

Q+A Suede



Haven't heard of Suede yet? Well, fasten your safety belt, this self-proclaimed diva is ready for liftoff. Take one part Ella Fitzgerald, toss in some Bette Midler and Rosemary Clooney and top with some Louis Armstrong, and you've got Suede, pop/jazz extraordinaire.

Sultry. Smooth. Sizzling. Suede has been making pop/jazz magic for 27 years and counting. She creates bring-the-house-down blues and love songs infused with her own warmth, humor and

originality, which is just one of the many reasons fans flock to her shows time and again. Suede just might be the loudest, best-kept secret in music today. — Carol Bryant

For current and soon-to-be fans, tell us who Suede is.

I've been a musician for nearly 27 years, own my own company and record label and I was born with an ability to play nearly any instrument I could find. In general, my style is pop/jazz/blues, but I sing anything that calls to me.

You perform on both land and sea, including Olivia Cruises. What can one expect when attending a Suede concert?

Expect the unexpected, as I never do the same thing twice. I am not just a musician; my shows are energy-filled with music and humor spanning the complete emotional range. I approach my voice as an instrument and play it for my audience as such.

Do you think being a lesbian helps or hinders you as far as being out as a performer?

I am amongst a rare breed who has been doing this long before it was safe or trendy to be an out lesbian artist. I've never fit the stereotypical ideal of a female jazz singer, lamenting about being done wrong by her man in song. My songs are non-gender specific, and I have been true to who I am. Thanks to NPR, PBS and indie stations, the word is getting out.

Tell me about your albums.

To date, there are four CDs and one DVD, also airing on PBS stations, *Suede: Live at Scullers Jazz Club*. My next CD is due out spring 2008, and is being recorded in Tony Bennett's son's studio with Tony's son as our engineer. I'm going full-steam on this one, with horns, strings, "Neverland" from *Peter Pan* and some original songs written for me, including a very moving tune inspired by my relationship with my dad, who passed away recently.

You are a self-proclaimed diva. Can just anyone be a diva?

Any woman can be a diva and wear the badge proudly. A diva is any woman who stands up for and knows herself; she strives for what she both wants and needs. For me, a diva is a magnificent female singer. ■

OTHER LICKS



Delusions of Grandeur, Cathy Richardson (Cash Rich): This artful, 18-cut follow-up to 2003's Grammy nominated *The Road To Bliss* is an epic, wide-ranging set that aptly captures the out, Chicago-based singer-songwriter's growth as a vocalist, musician and producer; styles range from acoustic and soulful sounds to dramatic string- and choir-accompanied pieces, and even a few reggae-tinged songs. What a voice. (cathyrichardson.com)



Keep Your Silver Shined, Devon Sproule (City Salvage/Waterbug): Virginia-based Sproule blends bluegrass, folk and jazz with soulful porch swing poetry on her sophomore CD, resulting in a romantic 34-minute set that begs to be played on repeat, endlessly. (devonsproule.com)

Seventh Tree, Goldfrapp (Mute): In high contrast to the glitz and glam of 2006's *Supernature*, the new 10-track set by the eclectic U.K. duo is largely sedate, texturally rich and entirely hypnotic. "Happiness" is the most upbeat, sure-to-be-remixed cut, while the opening "Clowns" is downright haunting. (goldfrapp.co.uk)

The Best of Lisa Gerrard, Lisa Gerrard (4AD): The mesmer-

izing, other-worldly voice behind 1980s cult faves Dead Can Dance puts out a 15-cut retrospective covering 25 years of her solo and collaborative high points, including scores from several award-winning films. The Middle Eastern-flaired "Yulunga (Spirit Dance)" is still one of my favorites. (lisagerrard.com)



White Shoes and The Couples Company (Minty Fresh): Hailing from Indonesia, this co-ed sextet of former art school classmates make melodic, '70s-inspired, cinematic-quality pop tunes that stick in your head and won't let go. The orchestral, English-language "Nothing to Fear" is a sure-fire hit, though even Indonesian-language cuts like the soaring "Tentang Cita" and jazzy "Windu & Defrina" will score with fans who have no idea what they are saying—the melodies are that infectious. (myspace.com/whiteshoesandthecouplescompany)



ON DVD
Hurrah! A Year of Ta-Dah, Scissor Sisters (Universal Motown): This feature-rich DVD from the flamboyant, part-queer band contains not only a 90-minute live concert shot at London's flashy O2 Arena, but also a one-hour, behind-the-scenes documentary, all filmed during last summer's Kiss You Off world tour. Extras include four music videos, an acoustic gig featuring barebones versions of their biggest hits and a bonus live track shot at Wembley Stadium in 2006. Well worth the money. (scissorsisters.com) — MC