

All Back To Vinyl: Suede Dog Man Star review

It's hard to underestimate the impact of Suede in the early 1990s, in some ways their cultural introduction was not dissimilar to the arrival of David Bowie as Ziggy Stardust. Brett Anderson was a working-class intellectual who wrote about everyday frustrations in British life with a certain street glamour and authenticity.

The impact of singles such as So Young and Animal Nitrate helped to define the early 90s and with Suede the dreaded 'Britpop' term was coined. Who came up with it first is still part of conjecture. The catch-all term for many very different bands was commonly used by the time Suede released their difficult second album Dog Man Star. During the recording, they lost an essential member Bernard Butler. Not just a vital member of Suede but one of the most inventive lead guitarists of the era who could comfortably stand alongside Johnny Marr and Billy Duffy as players who helped define the sound of the post-Beatles British guitar sound. It's a loss when bands shed members such as Butler and that loss was keenly felt by the band and fans.

30 years later Dog Man Star has lost none of its potency and

remains one of the best records of the 1990s taking its rightful place alongside strong competition such as Nevermind, Definitely Maybe and Urban Hymns. Lead single We Are The Pigs soars as this impressive 180-gram black pressing spins out. Newly mastered, the allure and nuance of Anderson and Butler's songwriting partnership hit a peak on tracks such as The Wild Ones. The quite cinematic and orchestral arrangement of the album's second single released in November 1994 recalls early Scott Walker and still stands as an example of Suede's devastating brilliance. It's a song that changes the atmosphere and hangs in the air long after the arresting end coda. The Power is perhaps the most Bowie-sounding track of the album with its evocative descriptions of suburban life with dreams of glamour and a more exotic existence. The 'la la la' refrain seals the deal suggesting this track could have appeared on Ziggy Stardust or Diamond Dogs. The bedsit balladry of The 2 of Us has an intense Morrissey/Marr flavour that manifests another era. The fairground waltz of Black or Blue could have appeared on the soundtrack to Brighton Rock supporting its subterranean atmosphere, another track that is a world away from what was happening at the time. This edition is almost perfect but perhaps the vinyl release should have included Stay Together which helped cement an astonishing run of singles by any band during the period.

Dog Man Star 30 will be released as a new half-speed master edition pressed on 2LP 180g black vinyl. A highly collectable "Dinked" album edition will be available on two LPs. It also comes on a translucent yellow vinyl 140-gram pressing with gatefold packaging, and an exclusive two-sided 7" single featuring The Living Dead (Piano Version)' and 'La Puissance (The Power)' on vinyl for the first time.

