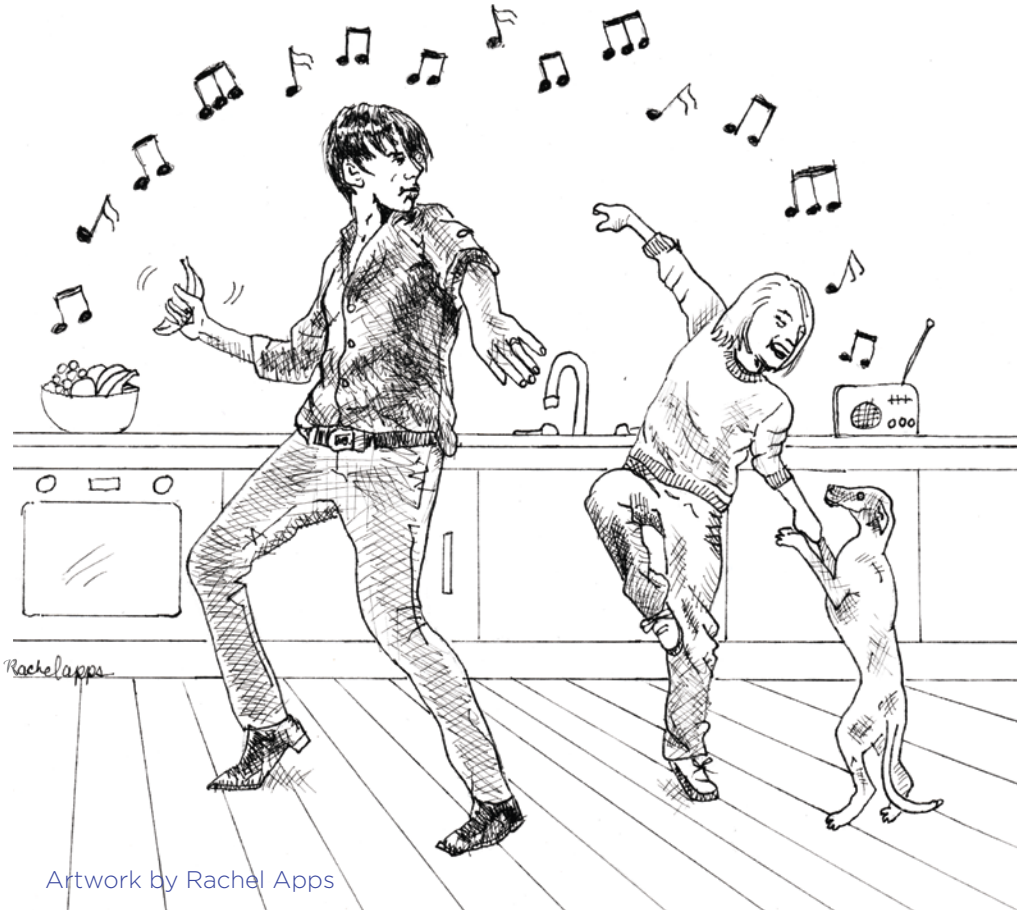
From all this so long, brave and beautiful artistic path where you have said that you have never given up and will never give up I'm sure, what is the most important thing that you keep in your memory forever?
Dominique Tasso, Paris

I always tell my kids to work hard and be kind to people. I think that's pretty sound advice.

Do you have any gardening tips?!
Juliette Green, Birmingham

I find employing a gardener really useful. I'm the wrong shape to keep bending over picking up seeds or whatever.

'I always tell my kids to work hard and be kind to people'



Artwork by Rachel Apps

when you were young...
so young

Simon Gilbert talks to us about *So Young*, his forthcoming photobook document of Suede's early years 1991-93.

Hi Simon, thank you so much for wanting to do an interview for the fanzine. When did you decide that you were going to do the photo book?

Thirty years ago to be honest ... although probably before that ... When I was a kid I had the book *The Sex Pistols File*, which was a photo book of the band with photos that you never got to see of your favourite band ... backstage, on a bus, in the pub ... and I was fascinated by it all. When I joined Suede, I started taking photos—just in case!—and here we are.

Are there other contributors to your book and if so please tell us about them?

Yes, there are, three very old friends of mine from Stratford who used to come to all the early shows. Iain, who passed away a few years ago, had been taking photos since we were at school together. He had all the gear and also developed all his own negatives. Phillip was/is a professional photographer, so was always coming to the shows fully armed up with expensive cameras. He also was a huge help to me when putting the book together as he knows more about contrast/colours, etc. Phillip continued pretty much throughout Suede's life taking photos—even when we got back together in 2010 he was one of the first people to shoot us.

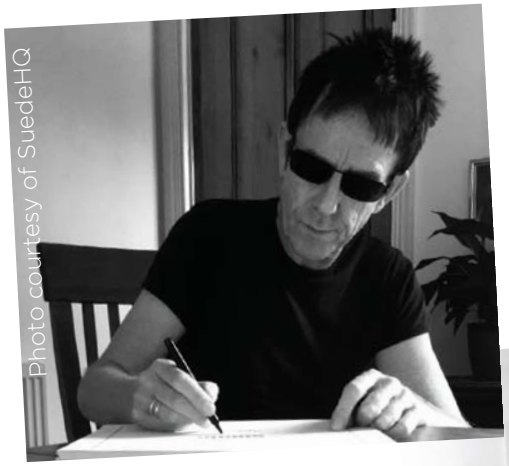


Photo courtesy of SuedeHQ

Photo by Iain Williams

Photo by Kathy Jeary

Kathy, who I lived with in London at the time I joined Suede, came to every show with me. I used to give her my camera to take shots while we were on stage, shots impossible for me to get!

Love its title* So Young*. Did you have any other titles in mind?

I did have other titles, but Mat suggested *So Young* as the obvious title ... and it had never crossed my mind to be honest ... so thanks Mat.

Were there any other photos in contention for the cover?

Yes a couple, there's a live shot of us playing at Rough Trade in Covent Garden—the band are all blurred but Brett is more in focus, but after seeing the Astoria shot of Brett, it had to be ... such a brilliant atmosphere to it.

How did it feel going through all the photos and your diary?

Well it took a while ... I had a suitcase full of them, I hadn't seen most of them since 1994, when I bought a video camera. All other formats went out the window then, so I put all the photos and negatives in the case and forgot about them. Unfortunately, for every good photo I took, there was 100 bad ones, so it took time to sort them.

How long did the whole process take, and what did you like most about the process?

I started putting the book together at the beginning of lockdown in March last year, so plenty of time. The first PDF I got back from Paul the co-designer with the first draft was a moment ... it actually looks like a real book.

How did you feel once you'd finished it?

A great weight lifted ... there's always little bits that could be moved slightly or need a bit more colour, so I had to force myself to say that's it, DONE.

Will there be a book tour?

Not sure, but possibly not due to schedules and lockdown, etc. I'd love to do one ... you never know.

Are there any plans for a volume 2?

I'd like to say yes, but I stopped taking photos after I bought a video cam so it would be a pretty dull read.

Describe your favourite photo in the collection.

One of my favourite pics in the book is actually the very first in the book of me. As a 14-year-old travelling down to London on the National Express coach, all dressed up in my punk finery ... my friends and I went for the day down to King's Road to visit *Seditionaries* (Vivienne Westwood/Malcolm McLaren shop). Paul suggested we need a young Simon in the book, and I found that one, it was 'back in the room' when I first saw it and the memories flooded back.

What camera/s were you using at the time?

I 'borrowed' my Mum's old camera from the '70s, a Pentax something or other. It was a proper old-school thing, actually having to manual focus every shot. I love the quality of proper old cameras, and it is something you don't get with an iPhone or whatever.

Have other members of the band past/present seen the book, what was the feedback if so, and did you get any requests to remove anything?

No one has seen it apart from the photographers and the designer ... hopefully all the photos I have chosen don't need to be 'removed'.

How many photos of Mat giving the V-sign made it through?!

Ha ha ... actually only one ... Mat's constant signage was more on film, I have hours worth of it ...
The Insatiable Ones Part 2 anybody?

So Young *will be released on 8th October 2021.*

maybe maybe it's the things we say

Kicking off our celebrations for the 25th anniversary of *Coming Up*, PR legend Jane Savidge talked about the times she had with Suede. Questions: Samantha Hand & Inge Klinkers.

Describe yourself back in 1996.

In 1996, I was a work/play-aholic who was probably at the peak of her gently persuasive PR powers—whatever that means. I had obviously looked after Suede for more than four years by that point but Savage and Best were also looking after The Verve—we were managing and PR-ing them at the time—as well as Pulp, Elastica, The Jesus and Mary Chain, Spiritualized, The Charlatans, The Fall, Menswear, Marion, etc., and about twenty other acts who were all over the press at the time. I think we were also running our own record label —Parkway—by this point and releasing records by Powder and Fluffy. So it was intense, but I loved it. I was quite definitely a Suede person at the time and still am.

Where were your offices based and what was the general vibe?

Our offices were about three quarters of the way up Parkway in Camden, down a little covered, cobbled mews. It was the most expensive office space we had ever had and we were on the second floor above a very boring set of accountants who controlled the entry system and front desk and they must have been utterly bemused by the amount of pop stars that had to sign their visitors book on an hourly basis. As to the general vibe—every day offered up a new challenge, but it felt very exciting to be at the centre of a music scene that I intimately understood and knew was a moment in history. I used to spend Wednesday nights at *Top of the Pops* and then spend Thursday night at the office watching the show with everyone else. On Friday I used to go to *TFI Friday* because we always had a band on. So the vibe was pretty special although it perhaps didn't strike me as anything special at the time.

It was a rather poignant moment in your book when you recount how you went round to Brett's house to drop off some weed and as you were leaving, Brett got up and asked if everything was going to be ok. When was the point that you knew for sure that everything would be ok?

That's a good question, and that moment you are referring to was way back during the latter stages of the *Dog Man Star* recordings, when Bernard had just left and I could tell that Brett was scared that everything was going to blow up in his face. Of course, the release of *DMS* didn't really change anything and I am not sure that the appointment of Richard changed much in the short term either. So there was an ongoing feeling of paranoia surrounding the band and me, and Saul and Charlie and, well, just about everyone connected to Suede. The amazing gigs on the seemingly

Photos courtesy of Jane Savidge

(continued from page 17)

endless *DMS* tour papered over the cracks to some extent because no one really knew what the future held for Suede or even if they had a future at all. 'Together' and 'Bentswood Boys' were very significant as they were new songs written by Richard, and Neil joining was a wonderful thing as he made the band even cooler and was a fresh angle for the press to write about, but I knew that the follow-up to *DMS* had to be pretty special to confound the naysayers. So, it was probably as late as hearing 'Trash' that made me know for sure that everything would not just be ok but a million times better than that. I mean I really knew that the song was special and that I could play it to just about every editor of any music magazine and they would know immediately that Suede were going to be bigger than ever.

What defines Suede for you in the Coming Up era?

Suede were more resilient than I or anyone else for that matter could have imagined. Brett was in an amazing place head-wise at the time; he felt as if a weight had been lifted off his shoulders—by which I mean to say that Bernard had been lifted from off those shoulders!—and he now had two young whippersnappers who were fun and talented and he was now the leader of a gang—which is what he'd always wanted. I remember the era as probably the most fun period to work with the band because I think I really knew what I was doing by that stage, whereas I was actually pretty naive and scared and making it all up as I went along at the beginning.

What's your favourite memory of that period?

Gosh, that would be 'Trash' going in at 3 and the album going in at 1, but there are so many—the Hanover Grand gig with Neil on stage for the first time was pretty amazing and the first few shows when the band played the album live for the first time. I have several favourite memories of listening to the *Coming Up* promo in my house in Belsize Park very, very loud and dancing around and trying to memorise the words—but we all do that ...

Favourite CU interview & why?

There were so many—and I almost excelled myself with the amount of front covers and press articles I got around then—but it would probably have to be the *Select* front cover proclaiming 'How did they do that—Comeback Of The Century'—as it felt like a vindication of everything I had been saying about Suede over the last twelve months.

That *Select* front cover was quite late to the *Coming Up* party and I seem to remember them being a bit reticent to champion a new record that they weren't sure would change the ongoing perception of Suede as slightly washed-up and incapable of coming up—ha!—with a decent album ever again. Funnily enough *Select* should have been the first cover to accompany the release of *Coming Up* but I felt we should go with something different, so we went with *Vox*, who had never got on with Suede from Day One—in fact the last two *Vox* stories on Suede had proved to be disastrous as they both threw spanners in the works with tales of Brett and Bernard not getting on, the last of these articles had actually speeded up the process of the band's first split. But that first *Coming Up* interview with *Vox*, which came out a few weeks before the release of the record, was really fantastic and set the scene for everything that followed. The headline was 'The Grand Return Of Brett-Pop' I think, so maybe that's my favourite piece around that time instead. And then there were the two *NME* covers and a couple of *Melody Maker* covers, one by Simon Price, and each one of those was more revealing than the last.

There was also an *Arena* magazine piece in 1996 that kicked off the whole campaign and was really fascinating because it featured author Hanif Kureishi and Brett discussing each other's work. The interview is interesting because you can tell that Brett is kinda confident and yet nervous about the new record and how it might be received. And of course, by the time 'Trash' and the album had been released and exceeded anyone's expectations and 'Beautiful Ones' arrived in October, Brett became much more relaxed and started to have fun in the next batch of interviews ...

Favourite CU song including B-sides?

Fave song is probably 'The Chemistry Between Us' as the lyrics are so clever and the guitar is so dreamy. Of the five singles off the album it would have to be 'Trash'. Fave B-side has to be 'Europe Is Our Playground', which is easily good enough to be on the album.

Best CU gig?

That would have to be one of the fan club shows, but does the Hanover Grand show count as a *Coming Up* gig? That was Neil's first appearance obviously and I was as smitten as everyone. I don't think I had seen someone for a very long time who looked so effortlessly cool and so born to be in a band that he had only just joined, almost by accident. But also I remember a Kilburn National Ballroom gig in October 1996—or maybe two?—which was/were outrageously good.

Favourite video?

Most Suede videos are pretty rubbish and the ones off *Coming Up* are no exception, I can remember Brett and Mat complaining to me that their videos were never filmed in far-off exotic places and always in Shoreditch or somewhere, and when you think about it they do all seem pretty claustrophobic and you can sense the band are trying to escape from their surrounds! So if I am pushed for an answer I would

Photos courtesy of Jane Savidge

(continued from page 19)

say 'Saturday Night' as there's footage on the London Underground!

What was your first memory of Neil?

As everyone knows, Neil kinda joined Suede by accident, or at least by being around the band at exactly the right time when they needed someone to give them another dimension and perhaps even a kick up the arse in all sorts of ways. I think he came into the office at the end of 1995 but it's possible that I met him just before that, as we had a mutual friend. But I did remember thinking when I met Neil that he was more Suede than Suede and I was a bit jealous because he was so skinny and almost certainly cooler than I was.

Most unusual request you'd received for Suede?

I think the most unusual requests just meant magazines asking if Brett would do a joint interview with Bowie or Morrissey or Hanif Kureishi, but there was nothing particularly outrageous that springs to mind. Brett did have his body painted for the cover of an *NME* and that was pretty unusual but also fun and interesting. Back in the 1990s the *NME* was the most important music newspaper in the world and they used to have a Christmas special where the newest and currently most popular indie pop stars would dress up as anyone they wanted to be for the issue. Brett dressed as Sid Vicious and he looked amazing, but I am pretty sure he came up with that idea and it wasn't something that was requested by the magazine.

Most unusual request made by the band?

I got many odd requests from other bands—Ultrasound asked me to find two peregrine falcons for a photo session and when they arrived, the falcons were long-term sworn enemies who started attacking each other from the minute their handlers released them—but the band never asked me to do anything unusual at all really … apart from 'can you get rid of those shitty clothes that the stylist wants us to wear for the photo session'.

What's your most treasured piece of Suede merchandise and is there a story behind it?

Not sure If I have anything too special, just maybe signed photos and first album original line-up signed stuff and I think I may have my 'Be My God'/'Art' 12" promo upstairs somewhere. Of course there are demo cassettes from the early days I have somewhere and I have very personal things related to press like the Suede interview price list which is reproduced in my book *Lunch With The Wild Frontiers* as well as original copies of some press releases I wrote for the band in the 1990s; and even my written entry to *Music Week* PR of the Year awards, which I won for the first campaign and came second twice for two later campaigns—which might look nice in a museum one day!

Anything you wished you'd done differently with Suede?

Some journalists have suggested that I got too much press attention for Suede at the beginning and throughout the 1990s, i.e. they were hyped up to the extent that they were always heading for a fall somehow. But it's hard to know how events would have panned out if I hadn't got so much press. Every band around in the 1990s were as jealous as fuck about the amount of press Suede got and would have cut off their drummer's right arm to get so much attention, so you can't have it both ways. And imagine if there had been just a nonchalant shrug when they first arrived on the scene—they'd have just been another indie band struggling against the odds (when they didn't deserve to be) and hundreds of thousands of people would never have got the chance to fall in love with their music. So to answer your question, I wouldn't have done anything differently, no.

Best piece of advice given to Suede?

You mean by me? Gosh, they never needed any advice from me, they were naturals. I think they knew I knew what I was doing—even though I wasn't entirely sure myself sometimes—but I am sure my most important role during my time with them throughout the 1990s was to be a constantly reassuring presence and to let them know that they were my favourite band ever and therefore the best band in the world.

How would you describe Coming Up?

Coming Up is one of the most joyous, life-affirming pop albums that I have ever heard. I remember Ed Buller saying that he wanted Suede to come up with their version of Michael Jackson's *Thriller* and I think the finished record is actually as close to an indie version of that album as one could imagine. I mean it's almost all hits apart from 'Picnic By The Motorway', which you couldn't imagine being a single, but 'Starcrazy' could have been and 'She' sounds like a smash hit to me—and 'Chemistry' has such a clever lyrical refrain that I can imagine that being a hit too. It's also an album that wears its heart on its sleeve and sounds just as fresh and exciting now as it did when it was first released.

Do you remember the first time you heard Coming Up? Where were you? First impression?

I think the first time I heard anything from *Coming Up* was in the studio, but I cannot for the life of me remember what song I heard. Saul had played me some demos of songs he thought would make the cut and I thought they were ok but nothing special—so it was only when they got into the latter stages of recording that I knew it was gonna be at least as good as their first two records—and perhaps even better.

You've said Suede are your favourite band. What sets them apart from all the other bands?

Suede songs spoke to me in a way that no other band had spoken to me before. I mean, I had loved punk as it was

Photos courtesy of Jane Savidge

(continued from page 21)

part of my childhood but all the bands that sprang out of that scene seemed one-dimensional and Suede offered … something more. There were a few moments for me that made me sit up and take note—of course there were a couple of early gigs that I saw that gave me tingles and then there was a three- or four-track demo for 'The Drowners' that I had in the office that I listened to on repeat so that everyone I worked with got as hooked as I did. But, thinking about it now, it is maybe 'Pantomime Horse' and seeing that song and 'To The Birds' and maybe 'Sleeping Pills' live too that set them apart from other bands.

There are a few early lyrics that immediately spring to mind as game changers for me around the time I first heard them:
'We kissed in his room to a popular tune'—a cleverly ambiguous lyric that makes you wonder if the singer is referring to a room belonging to the boyfriend of the girl he is now kissing—or whether he is kissing a boy in the room belonging to the boy in question—or whether Brett has switched genders for the purposes of our drama and is now a girl doing the kissing in her boyfriend's room. 'Pantomime Horse'—'have you ever tried it that way' was just so subversive and innocent at the same time that it set them apart for me. And in that first interview that Suede did for the *Melody Maker*, 'The Best New Band In Britain' cover, they immediately set themselves apart from every other band as they were so funny and honest and seductive and mysterious all at the same time. And do you remember that quote from Brett at the end of the piece? Interviewer Steve Sutherland had noticed some specks of glitter on Brett's upper lip and kept wanting to ask where it came from. So Brett replied 'oh a friend of mine has some glitter shorts. It gets everywhere.' What a very funny and intriguing thing to say. I remember being so excited that the new band I had just taken on and fallen in love with had acquitted themselves so well in their first interview.

Was doing PR for Suede different from working for other bands and if so, how?

There is simply no comparison between doing PR for any of the other bands I have worked on and Suede. Right from the off, when I first realised that they were the band I had been waiting for my whole life, everything changed and it felt like anything was possible in terms of making sure everyone I spoke to about them loved them as much as I did. Of course, that first *Melody Maker* cover changed things and meant that they immediately became a press phenomenon. But really it was Brett's look and demeanour and lyrics—together with Bernard's incredible guitar pieces—that made the difference between them and anyone else around at the time.

With so much time having passed, how did you experience digging up these memories for the documentary and what was your experience of watching it?

I had been listening to *Coming Up* a fair bit prior to Mike contacting me about being in the doc and I realised how much I loved the record almost to the extent that I preferred it to their first two records which surprised me somewhat. But it was lovely to see that the band still get on so well and could look back so fondly on that period with a sense of fun and perspective that is really refreshing.

In the documentary you call it a miracle that Bernard was replaced so quickly by someone as talented as Richard. When did you realise it wasn't a rash decision but rather the phoenix moment for the band?

It's funny that you mention Richard joining as a phoenix moment as the band's appearance at the Phoenix Festival on July 14th, 1995—and I know you are not referring to that type of phoenix at all!—I consider to be the Year Zero for *Coming Up*. What I mean to say is that that show marked the end of something and the beginning of something else entirely. But Richard joining was monumentally significant and changed things for the better to a marked degree. As I said earlier, 'Together' and 'Bentswood Boys' were good signs but the—albeit amazing—*Dog Man Star* tour didn't really change anything and it was only when *Coming Up* started to take shape that I realised Richard had saved the day!

Finally, what did you think of the* Coming Up *documentary?

I loved the documentary and Mike Christie is an amazing film maker. Of course it helps that he has a long history with the band and that they feel comfortable opening up to him about their chequered past, I don't think anyone could have made a film about the album and gotten it so right. I was also happy with my contribution to the doc, which is not something I usually say as I hate seeing myself on camera. I thought the bits with Ed running through the mixes for the record were particularly interesting as Ed is still so enthusiastic about the whole process of recording that album even though it was 25 years ago …

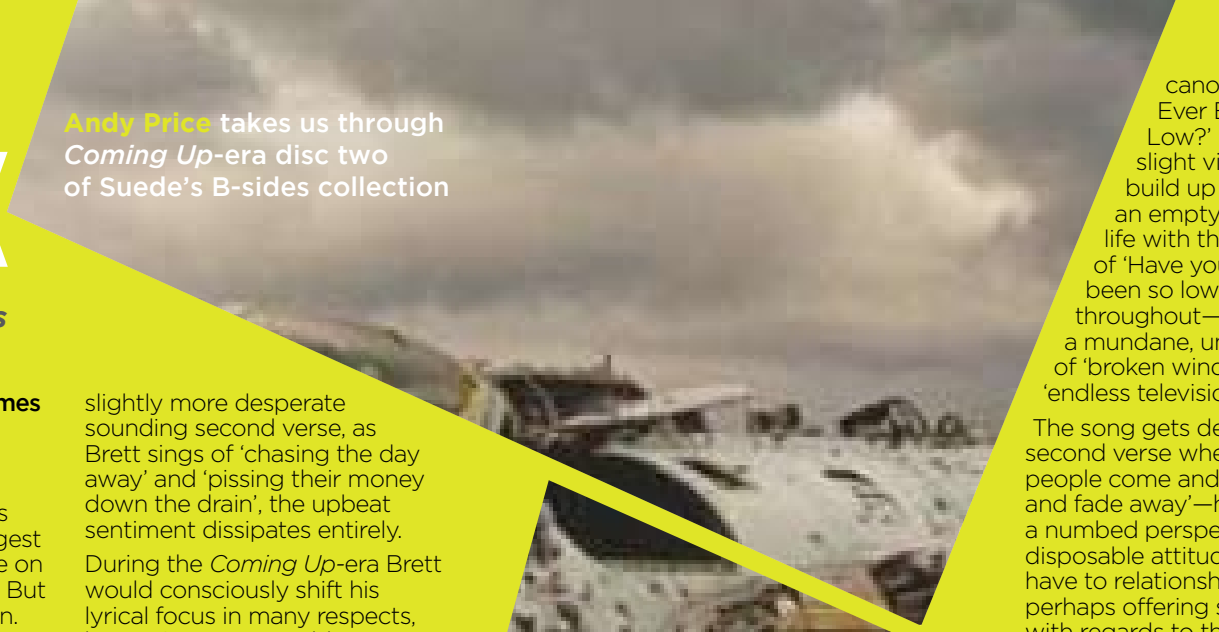
Follow Jane on Instagram: @Jane_Savidge for exclusive stories and photos. Jane's book, *Lunch With The Wild Frontiers: A History of Britpop and Excess in 13½ Chapters,* is available now.

Photos courtesy of Jane Savidge

track by track

Andy Price takes us through *Coming Up*-era disc two of Suede's B-sides collection

Suede—*Sci-Fi Lullabies (part two)*



© Photos by John Kippin

Every Monday Morning Comes

The second disc of *Sci-Fi Lullabies* is a very different record to the first; while the first half of the collection sits easily among Suede's strongest releases, the quality variance on disc two is often quite wide. But overall, it's a fascinating listen.

The disc kicks off on a high. The spritely 'Every Monday Morning Comes' sounds as bright as any of *Coming Up*'s singles, with an infectious melody and kinetic guitar riff, complete with Brett's glam-era recalling 'la-las' at the song's conclusion. A warm bed of acoustic guitar works to further build a retro-futuristic vibe.

Despite being a jaunty little song musically, lyrically we're tethered to the quite grim reality that, however much we might aspire and dream of a better, brighter tomorrow (a core theme on much of the first disc's songs) we're hit quite hard by the crushing impact of 'Every Monday Morning'.

The lyrics of the verses are a hymn to daydreaming. Where 'Europe Is Our Playground' offers the pulsing serenity of a hand-in-hand return to innocence, on this song the offering of a rule-free existence is saved just for the weekend and is less of an attractive, life-altering sell, with the concept of 'Monday' putting a perpetual stamp on our characters' notions of freedom. So, by the slightly more desperate sounding second verse, as Brett sings of 'chasing the day away' and 'pissing their money down the drain', the upbeat sentiment dissipates entirely.

During the *Coming Up*-era Brett would consciously shift his lyrical focus in many respects, becoming more world-weary and less 'sensual' with his writing. On songs such as this—'Lazy', 'Picnic By The Motorway', 'Starcrazy' and 'Saturday Night'—Brett would zoom right into the small-town existences of individuals living in council estates and their often circular, entrapped lives, with the cheap thrills of drugs, sex and alcohol providing temporary distraction from boredom. 'Every Monday Morning Comes' encapsulates this angle.

Musically speaking, the track bristles with energy, from Richard's slinky, sparkling riff to Brett's descending vocal melody that roars into one of the best choruses of the era.

Have You Ever Been This Low?

A song that features one of the most hopeless lyrics in Brett's entire song-writing canon, 'Have You Ever Been This Low?' paints a few slight vignettes that build up a portrait of an empty and hollow life with the question of 'Have you ever been so low?' repeated throughout—in reaction to a mundane, unfeeling world of 'broken windows' and 'endless television shows'.

The song gets deeper still in the second verse where a 'thousand people come and go and stay and fade away'—highlighting a numbed perspective on the disposable attitude that many have to relationships, and perhaps offering some context with regards to this malaise.

In this song, Brett builds the picture of the mind-state of a highly depressed individual—one who feels isolated and stands (quite literally) outside—observing other people's lives and the warmth behind the blinds of their homes, fulfilled as they are by the succour of TV.

Brett (or rather, the character Brett builds in the song) clearly requires something more ('I am the one, I sing the song', etc.). Though the lyric doesn't go into a great deal of depth, there's enough here to clearly communicate this individual's frame of mind.

The melody in the verse and Brett's delivery have a swirly quality, while Richard's fuzzy riff motors through the song with a charged electrical hum and Mat's bass provides a drip-drop of melodic nuance. It's a song with an odd dynamic, as the chorus melody repeatedly falls away before it can ever really take root, with Richard's riff-rising besting the other hooks.

The slightly eerie, unexpected piano solo, accompanied by howls of distant feedback, provide a musical depiction of the song's lyrical subtext—that beneath the shiny, poppy exterior, something more troubled, and haunted, resides. It's at that moment that the song really becomes quite compelling. It's an odd little song, and one which finds Suede trying out some interesting musical ideas.

Another No One

'Another No One' re-spins the 'escape-from-a-toxic-relationship' narrative of 'The Living Dead', though while that song's devastatingly overt references to drug abuse and the very real fear shadow of mortality bolstered the bittersweet triumph of escape, here we have a more straightforward tale of a young girl, sick of 'taking the shit' from her (now ex) partner.

It's a structurally interesting piece—as the verses find Brett playing omniscient narrator, reporting on the girl's actions from a third-person perspective ('she takes the blame, she packs her bag, calls a cab', etc.), while the choruses switch to a first-person statement by the girl towards the partner, though this transition is skilfully handled by Brett with a simple 'she feels all right, and turns to say ...' prior to the chorus.

The title of the song itself is pointedly against the ex-partner, with the lyric 'you'll have to find another no one', positively

(continued from page 25)

asserting herself against this esteem-eroder. 'Another No One' is another Suede tale of self-betterment and escape. It's a realisation that there's a world beyond the accepted confines of this toxic relationship.

Brett has always loved the romance of a waiting taxi, and this is used to great effect here, with the lovely lyric 'outside is just a taxi ride to drive away' standing out in particular. The fact that this character 'calls her mum' denotes her youth, and the realisation that 'outside in the morning light it's another day' is nothing if not the very essence of positivity. The song is suitably straightforward musically, with a circular-chord-based piano progression running throughout, and occasional howls of emotive synth sounds creeping into the higher frequencies. The distant playground ambience of the intro evocatively builds an image of the outside, urban world.

The song doesn't outstay its welcome, nor stray into anything akin to a solo or musical diversion, which is totally fitting for a song like this—keeping 'Another No One' fixed on the lyrical narrative.

Young Men

Beginning with a crazed reading of the 'Saturday Night' riff, morphing it from a post-party slice of introspection into a gradually rotating helicopter blade of pent-up energy, 'Young Men' lurches into life with an uncertain musical foundation. With the riff snarling away in the corner of the mix, Mat's bass stutters between notes before Brett dives into the fray, presenting a scattershot series of images illustrating a range of intimidating men, and their sad attempts to either hold on to their youth ('Les says punk isn't dead', 'fighting in the clubs', 'Phil's still off his head', etc.), or combat the depressing states their lives have got to, in particular with alcohol (Terry) or simply by sleeping through it (Paul) before leading to the chorus' beery, posturing battle cry of 'young men, young men, here we, here we go again'.

It's an in-your-face vision of masculinity unchained, with Brett's caustic images emphasising the ultimate emptiness of these men's lives, and those forced to play the part of 'the working-class male' by the unspoken forces of class and acceptance.

On the song's (incredible) chorus Brett amalgamates all these worst-case aspects and creates a horrifying vision of a new tribe—the 'Young Men' have no values, no moral code and no allegiance but to themselves, as Brett lists their deeds and traits: 'cheating on the wives, all shiny suits and lazy lies, the young men, insulting everyone, picked up your sister, kicked your son'. Allusions to sons, wives and P45's ground us in a middle-aged context—and a feeling that these men are kicking back against where they have found themselves, in an attempt to recapture the romanticised youthful abandon they once had—to be the careless 'young men' again.

'Young Men' also sports one of the strongest choruses of the era; Brett's incendiary delivery as he unleashes this monstrous caricature is awesome. The push-pull repetition of the title builds into a massive Richard moment, and one that gives another early indication of his complete mastery of the instrument.

In *Love and Poison* Brett remembered that at the height of Suede's success, himself and friends Alan Fisher and Gary France, 'Had this band called Bruiser, we had a night of drug taking where we wrote about ten great songs, it was kind of a piss-take of Britpop, it was actually really funny.' David Barnett revealed that among Bruiser's songs were such parodic masterpieces as 'Kissus For My Missus' and 'Santa Ain't A Wanker'—some of the lyrics would end up being the basis for 'Young Men'.

The class themes, and the 'naming' of people in the song point to these (clearly Blur-parodying) origins, though while many of Blur's *Parklife*-era songs tended to fetishise the edgier aspects of the working class, for Suede, this grim portrait is presented with a brutal starkness.

The Sound Of The Streets

Supported by a warm arrangement, 'The Sound Of The Streets'—on the surface—concerns a character with a similar detachment from the world as the one encountered in 'Have You Ever Been This Low?' Yet while that song's character seemed to pessimistically reject comfort and companionship, here the character of Sadie sees the merits of the laughter, the parties and the numerous ways to 'pass the time' that the painted people who surround her indulge in. But she herself cannot. We can extrapolate then, that Sadie's attitude towards life (and at least, other people having fun) is a generally positive one. But quite clearly something has happened to make her feel 'like winter' inside.

The lyrics of the song imply that she thinks of herself as futureless, is cocaine dependent (she 'needs a line') and floats through others' gleeful bliss like a ghost. The lyric concerning her feeling like winter leads into perhaps the song's most crushing line: 'for the child that died within her'. If taken literally, Sadie's inability to feel joy (despite recognising it, and not begrudging others for it) makes a lot of sense and adds a real note of tragedy and weight to this superficially upbeat song—or perhaps it's just a simple way of illustrating Sadie's loss of innocence.

Brett revealed in *Coal Black Mornings* that Sadie was also the subject of 'She' from *Coming Up* (as well as 'Sadie' later in this collection) and that, in general, 'The Sound Of The Streets' was developed from an exercise in documenting the minutiae of a particular area of London. 'Sadie, the fictional flaneuse, roamed the sun-kissed pavements of North Kensington, wearing out her shoe leather on Chesterton Road and Ladbroke Grove. The use of such minutiae in writing would be something that I would ruminate on often over the years; the way if used right it could locate the narrative so neatly and breathe life into the words.'

Despite all not being well with the lyrical character of Sadie, 'The Sound Of The Streets' is a typically upbeat, quite conservative piece musically—its rather traditional A-Em-G-D chord sequence providing a stable support for the lyric.

Money

An immediate attention grabber, the driving arrangement of 'Money' is a schizoid fusion of elements cribbed from both punk (the palm-muted, distorted guitar of the verse) and dance music (the relentless hammering beat of the chorus). In many respects a precursor to more sonically audacious moments of *Head Music*, 'Money' is a rhythmic-centred piece, and indeed by verse two, as if to emphasise that the musical power here is king, Brett backs away from the microphone and allows the band to just mine the groove.

The slight lyric is focused on the perceived power of money, with each verse repetitively demonstrating our lyrical protagonist's unimpressed reaction to a flash proposition—'you thought you'd come and amaze me with your money'.

© Photo by John Kippin

(continued from page 27)

The relentless chorus finds Simon demonstrating his durable side, his pounding drums working in tandem with Brett to deliver Suede's last word on the pursuit of wealth. Concluding that, in the end, it's other people—a one that 'turns them on'—that represents real wealth.

It's a simple, liberal sentiment set against a London increasingly dominated by those who seek to ascend the social ladder by simply flashing their cash; those that live party-dominated, consequence-free lives with their wealth providing a safety net. Most importantly, it's a treatise on those that want to impress (read: undermine) others with their cash.

'Money' is an infectious track and is one of the most excitingly abrasive on this whole double album. Brett's treated vocals, scattershot lyrics and the pulsing, rhythmic intensity of it are all signifiers of some of the shores the band would sail to on their next LP.

W.S.D.

The most peculiar sounding track on either disc of *Sci-Fi Lullabies*, the electronic leanings and disjointed rhythms of 'W.S.D.' underpin a largely fragmented lyric that builds up a depressing image of the languid, stale reality of drug abuse. As with 'Money', we're in proto-*Head Music*-territory here: the vortex-like synth sounds throughout the verse coalesce into a slinky, vibrato guitar riff that weaves its way through the song's chorus. The odd, sinister edge of the electronic sounds are pummelled by Mat's tunnelling bass which serves as another key ingredient of the arrangement.

The visual-heavy narrative of this track reveals the life of someone existing with a crippling, life-destroying drug addiction; the initial image presented by the lyric 'dressed as a cowboy on top of a hill, it's sadder than it probably sounds' establishes the song's angle: that this person is beyond help, living on the cusp of life and death, and a parody of their former self.

Throughout the song, Brett's lyric treats the character with a sense of tough resentment, lyrics such as 'so fucking what if he's licking the bag, don't o.d. on him now' basically establish that we have a man whose life revolves entirely around his next narcotic fix, having long since lost all semblance of identity, oblivious to the perceptions of others, the dangers of the world (drug intake/the traffic on the road, etc.). I think we can discern from the various hints that there's clearly the ruins of a relationship here too.

This relationship angle is borne out by the chorus' lyric—which seems to be a question being asked by a shocked, unbelieving outsider, 'Oh, is it true what they say about you two?'—clearly this pair's drug-fuelled antics have become so bizarre and so destructive that their shambolic exploits are a thing of myth and rumour on the streets.

The crucial line 'we're so disco we can't get on in this world anymore' feels like an attempt at justification for this self-gratification-oriented lifestyle and gives an insight into how this all started. Like a lot of Brett's '96-97 writing, 'W.S.D.' offers no solution to this quagmire, it's merely content to document it.

This Time

One of the most gorgeous songs in the Suede songbook, 'This Time' serves as disc two's singular strongest piece of music. With an affecting, resonant lyric that counterbalances an intense companionship against the living, breathing rhythms of city life, 'This Time' simply soars.

Fundamentally, the theme is a universal one: two companions feeling lost in the moment, supporting and helping each other to achieve greatness. The descriptive language used to paint the city is evocative and charmingly unvarnished. 'The city sighs and cars collide', Brett wearily notes, while in the chorus he points out the 'lonely crowds', building up a depressingly real vision of contemporary Britain. There really is nowhere lonelier than a crowd.

But the things that our companions will achieve, will 'wash it away', all that misery. There's a classic Suede sense of escape here, with the lyrics 'The roundabouts will take us south, past every train in every station, traffic signs and circle lines' fuelling the idea that new frontiers of promise lay beyond the city. We've heard similar sentiments before of course ('The Big Time', 'The Next Life', 'Europe Is Our Playground') and would hear them again later ('Beyond The Outskirts').

'This Time' is simply stunning from a musical perspective and further justifies Suede Mk2 as a formidable song-writing and arranging team. The intro is perhaps my favourite part of the song, the lulled chords wash over a mix that finds Mat's emotive melodic bass part taking prominence. The verse is defined by Richard's mesmeric strumming pattern, peppered by the piano's twinkling emotive stroll. It's the grand chorus though, that stands as the most triumphant, fist-in-the-air moment, as the song solidifies into a hymn to togetherness.

By the song's outro, Richard's euphoric lead line hits Neil's wall of synth strings head on. The clouds part and Brett's lyric dissolves away into a distant terrace-chant of 'na, na, na, na, na' as the city is left behind, and our duo ascend to better things. The grey well and truly 'washed away'.

'This Time' is one of the finest songs from the *Coming Up*-era and is among the band's strongest B-sides full stop. Its themes are universally relatable: a joyous celebration of companionship set against any blank, emotionally detached city.

Jumble Sale Mums

Though nothing specific has been revealed, it seems clear in the light of *Coal Black Mornings* that 'Jumble Sale Mums' was crafted from the memory of working-class necessity. 'Everything we owned was either homemade or second-hand' Brett revealed, 'We'd be jumble sale regulars, battling the elbowing pensioners every Saturday afternoon at the local village hall.'

On the gorgeous, oft-forgotten 'Jumble Sale Mums', Brett recalls these images from his childhood—of kids 'hanging round the street' and the point that 'they've got somebody else's clothes on'. He also provides insight into the fraught real lives behind the scrabble to make ends meet.

The question of 'what' the 'jumble sale mums' are on reminds us of the nullified, drugged housewives of 'Sleeping Pills', while the 'boiling' anger and implied abuse of the 'jumble sale dads'—constantly complaining about their existence not being 'the high life' and subsequently blaming their wives for their frustration, reminds us of no end of Suede songs that highlight the violent insecurity of fragile masculinity.

Unlike the majority of songs on *Sci-Fi Lullabies*' second disc, we do have a bit of hope here for the jumble sale mum, who has packed her bags—ready to flee from this on-the-breadline existence and the abusive husband who, in revealing fashion, 'says some things that I can't repeat' at the sight of her packed bags.

Fleeing from a terminally doomed relationship is another staple Suede lyrical narrative, which we've seen play out on such Suede highlights as 'The Living Dead', 'Another No One' and 'The 2 Of Us'. Here though, it feels more earned and weighty: this marriage, with kids and all, has clearly been unhappy for a long, long time, and not merely due to their obvious economic desperation.

The ascending chorus is an unexpected delight musically, while Brett's 'high life' vocal melody and delivery are particularly touching (the 'high life' as a concept again resurfaces throughout Brett's lyrical history). 'Jumble Sale Mums' is a really lovely song and reminds us of the suburban nowhere towns from which the band, and many listeners, hail.

These Are The Sad Songs

Serving as a dedication to those songs that have shaped Brett's development as an artist, 'These Are The Sad Songs' takes the uncharacteristically direct decision to enumerate those specific tracks. Here Brett proves his dedication to the all-encompassing power of music by listing them, mantra-like, by name.

 © Photos by John Kippin

(continued from page 29)

The songs listed are:
'Lay Lady Lay'—Bob Dylan
'Band Of Gold'—Freda Payne
'A Day In The Life'—The Beatles
'And Dream Of Sheep'—Kate Bush
'Sea Song'—Robert Wyatt
'Vincent'—Don McLean
'Death Disco'—Public Image Ltd
'Venus In Furs'—The Velvet Underground
'An Occasional Dream'—David Bowie
'Sign O' The Times'—Prince
'Bill Is Dead'—The Fall
'Lazyitis'—Happy Mondays
'Big Louise'—Scott Walker

Brett's choices are an eclectic mix of the well-known and a few murkier, deeper cuts. 'These Are The Sad Songs' is Brett demonstrating an awareness of popular music's lexicon—the rich tapestry of brilliant art that has articulated sadness, death, loss, hope and triumph. It also underlines Suede's positioning place in the history of pop, particularly at an age where vapid, manufactured pop groups were becoming more prominent and weight was being gradually—and insidiously—extracted from music, sapping its power.

Musically speaking, the song's structure—with Richard's arpeggiated chordal picking parts and the organically built-up chorus—seems to be a little 'run of the mill' when compared to the tracks that surround it, though Brett's crooning baritone in the verse is particularly nice.

'These Are The Sad Songs' then can be seen as a statement on the value of music, Brett's lyric underlines this deep effect that these classic songs have had, they are 'the good things you keep inside'.

Sadie

The Sadie-saga gets a little darker now, in this mysterious, under-discussed track. The song 'Sadie' sees the return of the titular character previously encountered in 'The Sound Of The Streets' (and 'She'). With this song we're granted insight into the inner workings of Sadie's mind. While previously, the emotionally battered character observes the revels of life happening around her with a ghostly detachment, here Brett builds an image of the world that shaped her, and the world she carries around within. These things are set against the grim reality of her own life.

Like Brett himself, Sadie acknowledges her suburban upbringing will always be a part of her. This is illustrated by evocative memories such as 'the old front room in the rain' and all the 'bored kids and their games' that pepper her memory. Sadie may have left the suburbs for the big city, and her life may have taken a downward spiral, but deep inside, the warmth of those suburban memories lives on. The good days and the bad.

The first verse—and the chorus—seem markedly bleak, the frequent references to her being 'cold as the night' and 'high as the trees' have depressive, almost deathly allusions. In just one listen we can feel Sadie's pain, the bittersweet memories and the dangers of the tough, loveless world she now exists in without needing to know the specifics.

Richard's guitar work is wonderful—from the dark, gothic riff that runs throughout the verse, the fuzzy expressive chorus, to the wonderful, contemporary edge of his lead guitar part which elevates the arrangement further. The vibraphone is a nice addition too and contributes to the enigmatic feel of the song, adding a different, alien layer to Suede's sound. The overall sonic effect is moody, gothic and intriguing. 'Sadie' is an undervalued song. Enjoy relistening to it.

Graffiti Women

Brett's depiction of the semi-supernatural hordes of vampiric 'Graffiti Women' invading not just the physical space of the character in the song, but also their mental space ('they'll carve their number in your mind') is unnerving and indicative of the paranoia Brett was experiencing around the time it was written—and also a genuine threat represented by the real-life graffiti women stalking him at the time.

Brett's illustration of these rabid, hot/cold 'fans' verges on the demonic. From simply 'drawing pictures on the wall' to this nightly terror of spiritual invasion, 'Graffiti Women' is creepy and unsettling, but it's a cracking listen.

There's an implication that these faceless demons have no personalities of their own, and are trying to (in the song at least) cut away parts of the main character, and steal his lifeforce for their own ends, intimated in the lyric 'they'll steal what they want from who they want'.

The graffiti women are just 'made up people' who 'swap stories in the park' and 'take photos after dark'. What the song illustrates is that their devotion has evolved to the point of demented stalking: a level of infatuation that yields occasional acts of violence (or hate-fuelled outbursts at least), with their ultimate desire to possess and own the individual motivating them to abandon the personalities they had before and give everything to their fixation.

Turning to the music, the lush arrangement has a distinctly psychedelic-folk vibe. Its acoustic-meets-synth arrangement sounds like an amalgamation of the late-sixties 'sci-fi folk' sound of David Bowie and mid-nineties etherealness of Air. It's a floaty piece of music that seeps into the ears politely—another track that leads us on the road to *Head Music* with its numbed, narcotically infused sensibility.

Once you scratch the surface, 'Graffiti Women' is a song that yields more than you might have immediately thought. Like 'Sadie', it reveals that Anderson's mind at this point was under threat from forces both external and internal.

Duchess

And so, to the final track on this collection, the achingly sad 'Duchess': a character study reeking of isolated loneliness. While the crushing depression of solitude has been covered by Suede previously, here we have a sort of grotesque sketch of an individual resigned to a life of shut-in misery.

This single woman, alone in a flat with 'no friends to see, no car to drive', lives a contact-free existence. And, despite attempting to reach out and socialise at bars, is ultimately 'much too shy' to say anything. For her, the heady thrills of romance and relationships are a thing of the past. This is emphasised by the character's name—the title of 'Duchess'—which implies a certain faded glory. Now she's descended from her lofty position and is merely 'one of us'.

The chorus' intriguing mentions of the 'Latinos' and 'Mexicans' that 'she knows' present a glimmering memory of a social life: at some point at least, she had friends. However, in the final chorus it's revealed that 'now things are tough and they've had enough. And they won't come back again.'

'Duchess' presents a bleak depiction of agoraphobia, depression and resigned hope. Brett refuses to offer any succour to the woman in this lyric. Much like the doomed nomad of 'Have You Ever Been This Low?', the drug-addicted shambles of 'W.S.D.' and Sadie's emotional detachment from society documented on 'The Sound Of The Streets', Brett's songwriting presents no easy answers, no naive escape and no liberation.

In many of the songs from this era, Brett seemed to find a new interest in simply documenting the crumbling lives he'd observed, as opposed to leading them to escape via the rapturous, euphoric resolutions that used to be common in his writing. Seen from that perspective then, 'Duchess' is the final tragic vignette of disc two.

From a musical angle, the two-note bass part which underpins the song is almost mechanical and the lo-fi recording also seemingly emphasises this point. The purposefully saccharine organ sound adds a hymn-like simplicity to mix, resulting in a track that continually resolves to the same sonic space. It's a guitar-and-drum-free arrangement that concludes the *Sci-Fi Lullabies* collection on a downbeat note.

© Photo by John Rippin

I supply her with ecstasy

Suede *Coming Up* North American Tour May 1997 by Rachel Apps

Introducing the fans: Myself, Vicky and Annie were 22 years old. We lived in a suburb of Los Angeles and Vicky and I had been making a Suede fanzine called *Quietly Kill For You* for three years. Vicky and I had followed Suede across America in 1995 on their *Dog Man Star* tour and Annie had joined us at the last few gigs closer to home. We were desperate to see Suede again and have an adventure.

5th/6th May: It had begun! We flew across America from west coast to east—Los Angeles to Boston. Being the free-spirited youngsters that we were, we hadn't booked a hotel room but had reserved a hire car we'd receive upon our arrival at about midnight local time. However, that turned out to be the least of our worries. When we got to the car hire desk, I was told that our compact/mid-sized car had not been reserved, but we could get ourselves into an SUV or van for an extra charge. I gave the man behind the desk some sass and then he rescinded the offer because I was under 25. As these were pre-internet days, the person I had spoken to on the phone for reservations hadn't noticed that I was underage to rent from this branch. Oh, to be underage! I must have gone ballistic and/or cried, because the man behind the desk phoned one of their competitors there at the airport and confirmed that they would rent cars to people over the age of 21 (now you're over 21 ...). And so, after paying a much heftier fee than I had agreed with the first company, we had wheels! And not only that, the car was the exact make, model and colour of Vicky's car back home. Her car at home was named Woody, after Ron Wood of the Rolling Stones, so we promptly dubbed our rental 'Keef'.

6th May: Made the seven-hour drive from Boston, MA to Buffalo, NY. Checked in to the Hospitality Inn at 10pm and coloured my hair at about 1:30am according to the sporadic scribblings in my journal. I hope we left a tip for housekeeping!

7th May: Buffalo, NY to CANADA! We drove past Niagara Falls, but no time to stop! The first gig would be in Toronto, and we crashed at the house of our Toronto pen pal Linh. Suede friends are the best!

8th May: Toronto. Queued at Much Music studio as Suede were doing a performance and interview for *The Wedge* TV programme. It was rainy, and so bitterly cold. We had a great time in the queue, chatted with people and walked up and down the line, handing out flyers for our fanzine to keep warm. They let the first 25 people inside the studio for the show and Vicky, Annie and I stood behind Richard and Neil. The band all said hello to us and gave warm hugs and kisses, and I got lipstick on Neil's cheek. Oops! Mat said, 'What are you doing here, you're American!' As the producer counted down to 'go' time, Brett and Neil started saying random numbers. Everyone was in a good mood. The band performed 'Lazy' and then were interviewed for a short time. We were elated. It was happening. We were here with the band.

We ended up in the hotel bar with Suede, some of the roadies and a couple of Mat's friends. Drinks flowed and I was writing limericks and stupid stuff in my journal. Brett came and sat next to me and wanted to see what I was writing so I let him read a few pages. He then picked up my pen and wrote on the opposite page 'I hope you're not intending to have any fun cos it's all going to be quite boring x.' He handed it back and gave me that classic Brett smile. I wrote that I could have just gone home happy then after just one song and that message in my journal. Simon asked if any of us were good with a video camera, and I said I'd brought mine as I was hoping I'd have a chance to film a bit. He asked if he got photo/video passes for me, if I wouldn't mind filming at some of the shows with his camera. I couldn't agree fast enough!

We were thinking about leaving as they were talking about going to the next bar, but they invited us to come with them, to a place very Suede-ily called the Bovine Sex Club. The night got a bit hazy after that but some of us ended up in a place called Octopus and then we returned to our budget motel in the early hours.

9th May: SHOW DAY! Toronto, The Warehouse. We're told that both Longpigs and Catatonia will be opening here this night so Suede will be on late. We joined the queue out front early and took turns resting in the trusty car, Keef. It was so cold for our Californian blood and it rained steadily all day. Many of the people we'd met at Much Music the day before were there and in the late afternoon, Linh and a couple of our other Toronto pen pals arrived to much celebration. The people in Toronto were absolutely lovely, and so the time we spent waiting went by really fast. Right before doors, one of the roadies, Evo, came to tell me that I was getting a photo pass and that I should head backstage to get Simon's video camera from him.

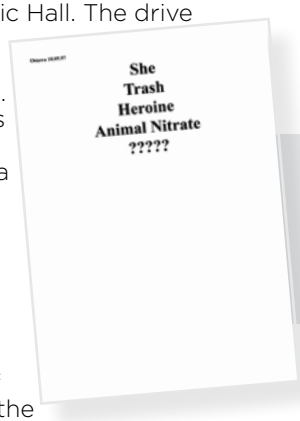
Now that the time had come, I thought, shit what if I can't figure out

Photos by Rachel Apps

(continued from page 33)

his camera? No one looked twice as I went back to the dressing room and Simon got the camera out and quickly showed me the basics. No problem. I was allowed in the photo pit and had a great time filming! I got some amazing close-up footage of Richard absolutely smashing it during 'Implement Yeah!' and thought I'd impress Simon with my cinematic prowess. Heh.

10th May: SHOW DAY! Ottawa, Barrymore's Music Hall. The drive from Toronto to Ottawa took about four hours. I was incredulous as Ottawa is the capital of Canada and it seemed a lot smaller and quainter than I thought it would be. The venue was a pretty building, red brick with lots of ornate detail on the façade. There was hardly anyone there when we arrived late afternoon, so we wandered quite a bit around the venue and drank lots of coffee. Simon came round the front when the band arrived to let me know that he'd forgotten to charge the battery on his video camera so I didn't need to film that night. I'd be lying if I didn't admit I was paranoid! I asked if he'd seen what I'd filmed the night before and he said yes it was great, but that I shouldn't film Richard so intensely as it made him nervous. The thought hadn't even occurred to me, and that was a reminder that my idols were just people, too. I was flushed with guilt all evening about it, but I pushed it aside to enjoy the night, vowing to apologise profusely to Richard the next chance I got. The gig was wonderful, felt more intimate than it was in Toronto, and the band seemed to be really enjoying themselves.


She
Trash
Heroine
Animal Nitrate
?????

We hit the road after the show and made the two-hour drive to Montreal.

I couldn't find a setlist for the Ottawa show anywhere, but if I were a gambling woman, I'd say they started with the triple threat of 'She', 'Trash' and 'Heroine' as they had for many other gigs on this tour.

11th May: SHOW DAY! Montreal, Le Spectrum. This couldn't have been more different than the day before in Ottawa. People were queuing from before noon, so we were glad that we'd made the decision to drive to town the night before. While looking for a toilet in a nearby department store, we ran into none other than Simon Gilbert, and he was buying black underwear. He asked if I was up for filming the gig that night and I was elated. Later, Annie and Vicky went round the back and ran into Brett and Mat arriving for soundcheck. Annie said 'I guess they're boob men, we've seen it in action, so to speak!' and Vicky responded to my confused face that Mat and Brett had both had a quick look at her cleavage. I wrote in my journal 'Mental note: get lower-cut shirts' which is hilarious knowing how innocent we were. Vicky was also able to drop the hint to the guys that it was her birthday the next day and that hearing 'My Dark Star' live was at the top of her wish list. The show was incredible. We were really enjoying Longpigs, it was a treat to have a fantastic opening band on the tour. Then Suede. The crowd were really up for it and the energy was immense. I filmed the first few songs with Simon's camera and then the rest of the gig with my own. At that point, we were feeling the giddy highs of touring with Suede and were so full of ourselves, I think we honestly believed that the band would play 'My Dark Star' but they didn't. It was probably a good thing, or we'd have become even more insufferable than we already were. I think Brett has a good sense about these things!

She
Trash
Heroine
Animal Nitrate
By The Sea
Starcrazy
New Generation
The Wild Ones
Saturday Night
So Young
Lazy
Picnic By The Motorway
Europe Is Our Playground
Beautiful Ones

Filmstar

12th May: Vicky's 22nd birthday. Travel day. We loaded up Keef and headed back over the Canadian border into the States, through Vermont, stopping a few times along the way including a nice birthday lunch for Vicky. It was a leisurely six-hour drive to Manhattan. New York City. The Big Apple. The Big Time. As we got closer and drove the bridge over the Hudson River, we were practically bouncing out the car windows, it was so exciting! The scene before us was cinematic, with the sun sinking in the sky, glinting off all the windows of the buildings. The gritty buzz of the place all-action, nothing and no one stood still. Yellow cabs zoomed by and honked at us for going too slow. It soon became obvious that driving in NYC is quite a different beast to driving in LA, and after a fraught hour of one-way street mishaps and trying to read maps, we made it to the parking garage of our hotel, where Keef would remain for the duration of our stay in New York. Leave the driving to the professionals, we said. Probably the best decision of the whole trip. This is where all the things I didn't bother to write in my journal but arrogantly thought in my youth that I'd never forget have long dissipated into the ether. I'm sure we went out that night, but I couldn't tell you where. All I know is that we ADORED New York and I still long to go back to that city to this day.

13th May: NYC. Again, there are no journal entries for this day. Tiredness was beginning to set in!

Photos by Rachel Apps

(continued from page 35)

14th May: SHOW DAY! New York, The Supper Club. As expected, queuing started very early, and there were fans who had travelled from all over due to this being quite a truncated tour. This was the first time I ran into Richard Hawley from Longpigs, in a shop near the venue, and said hello, he asked if my friends and I had been at the shows in Canada and I said yes! He said he thought he recognised us. I told him how much we'd loved their sets at the previous gigs. He was very friendly and nice so I reported back to Vicky and Annie that next time we saw guys from Longpigs milling around we should talk to them.

She
Trash
Heroine
Animal Nitrate
By The Sea
So Young
Lazy
The Wild Ones
Saturday Night
Starcrazy
New Generation
Picnic By The Motorway
Europe Is Our Playground
Beautiful Ones

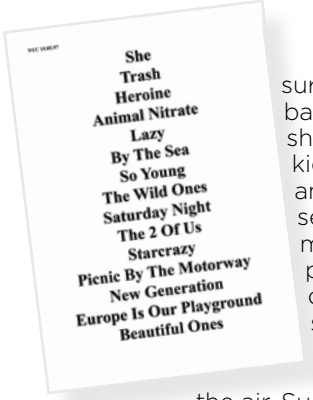
Filmstar

The gig was out of this world. There is nothing like NYC or LA gigs as far as concerts in the States go, the band were at their zenith in snarling sexy aggression, hypnotic hip swaying, and nonchalant poise. It was wild.

15th May: SHOW DAY! New York, The Supper Club. This was a special one. It was early queuing just like the day before, but when I went backstage to collect Simon's video camera before the show, I encountered Martin Rossiter, the frontman of Gene. He gave a jolly hello and told me it was his birthday and he was celebrating and handed me a bottle of beer. I felt a bit out of place since it wasn't Martin's gig and hoped that the band wouldn't think I was making myself too comfortable.

Suede were getting ready, but then Brett asked if I could iron his shirt for him. I nearly fainted as I agreed, trying to act nonchalant. He pulled one of his famous black button-up shirts out of a jumbled suitcase, it was sort of sheer with solid black stripes running through. It was wadded in a ball and stiff with sweat from a previous show. I flattened it out as best I could and noticed the Dolce & Gabbana tag. He must have thought I was useless, I was so scared I was going to ruin it. I had to keep increasing the heat of the iron slowly. Brett stood by, topless, and asked, 'Nearly ready, Rach?' and it really was still very wrinkled, but I showed him and he put it on and thanked me. I grabbed the video camera from Simon and wished them well, and then went to find my friends to scream and tell them what had just happened.

The show was just as magnificent as it had been the night before, even though there were a couple of minor and fleeting sound issues (which got Brett revved up). The audience was considerably rowdier, including crowd surfers. Annie was a badass and took the shoe off a guy who kicked her in the head and threw it. The band seemed to enjoy the mayhem, but it was probably best they didn't return to the stage for an encore. There was a heady sense of triumph in the air, Suede's fanbase here in the States were alive and literally kicking, and everyone was electrified by it.


She
Trash
Heroine
Animal Nitrate
Lazy
By The Sea
So Young
The Wild Ones
Saturday Night
The 2 Of Us
Starcrazy
Picnic By The Motorway
New Generation
Europe Is Our Playground
Beautiful Ones

16th May: Travel Day. We were slow to get up and out, but the drive to Boston was only about three hours and thirty minutes, so we didn't need to rush. We got Keef the hire car out of hibernation in the hotel garage, as we took taxis to get around the city. Somehow, we managed to navigate out of town without falling out with each other and took Highway 95 across Connecticut and into Massachusetts. We went to the Cheers bar that evening. We'd returned to where we started, and it felt great to be back! Boston is a fabulous city with great nightlife and beautiful architecture. We wanted to live there.

17th May: SHOW DAY! Paradise Rock Club, Boston. The queue was not too long when we arrived. We spotted some of the guys from Longpigs in a café near the venue and had a good chat with them, they were charming and funny. It was a pretty chilled-out day. Suede and their roadies were about and saying hello and stopped to talk.

She
Trash
Heroine
Animal Nitrate
Lazy
By The Sea
So Young
The Wild Ones
Saturday Night
Starcrazy
Picnic by the Motorway
New Generation
Europe Is Our Playground
Beautiful Ones

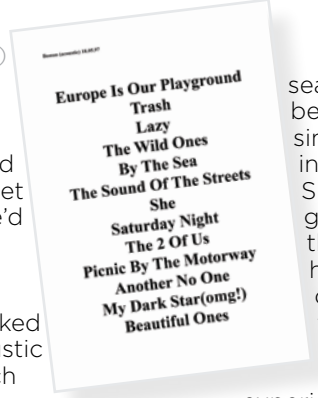
The show was spectacular, it really felt as if Suede had perfected their performance and everyone was on a high. It was so much fun dancing around in the crowd with all of the lovely people we'd met that day, I remember feeling like this was what it was all about, this was heaven. But what goes up must come down, and that happened in a big way after this show.

18th May: SHOW DAY? Paradise Rock Club, Boston. Disaster struck. Overnight, the compound at the band's hotel where the equipment trucks were parked was broken into, all their gear was stolen. When we arrived at the venue to queue, there were a lot of solemn faces. We were told that they weren't sure the gig that night would go ahead, there was a lot of scrambling to try to locate some last-minute equipment to rent. We were extremely concerned and so sad for the band. We'd fallen to earth with a bump.

Photos by Rachel Apps

(continued from page 37)

This band, though. Nothing can stop them! We saw Brett arrive at the venue and he said they couldn't let us girls down after we'd travelled so far. They would do an acoustic set. We were touched beyond belief and looked forward to an all-acoustic gig that evening, which was sure to be unique. It was by far the best gig of the tour, especially knowing that it nearly didn't happen, we savoured every second of it.


Europe Is Our Playground
Trash
Lazy
The Wild Ones
By The Sea
The Sound Of The Streets
She
Saturday Night
The 2 Of Us
Picnic By The Motorway
Another No One
My Dark Star(omg!)
Beautiful Ones

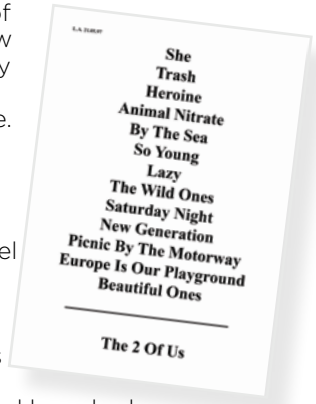
19th May: Travel Day. Back to Logan Airport, to fly from Boston to Los Angeles for the final leg of the tour. We returned trusty Keef to the car hire place. As we neared the check-in desk, we saw some familiar faces. It was Suede, Longpigs, and all the crew. They were all on the same flight as us! Brett asked us how we liked last night's show and we gushed that it was the best. He said to Vicky 'and we played "My Dark Star" for you!' and she nearly fainted but managed to wait until he walked away to get dramatic.

As we boarded the plane, we thought we couldn't be so lucky to be seated near the band, but as we walked to our seats, we spotted Neil, and some of the crew, then Richard, all scattered about. There were our empty seats and Simon and Brett directly behind, and Crispin Hunt, the singer of Longpigs in the seat right in front of me. We all said hello, Simon jokingly warned us not to get us all kicked off the plane, and then Brett went back to reading his book. We whispered to each other and tried not to giggle too much. For the most part we managed to stay calm, but it was one of the most surreal experiences, that lasted nearly seven hours. Vicky folded tiny origami cranes from magazine pages and occasionally would yawn and drop one in Brett's lap behind her. About midway through the flight, Crispin turned around and asked me if I had a tape he could listen to. I offered him a selection, and he picked Buzzcocks' *Love Bites*. By the time we landed, we were not only exhausted from our travels, but also from the exertion of not being overheard saying anything stupid all that time.

We were back in Los Angeles, our town. Vicky's mom was waiting to pick us up and we excitedly told her about what had happened on the flight as real life started to seep in around the edges.

20th May: Laundry Day. We were back home and had a day to get reacquainted with our families, though my mind was still firmly on the road. It was my sister's 18th birthday so I wanted to celebrate with her, but the end-of-tour depression was starting to kick in even though it wasn't over yet. The inevitable was creeping up faster than I was willing to admit. I felt so off-kilter being home but not done yet, sort of like a ghost in the footsteps of ordinary life, that I knew I'd have to go back to inhabiting soon.

21st May: SHOW DAY! El Rey Theatre, Los Angeles. We got to the venue early and lots of people we knew were there early too, so it was a fun atmosphere. Since the band played two nights at the El Rey, we stayed in a nearby hotel rather than go home after the show. Brett arrived as I was walking by the rear car park and he asked me about our mutual friend Ian's phone number I had given him. Brett said it didn't work, I asked if he'd dialled a '1' before the number and he said no. I said that's why it didn't work, you have to dial 1 before the area code, and he scoffed why is America like this, they don't tell anybody that! Brett seemed a bit harried which was understandable with the missing equipment situation, but he seemed happy to tell me that they had rented gear and would be playing electric that night. By the time doors opened, I was not feeling up to going to the barrier, so I stayed on the merch stall at the back and sold T-shirts and programmes with Evo where I had a good view of the stage. Despite the hired instruments they were playing, they put on a fantastic show and the crowd were as fervent as always, lapping up every moment with glee. The encore was a real treat!


She
Trash
Heroine
Animal Nitrate
By The Sea
So Young
Lazy
The Wild Ones
Saturday Night
New Generation
Picnic By The Motorway
Europe Is Our Playground
Beautiful Ones

The 2 Of Us

22nd May: SHOW DAY! El Rey Theatre, Los Angeles. I was definitely ill. My voice was disappearing, and I felt rubbish, but the show must go on! We went to queue again and a lot of the same faces were there early, which was good fun. I stayed dosed up on cold medicine and drank loads of water, hoping to resurrect myself for that evening. Ian told me that Brett had phoned him and there would be a small gathering at his house with some of the band that night and we were invited. We were elated at the prospect. Simon came out to the queue and took lots of photos with people and signed things. He told us that the band weren't that happy with the sound the previous night so

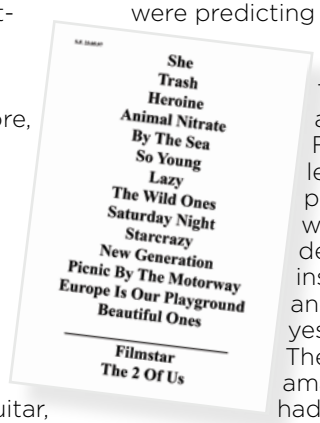
Europe Is Our Playground
Trash
Lazy
My Insatiable One
The Wild Ones
By The Sea
She
The Sound Of The Streets
The 2 Of Us
My Dark Star
Beautiful Ones
Saturday Night
Another No One
Metal Mickey
The Power
This Time

Photos by Rachel Apps

(continued from page 39)

they would be doing an acoustic set, which was very exciting after their stellar acoustic set in Boston. They did not disappoint; it was an absolute cracker of a gig and the fans seemed to treasure the band just as much as the band appreciated the crowd. This was the best energy by far of any gig on the tour, and the smiles on the band member's faces said it all. The mood at the after-show party was brilliant, and even though I ended up crying in front of Richard because it was so emotional, it was really good fun! Some of us went on to Ian's house after that, including Brett, Simon and Crispin from Longpigs, as well as a bunch of other people. It was Simon's birthday after midnight, so everybody sang. I don't think we ended up leaving until about 5am. Epic night! We went back to our hotel to check out and pretty much had to hit the road for the eight-hour drive to San Francisco.

23rd May: SHOW DAY AND SIMON'S BIRTHDAY! The Fillmore, San Francisco. It was a tough drive on very little sleep. We took turns driving and napping and luckily made it safely. After quickly checking into our hotel we headed to the venue. There was already a queue in front, but not as many people as we'd predicted. Shortly after, we saw Richard and he said he wanted to shop for a new guitar, so we offered to drive him and guitar tech Pete Sissons. Annie was too tired and stayed in the queue, but Vicky and I suddenly got a second wind. Vicky gave me a sneaky excited glance as she looked at Richard and Pete in her rear-view mirror and we all made small talk on the way to the guitar store. I think it might have been Guitar Center. Richard tried out various Jaguars and Vicky and I picked up some other guitars at a distance and messed about a bit, we didn't want to be hovering around and make him nervous. Understandably, Richard was very glum about his stolen guitars. He ended up not buying anything and it was a sombre drive back to the venue. Another one for the surreal file.


She
Trash
Heroine
Animal Nitrate
By The Sea
So Young
Lazy
The Wild Ones
Saturday Night
Starcrazy
New Generation
Picnic By The Motorway
Europe Is Our Playground
Beautiful Ones

Filmstar
The 2 Of Us

Suede love San Francisco just as much as San Francisco loves Suede, and with it being Simon's birthday, we were predicting it was going to be a memorable gig. They did not disappoint. There is something about the historic Fillmore, so many legendary bands have played there. Plus, there was a special poster designed for this gig, inspired by the 1960s and '70s gig posters of yesteryear at the Fillmore. The sound is always so amazing here, too. Simon had me film with his video camera one last time. I forgot all about my exhaustion and illness and lost myself in the revelry at the barrier. This made everything worthwhile.

24th May: A much-needed day off! We spent most of it in our hotel room sleeping. That evening, we ended up running into some people we'd met in the queue the day before from Texas and Colorado and went to a bar with them. We stayed out much later than we had intended.

25th May: SHOW DAY! FINAL DAY OF THE TOUR. Justin Herman Plaza, San Francisco. Suede were being broadcast on Live 105 radio on this sweltering hot afternoon, and the plaza was filled to the brim with fans. Earlier in the day, we had gone to nearby Berkeley to see Longpigs play in store at Rasputin Records, which was fantastic. Simon was there too! But as we were late getting to Justin Herman Plaza we weren't very close to the front. Someone had written Trash on the top of a bin and Brett autographed it. I tried to take a photo but it didn't come out when it was developed, unfortunately. No matter, we met up with our friends from Texas and Colorado. Neil wore his tweed jacket through the performance even though it was over 30°C degrees! Brett's voice was suffering a bit but that was understandable as rumour has it that Simon's birthday celebrations were not confined to one day, and it was the end of the tour. But it was fantastic!

Europe Is Our Playground
Lazy
Trash
My Insatiable One
By The Sea
The Sound Of The Streets
She
Saturday Night
The Wild Ones
Picnic By The Motorway
My Dark Star
Another No One

That night, we had a party in our hotel room with the kids from Colorado and Texas. One of the boys was smoking out the window when someone in the adjacent building looked out of their window and showed him a gun, which freaked us out, but the party carried on. My mother was not impressed when I relayed the story. I'm still friends with two of the people from Texas today, all these years later. That experience following Suede changed my life in so many positive ways and was worth all of the debt and pneumonia. We weren't to know that Suede would not tour America again after this (with only a gig at the Coachella festival sans Mat in 2011), which makes this tour experience even more meaningful to me. I'll be eternally grateful for their graciousness and kindness even in the midst of difficult times. We lived all the agony and the ecstasy with all our being. Lucky for us it was almost always ecstasy.

Photos by Rachel Apps

the making of classic albums: coming up

Director Mike Christie takes us behind the scenes of the recent documentary

© Photo by Mike Christie

The TV series *Classic Albums* is about the same age as Suede's *Coming Up*, but hardly ever features albums made so 'recently'. It's routinely and diligently disassembling masterpieces from the 1970s and 1980s, but only rarely gets its hands on a time-travelling mixing desk to deconstruct work from other decades. Despite that, early in 2020, in a broader meeting with Mercury Studios, the production company who make it, I'd gently floated *Coming Up* as potentially a great subject for one of the docs, but that suggestion soon got forgotten in the pandemic. Then, in November, Mercury clearly reached the same conclusion too, and approached Quietus to explore it as an option. Everything happened very quickly, and by Christmas I was mapping out the programme. *Coming Up*'s international success was key to its selection for the series: the first two albums were brilliant—arguably masterpieces—but they did not achieve the international success of Suede's third album. And of course, it was far from certain that a third album could or would ever be made—it was a new line-up, and a journey of belief and faith by all concerned.

This project was personal for me: though I've been making television and films full-time since 1998, my filmmaking career began during my work with Suede between 1993 and 1997. I'd squared that circle making the documentary feature *Suede: The Insatiable Ones* a few years ago, but this project offered something different. The previous production was tough on all, including me—it had to be. The subject matter was as hard as the times, so it was an exorcism in a way, which brought sleepless nights for everyone. This film, on the other hand, offered to be a joyous party. No acrimonious splits, no sleepless nights, no addiction talk—unless you count 'lost it to Bostik'!?

We got going as soon as 2021 rolled in, the deadline was April, so it was all going to happen very quickly … but there were a couple of issues. The first and most obvious: the UK was high on the second wave of COVID and about to be plunged into lockdown. The second problem was that the vital multi-track tapes hadn't been seen for a couple of decades—and sitting at the mixing desk and pulling apart the multi-tracks really is the hallmark of *Classic Albums*. Those multi-track tapes were probably in

(continued from page 43)

the Suede vaults, but they hadn't been needed since 1996 and that archive is extensive—endless piles of mysterious boxes, instruments, dead bodies and master tapes of all shapes and sizes, all in a warehouse somewhere in the middle of nowhere ... that no one was allowed to visit (COVID rules again). Didz bravely set about working his way through thousands of archive items with funny names—ordering them up ten at a time, to see if any of the unusually named items might prove to be a multi-track tape or two. Slowly but surely, he tracked them all down, but it took weeks and weeks, and it was a nervy wait as the mid-February studio desk session loomed up quickly and the set was still incomplete. Somewhat appropriately, the multi-track of 'Trash' was the last of the ten to be located. Then the tapes had to be 'baked' to restore them—strange but true—before they could be digitally captured. Baking is not always a process tapes survive! More nerves.

London was still very locked down, which made locations hard to get into and nail down, and some contributors understandably nervous. TV and film production had got its act together quickly in the pandemic. With the well-established industry COVID safety protocols in hand—this was my third film of the pandemic—and with that comfort, all agreed to filming and we set about planning the shoot for mid-February. Cue band and crew testing every day of the shoot, masks worn in close quarters, long lenses and longer microphone booms ... and all was well.

For me, the key narrative of the film was about the evolution of Brett and Richard's musical relationship, and in turn the development of the band—with the added delightful twist of Neil's brilliant arrival and timely contributions. So, somewhat unusually for a *Classic Albums* documentary, I mapped the film narrative using the order in which the songs were written, which unfolded the album's story in a more biographical way. I worked hard to piece together the chronology of the songs, where and when they'd been written. Richard has an incredible memory for detail—usually also able to tell you what he had for breakfast on any day of your choosing—so his recollections were a healthy foundation to build on, slowly cross-referenced with the rest of the band and everyone else who agreed to be in the film (and a couple of people who couldn't be!).

Richard also unearthed many lost versions of 'Trash'—then known as 'Pisspot'—stored in his attic: there were really far more iterations of that song than anyone really knew!

I discovered from him that 'Picnic By The Motorway' wasn't just the first song that he wrote that subsequently made the album ... but also that it was written in my house in Mile End, where Richard stayed with me during his first few months with the band! We were both on the *Dog Man Star* tour until early 1995 so it made sense—and I vividly recalled him coming home very excitedly (an unusual state for Richard, I know) after recording 'Together' in the studio but didn't know he'd also demoed 'Picnic' in the house. I think that house should get a blue plaque!?

Classic Albums is a well-established format, so I wasn't going to muck about with it too much ... but I did want to make it fresher for Suede. Stylishly shot interviews were important, and I do love getting the right mix of interesting spaces to make a set of interviews work together in—so what's on screen is a mix of spaces from posh houses in Notting Hill, to basement bars in Bloomsbury, and warehouses in Walthamstow, all filmed beautifully by DP Tim Sutton and team.

The interviews were shot over the passage of two freezing-cold weeks in February 2021, all carefully planned so I could cut stories and themes between people, interviews, and settings in the way that I like to. I also wanted to fleetingly visit a handful of outdoor locations for fun, like Nude's old office and Brett's old apartment from 1996. But, partly enthused by Neil's impromptu studio piano scene in the previous doc, I proposed we shoot some performance elements—including, to the bemusement of some people (naming no names)—a

© Photos by Mike Christie

fantastic, piano-flavoured 'Europe Is Our Playground'. I genuinely hoped to cover the recording of Mat's song in the documentary but there was too much to squeeze in, so it became a bonus deleted scene, which I was glad about.

The musical session had the most challenging logistics to organise with all deep in lockdown, but it came together eventually—and we filmed it in Air Studio 1, which is where Suede had also very recently recorded some of the Suede 9 sessions, so all knew the space well. It's also in the neighbouring control room at Air that we then filmed Ed working through the multi-tracks. The half a day it took to shoot that desk session with Ed was brilliant—he wasn't the only one grinning from ear to ear as we waded through each of the multi-tracks one by one, loving what we heard. What a joy. You can see it on his face.

Editor Jon Slade got to work as soon as we'd finished shooting. We weren't allowed in the actual edit suite at Sky so we both had remote set-ups at our homes—enabling us to log into the edit suite from home and view the screens, but also be virtually in the same room via live microphones and cameras. More pandemic innovation that worked well and was particularly useful when Jon (quite rightly) decided to submerge himself afresh in Simon Gilbert's bottomless vault of archive film and I left him to it for large parts of the day! Jon had cut the half of *The Insatiable Ones* that featured *Coming Up*, and had Simon guiding him through the footage for that production, but rightly he wanted to find fresh footage for this ... which meant two weeks of watching through Simon's footage carefully again. I think he found a lot of new gems, so it was worth it!

The film wouldn't have been complete without the presence of the old master that is Peter Saville, who was our very last interview, in March—ironically in the Universal board room, which overlooks Bailey's Warehouse—the location of our legendary, end of 1996 and post-Roundhouse wrap party. A few months into 1997, after I'd finished editing the Roundhouse concert I'd filmed, it was time for me to move on in my career though lifelong friendships would remain. After Peter's interview I stood on the balcony looking down at Bailey's, recalling the craziness of that wrap party, and it seemed a pleasingly circular end to a fresh jaunt half a lifetime into the past.

Come mid-April 2021, we had the *Classic Albums* edit complete: bang on schedule. It aired in the UK a few weeks later, and the series is pretty well established around the world so it will appear all over the place as the year progresses.

I think we all loved making this documentary, celebrating and honouring *Coming Up* and its 25th anniversary. For me, it's the ultimate companion piece to *The Insatiable Ones*. Both films are stories I witnessed up close and personal—and in many ways, *Classic Albums: Coming Up* was the 'upper' we perhaps all needed to compensate for the intensity we shared making *The Insatiable Ones*. I love both films—the biopic feature was a true labour of love—but it was fitting to round up reviewing this chapter of my life with a film that was dedicated to music, because—after all—that's what it's really all about!

... And surely now, it's someone else's turn to make a film about Suede ...!?

www.instagram.com/mikechristieuk

Ross Liddle reviews Sky Arts' *Coming Up* documentary

We know the story well; a band on the brink of implosion follows its critically acclaimed and commercially successful debut with a dark, brooding and powerful opus. Ultimately, poor communication and some nasty arguments write the story's conclusion, and Bernard left.

Mike Christie's *Coming Up* documentary starts here. Whilst Bernard does not feature beyond some incredibly tantalising home video footage courtesy of Simon (and really, why would he?), all key players are interviewed. Joining the band are producer Ed Buller, manager Charlie Charlton, publicist Jane Savidge and Nude Records head Saul Galpern. We also get a fan's perspective from acclaimed singer-songwriter and recent Brett collaborator Nadine Shah.

The tale begins with the saga of finding a replacement to tour *Dog Man Star*. Richard Oakes recounts how he replied to the advert in the music press and everyone reflects on quite how preposterous and potentially dangerous it was to bring in a 17-year-old who was yet to leave school. The fact however remains that, despite forever being referred to as 17, Richard had a gift for the guitar like few others with years on him.

Richard then discusses how, without any prompting, he decided to try and write some songs. We know that the first releases credited to Anderson/Oakes found their way onto the B-side of the 'New Generation' single, and if I have one very minor criticism of the documentary, it would be that it overlooks the writing, recording and release of 'Together', a song that at least to my ear served as the sonic blueprint for *Coming Up*. The track discussed here is 'Picnic By The Motorway', the quirky and psychedelic ode to roadside romance—and to this end we see and hear Ed playing individual instrumental tracks, pinpointing the idiosyncratic chord change as being the very essence of Suede. From a fan's point of view, these segments where Ed would play odd little backing tracks—a couple of which I would have given good money for to find out how they achieved the sounds—were the highlights of the documentary.

Next, we explore the beginnings of 'Lazy' and 'By The Sea'—both Anderson solo compositions that he wrote on the piano. Neil shows us how he would play the latter as an accomplished pianist, and then how Ed asked him to play it, in the more rhythmically stabby fashion on the record. There's a moment when Brett plays a tape containing his initial demo of 'Lazy', featuring nothing more than his voice and piano, and I honestly shouted at the TV when he switched it off almost as quickly.

As the documentary takes us through the writing and recording of the other tracks, we learn exactly how Ed works with Suede, brutally tearing song ideas apart in a quest to find that essence of Suede. He may be right more than wrong, but there is much humour from all when addressing the fact that he refused to believe 'Beautiful Ones' was a single. Watching Brett and Richard reminisce about the way they wrote 'Filmstar' and 'She' is quite beautiful, conjuring up as it does great memories of their summer of 1995. The arrival of Neil is addressed, as is the writing of 'Starcrazy' and 'The Chemistry Between Us'; it becomes apparent that Neil occupies the same stratosphere of musical genius.

The final song to be written and recorded would be 'Trash'. At that point, Saul was worried about the lack of singles (LOLZ), so when the anthem in question becomes a reality, the collective sigh of relief is palpable.

What this documentary meant to me as a fan was that it finally felt like confirmation of Suede gaining recognition beyond the shadow of Bernard. *Coming Up* was, as intended, ten 'bangers', five of which would serve as top-ten singles during the years 1996-97. Suede created Britpop, which is as much an albatross as a victory, but for too long they have been undervalued. This documentary redresses that completely. Not every record the band made would be as good, but it no longer matters. The proof lies in their output post-reformation, a triptych of records as brilliant as their first three. Had Bernard never left, we would never have had *Coming Up*. And that's not a world I'd like to inhabit.

third time lucky

Simon Hayes-Budgen has been watching the Sky Arts *Coming Up* documentary

Honestly, the vast majority of third albums don't make for great histories. At best, the answer to 'why this record?' will lay somewhere between a brown envelope from HMRC and a terse phone call from the contracts department at EMI.

Not *Coming Up*, though. A story which sounds less likely and more fabulous with each telling. When Charlie Charlton says, for example, that Neil's arrival was 'unexpected and definitely unusual', it only hits you a beat later that he popped in to borrow a suit, and somehow a quarter of a century later we're gifted with his talents as a key part of the band. (Does anyone else spend too long pondering how well one of Simon's suits would have fitted Neil?)

Parts of the story will be familiar to most of you reading this—indeed, as Brett makes a pilgrimage to the band's old neighbourhoods you half expect to see David Barnett and a gaggle of IOs march round the corner and into the back of the shot—but it's a tale worth retelling. And there's fresh insight—Jane Savidge citing 'lost it to Bostik', evidencing Suede's centring of cheap drugs encapsulates part of the album's appeal: an achievable hedonism; a relatable loucheness. And playing, winningly, against a band image Mat describes as 'opium smoking'.

'Beautiful Ones' ('our "Hey Hey We're The Monkees"', says Mat) is a catalogue of recognisable wantonness. We were never going to be driving Rolls-Royces into private swimming pools, but, man alive, did we ever shake our bits to the hits.

Even the most aspirational figure on *Coming Up*, 'Filmstar', has gone to seed and is within touching distance; gone so

(continued from page 47)

to seed, Peter Saville was pantomime-outraged to be nominated to personify him for the sleeve. The glamour of terylene shirts and—be still my heart—*riding in a car*—is more Borehamwood than Hollywood.

© Photo by Mike Christie

'I related more to Suede than any other Britpop band', says Nadine Shah. You understand how. A lot of musical retrospectives stuff their running time with dubious celebrity fans reading lyrics Sharpied onto their hands. Not here—Nadine's guest commentary comes from a genuine fan who understands the magic. Her observations on how well Brett writes women were welcome, too—much Suede gender discourse focuses on what Young Anderson wore on stage, rather than the more interesting question of what goes on in his head.

End of Part One

It's probably just a coincidence, but given how Facebook was showcasing the male-patterned amongst us casting envious glances at Neil's hair, you wonder if the good people at Manual knew exactly what they were doing when they booked an ad for their hair restoration products in the Sky ad breaks.

Part Two

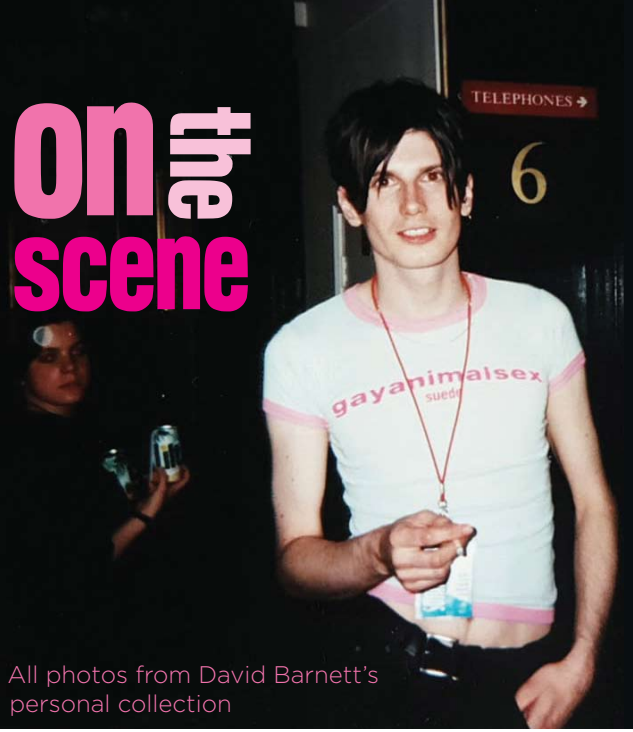
Mike Christie's documentary is as beautifully put together as the record it celebrates, structured around a tricky, but successful, blend of track-by-track and narrative. Some of the sweeps where a song is taken from the demo, into the official video, and then back out to Ed Buller's mixing desk, are so smoothly done you barely notice the change. You only get to look that effortless by putting in a lot of sweat, and at some point I'd quite like to see a Making Of the Making Of.

The aim for *Coming Up* was an album where every track was a single, and likewise the programme delivers hit after hit after hit. There's Richard, somehow finding himself on the YTS scheme to end all YTS schemes; Neil ripping notices from lampposts because he had ideas for 'Starcrazy' but no paper. The first month being 'just drums'. Brett, marched like Jennings into the head-teacher's office for a dressing-down, for not doing enough banger-writing homework. Neil recalling the first play of 'Beautiful Ones' and thinking 'this is different gravy'. The discovery that Nude extensively bankrolled the band honing their ping-pong skills. It's Ed Buller who is the breakout star, though: sitting in front of a mixing desk and hooting with delight as he plays extracts from the master tapes.

There're still mysteries left by the end: will we ever hear the vibraphone version of 'She'? How have those original cassette recordings survived a quarter century when even my most cherished tapes from period unspool as soon as I open the box? And just why were those Suede-branded bomber jackets never available at the merch tables?

The *Coming Up* biography is a joyful addition to a genre that too often slumps into hours that feel like you're stuck at a corner table with the pub bore. But it does make me wonder: Suede were generous with showing the shade with the light for Mike's *Insatiable Ones* documentary. Could that goodwill stretch to deliver an hour or so on *A New Morning*? Is the world ready for a Not Quite As Classic Album?

on the scene



All photos from David Barnett's personal collection

As we celebrate *Coming Up*'s 25th anniversary, who better to reminisce with than the Insatiable One on the inside; Suede tea boy, Suedewalk™ supremo, and author of the definitive Suede biography, *Love and Poison*. David Barnett takes the questions.

How did you get the job with Suede?

It was a long and gradual process which really started when I shoved a copy of my fanzine *Suave & Elegant* into Simon's hands outside The Queen's Hall in Edinburgh in February 1994, which turned out to be Bernard's last gig. That was a magical day. Somebody brought along a guitar and a practice amp so there was a crowd of us sat outside the tour bus playing and singing Suede songs. Apparently, the band woke up to the sound of us lot playing 'He's Dead' or something like that.

Anyway, Brett came off the bus a bit later going 'which one of you is David?' and I thought he must have been annoyed with it because the zine was quite cheeky and took the piss but I think they all appreciated the irreverence so that was my introduction.

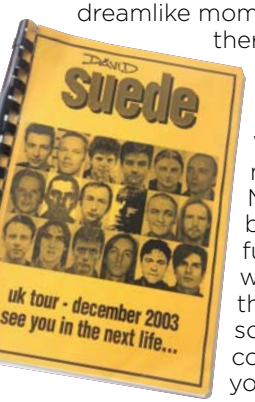
By the next time I went to see them Bernard had left and Richard joined, and I was hanging around outside the venue in Sheffield. I gave Brett the latest issue of *Suave* and he asked Charlie their manager to invite me to the after show and things escalated from there. I started going to as many gigs as I could—I flew to Switzerland at silly expense to catch a couple of shows and when I got there one of them had been cancelled! But it was worth it because that was the time they played 'A Day In The Life' in the soundcheck. I still haven't forgiven my friend for failing in the seemingly simple task of recording it.

When they came back to Scotland in December I got 'summoned' by Brett at the Barrowlands and they asked me if I could start writing stuff regularly for the fan club mag because they were struggling to fill it. They couldn't afford a salary but I got a tour laminate as a kind of payment so by then I was going to any gigs I could fit around work, often turning up the next morning having had no sleep from travelling

(continued from page 49)

back from far-flung places like Exeter. I was soon doing a few random things for them, including deciding the running order for the NFT screening of *Introducing The Band* as well as a load of merchandise ideas.

The first thing I got paid for was the Gay Animal Sex T-shirt. I still remember when Brett's girlfriend turned up at the Albert Hall wearing one—I couldn't believe it, it was a completely dreamlike moment. By the summer there had been a few changes in personnel at their management offices—Charlie's old PA Wendy had left to get married I think, and Sam McCormick had come on board to do the fan club full-time, and then there was this mad party after the Phoenix Festival and so, buoyed with artificial courage I went 'when do you want me to start?' or something like that.



What do you remember about your first day working for Suede?

I can't really remember the first day specifically, but I do recall that summer being really hot and the London air being quite oppressive. There was a lot of sitting outside greasy spoons with cups of builder's tea breathing in the petrol fumes, which was kind of the epitome of Britpop that was really at its zenith then. This was the time of the Blur-versus-Oasis battle for number 1, so it was an incredibly exciting time to be at the heart of it all. I got a real thrill just walking up and down Parkway and seeing people like the bass player from Powder and thinking they were some kind of superstar. At that time Charlie had taken on another act, Ruby, which was Lesley Rankine from Silverfish's new triphop outfit. They were on Creation, which was obviously Oasis' label as well. Lesley had been on the cover of *Melody Maker* with Brett for the notorious Sex Issue with the infamous 'bicycle who's never had a puncture' quote. So, it was all preposterously exciting for a boy from the sticks like me.

A lot of the first few weeks was spent putting the live band for Ruby together because the album had basically been Lesley and a producer. Chris Taplin became the bass player and he ended up becoming Suede's production manager further down the line. But there wasn't a great deal of Suede activity early on because they were just writing and rehearsing. So other than booking cabs and rehearsal studios, the main Suede task I remember was fobbing off calls from Metallica's people who were desperate to 'hang out with you guys', which was quite surreal.

David and Justine Frischmann at Eves Club in 1994 for the filming of Elastica's US version of 'Connection' and UK version of 'Waking Up' videos.

What was the feeling like in the camp when you joined?

In retrospect I was blissfully naive and had no concept of how fragile and precarious things were. Suede were my favourite band and I'd absolutely loved 'Together' and the other new songs I'd heard, so I just assumed everything would be hunky dory. But looking back it was completely insane to give up my respectable job in insurance, leave home and move hundreds of miles down south to work for a band of notorious hedonists that almost everyone had written off. I definitely didn't get any sense of fear or trepidation from the band—they'd proved they could cut it live with a new guitarist, but I don't think anybody could really predict which way things would go. I also adored the version of 'Shipbuilding' they did—that was the first thing that was released after I came on board officially. It seemed to have gone down well so things certainly didn't seem desperate. They all seemed pretty confident, particularly Richard, who was incredibly mature for his age—much more so than me! Maybe they were just good at hiding their feelings, but the mood seemed quietly hopeful, especially in contrast to what came later. The whole period was very upbeat—so the album really plugged right into the zeitgeist—these were the dying days of the Thatcher/Major years and it was obvious Tony Blair was going to win the next election, so the whole vibe was young and exciting before the whole Cool Britannia thing became more cynical. It's interesting that Diana's death and the start of New Labour turning sour was around the same time that the whole *Coming Up* campaign came to an end.

What did you make of Neil joining 'by osmosis'?

The weird thing is I'd actually met Neil before, after the Sheffield gig. We both somehow ended up on the same train to Hull and I got chatting to him. He was quite chubby then with long, blonde hair and loads of spots, although even then obviously very cool—but when this skinny model-type guy started turning up at the office chain-smoking and collecting envelopes of cash from Charlie and poncing fags off whoever he could, I didn't realise it was the same person. I remember me and Sam went 'who is that guy?', and Charlie said 'oh, that's

Scene from Mike Christie's Suede: The Insatiable Ones *documentary, Neil and David on set during the filming of the 'Trash' video.*

Neil!' I knew he was Simon's cousin and so it didn't seem that odd when I saw him tinkering on the piano with the band when they were rehearsing at Dave Stewart's place, The Church, in Crouch End. I mean, obviously Richard couldn't play piano and guitar at the same time, so I assumed Neil might just be a touring keyboard player like Blur and the Manics had. I don't think anybody thought he'd be a full-time member at that stage. But by the time they did the fan club gig he was very much part of the band. I remember Brett talking about him being a very Suede person and he certainly was.

At what point did you become convinced they'd be back bigger than before?

I distinctly remember going to the Townhouse and hearing them working on 'Beautiful Ones' and thinking it was absolutely brilliant and a sure-fire hit. Actually, I thought it was two sure-fire hits, because I heard them working on the verse, and then the chorus, but never the two joined up together; they'd do a bit, then Ed would rewind the tape and they'd do it again and again. The song was still called 'Dead Leg' and because of the lyrics I thought the chorus was a completely separate song

(continued from page 51)

called 'Beautiful Ones'. I remember Neil practising the 'Twenty-two' harmony over and over again. Soon after that, Charlie came bounding into the office hugely excited about another new one called 'Pisspot', which of course became 'Trash'—I remember it still had a big instrumental bit of nothing that needed editing out and Charlie saying 'forget the fact that it sounds like "Heroes"!' or something like that. And then Neil started coming up with songs and it was like there was suddenly an abundance of riches to choose from.

Of course I had no idea what the rest of the public would think but I knew the record was going to be pretty great by that stage. I do remember a meeting with a load of industry bods and Pete Nash, who was their agent at the time, rattled off a load of statistics about what 'good business' they had done on the continent and so on—so it was quite interesting to hear that from a purely business perspective. I think especially in those days there's a bit of a lag between the perception of a band and how they actually fare commercially, especially abroad. But all the hard work touring in Europe and beyond had laid some pretty firm foundations which they were able to capitalise on later—and that's something a lot of similar bands didn't have. I also remember one of the Sony bods being really excited that 'Saturday Night' mentioned the word 'winter' in it—they were all 'at last we've got a proper Christmas hit!', in contrast to 'We Are The Pigs' or the usual songs about gay animal sex they were used to having to try to convince the radio pluggers in Germany or wherever to get behind.

What are you most proud of contributing during the *CU* era?

Most of my personal memories are of fist-bitingly excruciating moments like the time *Melody Maker* phoned up looking for an exclusive. I told them the album was still at the experimental stage and they needed to speak to Suede's press officer and gave them the number for Savage and Best. Then the next week there was a massive exclusive about how Suede were releasing an experimental double album! I had to phone up all of the band members individually to apologise.

David and Suede fans on a Suedewalk™ at the bridge from 'The Drowners' video.

There's loads of things like that, that I still cringe about to this day—I remember helping Pete Sissons pack up after a rehearsal and a spring from the high-hat pinged across the room like a comedy bullet and I was thinking 'Oh god, I've just destroyed Suede's drum kit! The next gig will be a disaster!' So it's embarrassment and shame more than pride that are the strongest emotions I associate with those days. I guess I was most proud of the fact that Suede managed to prove all the doubters wrong and come back bigger than ever, although that had absolutely nothing to do with me. I do remember being quite pleased with the blurb for the tour programme—I wrote that and a few other things of that sort. I did the sleeve notes for the special edition of the American album which had some live tracks. I was a bit rushed so I ripped some of it off from the back of an old Sex Pistols bootleg—I don't think anybody ever noticed.

Was there anything in the *IO* movie/ *Classic Albums* doc that took you by surprise?

I was surprised how interesting the archive footage was, because I remember seeing loads of Simon's footage before and it was just hours of tedious hanging around in airports and other uneventful things like that! But I thought both documentaries were absolutely brilliant and it's nice that Mike did them because he was one of the first people in the extended Suede family I remember getting to know. He'd introduce me to Jane Savidge and so on. And he shared an office with us for a bit when he had his mysterious Believe Organisation. I was really surprised to hear the story about Brett being told to buck up his ideas and write some hits for *Coming Up*. I was blissfully unaware of anything like that ever happening—as was Richard, it seems. I'm not sure if that story was exaggerated slightly for dramatic effect but I don't remember anything like that at all. Everybody seemed pretty happy with how things were going. Even early on they had things like 'Saturday Night', 'Lazy' and 'Filmstar', which were obviously radio-friendly unit shifters to anyone's ears.

Did you get to hear 'Santa Ain't A Wanker'?

No, although I do remember Gary very well, who was the other member of Bruiser. I did hear Brett doing some Britpop piss-takes and there was also a song called 'Nothing Like An Old Woman', which was actually really great. I'd love it if they could release an album of stupid songs some time—like the Bob Dylan Christmas album, which is the only one of his I actually like.

Favourite gig of that era?

Reading was magic. That was probably the peak of the band in terms of totally capturing the mood of the day. Justine joined them on stage, and it felt like they'd finally exorcised all the demons of the past few years and the circle was complete. The Roundhouse was great too, even though I managed to miss Neil Tennant despite living just round the corner and being the person in charge of the bloody itineraries. I also have very fond memories of going back to Edinburgh and Brett running around the hotel afterwards asking Charlie: 'How many have we sold in Norway? How many have we sold in Japan?' and so on while Charlie rattled off these lists of huge sales figures from around the world.

What's the weirdest (legal!) request you had from a band member?

I do recall being surprised when Brett sent me to buy some Skittles at a photo shoot in Old Street. I did wonder if that was some kind of code, but no it was actually just a packet of Skittles he wanted. I still remember the way he said the word was quite funny, like Kenneth Williams or something—it just wasn't the sort of thing you'd expect Brett Anderson out of Suede to say: 'David, can you go and get me some Skittles?' Then there was the time he phoned the office to ask if we could do his girlfriend's homework. I think Sam McCormick ended up photocopying a load of books from the library for her.

If there's one place in London still standing that defines the *CU* era, what/where is it?

I suppose it has to be Chesterton Road. I still vividly remember Sam (Cunningham) phoning up in tears about the graffiti all the way from the tube station to number 106. I think we despatched Kimble, one of the roadies, to try and scrub it off. And of course

(continued from page 53)

I remember stuffing her jeans through the letterbox after Brett and Alan mistook me for Bernard. But the location I mostly associate with Suede was the Greenhouse in Old Street, where the office was when I moved down. A slightly sombre memory I have was working late in the office and hearing the IRA bomb go off in Canary Wharf miles away. That was the end of the ceasefire. I remember bricking it thinking 'We're not in Kansas now Toto!'

David on a Suederun™ in front of 106, Chesterton Road.

For you, what marks the end of that era, the tour end, or something else?

Reading was an amazing full stop to that period and definitely the high point for me musically. They did 'He's Gone' for the first time and it really seemed like the next album was going to continue the trend of ever-increasing success … I'd also hold a candle for the demise of Brett's fringe which probably signalled the beginning of the end in a funny way. There's definitely a correlation between the quality of Suede's music and the quality of Brett's haircut.

Looking back, are there things you wish you had done differently?

Almost everything—I really wish I'd managed to keep a diary for longer than a week and just paid attention to what was going on more. Or at least taken more pictures. Nobody had cameras on their phones in those days. In fact, none of the band even had mobile phones at that time. I wish I'd been less of a twat and hadn't so fully subscribed to Blake's idea that the road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom—but I guess most people would say the same about their 20s. It was enormous fun, but I don't think I or anyone fully realised what a unique time it was or how significant a period it would turn out to be. It really was the end of an era in many ways. When you're in the middle of that kind of storm it's hard to appreciate that it won't always be like that or that it will still be fascinating to people in 25 years' time.

In five words or less, can you describe the *Coming Up* era?

A very long time ago.

The original Suede: Love and Poison. The Authorised Biography *and the revised, updated edition,* Suede: The Biography, *by David Barnett. All print editions are now sold out but you can still get the Kindle version from Amazon.*

these are the good times you keep inside

London Brixton Academy
21st May 2011
by Melanie Butler Halbherr

Suede fans new and old gathered at Brixton Academy, the third night of their residency, to hear *Coming Up* in full. These most wonderful of groundhog days were not going to be repeated, and while feeling so exhilarated for three days straight, there was a touch of melancholy inside my heart, as I knew that what I'd been experiencing would not in this form happen again. This had truly been something special, where Suede showed they were back, they were proud of their past and they were here to give their all to us, once again. How truly lucky were we, are we, as fans?!

Chapel Club played their final set, followed by the pre-gig warm-up of key Suede faves including 'Bodies' and PIL's stomping 'Rise'. The lights went to dark, we started cheering and the magnificent 'She' (strings) ever so elegantly drew the boys out onto the stage to wild applause. Immediately Simon's drum intro began, and Brett, grey-shirted, began jumping and chanting to our favourite anthem, 'Trash'. The boys had lost none of their energy by the third night—they were amped to play this most 'fizzingly poptastic' of albums!

It was so special to hear so many adored tracks not in usual sets, and all the coloured lights, beaming projections and many moves of Brett provided a visual and aural kaleidoscope on this exceptional night. A memorable moment of the gig was hearing the dreamy guitar of Richard's 'Picnic By The Motorway' begin. After the riot of previous tracks 'Beautiful Ones' and 'Starcrazy', the shift in mood was dramatic enough to take me back to the otherworldliness of last night's *DMS* set. It was sublime. I had not heard 'Picnic' live before and it had many of us in the crowd singing along with Brett as it built up to its finale. Just gorgeous, 'such a lark'!

As the most blistering, most dazzling of Suede albums finished as spontaneously as we all knew, the boys left the stage for a short break before we were treated to an encore of almost the same duration. The B-sides to begin the encore were unbelievably good, a just way to start bidding adieu to this residency. 'Europe', 'This Time', 'Together'—some of my favourite ever songs were worth every penny spent, every mile travelled and every year waiting as a Suede fan for the opportunity to hear them.

The acoustic sound of the Academy can't be matched for quality and I'm so very thankful that this night is available to relive on YouTube still.

The final four tracks of the evening showcased the non-*CU* Suede hits for the less obsessive punters: 'Can't Get Enough' and the debut album's 'So Young', 'Metal Mickey', and finally, 'Animal Nitrate' which sent us all into the heavens before the lights went on to signal that it was all over.

In over five years spent in London, I can happily recall that this was the most magical time: the city in the springtime, Suede playing their albums nightly down the road at the world's best venue, and no work the next day. Nothing on Earth compares to this combination and I will cherish the memories always.

Photo courtesy of SuedeHQ

coming up

8th may 2021

{**Mat:** Intro music for the *Coming Up* gigs was Rachmaninoff's 'Variations on a theme by Paganini'—starts about 17.40 here.

Mat: Followed by this, of course [Sex Pistols–Bodies]

Mat: Right, have we all been for a pee? It's pretty quick, this album.

Mat: Needle hovering over the record.}

'Trash'

SuedeHQ: Right. Let's go... 1, 2, 3, 4...

Mat: And they're off.

Mat: The last thing we wrote for the record. It was felt that we were missing that 'comeback' record so Richard and Brett went away and wrote this. Like Trigger's broom it originally had a different verse AND a different chorus.

Brett: Ok. This is one of my favourite Suede lyrics. Every ten years or so a lyric drops in your lap that just nails it. This was one of those for me.

Brett: Trash is a song about the band and the fans. Kind of like a band theme song I suppose.

Mat: Ed playing a Moog the size of a wendy house there.

Mat: This might be my favourite thing to play live. So straightforward and driving. It's supposed to be like a Motown beat.

Richard: Sooooo ... I recently found a dictaphone tape of my very first musical idea for what became Trash, and it bears no resemblance whatsoever to the finished song.

Richard: Writing Trash was a 4-month continual evolution that reflected our bullet-proof belief in what we were doing in 1995/6. We were never going to let it fall by the wayside.

Brett: Never liked the varispeeding on this though—always thought there was a more soulful song lurking somewhere underneath.

Mat: I'm going to be saying this a lot for this record, but Simon's good on this, isn't he?

'Filmstar'

Richard: Filmstar was a breakthrough song in the writing of #ComingUp. Starting with a vocal/rhythm idea from Brett, it turned into a short, concise punk chant that displayed something very primal about the band.

Brett: Such fond memories of writing this with Richard. Lovely, scruffy, sun-kissed days.

Mat: This was almost a nursery rhyme when Brett wrote it. Richard just wove those chords around it to add a bit of menace.

Richard: 'Filmstar' felt like Distilled Suede, and the Church demo of it in August 95 really gave the album legs. God bless Dick Meaney.

Brett: We got @BoyGeorge and his band to join in with the handclaps on Filmstar. He was recording in the next room at Mayfair Studios.

Brett: I've bumped into @BoyGeorge a few times over the years (TOTP, press things etc). Always liked him. (Hi George!)

Mat: It always gets pegged as a T Rex sounding thing but it's more punk than that. We weren't really listening to the rocky Bolan stuff—more Tenement Lady and LIfe's a Gas.

Mike: I pitched a treatment for the pop promo and it got rejected.

'Lazy'

Mat: Lazy—One of Brett's. The line 'Uncle Teds and their legendary vests' gets me every time. I always think of it as our Kinks song. Just a slice of ordinary life.

Richard: We got Brett's demo of Lazy in summer 95, and that's exactly what it feels like: summery, care-free. Hints of I'm Only Sleeping.

Richard: We had to rough it up a bit to make it into a #ComingUp track, put some guitar spike on it and let @matosman and Simon give it some dynamism. But it worked!

Brett: The original line was 'as lovely as the clouds on my ceiling'. When I was a kid my mum painted my bedroom ceiling with blue and white clouds and I hung my model Airfix planes there with little threads of cotton and drawing pins.

Brett: Bit of a 'meh' song to be honest. Rescued by Richard's great guitar line.

Mat: I think Richard regrets doing that noise where he detunes the guitar string at the end of the chorus. It's a bugger to get it back in tune live.

Mat: SO MUCH MELLOTRON.

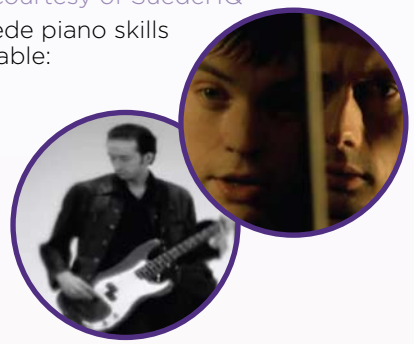
'By The Sea'

Brett: I wrote By The Sea on the piano in my flat in Moorhouse Road back in 1993 when Bernard was still in the band.

Mat: One of the few things we had when we started the record. It really only came to life when Neil joined. The rest of us are one-finger pianists.

Brett: This song was a companion piece to 'The Next Life'—another song about escaping to Worthing.

Photos courtesy of SuedeHQ



Mat: Suede piano skills league table:

Neil
Richard
Brett
Simon
.
.
.
.
.
Mat

Richard: By The Sea was a lovely but fairly straight piano ballad when we started playing it live at the festivals in 95. It got the #ComingUp treatment in the studio.

Mat: Simon's good tonight, in 'e?

Richard: @ed_buller painted it with neon colours and Neil took the piano part away from the school assembly room and into the upside down.

Mat: Seven Sisters is just the best named place in London, isn't it? Seven Sisters, then The Angel, then Elephant and Castle.

Brett: Partially inspired by Puff the Magic Dragon. Yup.

'She'

Brett: Right then. She is my favourite song on #ComingUp. Brilliant guitar parts. Love those minimal stabs in the verse.

Mat: Just assume I'm tweeting 'Simon's good on this one' every three minutes, OK?

Richard: Another vocal/rhythm first song.

Mat: She is the most 'Coming Up' track I think. It's everything we were trying to do. Simplify, Solidify. Smack it up a bit.

Mike: The Classic Albums doc was very nearly a doc just about this song! So much to say ...

Mat: 'Injecting marijuana' is funny, right?

(continued from page 57)

Brett: I've always viewed women as masterful and dynamic and this was my ode to them.

Mat: Craig Armstrong strings there. Ed wanted it to sound like a spy theme. The kind of thing you'd hear over The Ipcress File's credits.

Richard: The original home demo I did of She was slow and mournful ... a lament. Taking it to the band turned it into a snarling beast of a song, stalking, dark, desperate.

Richard: Every part of it is so simple and direct ... even the complicated but beautiful string arrangement by @CArmstrongUK (clang).

'Beautiful Ones'

SuedeHQ: Here it is.

Mat: The Big Man. If Animal Nitrate was Suede Mark 1's anthem, this is Suede Mark 2's.

Mat: We tried that intro SO MANY WAYS. Acoustic. Electric. Dobro. Sitar. I have tape after tape of mixes. Still sounds good though.

Brett: Mine and Alan's crazy, marginal life in the 90's and the procession of freaks that stumbled up and down our stairs in Chesterton Road. ...but it's all about that riff, isn't it?

Mat: Originally called Beautiful Scum. Oh how different it could have been.

Richard: The first musical idea I had for this is so odd. It was a very light, MOR piece. Not sure what I was aiming at!

Mat: The middle eight is my favourite bit of vocal on the album. It just swoops.

Richard: Nonetheless, Brett saw the pop potential in it, wrote the song around it. Neil also spotted something great in the track. Then @ed_buller convinced us to use the verse as the main hook and outro, and bingo. Now it's our Theme Tune.

Mat: Fans have sung these las back to us everywhere from Shanghai to Santiago. Still gives me the shivers to hear a crowd singing along.

Brett: My first draft lyric was called Beautiful Scum. Probably wise to have changed it!

Mat: I have it on good authority that P Diddy drops this in his DJ sets regularly.

'Starcrazy'

Brett: Neil's first shot at writing for Suede and what a corker. I know it's a bit unloved but I still think it's great.

Richard: Neil's introduction to Suede songwriting. A thoughtful, accomplished piece of music with some tasty Marr-like guitars that I couldn't wait to get stuck into.

Mat: Neil wrote this at my house in North Pole Road (we used to get letters to Santa at Christmas). Can't believe this was his first attempt at writing for us. It's SO Suede.

Mat: Glad I don't have to play this guitar riff. It's a bit brisk, innit?

Brett: A celebration of the power of chart music and a song of defiance for the kind of pop fans that music snobs might otherwise dismiss.

Richard: Brett wrote a stamping punk song around Neil's demo and it was an instant classic. Doesn't get the attention it deserves and has the best ending chord in history. Up the charts!

Mat: I remember laughing out loud the first time I heard Brett sing the 'nyyyyyah VIOLENCE' bit. So hooky.

Photos courtesy of SuedeHQ

'Picnic By The Motorway'

Richard: Picnic. My favourite song on #ComingUp, and the very first piece of music I wrote for Suede in autumn 94.

Mat: The first thing Richard wrote for the album I think. It's got a taste of that pastoral British psychedelic thing to it. Floyd/Robert Wyatt etc. Richard had such a knowledge of weird proggy British stuff like Caravan. Strange boy.

Brett: One of the many Suede songs about motorways.

Brett: I know it kind of became a 'Suede-by-numbers' cliche but I've always been fascinated by that iconography—the edge-lands, the fringes, the 'nowhere places'. Kind of inspired by JG Ballard's *Concrete Island* I suppose.

Mike: So, when Richard Oakes joined Suede he lived with me for a few months—I was a responsible adult (!?!) in the Suede camp. I found while making the Classic Albums doc that this song was written in my house during a break on the DMS tour. I like that!

Brett: I've always been obsessed with the edge-lands and nowhere places. There's a poetry to those forgotten, melancholy spots that people drive by.

Richard: I loved what Brett wrote for the verses but it was his chorus melody that made it cosmic, it just leapt out. We had to evolve it sonically to fit onto the album, but the end result is much more unique and interesting.

Mat: SO MUCH MELLOTRON.

'The Chemistry Between Us'

Richard: Chemistry was much more experimental than Starcrazy. I remember us shaping & evolving it in rehearsal & at Master Rock. Neil did several fully-realised home demos for it but Brett wrote the song around a scratchy set of chords on a cassette.

Mat: Massive apologies to the journalist who moved to Streatham purely on the basis of it being mentioned in this song. Sorry.

Mat: How great is this? It just rolls. Great strings. Not the lush 'look at the size of our orchestra' stuff that kinda ruined Still Life. More filmic, more focused.

Richard: It was a chance for me to wig out and have a bit of fun, which was kind of against our 'Punk Ethic' (maaan) at the time! Great strings too, @CArmastrongUK *clang.

Brett: The best version of this song isn't Suede's—it's this one: https://youtube.com/watch?v=uf4mdIEkShk... So charming. {Yuyi & Tanya, The Chemistry Between Us, Suede Cover}

Mat: Lots of ProTools on this album. It was so new that it came with an engineer (and a manual that would break a toe if you dropped it on your foot).

Brett: The album would have been so much stronger if this was replaced by Europe Is Our Playground. Regrets? I've had a few...

Mat: Even I don't agree with that.

Mat: Really looking forward to playing this one live in November.

'Saturday Night'

Mat: This is as mainstream as we get, I think. If it weren't for that spiky little guitar line it could be MOR but I think we get away with it.

Brett: Beautiful song. Sentimental? Certainly.

Mike: I will never forget visiting the #saturdaynight pop promo shoot at Aldgate station and being told, 'yep, head down the platform, jump onto the tracks and walk down the tunnel and you'll find them' ... was utterly weird.

Brett: I suppose getting dewy-eyed isn't very 'Suede' but fuck it. The romance of the everyday. Love the outro.

(continued from page 59)

Photos courtesy of SuedeHQ

Mat: We all know that it's Keeley Hawes in the video for this, right?

Richard: It felt like a Suede ballad when we wrote it and it fitted in perfectly with the other songs, but I now see how different it is to anything before or since.

Richard: Sentimental and warm, and musically progressive. I think it appealed to people who hadn't liked anything we'd done before. It felt like the key to a new audience, and must have pissed off some old school disciples.

… which I took no pleasure in whatsoever.

Brett: The 'sat there in a black chair—office furniture' lyric is my favourite. It was inspired by a Patrick Caulfield painting.

Mat: Oh surprise surprise. More Mellotron.

Richard: Thanks for joining us and thanks to @TimBurgess, @LISTENING_PARTY

Brett: That was an awful lot of fun. Thanks so much, @TimBurgess @LISTENING_PARTY

Mat: Well that was quick! Thanks all, for your company and your support. And thanks to @TimBurgess for these wonderful events. We'll see you (fingers crossed) in November.

Tim: Huge thanks to Brett, Richard, @mikechristieuk & @matosman @suedehq

lost in tv

Mat Osman In Conversation as part of the Louder Than Words Festival. **Joolz Green** was taking notes.

Photos courtesy of Louder Than Words

What could be better at the end of a busy, rainy day than relaxing in the company of Mat Osman? Well, that's what we did on the evening of the 20th of May as we joined Mat in conversation with fellow writer Zoë Howe. As ever, with the video calls to which we've become so familiar, there was the odd technical issue. In fact, when Zoë went off to get headphones, Mat took the opportunity to say hello to the Suede fans watching around the world and give us an update on the progress of the new album ('it could be finished … but we're still fiddling with it'). He even joked to Zoë on her return: 'you can go if you want!'

The video chat format put me in mind of the sections in *The Ruins* where Adam, Rae and Robin had their transatlantic conversations, and this was discussed during the interview. As Mat observed, you are so close to being connected, but that spark can't quite jump from screen to screen: 'You can go those thousand miles but can't go that final touch' (as he touched the screen).

Mat explained how, in *The Ruins*, he wanted to write about how it really feels to be in a band—lots of hanging around, sandwiches, vans … but also how it feels 'to make music with people you know and people you love'. He also spoke about some of the bizarre moments that happen when you're in a band. For example, the time when they were flown by helicopter to a radio roadshow in Cornwall for the 1999 eclipse and were told they would be miming: 'We're going to see an eclipse … on the radio … and we're going to mime … on the radio?' Apparently then-manager Charlie's wise response was: 'Never saw the branch you're sitting on!'

When talking about the practice of writing, Mat described how writing enables you to process things in a different way from how you think about them. He said he cut about 80,000 words (i.e. a whole novel) from his original manuscript, but came to realise that's just the way he works—in complete contrast to his brother, who plots everything out from the start and can knock out a novel in a year. He also revealed that—despite having no belief in the supernatural—he drew a Tarot card each day before he began writing. He felt that it prompted him to think in a certain way, to kick-start his day's writing and to start him from a place where he wouldn't otherwise have been.

Mat said that he found writing fiction solo very different from making music with 'really talented and really opinionated people'. You make a lot of mistakes, but then the reward is that you can say it's all yours: 'something with my personality on it out in the world.'

When asked if he reads his reviews, he mentioned that thirty years of being in a band in the public eye makes you pretty much 'bulletproof'. He also found people in the publishing industry to be incredibly polite!

Mat spoke with real fondness about being in Suede and the connections between the band members. When they got together for their first rehearsal for the Teenage Cancer Trust gigs, he said it was 'instantly there … the rhythms and shapes the five of us make together were instantly there … personal—like a fingerprint' and how playing with other people (no matter how great they were), just wasn't the same.

Mat said that one of the greatest feelings about being in a band is being in the studio and listening to a piece of music as you create it—'making beautiful things'. However, he did also talk with a real spark in his eye about how he couldn't wait to get back on stage. He enthused about how the best gigs are when 5005 people (the band and the crowd) are all singing together and behaving in 'ridiculous ways' that you never would in everyday life. 'Music can be transformative … like a spell … the words you use and the sounds you make can make 5000 people as one … if music was a drug, it would be banned in an instant!'

Soon it was almost over and there was just time for a couple of fan questions. The most exciting thing Mat told us was that they have used some of the IO fan recordings for the next album. He said that the clips have been 'stacked into an insane choir' of 'disembodied people singing along' which made the hairs stand up on the back of his neck and was perfect for now, in this time of isolation. Sounds amazing.

He finished by saying that he has lots of plans for the future, including a desire to write screenplays, and that this last year has 'made me want to try everything … I want to learn to draw and paint … I might become a ballerina!'

coming up

Amanda Blazier previews what we'll be going starcrazy over soon ...

September 2021

10th—25th Anniversary editions of *Coming Up* are released. The record will be available on 180g clear vinyl, and 2CD mediabook with the album itself, a 24-page book, and 17 of the B-sides from the period. Also out this day are 180g vinyl editions of *Dog Man Star*, *Coming Up*, *Head Music* and *A New Morning* under 'The London Suede' moniker.

October 2021

8th—We are finally getting our hands on *So Young: Suede 1991-1993* by Simon Gilbert. The 200-page book is packed with unseen photos, gig flyers, posters and diary entries from Simon's personal archive. The deluxe signed and numbered edition sold out within a couple of days; hardback copies can still be ordered from Townsend Music, who also have an exclusive limited-edition art print of the photo of Brett from The Astoria in 1993, which adorns the cover.

November 2021

Third time lucky, we hope, for the *Coming Up* tour to finally get underway. For these and all future concerts, please check the current entry and COVID safety protocols for your country, as well as that of the concert venue and transport links, before travelling.

UK leg:

3rd—Usher Hall, Edinburgh
5th—Rock City, Nottingham
6th—O_2 Academy, Birmingham
7th—O_2 Academy, Bristol
9th—O_2 Academy, Leeds
10th—O_2 Victoria Warehouse, Manchester
11th—Alexandra Palace, London

Nadine Shah will be supporting at the UK shows.

Early 2022

Suede 9? Brett told Danielle Perry on Absolute Radio that he expected the next album to be released in Jan/Feb 2022.

May 2022

Coming Up tour dates EU leg:

5th—Posten, Odense, Denmark
6th—Train, Aarhus, Denmark
7th—MCH Kongrescenter, Herning, Denmark
9th—Kulturvaerftet, Helsingør, Denmark
10th—Annexet, Stockholm, Sweden
12th—Falkoner Salen, Copenhagen, Denmark
13th—Falkoner Salen, Copenhagen, Denmark
15th—Columbiahalle, Berlin, Germany
16th—TivoliVredenburg Ronda, Utrecht, The Netherlands
17th—La Salle Pleyel, Paris, France
19th—Razzmatazz, Barcelona, Spain
22nd—Den Atelier, Luxembourg
23rd—Cirque Royal, Brussels, Belgium
19th–21st—Tomavistas Festival, Madrid, Spain

August 2022

12th—Øyafestivalen, Oslo, Norway
25th-27th—EDP Vilar de Mouros Festival, Caminha, Portugal

Indeterminate date

Mat has been tweeting about secret projects. Project 1 photo was taken at Bush Hall London (great spot from Insatiable One Maria Burton), and seemingly shows Brett and photographer Paul Khera. Project 2 photo was taken at Craxton Studios London (again, thanks to Maria), but of whom remains a mystery. Project 3 was a teaser for the *So Young* book. Speculate about these, the new record, and everything else Suedeworld in the Insatiable Ones Facebook group, on the Twitter and Instagram feeds, or our new TikTok @theinsatiableones.

Photos by Mat Osman

strings uncut

Composer **Craig Armstrong** provided string arrangements on *Coming Up*, chose Brett Anderson to sing his breathtaking track 'Crash' and was recalled to Suede strings duty in 2018 for 'The Invisibles'. **Adam Redmayne** spoke to him about his life, career, and, of course, working with Brett and Suede.

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for* The Insatiable Ones Fanzine*. We really appreciate it. As a classically trained musician, what originally led you into the popular music world?

As a young boy I played a lot of different music from my mother's record collection. From pop music through jazz to classical. When I was young, I was more interested in pop music and played bass guitar in local bands. My Aunt Bella, who was a piano teacher, taught me the piano. Bella was blind from birth, so she taught me by moving my fingers to the correct notes. She herself read music through Braille. I had lessons from the age of nine and like most kids I never really enjoyed my piano lessons but my mother, who was a nurse, ignored my protestations! In my teens I avidly collected records. My first single, if you can remember those, was 'Lola' by the Kinks. At secondary school I learned the violin, although I wanted to learn the trumpet, but no trumpets were available unfortunately. Learning the violin was incredibly helpful when I began to arrange for strings and orchestra. Really my love of pop and classical music went hand in hand.

It was only as a teenager playing in the Schools Orchestras that I realised the class implications involved in classical music. As a kid having been brought up in the East End of Glasgow, I had luckily avoided any musical snobbery and didn't come across it until much later. It was on a caravan holiday when

(continued from page 63)

I was eleven years old in Scarborough with my parents and brother, where I heard 'The Long And Winding Road' by the Beatles on the radio. As I sat on the caravan steps, the song with its stunning orchestral arrangement had a profound effect on me. I decided then that I would find out how to write for an orchestra. It seemed like magic and in a way it still does.

What are you working on at the moment?

At this moment I am working towards releasing my second record on Modern Recordings—a label based in Berlin. I'm also working on some songs for the German singer Andreas Scholl and composing music for a film.

You have had great success in so many musical genres. Do you have different working methods depending on the genre or is your approach essentially the same?

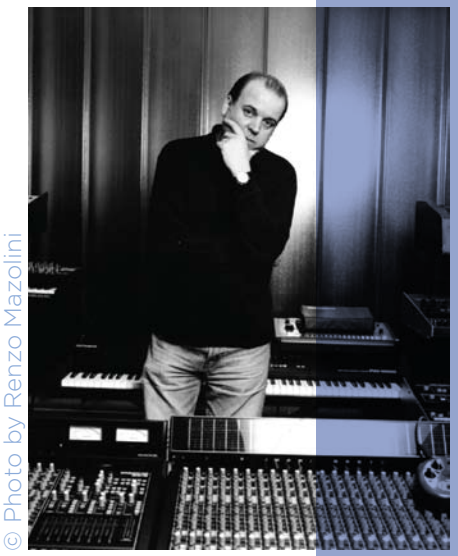
I always aim to approach different musical genres with the same outlook. I write the best piece I can write. Whether that's a film, a classical piece, or a song. I also like the different genres to cross-fertilise with each other. I think it's healthy to let your influences come through when you write.

How did your first collaboration with Suede on* Coming Up *come about?

I first collaborated with Suede during a period of time when I was writing quite a lot of string arrangements. I think Brett liked an arrangement I had done with Massive Attack a couple of years earlier. I seem to remember he knew them or their manager Marc Picken, and I remember being happy as I have always been a huge Suede fan. They seemed to me like a band you would have loved to have been in. I remember meeting Brett and the band, and they were really great to work with.

How do you think the* Coming Up *album stands up after 25 years?

Coming Up doesn't seem to have lost its relevance at all. I love the energy they have captured in the recording. It's been great to listen to it again after all this time.



© Photo by Renzo Mazolini

Did the band ask you specifically to work on 'She' and 'The Chemistry Between Us' or did you identify them as songs that would benefit from string arrangements?

To be quite honest I don't remember. I know there were quite a few songs I did strings on and I remember Brett's working method is similar to my own in that it's good to let other artists be free to interpret the music the way they feel it, at least at the beginning.

The strings on 'She' became an iconic element of the sound on* Coming Up *and were also used in isolation as an intro to the concerts. Can you talk us through your working process on this song?

I think when a song is as good as 'She' the arrangement almost writes itself. I feel the same about films too; when working with Baz Luhrmann there is so much inspiration already in the picture, so it's much easier to write for these incredibly inspiring works.

Could you talk us through your working process on 'The Chemistry Between Us'?

Once again Brett let me interpret what was already there. It was a time in my life when I was doing a lot of string arrangements and I was fortunate in that I got to work with many great artists. I decided to stop arranging more or less completely after I'd arranged 'Frozen' for Madonna. I felt it was time to write my own records. Luckily Massive Attack signed me to their label Melankolic and I made my first album, *The Space Between Us*. I think it's good for musicians to change direction every so often.

'Crash' is a much-loved piece of music amongst Suede fans. How did you come to create it and what made you decide that Brett was the right person to sing it?

I wrote three albums that contain songs: *The Space Between Us*, *As If To Nothing* and *It's Nearly Tomorrow*. I wrote 'Crash' for *It's Nearly Tomorrow* and always had Brett in mind. I never really thought he'd say yes but I hoped he would. He was also very helpful working on the song with me. It's great Suede fans like the track, that's a great compliment. He sings it so beautifully.

Neil Codling said in a recent issue that Suede called on you for 'The Invisibles' because it needed more attention than the other arrangements on the album and that you are 'a master arranger'. What state was the song in before it came into your hands, and can you talk us through your arranging process for this track?

Brett asked me to arrange for 'The Invisibles' and it was quite a complex track. Mainly I tried not to distract away from the song and its emotions. The arrangement was more classical and I think hopefully quite subtle.

What are you listening to for pleasure at the moment?

I've actually listened to a lot of music in lockdown. It's one of the great things about music, that it takes you out of your environment.
Here are a few:
Anna Thorvaldsdóttir—'Aeriality'
Claire M Singer—*Solas*
Matthew Herbert—*Disobedience*
Ryuichi Sakamoto—*Async*
Rita Ora—'Let You Love Me'
Beethoven—late quartets
Stevie Wonder—*Music Of My Mind*
Guy Garvey—*Courting The Squall*
Mogwai—*As The Love Continues*
Matt Monro for the great orchestral arrangements. And my friend Vladislav Delay—*Rakka II*, and many, many more. I listen to Ravel a lot too as he is my favourite orchestrator.

What is your favourite Suede album?

Coming Up of course!

Have you ever seen the band live?

I haven't seen the band live but would love to. They're really brilliant. When Brett came to do 'Crash' he spoke about a book he was writing and I recently read it and really, really enjoyed it, *Coal Black Mornings*. His background is very similar to mine. As I said, I was brought up in the East End of Glasgow, and it's very difficult to get out of that environment. I was impressed he cycled to the studio every day as I love bikes myself, a man ahead of his time!

Are there any plans for you to work with Suede again in the near future?

I would love to work with Suede again, I think if we all survive COVID and Brett wants to, we should write somewhere exotic! I've wanted to spend some proper time in Venice, I really miss travelling. I hope all of you stay well during this awful pandemic. Thanks for asking me to do this.

Thank you so much for your time.

Johanna Järvensivu shares her experience as one of the lucky fans to witness Suede's first show since before the pandemic

shut up and kit that metal

Photos by Tonja Svahn

Qstock, 31st July 2021, Oulu, Finland

I started writing this on the train home while still floating somewhere in the stratosphere after yesterday evening's gig. To see Suede after more than two years ... there are no words to describe how good it felt.

I had never been to Qstock before. Oulu I had visited years ago, so no recent memory of the place. I took a short walk around the town before heading to the festival area in the company of another Finnish Insatiable One. Finally, after what seemed like forever, I was going to enjoy live music and it felt unreal. The Festival was well organised, taking into consideration all the necessary COVID-19 safety matters. Face masks were handed out for free and there was plenty of hand sanitiser available. We were lucky that the weather was on our side on Saturday—the Friday had been really wet.

Now for the gig ... first of all the setlist made me so very happy. 'Europe Is Our Playground' was an amazing and absolutely perfect opener. Love that song so very much. I surprised myself by holding it together when first Neil came onto the stage and sat behind his keyboards and then the familiar intro started as the others took their places. Brett looked absolutely breathtaking when he walked to his mic. That image will stay with me forever.

Loved also how Mat came to the front of the stage quite a few times during the gig. He was clearly enjoying it all. And from the smiles I got to see on Simon and Richard's faces I think they too had a good time being back on the stage.

The cover art backdrops were stunning. I was able to record some of 'Europe' and tears well up when I rewatch it. Then, after 'Europe', hearing 'That Boy On The Stage' live for the first time was such a treat. I was hoping for a new song to be played and there it was. Regretting now that I didn't record it.

The set continued with 'Outsiders' and 'We Are The Pigs'. So much love for both of those songs. 'Trash' (our song), 'Metal Mickey', 'So Young', 'It Starts And Ends With You' ... Brett and an acoustic 'The Wild Ones' ... just him and a guitar ... so beautiful. 'Life Is Golden' ... perfection. Brett sounded amazing during the whole gig. Then two bangers: 'Can't Get Enough' and 'Animal Nitrate'. 'Nitrate' always gives me such a rush, I will never, ever get tired of it. When 'Beautiful Ones' started I knew it would soon be over. So bittersweet. 'New Generation' was a perfect gig closer. It felt safe in a very good way. Suede were back.

It was so lovely to meet other Insatiable Ones in the front row, definitely very special. Hoping to meet many more in November. Fingers crossed.

Thank you Brett, Mat, Simon, Richard and Neil. Thank you for everything your music keeps giving me. Love you.

Take care. Stay safe. Stay Insatiable. And be reminded that you're never alone and your life is golden.

Photo by Tonja Svahn

remembering scott brawn

We were so sad to hear of Insatiable One Scott's passing. His sister Candy Napier wrote a tribute to him.

Scott was the youngest of four siblings, strangely turned out to be the tallest. We are close siblings and now we are three which just isn't sitting right with any of us. We grew up in a house of love and hard-working parents. There was always music in our house, our mum was a big music fan.

Scott had a few health complications, renal transplant in his early 20s. Scott was a quiet, sensitive boy and man.

We both liked Suede and got to see them together at Kenwood House. Scott met his wife Loreley through Suede and it really is a love story of how and what they had to do to be together. Eventually they married and it was an absolute honour to see our little brother marry the love of his life. They quite simply adored each other.

Scott's other passion was photography and he had work published and used on TV. He was successfully selling his work online. Scott became ill with various infections that would not shift. We lost Scott in March after a second bleed on his brain. He and Loreley were so happy and perfect for each other. As a family we are so incredibly proud of our 'Scottie' and his wife is an incredibly brave and strong woman. As is my sister, Hazel, who along with Loreley was with Scottie at the end. Two incredibly strong women.

Photo courtesy of Candy Napier

Thank you for doing this first of all, I must say thank you.

You're certainly welcome. Always happy to talk about working with Brett and *Death Songbook*, we had a lovely time doing it.

I know, it's amazing, I listen to it nearly every day. It absolutely blows me away.

I love the fact that it still speaks to you after all those listens. Excellent, that's a very good sign. Which is your favourite?

'The End Of The World'.

Oh, is it?

Yes, what's your favourite?

Oh, I don't think I could say that, they're all like children of ours, I love them all equally, you know what I mean? I genuinely do, each one has a different quality that really speaks to me. I love some of the more radical choices we made, like the handbells in 'The End Of The World' actually. And some of the weird sounds in 'Wonderful Life'. I love the fact that we've taken Brett's own material and Suede and not reinvented it of course, but just thrown it slightly at an angle, at a distance, so viewing it through a slightly different set of lenses. Of course it sounds like the original, but it's got something else going on as well, which for my money is exactly what a cover version needs to do. All too often you get a cover version by one artist of an existing song and it's kind of the same and you think well, there's no point in that. You've got to say something new, otherwise there's no point in doing it. So I do genuinely believe that all of our versions are re-versions rather than just covers in a way.

'you make music as an act of love for someone else'

Together with Charles Hazlewood, Samantha Hand delves deep into the life of Paraorchestra and the creation of *Death Songbook*

© Photo by Steve Tanner

(continued from page 69)

I love them all, don't get me wrong, I absolutely love them all, but if I had to choose one, I'd choose that one, definitely.

Were you into Nadine before?

© Photo by Kirsten McTernan

No, I'd never heard of her. Well, I'd heard of her, but I had not listened to her. Her voice is amazing.

It's extraordinary, you can climb inside it, you know what I mean, it's like a box of velvet jewels. Brilliant.

Yes. And they go perfectly well together, both of their voices.

They do, don't they? Isn't that weird? It's like where Brett stops, Nadine starts and where Nadine stops, Brett starts. It's really funny how that can sometimes happen.

Yes, it's like they're a match made in heaven, honestly. Beautiful.

I think so, yes, it's beautiful.

With 'Wonderful Life' though, I didn't like the original.

Haha, didn't you? Why not?

I don't know. At the time, I just heard it everywhere and I was just like, oh no not this song again. But when I heard Brett sing it, I absolutely love it. It's probably my second favourite.

Wow, that is interesting. I must say when he suggested it to me, of all the songs that we'd discussed, that was the one I was a bit, well a bit like you maybe, it didn't particularly grab me, initially. But I totally take Brett's point, which is about happy music being depressing and sad music is what lifts you up, and there's something so beautiful—there's a melancholic tinge to 'Wonderful Life', but it's in the context of a kind of slightly jolly upbeat music, it's really interesting, that dichotomy. As you say, it really works. And I agree, I mean no disrespect for Black, but Brett is a different level of brilliance.

Yes, definitely and I absolutely love it now, and I can listen to the original and think, oh that's an alright song now.

Haha. Very good.

How did you get involved with Paraorchestra? How did it start?

I started it. It started because my daughter, I've got four kids, and my youngest, my daughter was born with cerebral palsy. So I suppose besides from being my beautiful only daughter, it made me think about that whole community of people I hadn't thought of before, people with disabilities, and I then very quickly started wondering why it is that in thirty years of conducting orchestras all over the world, I'd virtually never come across any single disabled person in any of those orchestras. So, I spent a lot of time asking the question why is that? You can't tell me there aren't millions of really gifted disabled musicians in the world. Where is their voice? Where is their platform? Why are they not making it through to perform at the highest level?

Then of course, some very, very depressing things become loud and clear: of course, orchestras don't have a sign on the door saying that if you're disabled, you're not welcome, of course they don't. But the fact is that they're not set up to embrace disabled people. One basic example, the UK, which has a relatively enlightened attitude towards disability compared to many countries in the world, there's still an alarming number of concert halls, even in 2021, with a stage you can't get onto if you're in a wheelchair. That's the really grassroots problem. Plus the fact that a lot of people who are disabled make music through technology. You've got an impairment, which means you can't play an oboe, but you can play an oboe digitally. There's generally no barrier anymore to any person, whatever their condition is, to make music. It's the first time in the history of humankind that that has been the case. There is now an instrument, or assistive technology application, for almost any person, no matter what their disability. But the problem is that you look at our music schools, look at our conventional schools, look at our music colleges, there are no skilled teachers with knowledge of adapted instruments or assistive technology, they can't teach it. So, we're really at ground zero. You know what I mean?

So of course, this is a fundamental problem. Anyway, I thought, well fuck it, something's got to be done about this. I was thinking all of this in the year or so running up to the Paralympics coming to London in 2012. I thought, right, I'm going to form a new orchestra, it will be world class like any other, but the only difference will be that it will be entirely made up of disabled musicians. And that may sound like a really sweet thing to do, but, I tell you it was absolutely so difficult. Because even for intelligent, liberal-minded people, if you say I want to make an orchestra of disabled people, they'll say to you, wow, that sounds like a beautiful thing to do. But in the back of their mind they're thinking yeah, but it'll be shit, won't it. People find it hard to put disability and excellence in the same sentence. That's the problem we all face. That's the in-built prejudice. I mean the Paralympics has given us proof beyond reasonable doubt that of course someone who happens to be disabled can perform to the absolutely same high level that someone without a disability can. It's just limited thinking that's got us stuck in this rut.

I formed Paraorchestra and they made their maiden voyage with Coldplay, at the closing ceremony of the Paralympics. That was the beginning of it.

Oh wow, I didn't know that. That's incredible.

Yes, that's where it started. Anyway, so then we kind of carried on building on the model. But what became very, very clear to us, you know the end game to this idea is not to create another disabled ghetto. Paraorchestra would probably have become problematic for me if it had been only about disabled musicians. We want to see integration of gender and of ethnicity. And of course, an integrated mix of disabled and non-disabled.

So anyway, we realised that's what Paraorchestra needed to become, so basically we kind of amalgamated it with another orchestra that I had, which was an orchestra of non-disabled musicians, and so the orchestra that you see today was born out of that. And it's an ensemble of up to eighty musicians depending on what we're doing, nearly forty of whom identify as disabled. I mean it's a completely brave new world. A new world order. There's no other orchestra anywhere like it in the world. So, it's a start.

Yes, it's a start and hopefully it will just keep going. It's a tough world that we live in, with so much prejudice. But they do an amazing job. I mean, they did just amaze me and the* Death Songbook*, they said that the pandemic has been difficult because not only do they wear their disabilities on their sleeve, and I just thought, it just really brought it all home to us.

Yes, so true. It's interesting that, let's make no bones about it, I mean the pandemic has been, of all the kind of different groups within our society, obviously, it has been very tough on the

(continued from page 71)

elderly and it has also been incredibly tough on disabled people, many of whom are extremely vulnerable. So yes, I mean the isolation, the sense that there is no hope. Let's not also forget that in the music industry, for all the reasons I've already said to you, disabled people have got so much less opportunity to work, because that's the way the system is set up. So if you've got a pandemic going on, you're feeling hellishly vulnerable and you know that at the other end of it you're probably not going to get much in the way of work that's going to pay you back for the months when you earned nothing. So it's an absolute living nightmare.

Yes, I can imagine, well I can't imagine, can I, that's not right to say.

No well, I mean, you can imagine. So it's a really important project. But the thing to stress is, and you've already kind of alluded to it, that Paraorchestra could so easily have been a very worthy kind of care-in-the-community project. So, you know and there are initiatives like that. Other orchestras have set up a kind of disabled wing but it only really feels tokenistic. Whereas right at the heart of the Paraorchestra model, it's got to be world class, otherwise no one will really be interested, at least, we wouldn't retain their interest. You know what I mean? In the early days of Paraorchestra people would come to our gigs and they were actually being really sweet, they thought they were coming along to support a worthy cause, but I'm glad to say that by the time they left, they were thinking holy fuck it's really good. Not a worthy cause actually, it's only ever about world-class performance, just as the Paralympics is. You wouldn't carry on watching the Paralympics if it wasn't world class, you know what I mean? It's actually nothing to do with disability, at the end of the day, it's about the highest standards.

No, it's about the music and about the talented people that play the music. How did* Death Songbook *come about?

My missus is very brilliant. She's been curating a festival for a couple of years in Somerset, it's a festival of death and dying, it's a really interesting and new idea to try and break the death taboo. We've got such a taboo around death in our culture. We find it difficult to talk about it, we pretend it doesn't exist. There's that kind of all too common scene when the relatives are standing around the dying person's bed. The dying person has to still do the heavy lifting, to help keep the people who're staying around to not feel desolate. It should be the other way round. If you look at cultures in Brazil or Mexico, they have so much more of a healthy attitude towards death. It is talked about, it is expressed, it is sung about. In Africa as well. And all we have is a cold and miserable funeral scenario where everybody represses their true feelings. Which is why people get pissed as fuck afterwards. It all gets bottled up.

My wife started her incredible festival and got the conversation going, and it really set me thinking. Obviously, there's so much great music which is about loss, about anxiety, about heartbreak, about the death of love. About death itself. And as Brett has said earlier, I'm exactly the same, I'm always drawn to melancholic music, I don't like happy music per se, it doesn't really turn me on. So, it was really obvious what we needed to do, especially because of the pandemic. Where everyone was living with anxiety and loss, and heartbreak, and neurosis, and paranoia. I just felt it was the right thing to do.

Yes, it was much needed. And you're right about death, people don't want to talk about it. And it is the person who's dying who is kind of carrying all the others. I remember my Dad, with my Dad it was the same.

It's sort of unfair.

It is really, so I hope I don't die soon because it's going to be a nightmare!

Haha. Just have a word with everyone. Listen guys, I'm not doing the heavy lifting on this, is that alright?

Yes, let me suffer, let me cry, let me do whatever I want, at the last minute.

Yes, I'm not going to be looking after all of you.

Yes exactly, I don't care anymore.

No, exactly haha.

And when did talks first begin with Brett, about the collaboration?

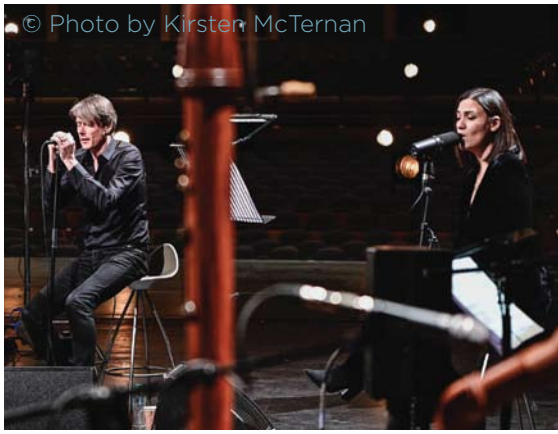
Brett and I had been gradually becoming friends over the last two to three years I suppose, we live close by in Somerset. So, for a while, we both had a kid at the same school, but that wasn't really the reason. Yes, we kind of got talking, hanging out, I think it's fair to say that we were both fans of each other's work. And then one day, I don't remember how we even got to the topic of actually doing something together, and I said yeah man, I'd really like to make a collection of songs around the theme of death, the death of love and stuff, and he was immediately like yeah I'm in, I'm in. And immediately we got into it, we were like children in the sweet shop, it was like a new hobby that we shared. We were greedily, thrilled, sending each other emails every other minute with more tracks, more tracks, more tracks, that we were really into doing. It's quite neat, because we're the same vintage, we grew up with much of the same music, we've got a lot of the same passions. So yes, it was just one of those projects where there was no pushback, there were no changes of heart, there was no disagreement, we just completely got hooked into it. Before we knew where we were, Brett was over at mine, I have this studio in an old swimming pool and they just came around and we just started jamming, and we knew it was going to be a blast. And it was, every single second of it.

Ah that's amazing. How many songs do you think you had to choose from?

Oh, I think we had as many as thirty choices in the bag. Putting ideas forward. And in fact, we are in conversations about the possibility of doing a live show where we hope to add some more songs in.

Yeah! Oh god that would be brilliant. Do you think it will happen?

I hope so.



So how did you make the decision of which songs would be included and which ones you wouldn't include?

That's an interesting question. It was just a process of kind of chewing the fat together. I don't know, they just presented themselves. You don't want to sweat it, you just kind of relax, talk, think, take perspective and then before you know where it is, the right one is just falling into place.

Yes, definitely a great choice of songs. And I had never heard some of them before either. They're really beautiful songs, but then obviously they're much better with you guys. But don't tell the people that.

Hahaha, cheers.

Are there any other songs that you recorded? Or they're the songs, that's it?

Exactly, we're very efficient, we don't like wasting anything, so everything we did is in that set.

(continued from page 73)

Brilliant. When did the rehearsal start and how did everyone prepare for the performance?

I think we started rehearsals two days before we recorded *Songbook*. Yes, it was a two-day rehearsal set and then the day itself.

Wow.

It was a chilled day—for us performing anyway. Just recording each one in turn. It was lovely actually, it was a really lovely, heartwarming, soul-nourishing experience. How did everyone prepare? Behind the scenes it was like a military operation. I mean, we were recording in the middle of lockdown, in a global pandemic. The Paraorchestra team—and Wales Millennium Centre's teams, which is where we recorded it—are incredible, the planning that went into this to ensure it was carried out safely, within the strictest conditions, was quite unbelievable. I'm so lucky to be working with a team of talented and committed individuals like that.

The orchestrations were done by Charlotte Harding—a brilliant, brilliant composer who we have collaborated with on a number of projects—who had evolved the pieces especially for our ensemble, providing us with this amazing material to work with. It was all there ready for us to press go.

So, on the day of the first rehearsal, the Paraorchestra musicians—plus of course brilliant people like Adrian Utley and Seb Rochford—can just get on with what they do best.

It's more a matter of everyone practically had it down—when everyone was happy with how it sounded, it was then a matter of just finetuning, or like sculpting, like wet clay, just gently adding something or subtracting something else, or applying a different technique on something. But it is always very collegiate with Paraorchestra, there was no one running it, it was a collective experience. My role is simply to create the magic space and place an ultimate kind of encouragement where then everyone feels valued and can really play to their very best level. It was just a really delicious two days.

© Photo by Steve Tanner

How did it feel without an audience there?

That, I must say, is the one thing that was really weird about it. We did have that rather lovely sitting in a circle, facing into a circle which was really nice. We were all completely connected with each other. And we don't normally get a chance to do that. Obviously, because you want to face the audience. That was the one great benefit. But no, if *Death Songbook* only half had its time, only half had its impact; when it's actually played in front of a live audience, it will lift off into a completely different stratosphere. No question. Artists make music, not in isolation, not in a bubble, you make music as an act of love for someone else. As an act of communication. By removing the someone else, you're kind of only ever going to get halfway there. So, I am dying, we're all dying to play the set live because we know that it will be a completely exciting thing to do that. And the music will have a completely different power.

Yes, I'm dying to hear it as well.

It will be amazing.

Would you think it would have happened without the pandemic?

I think I would have done it anyway, because as I say, this brilliant new work on death in our culture that my missus has started to do, obviously I've been affected by that and I've been very much a part of her festival. I think this is really important work, this needs to be done now. It's part of, it's another issue around mental health in a way, because bereavement or heartbreak or anxiety in any form, these are all forms of mental health and wellbeing or lack thereof, so of course we need to address it. It's a bit like, I don't know if you know but I was on *Desert Island Discs* last year, and I came out about the fact that I was a victim of sexual abuse when I was a child, and that was a hard thing to talk about but I passionately believe we have to, because you can't bury these things, just as you can't bury your feelings about somebody who has died or the experience of death. It's not healthy and yet our culture has been doing that for centuries. You keep calm, carry on, it's all bullshit. It's not healthy.

No, it's not at all. And it would help, even if it helped just one other person in the world, then it was worth doing.

Oh god yes. Absolutely.

Have you rewatched the performance? Did you watch it when the Gŵyl festival broadcast it in March? What did you think when you were rewatching it?

Yes, I did. I did watch it. I loved it, I was overjoyed with it. I'd been living with it for some weeks and I did all the mixing and so on, so I was just delighted with it. Like I said, nine beautiful children came out of the clay, nine beautiful songs. I really enjoyed it actually. I had it turned up to the max, I've got some big old speakers over there at my house. Yes, it was great, thank you, a glass of wine, you know.

It was brilliant, we loved it. Were you surprised with the reaction from people?

Well, I will tell you what, nothing prepared me for that tsunami of joy which Suede fans gave it. You never quite know do you. Don't mess with things which are really important to people. But I know for a fact that Brett being involved probably ameliorated some of that. If we'd just been hitting Suede songs with a completely different bunch of artists, unrelated to Suede, maybe there would have been more hostility, but you never quite know, people have such investment and love in a particular track and in a very particular way it sounds. If you give them a new version, they might well go, no I don't like that, I want the original. You never quite know how it's going to play out. So yes, nothing prepared me for the enthusiasm, the delight, the sheer love coming back from Suede fans and especially you guys, the Insatiable Ones, you know, really remarkable, so that was very special.

It was amazing, and it just came at the right time. It was at the beginning of this year, after last year you thought this year is going to get better but then at the beginning of the year we didn't quite get there, it wasn't that feeling, so when we heard about it, it just gave us that lifeline that we kind of needed.

Exactly. Brilliant.

Are you a Suede fan?

Yes, god, yes, I've always loved Suede. Funnily enough, they and Pulp were the bands that most interested me during the so-called Britpop years. I was always fascinated by Brett's character, but I didn't know him back then. And he really, really is so intelligent and so humane. An awful lot of people in the industry are slightly narcissistic, but he's not like that. He's humble, he's gentle, very kind, he's interested, he's curious about life, that's a big winning quality for me. A lot of people stop being curious, you know, Brett never has.

No, I don't think he ever will either, he's an amazing human being.

He really is.

(continued from page 75)

Do you have a favourite Suede song? Or a couple?

No, I'm not going to be drawn on that actually, I love so much of them. Especially the odd little B-sides, and funny little remixes and things. I generally love the whole sweep of it, from the start to the end of it, not that it has ended. It's really cool stuff.

Do you think there will be any further collaborations with Brett and Nadine and Paraorchestra?

Yes, I would say there'd be every chance there will be, because there's such a good vibe I'm sure Brett will want to do more stuff with Nadine and I'm sure Nadine will want to do more stuff with Brett, whether or not it involves Paraorchestra. We certainly have got other plans for Nadine in the pipeline. And inevitably we're going to carry on working with Brett because he's a bloody legend!

© Photo by Kirsten McTernan

He's an absolute legend. Are there any other artists you'd like to work with?

There's always a long list of artists that we're in conversations with or thinking of having conversations with. You understand that the scope of Paraorchestra is inordinately wide. We did a big project called The Love Unlimited Synth Orchestra for Glastonbury a couple of years ago which is a homage to Barry White, now that set featured Nadine, but it also featured, Gruff Rhys from Super Furry Animals, Eno from Ibibio Sound Machine, it featured Lianne La Havas, Adrian Utley. We do so many different worlds of music, genres. We've got a very wide range of artists to collaborate with us, so there's always talk about all sorts of things. It's great, we are having a lovely time.

Do you think there will be a physical release of* Death Songbook *in the future? We'd love it anyhow, we'd be excited for it!

Aww that's great. Yes! We would love to release a record, it's a kind of watch-this-space thing.

And what are you working on next, or at the moment?

Oh god, all sorts of things. We've just been workshopping a very ambitious new outdoor show which should see Paraorchestra in a kind of formation of seventy, like a huge wind and brass and percussions band, like a Brazilian carnival basically, storming down the streets, playing banging pop classics, massaoke, en masse so that is it, it will just ambush people on the street and they'll get drawn into the dance of it and into the singing of it. It's a big show really, it's been workshopped in a football stadium in Bristol. A massive new series of Sky Arts which is just in development, so that's really exciting. And I'm composing a new musical and lots of other stuff going on.

You're just very busy, I'm very grateful I could speak to you today, that you had a bit of time for us. Is there anything you'd like to add?

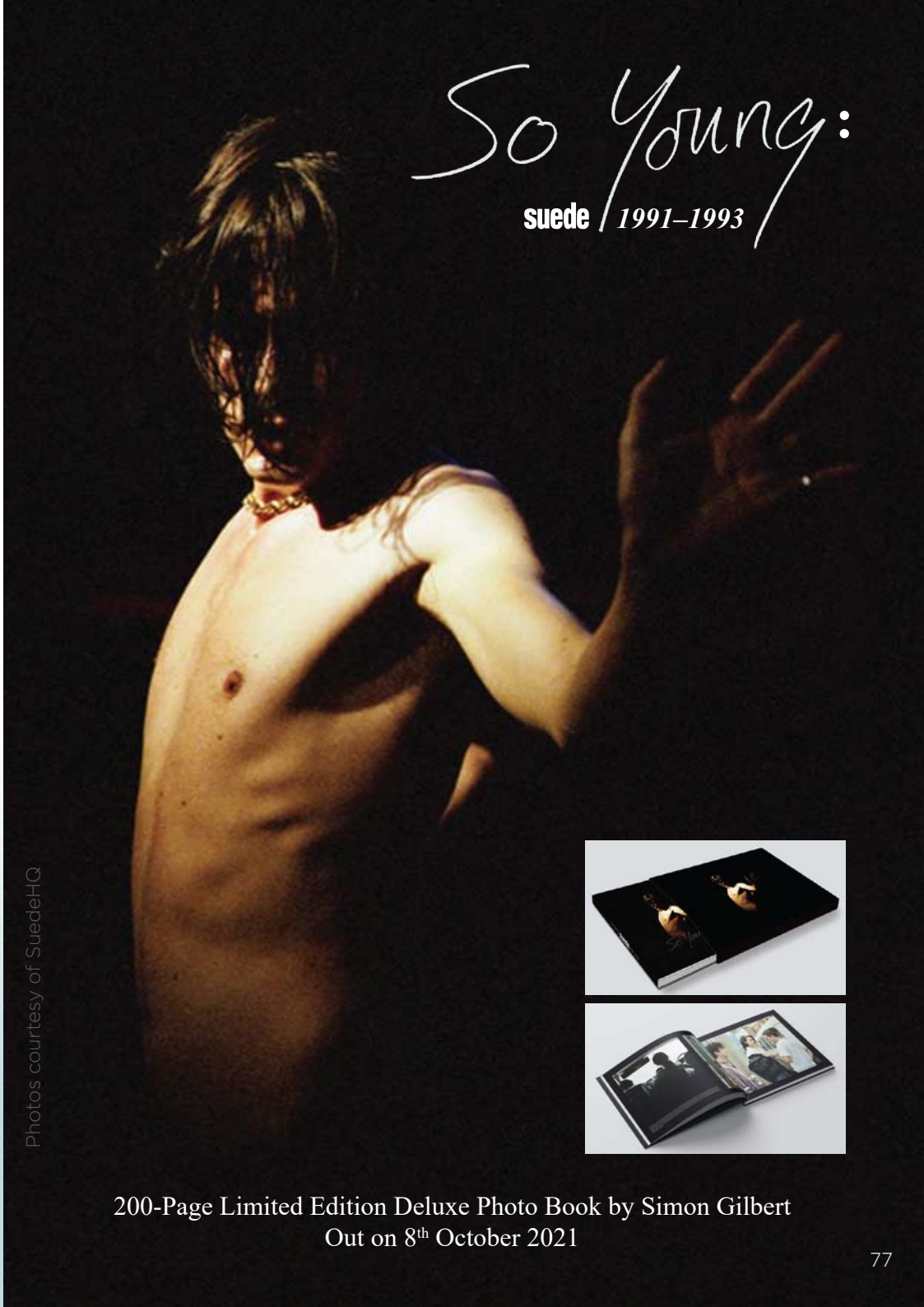
You're welcome. I don't think so, I think we've covered everything.

Thank you so much. Honestly, you just don't know how much of a gift it's been for us, for me as well, definitely. Speaking from the heart as well.

Aw, well, that's lovely to hear Sam, it means a lot, thank you for sharing that. Good luck with everything.

And hopefully we'll see you later in the year.

Let's hope for that Sam, brilliant.



Photos courtesy of SuedeHQ

200-Page Limited Edition Deluxe Photo Book by Simon Gilbert
Out on 8th October 2021

my death (songbook)

Writing exclusively for The Insatiable Ones Fanzine, ***Brett Anderson*** *gives us his insight into the rapturously welcomed* Death Songbook *project*

The *Death Songbook* thing was a lovely experience. I met Charlie {Hazlewood} at a party a couple of years ago and we got chatting. The whole idea was something that started off as a very vague conversation but then blossomed into something bigger.

He's got this amazing studio workspace in an empty swimming pool at his house, and we sat there in the deep end amongst the mosaic tiles during a couple of bleak, wintery afternoons last year, running through songs on the piano trying to find things that worked with my voice and suited the remit. It was an interesting process—at first we were looking rather literally to songs that specifically referenced death but then we started to include stuff like 'Wonderful Life', which for me always contained a bittersweet irony and somehow worked within the boundaries of the world we were trying to evoke. I'd met Nadine after falling in love with her voice a few years ago and we had talked about doing something together but couldn't find the right song. This project seemed ideal to reignite that idea so we batted a few emails about and she suggested the Skeeter Davis song and I came up with 'Holes', which again doesn't specifically reference death, but somehow contains a stately kind of melancholy and a tug of regret.

The session itself took place in a locked-down Cardiff in January, but despite the gloom and the masks and the constant lateral flow tests it was a wonderful couple of days. The Paraorchestra were just so inspiring, so full of life and dedication and it was lovely to see how Charlie worked with them, always creating a fantastic working energy that never drifted into the kind of tetchiness that can occasionally typify these situations. Charlie makes everyone proud to be there, always inspiring people to reach for their best. I think everyone was just so relieved at finally being able to work again that it created a kind of breathless excitement that, despite the gravity of the material we were tackling, somehow bled through into the energy of the performances.

I'd worked with Seb Rochford before, who fittingly had played drums on the *Black Rainbows* version of 'Unsung' a decade earlier and it was great to meet and work with Adrian Utley whose playing I'd admired for many years. To be honest I couldn't be more proud of the results, I like to think we brought a fresh twist to all those songs but still kept something of their original dark heart.

© Photo by Kirsten McTernan

Artwork by Monica Colias