

Robe style for Jamie Cullum

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Courtesy Louise Stickland

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Super talented jazz-pop singer/songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Jamie Cullum is on the road again with great flair around the UK and Europe with an equally stylish lighting design by Hadyn Thomas.

The moving lights are all Robe, supplied along with the rest of the lighting equipment by Leeds, UK, based Zig Zag Lighting.

Thomas has been a big Robe fan ever since he started using the brand back in 2004, so it was a “no brainer” when it came to spec’ing the rig!

“Robe has always been very reliable and offered plenty of creative options,” he states.

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His show for Cullum, for whom he's worked – initially as a dimmer tech – since 2004, is a fabulous blend of elegance and cool to match Cullum's dynamic performance which has won him massive popular success amidst great critical acclaim.

Thomas received a basic lighting brief from show designer Mark Silver, who designed an innovative set based on piano strings. These were fabricated by Zig Zag and consist of a series of boxed winch sets with white nylon rope – the bottom sections sit on the floor upstage, while the top sections are raised up to the trussing mother grid, pulling the ropes up with them, and tensioned when at trim height. Integral to the boxes are LED lighting fixtures which point directly

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upwards, so the sheeny texture of the ropes catches the light beautifully.

The overall look of the show draws inspiration from the legendary jazz record label Blue Note. Silver was very keen on certain colours to be used, and so Thomas also needed to use fixtures with excellent CMY mixing facilities to reproduce these in the perfect hue - another reason for choosing Robe.



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Thomas keeps the colour mixes simple and clean and beam effects are used sparingly, but with great impact, in a jazzy but not overly flashy vibe!

Above the stage on the mother grid are 12 Robe ColorWash 575E ATs and 8 ColorSpot 700E ATs, and these are utilised to achieve the saturated cyan, magenta and yellow mixes that are integral to the show, along with classic primaries of blue and red.

Then there are 4 ColorSpot 575E ATs upstage on the mother grid and 6 on the floor across the back of the stage, used for heavy back lighting of the whole band and to silhouette Cullum on the projection screen upstage of the strings. They also move out into the audience at times for gobo effects.



On the front truss are 4 ColorSpot 700E ATs and another 6 ColorWash 575E ATs. These are for full stage washes and for picking out Cullum at the piano, the Rhodes keyboard and the various other stage positions he used during his energetic performance. Two house follow spots also help pick him out when he is on the move.

“It’s fundamentally a jazz show, laced with some elements of rock ‘n’ roll,” says Thomas describing the crossover style of lighting which suits the show so well.

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He particularly likes the animation wheels on the ColorSpot 700E ATs, and thinks the zoom range on the ColorWashes is “fantastic”, with the flexibility of almost being able to use them as washes or spots.



All the lighting is controlled via an Avo Diamond 4 Elite. There is no set list and plenty of improvisation, so he has a pool of songs programmed and keeps on his toes during the show, although he can sometimes anticipate what's coming up next by Cullum's preamble.

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The projection screen is also used for an arty camera mix and Catalyst media server playback, supplied by XL Video.