



CASE STUDY

Mötley Crüe 2022 US Stadium Tour pioneers Disguise GX 3 for next-level generative graphics

After a nearly two-year delay from the initial scheduled date, Mötley Crüe's 2022 US Stadium Tour returned in full force with an impressive headliner line-up, sharing the stage with Def Leppard, Poison, Joan Jett, and Classless Act.



Summary

This case study explores how LA-based creative agency All Of It Now delivered the world's most notorious rock band's US tour in the summer of 2022, successfully pioneering the use of the Disguise GX 3 media server with innovative Notch generative effects such as facial tracking and AI background removal.

All Of It Now (AOIN) have been working with Production Directors Robert Long and Ashley Zapar since 2017, when they met during Halsey's 2017 'Hopeless Fountain Kingdom' Tour. Since then, they developed a really great relationship and ended up collaborating again on KISS's 'End of the Road' World Tour - a show that ran for an impressive four years powered by Disguise GX 2.

The teams reunited once again, fresh out of the pandemic, determined to deliver an incredible show for the legendary group's long awaited tour. And the results spoke for themselves, according to Danny Firpo, Co-founder and Executive Producer at AOIN.



“The future is ours”

The show kicks off with an emergency pirate broadcast, promptly interrupted by a “motley crue” of hackers, boldly proclaiming “the future is ours”. The show makes repeated use of a near-future dystopian cyberpunk inspired city, complete with automated “murdertini” towers, capable of elevating dancers 15 feet above the stage. AOIN aimed to programme the video so that it felt like the content on screens experienced frame drops and sync issues in order to keep people’s eye on the stage before the band made an entrance.

The show continues with many cyberpunk city elements throughout, which AOIN also relayed in the Notch effects that they created for the show. Firpo recalls one piece of content that has a depth mask style effect that uses Notch’s brand new AI background removal tool, a look that was made possible only with the render power of the Disguise GX 3 machine.



The challenge

A multi-headliner show

As the tour featured an incredible line-up of high-calibre artists from the golden age of heavy metal, it almost felt like a festival in itself. And each headline act included its own creative and technical brief, with Disguise hardware powering the visuals for each act. So it was really important to get the technical documentation correct for each act as they were running through the Disguise servers, Firpo explains. “We had to capture in their feed and then serve it to the wall. This made Disguise servers a really important, crucial component of not just our own show, but every artist’s show on the stage.”

Switching it up

While the initial technical brief of the show was built around the enhanced capabilities of the new Disguise GX 3 machine, the machine was only introduced halfway through the US tour. As a result, the team brought in two Disguise GX 2C machines for the first leg of the tour. AOIN had built the Notch effects to the GX 3 spec, but were able to dial the frame rate back to the capabilities of the GX 2C for the first leg.



The challenge

Trialing a new machine with new software halfway through the tour was a bold attempt, yet not something unattempted before. **AOIN team's long-standing Disguise experience made them confident to face up to the challenge.** "We are frequent beta testers of new Disguise features and, in some ways, feel responsible for some of the new features and tools that subsequently become available to the rest of the community. That experience and track record is why we felt confident doing it and partially why we were able to do it in a way that maybe other teams wouldn't have felt as confident to do," Firpo explains.

Crue support

The Disguise support team was also on hand to respond quickly to any technical issues, and even joined the team onsite for the server swap. It was Disguise support that gave AOIN the confidence to make the change in the middle of the tour, according to Firpo. A GX 2C machine was kept as a back-up machine in the event of a failover, however that never was the case.



The solution

To Infinity and beyond

The team debuted the GX 3 at SoFi stadium in Los Angeles, and they did it in style. To showcase the true potential of the machine, the team took over the massive Infinity Screen in the middle of the stadium - an impressive piece of video engineering, with inner and outer screens wrapped around in 360 degrees.

“Not only were we doing a server swap on top of already a very compressed load-in schedule, but we were also charged with additional programming and outputting to the Infinity Screen.”

This required some thoughtful programming, as well as additional discrete Notch layers.”**To have the additional render power from the GX 3 was really essential because we had to format and design and programme the Notch effects somewhat customised for those screens, separate from the primary IMAG experience.** And so that meant that we needed to run another Notch layer and to double the amount of Notch processing that was occurring on each server.”



The solution

Background off, background on

AOIN also used some of the new background removal effects from Notch, which were very performance-heavy, but ensured an important level of control for some effects. They also used Notch's UVW pass feature for Saints of LA, which featured flythroughs of a huge cyberpunk inspired city, with Notch-effected IMAG in the city billboards. **"We could not have been able to render the city backgrounds in the level of cinematic quality without the power of the GX 3."**

The luxury of time

Due to the earlier start of the show, the technical prep had to be compressed ahead of each show, which ultimately meant that the show had to be really well pre-programmed every night. As the IMAG vendor was regionalised, the screen size would change based on each city's venue, Firpo explains, which meant having to re-program elements of the show for every single city the band played in. **Disguise's pre-vis tools were essential here, allowing the team to handle all the show programming ahead of time, according to each screen size.**

Disguise's pre-vis and multi-user design tools were also essential during rehearsals, allowing multiple programmers to work on different songs in parallel.



Results

The show set-up consisted of a header screen, two IMAG screens on each side of the stage, and a bank of five screens for the upstage wall. AOIN made use of the Disguise parallel maps feature to map content dynamically on the upstage screens, as well as the header. IMAG content was mapped on the upstage wall quite often to really showcase creative Notch effects.

The team was able to use the IMAG screen content really dynamically, turning them into an extension of the main upstage screen. “Being able to not just have dedicated IMAG screens on for the entire time was part of the design brief for some songs,” Firpo explains. “The band really wanted to show these big content moments and have the visuals take charge, with the music really almost being a soundtrack to the content itself.”

A blessing in Disguise

For the original tour dates in 2020, AOIN had discussed using depth cameras for the background removal Notch effects, but mounting and streaming these cameras for each show would have been too difficult. Resuming the Notch creative two years later meant that AOIN had access to new Notch features that weren't available at the time of the original tour date, which was a blessing in Disguise.



“The GX 3 is a multipurpose Swiss Army knife, enabling more integrated live shows and xR workflows. It has the rendering power of the latest and greatest technology, enabling a lot more creative Notch effects, more powerful Unreal workflows, while also having an additional output which for some shows can make the difference between whether or not Disguise is used. We’re excited to use it on this tour moving forward.”

Danny Firpo

Executive Producer & Screens Producer

Success

The project couldn't have been possible without the lighting, camera, and media server programmers working together to deliver an incredibly cohesive show.

On top of it all, switching hardware in the middle of a tour is a testament to how confident the team felt about the GX 3 and its ability to adapt and grow. "Knowing that we always had a Disguise GX 2C to failover to was what also gave us the confidence to live beta test this new product in a very visible way," Firpo concludes.

The tour resumes in 2023 in the Latin America and Europe with 30 more shows and the AOIN team along for the entire ride.

36

shows in North
America

\$173M

in ticket sales

1.3M

tickets sold



Disguise equipment used



GX3

The GX 3 is the most powerful and versatile Disguise machine to date, unlocking new potential in generative graphics thanks to its GPU's processing capabilities.

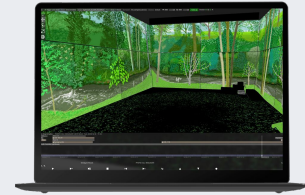
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GX 2C

The GX 2C media server delivered dynamic Notch video content across the show's innovative visual canvas.

Find out more [→](#)



DESIGNER

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In Partnership with

Creative Directors: Robert Long, Ashley Zapar, Fred Caron,
Curtis Adams

Production Director: Robert Long

Tour Manager: Thomas Reitz

Production Coordinator: Ashley Zapar

Disguise Programmers: Lucy Ockenden, Allison Faith Sullock,
Vishal Sharma, Brady Villadsen, Danny Firpo

Disguise Operators: Lucy Ockenden, Allison Faith Sullock

Notch Creative: Brenton March, Visha Sharma, Brady Villadsen

AOIN EP / Screens Producer: Danny Firpo

Screen Content: Normal Studio

Screen Content: Andy Reuter

Video Director: Christian Lind

Video Crew Chief: Cameron Dixon

Lighting Designer: Michael Cooper

Lighting Director: Michael Willingham

Photo credits: Sam Shapiro @samshapiromedia



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