

as opposed to timing their moves for lighting cues. However, he adds that they do appreciate how lighting, like music, has dynamics, and feels that in the future Suede may get more involved in the theatre side of lighting rather than leaving him to his own devices.

He has also had to design a show that would fit into a variety of venues and reckons that thus far, 99% of the time the rig has worked in this context. The set, also designed by Malcolm, consists of five wooden columns either side of the stage, painted in a special grey that picks up light very efficiently. In the austere functionality of the '40s-built Guildhall, they could be taken for part of the room.

Each pillar is lit by two par cans at the base,



MALCOLM MELLOWES

complete with ColorMags. Other than that, there are five bars of six PARs, four on Manfrotto stands and one upstage of the kit, all with ColorMags and ten Icons. Because of the flying restrictions in so many of the venues, all lighting is floor mounted, and the upstage projection screen has the option of flying or being floor-based. Probably under-crewed for the amount of technology, Malcolm is a fully-working LD, and operates the generics from a small Avolites Rolacue desk. His crew and Icon operator is the semi-legendary Fats from LSD.

The decision not to use the Icon desk to control all the fixtures was made because some of the venues were small enough to fit in only the PARs — so the two systems were kept separate. Malcolm integrated the Icons thoughtfully and subtly into the show.

There were plenty of unusual gobo permutations, projecting onto pillars and the screen (when it wasn't full of video), and the expansive colour palette of the Icons was utilised from the palest of hints to the most aggressive of primaries. The fact that there were so few lights didn't constrict the imaginative consequences in the slightest.

The Icons were used more for effects than general lighting, although at times they doubled for traditional cross-stage washes. Out of all the moving lights Malcolm looked at, one of the reasons he plumped for the Icon was because it

was the quickest and easiest to programme and update.

Projection equipment is provided by PSL. A double Barco 5000 sits front-of-house, controlled from a laser disc player overseen by Matthew Askern.

SUEDE SOUND

It's sound engineer Steve Phillips' first tour with Suede, and the first time he's used Wigwam's new d&b 402 system. At present it's running with Meyer subs, although d&b subs will soon be replacing them on the spec.

Southampton Guildhall isn't the most sound-friendly room on the circuit, but it sounded pretty good. The vocals were clear and punchy and the band were loud, assertive and balanced without it being that familiar din so unavoidable in concrete concert halls.

Anorak facts are coming up, with five top d&b boxes a side and three Meyer 650 subs from a custom "crossover with a few phasing tricks." Steve finds a great advantage in using sub bass — you can stack the rest of the PA on top and attain a perfect height without needing a riser.

Out front he uses a 40-channel Yamaha PM3000 plus two SPX990s, an H3000, a TC



STEVE PHILLIPS

2290 DDL and the new Roland SRV300 reverb.

Processing-wise, he has two DPR901s, BSS dynamic equalisers on vocals, BSS compressors on guitars and bass, Drawmers on the toms, kick, etc, Klark-Teknik DN360 graphics and a KT analyser. They've started recording the shows on a Tascam DA88 as B-sides for forthcoming singles.

Brett Anderson's voice is powerful, strong and presents Steve with no great problems. Apart from the dynamic equaliser and a bit of overall compression, he uses no other vocal effects. "Sometimes the SM58 microphones will distort with his voice, just by virtue of the amount of level he puts on it!" The band have very much left Steve to his own devices. "Richard, the new guitar player, is very keen to hear what happens with the sound, which is good. they're a great bunch of people to work

with," continues Steve.

It's very loud on stage with Brett using five Nexo wedges. Steve recalls a story from a gig in Paris where there was a strict dB limit of 100 at the desk. "We experimented at reached 107 using his monitors — and that's with the vocal alone. All wedges are Nexo PS15s. The drummer uses two plus a Nexo sub. Brett uses five and the other two use two each. Monitor man is Graham Lees, probably the most-bumped-into crew person of 1994 by the Live! team. "We are trying to introduce Brett to in-ear monitoring at the moment," says Steve. "Most people, once they've acquired the taste, never go back to anything else ... but it's a question of having the time to wean him onto it."

Steve likes to attain an authentic 'live' sound. "Not too smooth, very ambient drums. He has 'the usual' two overheads and hi-hats and an extra ride cymbal mic. "I don't gate the snare as he plays a lot of little fiddly bits on the snare — it's just trying to attain a good balance between everything really." He uses four mics on the guitar, two on each cabinet — a 421 and a 57. "This tends to give me a thicker, more realistic guitar sound than just one mic."

At one point during the set there was the merest fleeting hint of feedback — a valid reminder we weren't actually listening to a CD. It did sound real, live and alive. Quickly squashed, it was absolutely no detriment to the dramatic and accessible collaboration unfolding before us on-stage.

Credits

Lighting Designer: Malcolm Mellows

Lighting Crew: Fats

Lighting Equipment: LSD

FOH Sound Engineer: Steve Phillips

Monitor Engineer: Graham Lees

PA Rigger: Don Parks

Sound Equipment: Wigwam

Catering: Saucery

Trucks: Stardes

Buses: Liberty Coaches

Video Hardware: PSL

Video Technician: Matthew Askern

Film Directors: David Lewis / Andy Crabb

Film Producer: Michael Christie (The Believe Organisation)

Backline: Peter Sissons, Kimble Garcia

Set: Jem Matthews

Tour Manager: Benny Brongers

Follow Spot Operators: (The best in the world, according to Malcolm Mellows)

Mark (The Meat) / Richard (Two Veg)