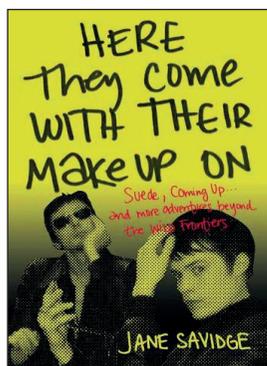


# Books



## Here They Come With Their Make-Up On: Suede, Coming Up... And More Adventures Beyond The Wild Frontiers

Jane Savidge

★★

Jawbone, £14.95

ISBN9781911036890, 280 pages

**Convoluting look back at Suede's triumphant Coming Up campaign**

Jane Savidge was one of the key behind-the-scenes architects of Britpop as head of PR firm Savage & Best in the mid-90s, with Pulp, Elastica and The Auteurs among the company's clients. Her second account of that feral period of music history, *Here They Come With Their Make-Up On: Suede, Coming Up... And More Adventures Beyond The Wild Frontiers*, recalls how her favourite band Suede somehow came back from the brink after losing a key member, with Brett Anderson's new gang summoning the Dunkirk spirit – and the odd drug dealer – to rule the charts and make the inkies eat their words. It's a fine tale, and one you can get straight from the (pantomime) horse's mouth in Anderson's *Afternoons With The Blinds Drawn* from 2019. Savidge is an avowed fan with unlimited access, and that enthusiasm shines through and carries the book; furthermore, there are several myths dispelled that she no doubt helped to foment herself. The decision to tackle each song in turn also works, and Savidge writes engagingly when on topic, though there are also maddening tangents that may leave you scratching your head, such as a hefty chapter concerning George Michael which includes a two-page retelling of her favourite scene from *Frasier*. *Jeremy Allen*

## The St. Louis Blues Of Walter Davis

Guido van Rijn

★★★★

Agram Blues Books, £40

ISBN9789082657043, 326 pages

**The life of iconic bluesman**

What a story charted here: born in 1912 or 1913 in Grenada, Mississippi, blues



**Suede in leather: their heyday recounted in Jane Savidge's new book**

singer, pianist and songwriter Walter Davis left home aged 13 and made for St Louis. He made his recording debut in Cincinnati in 1930 with Roosevelt Sykes on piano for RCA Victor waxing his classic M&O Blues, a song he cut three times. Davis taught himself piano: blues scholars have described his playing as 'idiosyncratic' and 'primitive but expressive'. He had a mournful voice but he was a wonderful tunesmith. His songs were laced with dry humour, not to mention double entendres such as on *Think You Need A Shot* released by Bluebird Records in 1936 (and the title of a 1970 RCA reissue album) which today would carry an explicit lyrics warning.

Between 1930 and 1952 he recorded over 170 sides for RCA Victor and their Bluebird label and a handful for Nashville's Bullet outlet. It's a tale that's profusely illustrated, with the book containing a full biography, track-by-track discography, lyric transcriptions and commentary, plus a 22-track CD with an interview conducted by doyen of blues writers, Paul Oliver. A remarkably researched book. *Tony Burke*

## Baptism Of Fire – A Year Of Living And Working With Duran Duran

Ian Little

★★★★

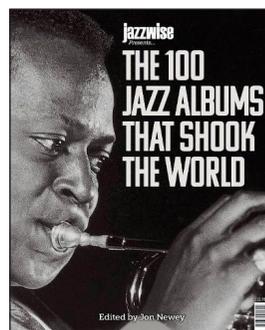
Astral Horizon Press, £25

ISBN 9781916039643, 240 pages

**Tales from the control room**

Like many people, Ian Little fell into the music business by accident. Working for a pair of architects who'd successfully bid to design a lighting and stage set for *Breakfast In America*-era Supertramp, Little went to oversee things and got seduced by the lustre of the Access All Areas pass. Returning to the UK, a chance meeting with Roxy Music's Phil Manzanera lead to studio experience, then his own recordings under the name New Asia, and a new life as a producer. Given the alternatives, as members of Pink Floyd had previously discovered, architecture ceased to be of any great interest once he had found his place behind the mixing desk.

Little's autobiography takes in some of his numerous production credits, while also discussing homelessness, mindfulness and philosophy in an interesting and non-linear narrative which teeters on the cusp of being *Zen & The Art Of The Mixing Desk*. However, as can be divined from the book's subtitle Little's work on Duran Duran's *Is There Something I Should Know* and *Seven & The Ragged Tiger* forms his autobiography's centrepiece. It's not all plain sailing in *Baptism Of Fire's* very entertaining blags-to-riches story, but Little tells it well. And, besides, it would be churlish not to get swept up in his enthusiasm when *Is There Something I Should Know* goes straight into the charts at No 1. *John Tucker*



## The 100 Jazz Albums That Shook The World

★★★★

Jazzwise/Mark Allen Group, £12.99

ISBN13680021, 100 pages

**UK jazz mag's list of the idiom's greatest records becomes a book**

This beautifully presented publication builds on the foundations of a popular 2006 feature in *Jazzwise* magazine that its editor Jon Newey intended as "a listening guide that looked at the landmark albums that changed jazz, changed lives and brought this life-affirming music kicking and screaming into the mid-2000s". After the article went online, it quickly shot to pole position in Google's "best jazz albums" search rankings and now, 15 years later, has been revised and expanded for an A4-sized 100-page "bookazine" that offers an annotated countdown of the Top 100 albums. Compiled by such redoubtable UK jazz authorities as Stuart Nicholson, Brian Priestley and Kevin Le Gendre, who also provide detailed and insightful

commentary, the book is an irresistible page-turner. Some of the entries (like Miles' *Kind Of Blue* and Trane's *A Love Supreme*) are entirely predictable, of course, but in a good, reassuring way, while other inclusions – which I won't reveal because it will spoil the fun – might be deemed controversial by purists. Some detractors might also balk at what they perceive as crucial omissions but, ultimately, this superbly written assemblage is an engrossing read. The chosen 100 albums don't tell the music's full story, of course, but they function as a valuable foundation for building an impeccable jazz collection. *Charles Waring*

## Ugly Beauty: Jazz In The 21st Century

Philip Freeman

★★★★

Zero Books, £16.99,

ISBN1789046327, 272 pages

**Contemporary jazz under a microscope**

For many American jazz musicians, the term "jazz" is despised; the equivalent of the worst four-letter cuss word you can imagine. Both Duke Ellington and Charles Mingus vehemently objected to their music being called jazz, favouring "Black Classical Music", while Miles Davis preferred to label what he was doing "social music". And yet for better or worse, jazz is still in common usage; an all-encompassing umbrella term that describes everything from Louis Armstrong's jaunty Dixieland romps to