



LOUISE STICKLAND REPORTS ON AN 'IMAGINATIVE FUSION'
PICTURES: MARK THOMPSON • VENUE: SOUTHAMPTON GUILDHALL

The end of Suede's set is marked by a statement in the last frame of the credit roll: "These films are dedicated to Derek Jarman". Accompanied by a massive Hollywood reprise of the final song *Still Life*, with the band off-stage, the closing moments of the show swelled into a lasting and moving reminder that Jarman's creative legacy is hauntingly alive, and will continue to evolve.

The films were directed by David Lewis and Andy Crabb and produced by Michael Christie (for the Believe Organisation), all of whom worked with Jarman. Eight provocative and captivating films run during the current Suede show. They crossfade between a diversity of subjects and emotions ranging from violence to abstraction to homo-erotic to ambiguity. They are simultaneously enticingly simple and frighteningly complex, from the dancers silhouetted against a pale green gas-like background to the stark black and white grimness and visceral horror of *The Killing Of A Flash Boy* where you feel every blow. Mike Christie comments: "We wanted variety in the subject matter. All the extremities are there from violence to direct narrative ... we've made lots of references to lots of things."

Although the images had the ability to dominate at times, the film never seemed a more relevant element than the band, lights or sound, although they did give the show an emotional intensity rarely seen at this level of

touring. It was a show born out the imaginative fusion of all components. Suede, one of the most-hyped bands of 1993, have been the subject of considerable conjecture in the music press of late. Now they are two months into their sell-out tour with new guitarist Richard Oakes. They are solid, concise and captured the hearts and minds of the young Southampton audience who danced away from the gig bawling slightly undignified choruses.

The band and the production exude a plucky confidence, as if they know that they have already surpassed the "Band most tipped to ..." phase, the critics and those awaiting their relegation to the one-year-wonder scrap heap. They have matured, risen above, are flaunting their identity ... and rocking out!

Lighting designer is Malcolm Mellows who is back on the road after an eight year break from touring culture. Most recently, Malcolm has been renowned throughout the business as being in the front line of PSL's video and music division. He is quick to pay tribute to his time there, although the opportunity to get in the artistic division of projects had been limited. He had offered to return to lighting throughout most of his two-year stint at PSL, but not until Suede came up did he feel it was an opportunity he just couldn't miss.

Unlike many bands that Malcolm had worked with in the past such as Toyah, Adam And The Ants, Fashion or Classics Nouveaux, Suede wanted to "be theatrical without actually taking part in the theatre". He explains they are very much into being their own people on stage, ➤

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