disguise

CASE STUDY

disguise solution drives immersive visuals in Broadway's "Here Lies Love"

After becoming an off-Broadway hit in New York, London and Seattle, award-winning original musical "Here Lies Love" opened in New York City's Broadway Theatre in the summer of 2023. In this case study you will discover how disguise media servers drive an innovative narrative traversing across discos and an infamous dictatorial regime.

Summary

Central to the play's production was renovating the Broadway Theatre, one of Broadway's largest venues, to host a dance floor instead of traditional orchestra seating. Its orchestra seats were removed and a performance space evocative of a nightclub and wrapped with screens was constructed. Audience members are offered ticketing options on the dance floor itself where they stand and move around in various locations including the centre of the action with the cast; elevated gallery seats; the front mezzanine, which now functions as the orchestra with catwalks and satellite stages for the cast; and in the rear mezzanine.

In this Club Millennium, a DJ tells clubbers to enjoy the party as they watch the staff reenact the life of Imelda Marcos. Thirty projectors and more than 60 LCD monitors fill the space and display video content for every moment of the show. Tony Award-nominated Projection Designer Peter Nigrini enhances the club setting with immersive visuals existing as a fundamental storytelling device.

Image credits: Billy Bustamante, Matthew Murphy and Evan Zimmerman

The challenge

Since several hundred audience members experience the show on the dance floor and others from innovative seating, they see the production from many different perspectives. The major addition to this version of the production was the addition of two wireless and eight PTZ cameras that make the show as immersive as possible.

It was necessary for the cameras to exist within the context of the story, visible to the characters and reproducing the action in period appropriate style. As a result, colour control, signal processing and compositing of the live feeds was critical. The cameras also needed to be distributed around the venue depending upon the relationship of any given audience member to the location of the live performance.

Image credits: Billy Bustamante, Matthew Murphy and Evan Zimmerman
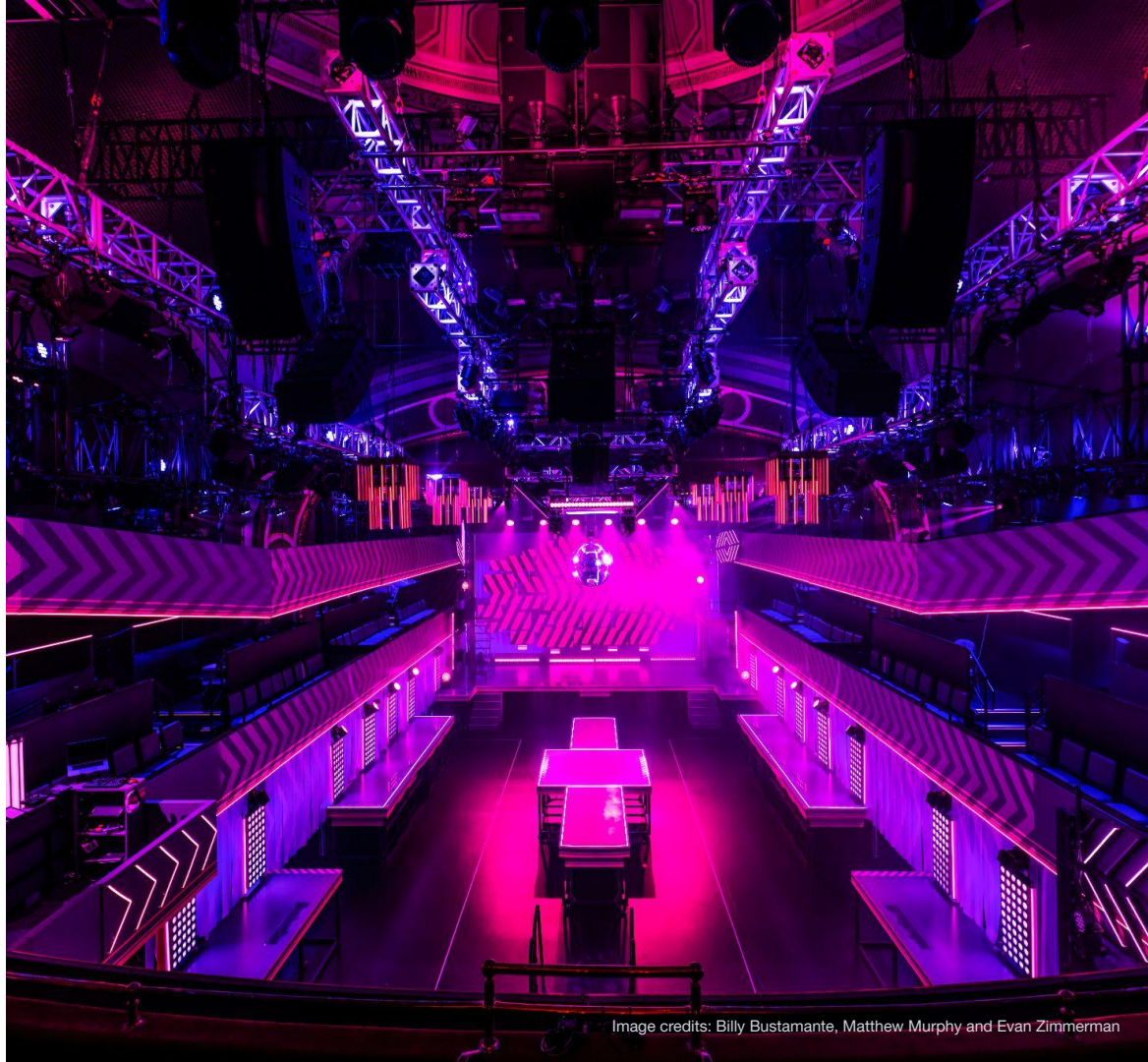
The solution

Nigrini selected a disguise GX 2C and three VX 4 media servers to drive the musical's immersive imagery. A long-time user of disguise media servers, his work and the software have grown up together in many ways. According to Nigrini, much of the way he builds a show is intertwined with the features of disguise.

For "Here Lies Love" Nigrini found that the disguise solution gave him the required degree of flexibility in image processing and distribution. As so much of a showgoer's experience depends on the seat (or dance floor position) they occupy, it was critical that Nigrini could rapidly check on how the show might look from various places in the theater. The disguise Designer software's 3D GUI made this possible.

Image credits: Billy Bustamante, Matthew Murphy and Evan Zimmerman

"Having spent almost 15 years working with disguise media servers and contributing to their feature set, they now fit my work like a bespoke suit. And one that I can always discuss with the tailor when I am looking for something new."

Peter Nigrini
Projection Designer

Results

The disguise media server solution helps deliver a complex, immersive musical unlike anything seen on Broadway before. The production has received largely positive reviews with some critics citing an amount of detail unique in Broadway shows and the effective balance of a good time atmosphere and the controversial life story of Imelda Marcos.

With the support of disguise and technical solutions partner, PRG (Production Resources Group), Nigrini delivers compelling visuals that immerse every audience member in Imelda Marcos's unique story, no matter their chosen seating option.
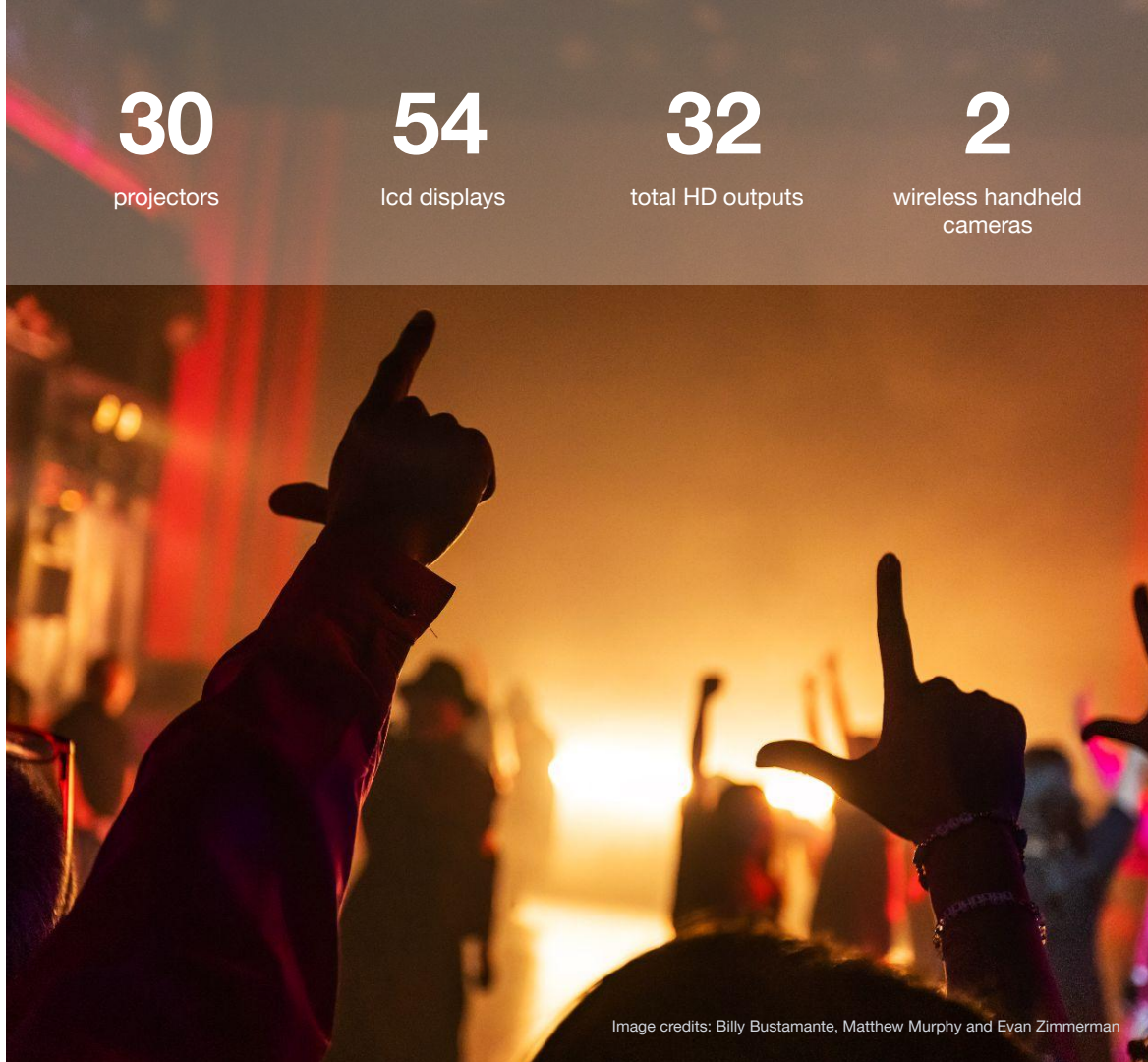
30 projectors

54 lcd displays

32 total HD outputs

2 wireless handheld cameras

Image credits: Billy Bustamante, Matthew Murphy and Evan Zimmerman

disguise equipment used

GX 2C

Built with the power to respond, the GX 2C media server delivers richer scenes at higher resolutions, and smoother frame-rates than ever before.

Find out more ⊙→

VX 4

Optimised for playing up to four times uncompressed 4K60 and lossless 10-bit video, the VX 4 powers content of the highest quality at any scale.

Find out more ⊙→

In Partnership with

Associate Projection Designer: Robert Figueira

Assistant Projection Designer: Zoey Crow

Lead Animator: C. Andrew Bauer

Animators: Dan Vatsky, Kate Ducey, Lacey Erb, Lisa Renkel, Ryan Belock, Johnny Moreno and David Bengali

Projection Programmer: Ido Levran

Production Video: Asher Robinson

Deck Video/LX: Adam Bishop

Technical Solutions Partner: PRG

disguise

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Curious to know more about us?
Want to master our production toolkit?
Need support on your project?

Our team will be happy to speak to you,
whatever your query.

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e-learning programme