

LIVE!

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● **Cover Pic:** Suede at Southampton Guildhall. Photo by Mark Thompson

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Since making the decision last year to schedule the *Live! Show* for the second week in January, Christmas has never quite been the same. Throw into the mix a November change of ownership, location and underpants — a disruption of gargantuan proportions to we sedentary, village folk — and you will gain some idea how early into the year we had to set the industry's alarm call. *The LIVE! Show* takes place over Tuesday, January 17 and Wednesday, January 18, with the Awards Dinner, hosted by Jim Davidson on the night of the 17th.

Polling this year was unusually (and gratifyingly) high — perhaps because we broadened the categories to recognise all levels (and types) of touring. The fax machine started buzzing on January 3 — and have not stopped since.

First, we attempted to wake the industry from its seasonal stupor on the 5th — when we helped Countrywide Communications launch the *Wayne's World 2* video at the Marquee Club, via a Roadie's Convention. Yet rather than being the pleasant, innocuous affair we thought it would be, we failed to awaken *The Independent's* sensibilities to the realities of touring in the '90s, judging from "arts reporter" Marianne MacDonald's account, and the furore that followed. Entirely bypassing the sense of irony and deliberate stereotyping with which highly skilful contributors like Dave Smith and Coral Cooper had imbued the event, the message they took to their lay readership was of the old hellraising rock 'n' roll marauder spirit of the '70s ... the scourge of backstages and hotel rooms from Max's Kansas City to the Roxy, from the Marriott Essex House to the Continental Hyatt.

The debate, having raged in the pages of *The Independent*, then took to the airwaves via BBC Radio Scotland's Colin Bell programme, the argument nicely stoked by Coral Cooper (an absolute gem at the Marquee; may she sell at least three ScanCommanders at the *LIVE! Show*).

Now let's bury that issue, so that we can get on with our 1995 agenda. Our schedule of feature articles for the year opens with the first instalment of Ian Haley's exhaustive look at the industry's lighting desks — what they do and who favours what. Part two will appear next month, alongside product surveys on chassis loudspeakers and spatial enhancers, which are gradually assuming a higher priority on touring inventories.

Finally, unorthodox though it may be to headhunt through the Leader box, it is time for me to hang up my keyboard, concede the editorship of this journal and gaffa some other poor ... I mean offer the all-conquering power that the position demands to someone er ... *different*. Journalists with *real* jobs only need apply, but make it soon as my new plush, middle-management office beckons.

All the usual fringe benefits apply — including the chance to be lammed up backstage with the roadie of your choice — and who knows what that might lead to?

Jerry Gilbert