

Robe Goes Wild for Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds Tour

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Australian singer, musician and writer Nick Cave – whose eclectic and acclaimed musical influence has inspired generations since the 1980s – has completed the final European leg of a world tour with The Bad Seeds. This run of shows followed on from their *Wild God* album campaign in 2024/25.

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Photo by Dougal Gorman

The lighting design was created by Sydney-based LD Grant Hickey and included 22 x Robe iESPRITE LTL wash beam moving lights at its core, together with 9 x iFORTE LTXs, which were rigged on the locally supplied trusses and used for band back light. All of these touring fixtures were supplied by PRG Belgium.

On the technical rider, festivals and promoters across the 32-date tour were asked to additionally provide 6 x iFORTE LTXs for FOH spots, plus another two on stage for side lights / kickers.

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Photo by Dougal Gorman

Grant was professionally reunited with Nick Cave at the end of last year when asked on board as LD. While he had worked for a previous LD as programmer and right-hand between 2010 and 2017, this time he was in full creative control of lighting, bringing fresh energy and style to the lighting aesthetic.

Grant chose to use the Robe iESPRITE LTL wash beams at the heart of the lighting rig, together with the iFORTE LTXs, for their power and flexibility.

iFORTE LTXs provided lots of punch combined with a nice big fat lens that he knew would work

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well for the shows that started during dusk and slipped into full darkness. “There’s not much else out there that works as well for all these different natural lighting conditions,” stated Grant.



Photo by Chloe Hashemi

The iESPRITE LTLs were picked for being bright yet light in weight, as 20 of the 22 fixtures were positioned on 20 x Wahlberg lift columns dotted around the stage. The remaining two were strategically positioned downstage of the front runway, fixed to the audience barricades for optimal front and side light in this area.

The onstage iESPRITE LTLs topped four lift towers down each side of the stage and another 12

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upstage of the band. The fixtures on these had to be under 45kg, produce quality light and be weatherproof because all the summer shows were outdoors and the positions exposed.

Grant had used iFORTE LTXs before, but the iESPRITE LTL was a new experience. Darren McLanders from Robe ANZ organised a demo for Grant in Sydney, who was suitably impressed with the output and features.



Photo by Chloe Hashemi

These Robe products were the backbone of the lighting system. The only other lights were some strobes, some moving LED battens and one 24K fresnel special.

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The nine iFORTE LTXs were rigged on whatever house bars or trussing was available over the stage at each venue.

It wasn't a big flash-and-trash show; lighting was very much focused on supporting the artist and his band. "People come to see Nick and the Bad Seeds rather than the live production," underlined Grant. "So, my job is very much to enhance and support his considerable presence as a performer with subtle and appropriate lighting," he explained, adding that "naturally" it also had to look as good as possible for the host of audience Insta stories created during and after each show. This is not as easy as it might sound!

That said, there was plenty of dynamics in the set, and opportunities for vibrant and dramatic lighting, strobing and lots of contrasty scenes.



Photo by Chloe Hashemi

He noted that the most important luminaires in the rig were the two on the front barriers together with the three spots – two rear and one front – on Nick Cave, so the reliability and repeatability of both fixture types were key.

It was also crucial to light Nick and the Bad Seeds well for the cameras as IMAG video was an important aspect of the show, albeit less conspicuous and more blended rather than in-the-face!

For the 'exclusive homecoming concert' and only UK show staged at Preston Park in Brighton, an additional 40 x iFORTE LTXs were added to the rig, supplied by Colour Sound Experiment.

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Cultivating the specific look and style demanded by the artist was among Grant's biggest – and most enjoyable – challenges: “Nick is very aware of how he looks and feels onstage and that's a big part of the brief, and while he does have input into lighting at certain times, he also trusts us to get on with our jobs.”

He highlighted that both iFORTES and iESPITES were excellent, and he was also struck by the availability and how they could source the LTX follow spotting package everywhere, even in some of the less commonly toured parts of Europe, although they also toured two of their own iFORTE LTXs ‘just in case’.

Grant especially enjoyed the two nights they played at Pula Arena in Croatia, a truly magical venue and among the best-preserved ancient Roman amphitheatres in the world, where the local production was supplied by Ivas Grupa d.o.o.