

Robe Gets into the System

Posted on September 26, 2026



Photo by Event Rookie

System of a Down's 2026 stadium tour featured a large Robe moving light rig which was specified by Rob Sinclair, who created the initial lighting design and concept in early 2025.

On the previous incarnation, programmer Andre Petrus had created the strong backbone to the

current showfile together with Meg Sinclair, Daniel Richardson and Matt Arthur, who added extra finesse once on the road.

This time round, the show was further embellished by Matt – as lighting and show director – who oversaw the implementation of the new design. Matt was also out on the road in Europe this summer, operating lighting for the tour.

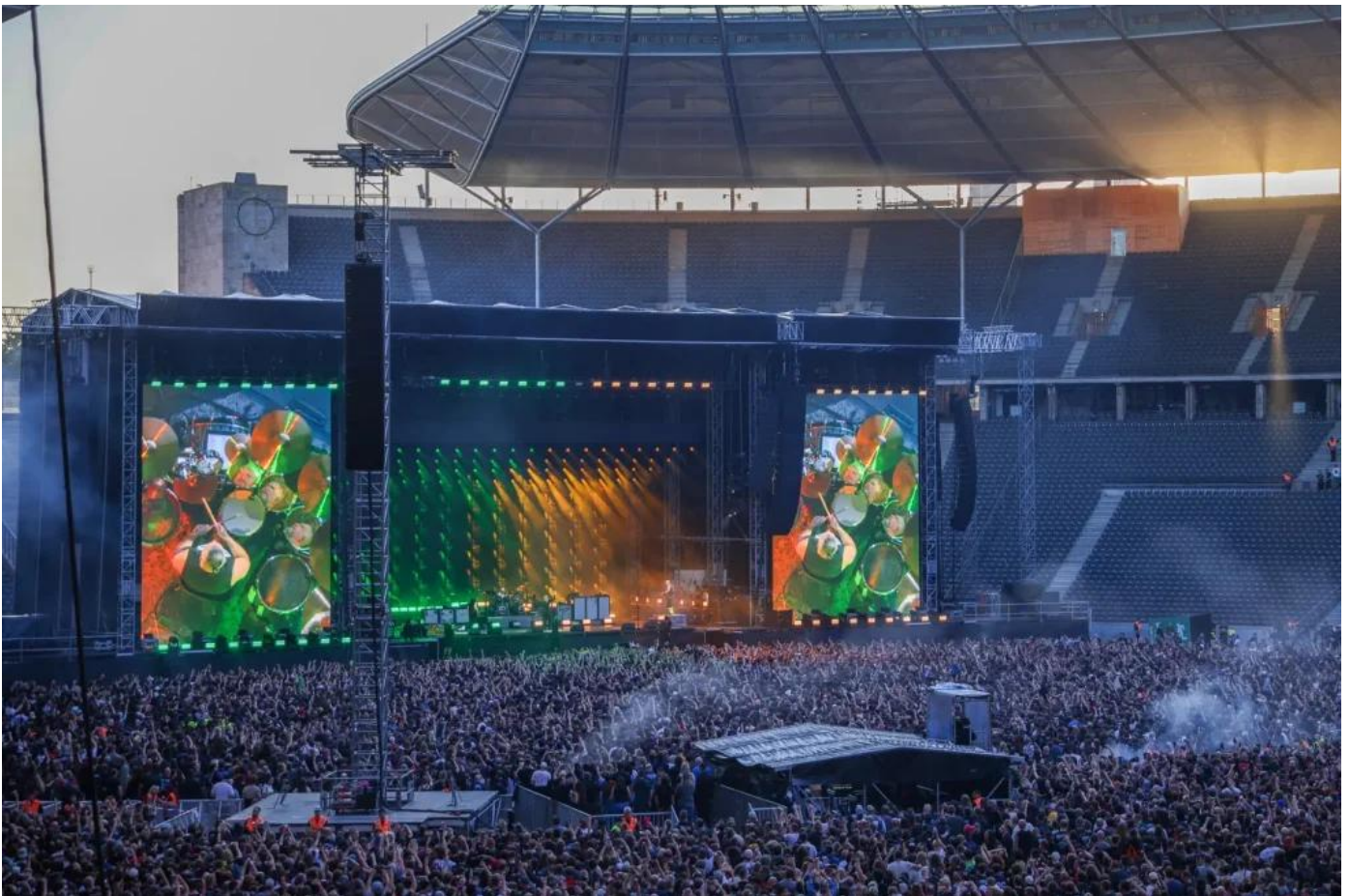


Photo by Event Rookie

On the rig were 128 x Robe iFORTES, 12 x iFORTE LTXs and 96 x iESPRITES with iESPRITE LTLs offered as a substitute for standard iESPRITES in Europe and chosen after a shootout at lighting

supplier Neg Earth Lights' warehouse in London.

The iESPRITE LTLs were picked for their power and versatility, which matches the band's incendiary live shows.

"These latest generation Robe products are simply amazing!" declared Matt, who admits that it is only recently that he has had the opportunity to properly maximise these Robe fixtures.

The visual look of the tour saw a close alignment between lighting and video.

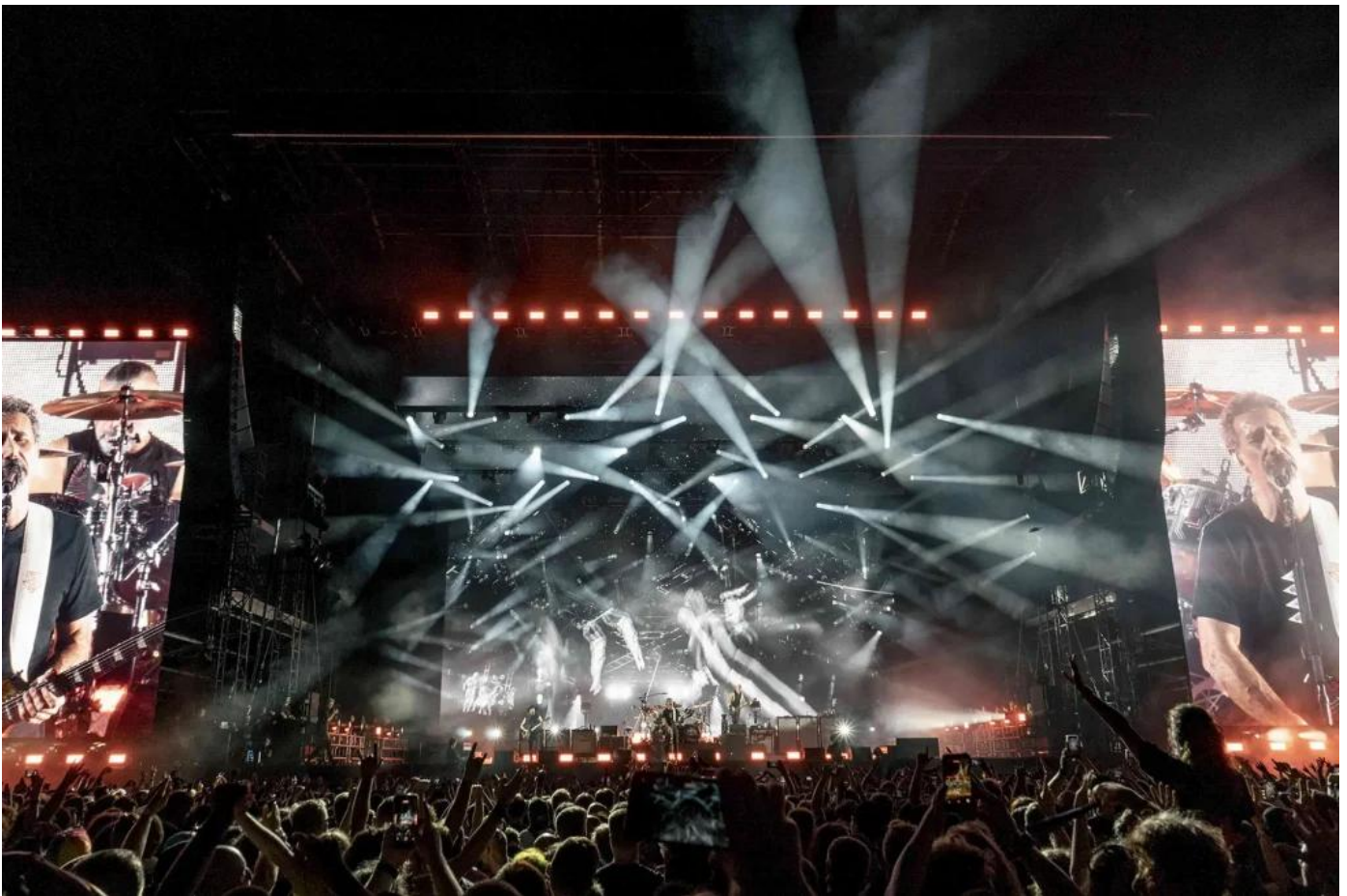


Photo by George Pitt

Robe Gets into the System

Over the stage were four straight 18-metre trusses complete with LED borders, all on an automation system that enabled them to create different architectural looks throughout the performance, and each of these was rigged with 18 x iFORTES.

These were used for all the essential band lighting and effects.

The stage wings were each up lit by another 8 x iFORTES per side on the stage deck. Deployed on short sections of pre-rig truss positioned all around the band as a floor package were 25 more iFORTES, together with 15 on the front truss, making up the impressive total.



Photo by George Pitt

A fifth roof truss upstage of the four automated ones was used to position four of the iFORTE LTXs, while the other eight were rigged each side on downstage ladders. From these positions they neatly and unobtrusively framed all the front-of-stage action.

Nine of the twelve iFORTE LTXs were controlled via Robe RoboSpot systems, and these were used for key'ing and highlighting the three front band members, with the drummer illuminated by the other three locked off in position, and with various positions programmed for the different architectural looks created by the automated truss moves.

Matt is a big fan of RoboSpots, commenting, "Being able to pre-determine when follow spots change colour, turn on / off, strobe, etc is a massive leap forward, and everyone benefits from using this system! Not having to call 9 follow spots means I can be super focused on the show and getting all those cues bang on, every night".



Photo by George Pitt

He also highlights other practical benefits like it being generally safer without people having to work at heights during the show, and if there are any issues with comms not being audible, the operator can simply continue following the target. “No more fade ins and fade outs, blackouts and restores or live colour changes. RoboSpot makes both of our jobs more straightforward, ultimately benefitting the show!” he elucidates.

In addition to the intense brightness and all the iFORTE dynamics and features, the luminaires were chosen for their high-quality output, high CRI and excellent skin tone rendering.

Robe Gets into the System

Further upstage, behind a 60 ft wide 30 ft high block of blow-through LED screen, were the 96 x iESPRITE LTLs in a 12 x 8 matrix pattern on 12 ladder trusses (8 fixtures per ladder), which looked extremely cool and created some retina-burning signature looks, as well as more subtle fluid kinetic effects – a mix of raw hard-hitting big-metal rock show attitude and flowing kinesis that matched or contrasted with the video!

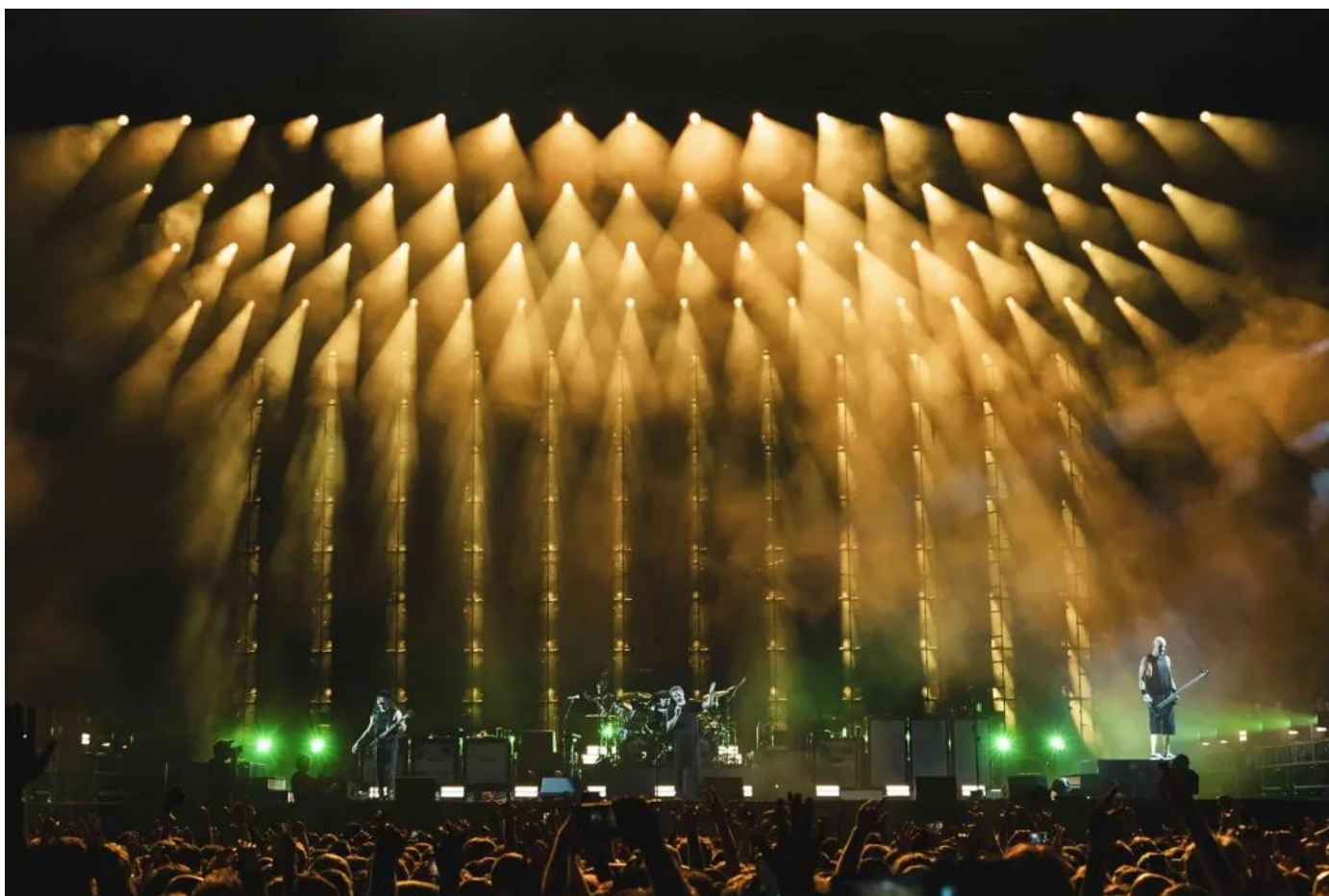


Photo by George Pitt

The rig also included 104 strobes and 12 blinders (the latter beneath the ego risers), but the backbone was the three types of Robe luminaire.

Matt likes many features of these new Robe products, noting how Robe has further refined the colour mixing, which he describes as “extremely good and smooth,” while also highlighting “a nice gobo set and a really flat field of light with their LED engine.”

He has been working with System of a Down since 2017 and is a big fan of having large quantities of fewer fixture types, rather than a miscellaneous collection of many, explaining that as they tour across different territories, this is always their biggest ask from local suppliers.

He feels the FORTE range in particular has been a “game changer” for Robe. “They are bulletproof and as bright as the sun,” he quips with a smile. “Seriously, they have plenty of punch and have proved super reliable, and I just love the big ‘full-faced’ spot aesthetic! I will definitely spec them in the future.”

Brightness is obviously an issue when competing with large LED surfaces, and both iFORTES and iESPRITE LTLs delivered. iESPRITE LTLs were a good physical size to make up the back wall of lights.

The tour started in Stockholm and ran for a month, preceded by production rehearsals at Fly by Nite in Redditch, UK. They played two highly anticipated London dates at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium and Paris’s Stade De France amongst others, with all shows sold out. Overall, it was a massive success as the band remains an all-time contemporary metal favourite.

There will be another show in the US in October and the tour visits Australia and New Zealand in January and February 2027.



Photo by JJ Valchar

Last year, SOAD played the US and Latin America using the same system, with the lighting and video kit supplied by Gateway Production Services.

Lighting crew chief Dan Arnold came to Europe with the production to work on this Euro tour, together with Neg Earth's crew of six – distro / dimmer tech Mark "Ethnic" Cooper, FOH / lighting tech Graham Feast; lighting techs Martin Strods, James Butler and Chloe Boucher, plus RoboSpot

and network architect George Pitt, all chiefed by Harry Smith. "They were all fantastic!" declared Matt.

Video for the European leg was supplied by 4Wall, SOAD's disguise programmer was Matisse Desmedt, and their live camera director is James Duer. Keeping everyone and everything organised on the road was production manager Paul Binder.