DISGUISE

Shania Twain's "Queen of Me" Tour is a crowning success deploying Disguise IP-VFC technology

Summary

One of the best-selling music artists of all time, Shania Twain completed her fifth headlining concert tour, "Queen of Me," late last year after playing 68 dates in North America and ten in Europe. The tour supported her eponymous sixth studio album and followed a highly successful Las Vegas residency run from 2019 through 2022.

The tour capitalised on the long-standing relationship between Twain's producers and US rental partner Fuse Technical Group, which dates back to Twain's first Vegas residency in 2014 and her use of Disguise 4x4pro media servers on the road. Fuse was hired as the crew supplier and video equipment vendor for "Queen of Me", with Video Design in the UK as the rental partner for the UK-based shows. Cory FitzGerald from Silent House was the tour's Creative Producer.

Twain designed the show herself and played a very hands-on role throughout. She was directly involved with the production and programming aspects and often remained at the production table until the video programming team wrapped up their work every night.

Image credits: Lizzie Wood

The Challenge

The creative concept for the show featured multiple LED surfaces, including a massive upstage wall, riser fascia, LED floor, LED banners, and LED IMAG screens – a lot of video in a very tight space and a large canvas for the content team at Blink to work with.

The programming team at Dark Matter began pre-vis for the show in March 2023, and as production design came together, lead Disguise programmer, Adam Fontana, realised some serious horsepower was required on the server side.

The need for high quality, reliable signal delivery to all of the screens, including 4K camera inputs and 4K canvas outputs, called for three full 4K rasters and a low-latency system with the cleanest delivery path and the fewest format conversions possible. A Disguise GX 3 server package equipped with IP-VFC cards was selected to do the job.

Although Fontana's team did not have servers available for the few weeks of pre-vis, the ability to run the full watermarked software on a laptop meant they could get a head start nonetheless. They connected Designer to sACN and captured the output into Syncronorm's Depence visualiser to program the majority of the show before any trucks hit the dock.

Image credits: Fred Thiebaud

The Solution

The tour's full 4K video pipeline had cameras running at 4K60 and capturing two 12G M/Es from the switcher. All Notch generative effects also ran at 4K.

The Fuse team jumped at the chance to provide native 12G outputs to LED processors via the 12G SFPs in the IP-VFC cards. This enabled them to monitor 4K outputs while using an off-the-shelf 40x40 12G router to distribute signal everywhere. The process reduced a lot of electronic waste in the rack and allowed the techs to easily diagnose a point of failure with signal should something go wrong.

Typically, Fuse would have a screens management interface between the media servers and the LED processors, whether an E2 or a Spyder, but the IP-VFC cards' native 12G outputs helped eliminate the need for that format conversion. Most of the time they took either DisplayPort or HDMI video signals and converted them to SDI, mainly for monitoring and for single distribution purposes for ease of use. But the IP-VFC cards bypassed those needs and pumped straight out to the router and then directly to the screens without introducing any additional latency. This was a substantial improvement over previous shows.
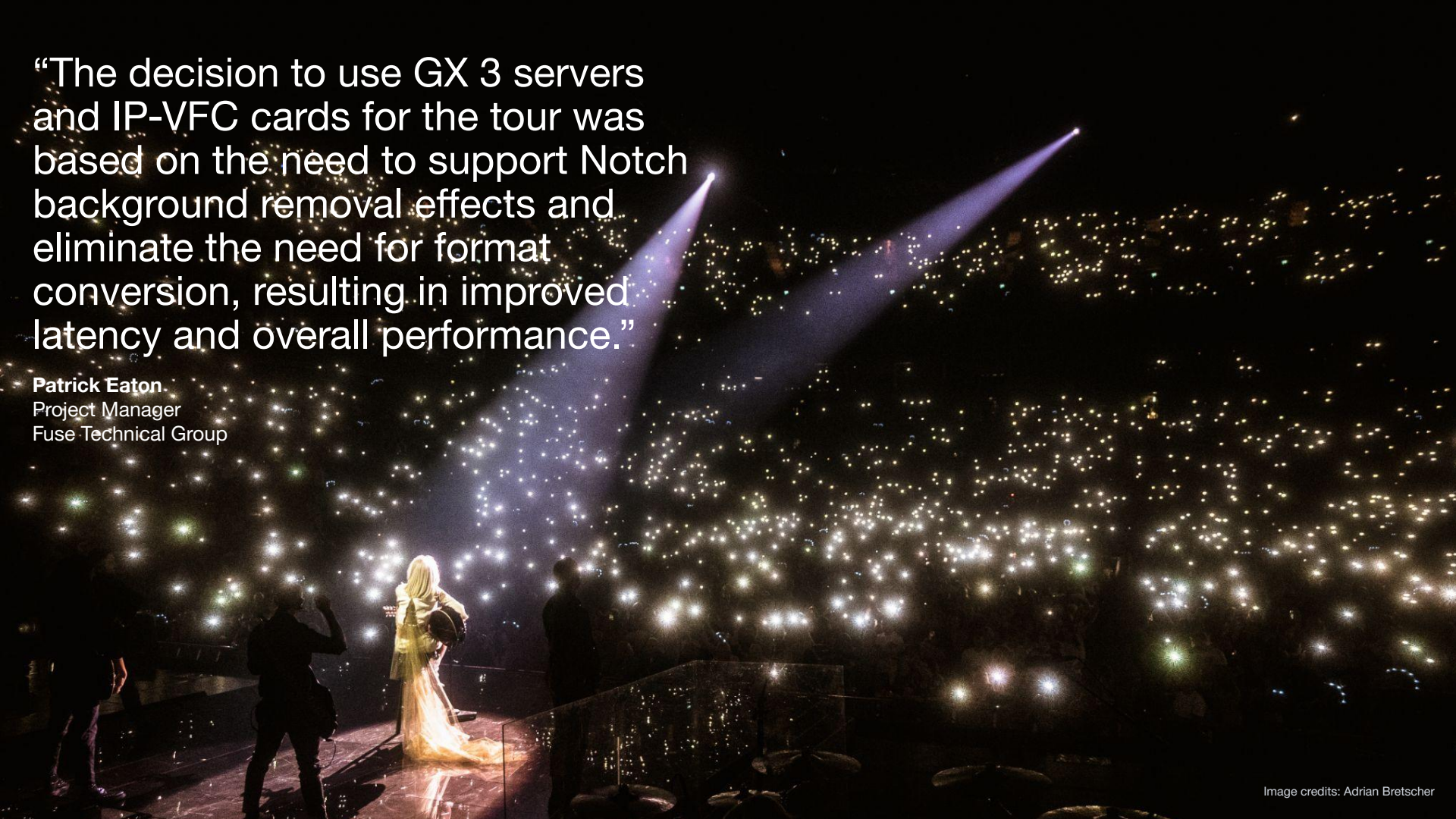
Image credits: Fred Thiebaud

The Solution

Dark Matter found that the GX 3 allowed them to incorporate Notch effects on the camera feeds, including some instances of AI background replacement. Notch was deployed throughout the show, often in very subtle ways.

Fontana and his team programmed primarily in Sockpuppet, giving Lighting Director and Sockpuppet Programmer, André Petrus, ultimate control and the ability to tightly couple lighting and video cues.

They created an additional version of the show file in timeline mode for use at festival dates. This enabled Fontana or the touring tech to make offline edits and accommodate different LED setups without having to involve the lighting programmer.

Image credits: Lizzie Wood

"The decision to use GX 3 servers and IP-VFC cards for the tour was based on the need to support Notch background removal effects and eliminate the need for format conversion, resulting in improved latency and overall performance."

Patrick Eaton
Project Manager
Fuse Technical Group

Image credits: Adrian Bretscher

Results

The tour was among the first in the world to implement the GX 3 with IP-VFC set up. Its success set a benchmark for future tours by Fuse, giving them a new path forward for upcoming shows.

The use of native 12G video outputs from the IP-VFC cards was a groundbreaking achievement and a testament to the reliability and durability of the Disguise hardware. The "Queen of Me" tour was an important proving ground for a process which will greatly benefit more shows to come.
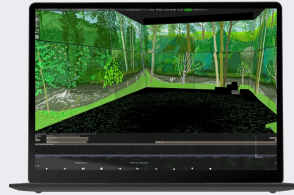

Image credits: Fred Thiebaud

Disguise equipment used

GX 3

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.

Find out more ➜

DESIGNER

Designer is the ultimate software to visualise, design, and sequence projects at every stage, from concept all the way through to showtime.

Find out more ➜

IP-VFC

The IP-VFC is a patented video format conversion card that enables a ST 2110 video output from Disguise media servers to the LED screen.

Find out more ➜

In Partnership with

Show Design: Shania Twain
Creative Producer: Cory Fitzgerald (Silent House Group)
Lighting Direction / Sockpuppet Programmer: André Petrus
Disguise Programmer: Adam Fontana (Dark Matter Technologies)
Content: Blink Media
Video Vendor (US): Fuse Technical Group
Video Vendor (UK): Video Design
Touring Disguise Tech: Ben Rotella

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whatever your query.

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