

Shakira

Without Tears

The star triumphantly
returns to live
performance in the
*Las Mujeres Ya No
Lloran World Tour*

Photos and text: Steve Jennings

The Colombian singer-songwriter, dancer, and record producer Shakira's *Las Mujeres Ya No Lloran* (named after her 2024 album; English translation: *Women No Longer Cry*) is the all-time highest-grossing tour by a Latin artist. Playing both arenas and stadiums, it has included a record-setting 12 sold-out nights at Mexico City's GNP Seguros Stadium.

The tour has been a roaring success. According to Maddie Browning at Boston.com. "Her two-hour set wasn't just a concert; it was an experience. Roaring flames burst from the stage, an intricate bubblegum pink candy-themed bar and bedroom set rolled in, a huge S-shaped structure served as a pole-dancing station, and a giant inflatable she-wolf beamed laser eyes into the audience."

Olivia Petty, in the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, noted, "As the lights went dark, the fog machines let loose, and the first of many CGI visuals began to roll across the 50' tall screens, and a towering computer-generated Shakira began to make her way across sandy dunes.

Synchronously, a cluster of spotlights fell to an aisle in the audience, and the star made her first appearance wearing a bedazzled silver tracksuit and reflective sunglasses. Flanked by her dance crew, she powered her way through the crowd and to the jutting catwalk, where the first notes of 'La Fuerte' rang out, and a hydraulic platform began to lift her upward."

Indeed, with the lifts and a massive video wall, complete with built-in doors, the show is a nonstop spectacle. Speaking to the online publication *Flaunt*, Damun Jawanrudi, co-production designer with Julio Himede (both of the firm Yellow Studio), says, "We designed the stage to always stay in motion—whether through the fluid integration of kinetic elements, a thrust that brings her into the audience, or a seamless video wall that could carry her avatar, visual interludes, and storytelling moments. It was about giving her presence and flexibility: lifts that elevate her, lighting that could shift from deeply intimate to bold and powerful, and a layout that let her move between distance and closeness." He adds, "It's all about tension—holding back just enough so that when the stage does transform, it's impactful. We designed a minimalist base that could shift dramatically without giving away those changes in advance. The video doors stay closed until a moment of reveal, lifts emerge from the floor only when needed, and then everything returns to a neutral, almost meditative state. That restraint allows the show to swing between extremes: from massive, global moments like 'Waka Waka' to something as intimate as 'Antología,' where it feels like Shakira is singing right next to you."

Dan Norman, lighting designer

Norman was approached by Ashley Evans, from creative directors Squared Division, with whom he had worked on previous projects. "They were looking for a designer with my reputation and skill set," he says. His creativity was

needed thanks to challenges posed by the production.

"Because the design had massive LED screen doors that opened, it required the side IMAG screens to be on a track to move offstage out of position for the center LED doors to have clearance and swing open," Norman says. This unfortunately started to max out the weight capacity of the touring roof systems that were provided at the stadiums. "I had to cut back the weight of the lighting rig, which dictated a bit of how the design turned out. Along with the budget and weight constraints, I worked with the original touring vendor, PRG, on this portal system of lights surrounding the main LED screen. There were designs with more layers of truss and lights around the screens, but we weren't able to keep them. But I'm happy with where we landed, and Shakira was also very happy."

Shakira likes to keep her shows similar day to day, no matter the venue. "The main things that we changed from the stadium show to the arena show were just downsizing the screens to fit the max width of the arenas," Norman says. "Much of the programming and looks are the same from stadium to arena. Because we are indoors, you'll see the beams and effects a little bit more clearly because you don't have the light pollution from the outside world; we're also able to hold a lot more haze and fog clouds in the arena so the beams become more visible and impactful."

Norman says that Shakira was a major contributor to the show's look, taking a hands-on approach with Evans and Norman. "At the start it was a little bit difficult to understand exactly what she was looking for, but once we got into the groove of things, I started to predict and learn what she liked," Norman says. "She's very particular about her key light, and that took several rounds of edits and equipment changes until we landed on a place that makes her very happy. Yellow Studio did a very good job of designing a very clean stage for us to work with, keeping all the lines clean."

He adds that everything about the show's segments conveys the energy of the song in ways that Shakira wants. "We refined it every day in rehearsals. She was very specific on songs that needed to feel 'warm.' Other songs needed an extreme number of strobes to make everyone feel like dancing. She especially wanted the last section to be like an all-out rave. The last song in the show, called 'Bzrp Music Sessions, Vol. 53,' took about 20 hours to program, as there are so many sections in it." (A typical number takes four to six hours.)

"It's such a long song, but we really wanted to hit every single detail," Norman says. "I remember the first previz pass on it took us ten hours. And we kept touching it up in rehearsals. The color palettes kept changing in rehearsals as well. It was refined, a lot of it matching the video content direction for seamless integration. When lasers [from Pyrotecnico] came into the fold, we made sure to drop into dark colors, allowing them headroom to play. We blocked

off sections of songs for them to lead, then sections for us to lead, sometimes both at the same time for when we need to go all-out crazy.”

Norman and Eric Christian have programmed numerous shows together, and, the former notes, they have a very hybrid way of working: “Sometimes I’ll program a song, sometimes he will, sometimes I will program the main looks and ask Eric to create different sequences that will time-code hit in the music. Sometimes Eric will take a pass at a song, and I’ll do a finishing-touches pass over him. A lot of times it’s a very fluid, hybrid process. We program shows similarly; we can work on each other’s programming without a lot of stress or confusion. Because the show has played festivals, we did a bunch of the programming with grandMA3 recipes [designed for shows where changes are expected along the way]. After the main show was programmed, we had Peter Forster, another programmer, help us clone it over to any of the festivals we’d go to.”

Norman says designing a stadium show is definitely a challenge because he’s accustomed to having an arena roof over the audience and a catwalk for hanging lights. “Only being able to position light fixtures around the screen or in the stage house once the LED doors swing open makes it a little difficult to get a whole bunch of varied looks out of the rig,” he notes. “I’ve done stadium tours in the past, but only as an assistant designer and program-

mer. It was very rewarding to create a lighting design of my own from scratch. There were a lot of lessons along the road that have helped me grow as a designer, especially when it comes to key-lighting a show of this scale and at these distances. We essentially had to key-light Shakira 360, so she looked immaculate from all angles.”

Forster’s contribution was helpful because some tour stops relied on local suppliers, which required cloning a fixture like the ACME Lighting Gemini into a generic LED round-lens wash light. “We brought Peter in during the last week of rehearsals to start advancing all the fixture types and made sure that lighting directors Alyssa Milione and Vanessa Arciga were supported,” Norman says. “When the stadium tour kicked off, we had Alyssa running timecode effects lighting, and Vanessa was shading Shakira’s spotlight, depending on which direction she looked and the camera was shooting. Then Kate Leahy was the followspot caller. Later on, Kathy Beer took over Alyssa’s position, and Kate Leahy took over for Vanessa. This has been a nearly two-year-long adventure, and they have all been fantastic!”

Kate Leahy, lighting director

Leahy handles all the followspot shading and key light. “In the stadium rig we use 26 [Robe] iForte LTX Robospots,” she says. “We have 19 in the arena rig. I also call followspots in English or Spanish, depending on where we





Above and opposite: The main LED wall, featuring ROE Visual CB8 panels, delivers just over eight million pixels of resolution, is 185' wide and 32' tall, weighs just under 40,000lb, and requires a significant amount of infrastructure and processing capability.

are. Then I also call lighting deck moves out to the lighting team.” Leahy says she can get a little confused as to which language is on which channel! “Kathy and I work well together to focus the rig in general, which is quite sizeable.”

Leahy started on the stadium leg calling spots in January 2025, then took over from LD Vanessa Arciga after the US run last summer when the two roles (caller and shader operator) were combined. “I have 12 channels of comms I use during the show,” she says. “Most of the time I’m talking to my followspot operators. I will talk to video director Klaas Vantomme from time to time for fun, but as far as cameras go, I have a point-to-point with the camera shader, Werner van den Eede. Werner and I work together to make Shakira look her absolute best on IMAG. It has been quite a unique ride with this tour family.”

Kathy Beer, lighting director

While Leahy oversees key lighting and followspots, Beer handles the lighting rig, console programming, and any rig-related questions or adjustments. They work together on focusing. Beer joined at the end of the first US leg in 2025.

The arena leg this summer saw a slight decrease in the lighting package from the stadium run, along with a few

substitutions. The package includes, from ACME Lighting, 90 Geminis, 22 Tornados, and 28 Strobe 6 IPs; from Ayrton, 36 Domino LTs and 36 Khamsins; from CHAUVET Professional, two COLORado Solo Bar 1s, nine COLORado Solo Bar 4s, 22 COLORado Solo Bar 6s, and 14 COLORado PXL Curve 12 LEDs. Also included are 125 Elation PROTEUS HYBRID MAX units, eight GLP JDC Burst 1s, ten Robe iFORTE LTX units, 19 iFORTE LTX FS units, 13 TMB Solaris Flare Q+s, 60 TMB Solaris Flare Q+LRs, 28 four-light LED blinders, ten Martin ZR44 foggers, five MDG theONE hazers, and 16 TMB ProFans.

PixMob outfits fans at each show with its reusable Waveband 4 LED wristbands, creating RF-controlled effects that are activated across multiple performances. The company collects an average of 70% of wristbands for reuse without recharging. The tour included one of PixMob’s largest activations to date during a free concert in Brazil for a record-breaking two million-plus attendees.

About the fixtures in the rig, Beer says, “A few were new to me. For instance, I had never used ACME Tornados or Geminis. It was nice to see them in action. I’ve had a great time working with Dan [Norman], Eric Christian, Peter, and Kate. It’s been a fantastic team to be a part of.”



Above and opposite: Norman says designing a stadium show is definitely a challenge because he's accustomed to having an arena roof over the audience and a catwalk for hanging lights. "Only being able to position light fixtures around the screen or in the stage house once the LED doors swing open makes it a little difficult to get a whole bunch of varied looks out of the rig," he notes.

Ernest Guzman, video crew chief

Guzman, an independent contractor working with Solotech, says a defining aspect of the production is the video signal path's true 4K workflow. "From content creation and media server playback through switching, processing, and final display, the entire video chain operates in 4K, ensuring exceptional image quality and sharpness across every screen in the show. To power this workflow, we utilize four Disguise GX3+ media servers, providing the processing power and performance needed to drive the show's high-resolution visuals while maintaining seamless playback and synchronization across the entire system."

The show utilizes a multi-camera system designed to capture the performance from every angle, including front-of-house, pit, runway, and onstage positions, for a total of nine cameras. "The package combines operated cameras and rail camera systems to provide both traditional broadcast-style coverage and dynamic, immersive shots throughout the performance," Guzman says. "We are utilizing two Sony HDC-3500 cameras, providing primary coverage of the performance from the front-of-house position. In the pit, we are also using two Sony HDC-3500 cameras to capture close-up performance moments and dynamic stage coverage. Along with our rail camera systems, we utilize two Sony P50 cameras to provide smooth, dynamic movement and coverage along the runway. Our wireless

camera package includes a Sony P50 mounted on the Steadicam system for mobile, stabilized shots throughout the performance, along with a Sony HDC-5500 handheld camera for operator-driven coverage and creative live camera work."

The scale of LED deployment is a major part of the system's design. The main LED wall, featuring ROE Visual CB8 panels delivering just over eight million pixels of resolution, is 185' wide and 32' tall, weighing just under 40,000lb and requiring a significant amount of infrastructure and processing capability. "With the help of our friends at [custom staging provider] TAIT, we were able to automate the main center section doors to open and close during the show, changing the look throughout the show as we could position them at different angles," Guzman says. "This allowed us to have a full cinematic shot with one camera encompassing the entire LED wall and also be able to revert to a more traditional IMAG-style look for different numbers in the show."

The LED runway floor adds another eight million pixels, measuring 132' long by 16' wide, extending the visual canvas into the audience space and creating a fully immersive experience. Alongside that are two cake lifts, provided by TAIT. Surrounded by 44 ROE Visual CB5 tiles, content is displayed on all sides of the ramp lifts as they rise. The video system is powered by four Disguise GX3+ media

servers, with Notch providing real-time graphics and effects. The ROE walls are driven by four Brompton Tessera SX40 LED processors; the YesTech LED stage deck is powered by four NovaStar MX40 processors. An extensive fiber-optic network interconnects the video system, providing the high-bandwidth, low-latency infrastructure required to distribute content to the Brompton XD data distribution units, ensuring synchronized playback and consistent image quality across the LED walls.

"This tour has been an incredible example of what can be accomplished when a talented group of people comes together with a shared goal of delivering something truly special," Guzman says. "The scale and complexity of the production required an enormous amount of teamwork, communication, and dedication from every department, and I want to recognize the entire crew for their professionalism, long hours, and commitment to excellence."

Klaas Vantomme, video director

Vantomme is a freelancer who has toured with Beyoncé and The Chicks. "Emelie Scaminaci, a colleague from Belgium who has been working a long time with artists like Madonna and Beyoncé, introduced me to the Shakira

camp," he says. "Through James Merryman [video director and creative] and Seanne Farmer [show caller and creative], I ended up working this tour with Shakira."

"From specific framing to the pace of the cuts, Shakira has an opinion on everything, which is good, considering how involved she gets," Vantomme says. "I try to work with the camera team to translate this as best as possible into what the fans in the stadium or arena will see."

To switch between cameras, Vantomme uses a Ross 3ME mixer. "We also use CuePilot so we can script each song as effectively as possible and make quick adjustments when needed," he says. CuePilot is a multi-camera scripting software used to pre-visualize and synchronize live shows. (See *LSA*, October 2025.) "Each cameraman has an iPad with all the information about timing and shots. This makes the workflow a lot easier on this tour, where every show features guest artists and requires adjustments."

"All in all, we've been on this tour for over a year and a half," Vantomme notes. "It makes me very proud that we've been able to keep the camera crew together. We've really become a group of friends who are proud of their work and have a great time together. Both on and off the



job. We've been through a lot, especially in South America. Working in difficult conditions and under a lot of pressure. I'm incredibly proud of everyone."

Bill Sheppell, front-of-house engineer

Having mixed for some of the biggest artists in the industry [Beyoncé, John Mellencamp, Korn, Prince, Bon Jovi, and Green Day, among others], Sheppell says he's pretty lucky that most people trust him to do what he does. "It's been a real pleasure working with Shakira and the band.

so complex, none of the other consoles really could do everything we needed for this. The large screens and better graphics also help in our decision-making there. We are sharing a fiber loop for inputs and outputs, and it is completely maxed out. We each have another loop for our outboard racks. We could not have gotten the channel/output counts with any other setup."

Sheppell says a distinctive feature of the tour is the number of guest artists in different cities. "Shakira really likes to give fans a different experience when possible, so



"With the help of our friends at [custom staging provider] TAIT, we were able to automate the main center section doors to open and close during the show, changing the look through the show as we could position them at different angles," Guzman says. "This allowed us to have a full cinematic shot with one camera encompassing the entire LED wall and also be able to revert to a more traditional IMAG-style look for different numbers in the show."

Her producers and I have similar sonic ideas, so that has also been a really good working relationship."

Sheppell mixes the tour on a DiGiCo Quantum 852. He notes that he's used almost every DiGiCo console over the years, and when this tour started, he and monitor engineer Travis White decided to go with the 852s. "As this show is

we have that fairly often. For in-console effects, I'm using [DiGiCo's] Mustard EQ and compressors on quite a few channels. I also use the Mustard MSE [Mustard Source Enhancer] to clean up backing and guest vocals. They all work really well. I really like to use an [Overstayer Recording Equipment] SFE on my drum compression

group. It adds a certain sound that I really like. On Shakira's vocals, I have a TUBE-TECH CL1B, which is pretty much my favorite for vocal compression. I use a Bricasti M7 for her vocal reverb, and my trusty old Eventide H-3000 D/SE for vocal widening. I also have a few [Empirical Labs] EL8 Distressors on kick and snare groups. As far as outboard plug-ins, the newest addition is the [Alpha Labs] DeFeedback plug-in on her vocal to clean up spill into her mic, as she is on a long thrust in front of the PA for much of the night. It's really been helpful. I use the newish [Universal Audio] UA Apollo for some really nice reverbs as well, then the AMS RMX16, EMT 140, and Lexicon 224. Waves F6 is also a go-to that I really like."

The tour's PA system is a d&b package. Shepell says it went from large-scale GSLs for the stadium shows to medium-to-large KSLs in the additional arena show run, for main and side hangs, 20 deep in each position. "We can get a better wrap to the floor with the KSL in this configuration, while keeping the top of the array flatter to get good throw into the far corners of the arenas," he says. "One hundred eighty hangs are 16-deep V80 cabinets. Flown subs are nine SL-SUBs per side. Ground subs are three stacks of three cardioid B-22s. They fit better under the front of the stage. Front fills are Y10s. This configuration keeps the sound very similar to our stadium setup, but works a bit better in arenas, I think."

Shepell adds, "This tour has been one of the longest and busiest I have done in many decades of touring, and I want to thank every audio crew member that has been on this tour for their hard work, and for making our department look good out here."

Travis White, monitor engineer

White is a longtime DiGiCo user, so he says it only made sense to go with a Quantum 852 as a step up from his usual Quantum 7. "I have not regretted that choice," he says. "Other than a few small issues I'll attribute to bouncing around South America, the console has been really reliable. The thing that attracts me most to the DiGiCo platform is the ability to make the console do anything in regard to routing. I don't always stick to the traditional way of laying out a desk for monitor mixing, and the 852 doesn't stand in the way of that."

He doesn't use too much in-console processing, as he notes his outboard plug-ins get the sound he's looking for. "I am using the console's Mustard channel quite a bit, mostly for the MSE, DiGiCo's version of something like the Waves PS," he admits. "I find myself adding the MSE to more and more inputs. It really helps clean up the ear mixes from stage bleed."

White has three different plug-in setups. "They're mostly used for noise suppression and [Waves] H-Delay. I have two UAD live racks. I also have a [Digital Audio Denmark] Core 256 [digital audio interface] feeding a Mac mini host-

ing [Audioström] Live Professor. I've loaded that with as many instances of LiquidSonics Seventh Heaven reverb as I can get away with. It's my go-to reverb on everything. I also have an analog rack of gear all on Shakira's mix and vocals. Her vocal chain after leaving the desk is an API channel strip and a TUBE-TECH CL1B compressor. This has been my go-to for vocals for the last several artists I've worked for. Two Bricasti M7s for main vocal reverb and a vocal delay reverb effect."

He uses analog summing for Shakira's mix with a Rupert Neve 5059 and 5057, and he feeds them stems from the console. "I find it opens the mix up quite a bit for IEMs. There is an Overstayer Stereo Field Effect as well as an API 2500+ across the drum and bass bus. I use an SSL Bus+ on a band bus. For a bit of overall EQ, I have an Elysia Xfilter that does the trick. Last step of her mix, her vocal passes through an SSL Fusion that I really like for getting a tight, punchy mix that still leaves space."

White notes that Shakira had Sennheiser for her vocal mic long before he got in the camp, so there was no reason to change anything. "She's on the SKM6000 with an MM 435 [dynamic cardioid] capsule. I've actually lost count of how many we have now, as she has them custom-colored for every costume change. During the rehearsal process, Shakira tried several different in-ear models [from JH Audio]. She was previously on the JH13v2 but wanted to try different options. Once she tried the JH Sheenas, everything seemed to settle in place for her."

"Mixing for her is a challenge but fun and never boring," White adds. "Her mix is a full-time job. I have a ton of snapshots built during rehearsals that automate any changes the band needs. Her mix is loud and aggressive. She wants an in-your-face, club-style mix that also leaves plenty of space for her vocals to sit right on top in the middle. On the more rock-style songs, it's all about dialing back the comps and limiters a bit to open up room so everything has a place to sit. The two different styles are where the analog summing really shines for me. It lets me sit somewhere in the middle and push the mix in either direction, depending on the song. Shakira wants a full album-style mix, and that's what I'm trying to recreate. I ride instrument solos and continually change the threshold of noise suppression based on where she is on the stage, which is spent significantly in front of the PA. She loves to interact with the audience, and we are pretty extravagant on the crowd mic setup to make her feel like she's surrounded by the audience."

White says Shakira is an absolute perfectionist for the right reasons and, because of that, expects a lot of her crew. "Then again, so am I as well as the crew, so that's why it really works. It's a challenge to keep up sometimes but also incredibly rewarding. She is so invested and involved in her show from every angle. Her work ethic, drive, and determination are really pretty amazing. She has



Las Mujeres Ya No Lloran World Tour

Production Crew:

Creative Direction: Squared Division, Ashley Evans
 Production Design: Yellow Studio, Julio Himede/Damun Jawanrudi
 Lighting Designer: Dan Norman
 Lighting Programmers: Eric Christian, Dan Norman
 Lighting Directors: Alyssa Milione, Vanessa Arciga, Peter Forster, Kathy Beer, Kate Leahy
 Video/LED Crew Chief: Ernest Guzman
 Video Director: Klaas Vantomme
 FOH Engineer: Bill Shepell
 Systems Engineer: Matt "Slag" Fridley
 Monitor Engineer: Travis White
 Tour Director: Marty Hom
 Tour Manager: Rashad Ismail
 Production Managers: David Wright (first leg), Luke Larson (second leg)
 Artist Manager: Nadine Eliya

Production Companies:

Lighting/Video: PRG, Solotech
 Visuals: Blink
 Sound: Clair Global
 SFX (Pyro/Lasers): Pyrotecnico
 Custom Staging/Scenic: TAIT

Shakira "is on the SKM6000 with an MM 435 [dynamic cardioid] capsule," White says. "I've actually lost count of how many we have now, as she has them custom-colored for every costume change. During the rehearsal process, Shakira tried several different in-ear models [from JH Audio]. She was previously on the JH13v2 but wanted to try different options. Once she tried the JH Sheenas, everything seemed to settle in place for her."

a natural way of pulling the best out of everyone on the team. Something that's always stuck with me about doing this for a living is that it's a team sport. It takes everyone to make this happen at the level that's required. Without the crew working as one, it just isn't going to happen. We've had quite a few crew changes over the course of

almost two years on this tour, and somehow, I always end up with the best of the best in the audio department."

Following the Madrid residency, the tour is scheduled to play Doha and Abu Dhabi, concluding on November 28 with a special stand-alone concert at the Pyramids of Giza in Al Haram, Egypt. 🌍