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Justin Townsend Lights Acclaimed *Jagged Little Pill* with Elation Lighting

Theatrical-grade Artiste Picasso™ moving head, ZW37™ wash luminaire light record-breaking pre-Broadway run at American Repertory Theater

Lighting designer Justin Townsend is using Elation Professional lights more and more since his first experience with them on the Broadway musical *A Night with Janis Joplin*. The multi award-winning and Tony-nominated LD was recently one of the first designers to use the new Artiste Picasso™ LED moving head, employing them along with the company's ZW37™ LED moving head on the record-breaking premiere of the musical *Jagged Little Pill*, featuring the music of Alanis Morissette.



The world premiere of *Jagged Little Pill* ran for 79 sold-out performances – May 5th to July 15th – at American Repertory Theater's Loeb Drama Center in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the longest run of any production at the theater. The show, which incorporates music from Morissette's 1995 Grammy Award-winning album such as "Ironic" and "You Oughta Know," is an original story that deals with some of today's most significant issues like opiate addiction, gun control and gender identity.

Special show, special lighting

Directed by Tony Award winner Diane Paulus, the show received tremendous reviews throughout its run. LD Townsend calls it simply a very special show. "It's really a very special piece," he says. "It combines the explosive energy of a live concert with the deep profound story telling of great theatrical drama. There are some big issues that come out in the play, real moments about what's happening in the world today. Alanis Morissette's album is amazing in its own right and [Academy Award-winning screenwriter] Diablo Cody has created an amazing script with songs weaved in to the narrative. It stays very honest to Morissette's material."

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The special show included some special lighting as well. “The light of the production used bold, strong ideas working with the action of the play and the mood,” Townsend explains. Playing a prominent role in the lighting rig were 42 LED source Elation ZW37 beam/wash moving head effects that the LD had lined in angled overhead trusses in the iconic shape of a roof. “Working with set designer Riccardo Hernandez, we created a world of light- the iconic shape of a roof of a house became the unifying design idea and we hung three trusses full of wash lights to create an overhead structure. The units acted as both powerful lights to compose each scene, but also created a unique theatrical architecture- activating the scenic design idea. This ceiling of light flew in and out during the action, creating compressed spaces as well as completely flying out to the grid, creating a giant black void.”

The designer complemented the look with Artiste Picassos, the first use of the new LED moving head in a theatrical environment. Townsend was elated to have had the opportunity to use them. “When I found out I would be able to schedule them into the rig for this production, I was blown away,” the designer stated. “They were real workhorses on the show and did everything asked of them. In terms of punch, clarity, reliability, they were excellent. I could depend on them for the fine and specific lighting fitting of a Broadway musical.”



Part of Elation's award-winning, theatrical-grade Artiste series, the Artiste Picasso houses a 620W Cool White LED engine and advanced optical system for a powerful, crisp output and extremely uniform field of light. Townsend had nine Artiste Picasso units at his disposal and used them as top light for color shading and on occasion for texture onto the deck. He also used them as cross light, where the designer said the 23,000 lumen moving head had real punch.

“They also have dependable, clean shutters,” he said of the unit’s 4-blade framing system with +/- 45-degree individual blade rotation. “The speed is great too and they make little noise. In theatre, there are explosive moments but then the next moment can be tender and quiet. These fixtures work well in that environment with no fan noise.”

Townsend, who also uses Elation gear when he teaches lighting design at the Brooklyn College Department of Theater in New York, a city school that has the same strict requirements as



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Broadway level musicals, says both places need top notch gear that is dependable. "Elation offers that," he says. "The gear is solid and the quality is excellent. It should be used all over!"

The Elation fixtures for *Jagged Little Pill* were supplied by lighting rental company Christie Lites with Townsend sending special kudos out to Christie account rep Chris McMeen, who provided him with fixture advice and support.

Photos: Evgenia Eliseeva

Photo 1. The Chorus of *Jagged Little Pill*.

Photo 2. Lauren Patten as Jo and the company of American Repertory Theater's *Jagged Little Pill*.

Photo 3. Elizabeth Stanley, Celia Gooding, and Sean Allan Krill as MJ, Frankie, and Steve Healy in *Jagged Little Pill*.

Photo 4. Lauren Patten as Jo in *Jagged Little Pill*.

About Elation Professional

Elation Professional is one of the world's leading lighting and visual solutions providers and is the global brand of Elation Lighting. Founded in 1992 and headquartered in Los Angeles, with European sales, distribution and support based in The Netherlands, Elation designs and manufactures a comprehensive range of innovative yet affordable lighting and video products that are distributed through a global network of dealers and distributors. Made up of a spirited team of dedicated personnel, Elation is setting new efficiency and performance standards in Platinum lamp and LED technology and is acknowledged for a comprehensive commitment to Total Support. As a company in expansion with a presence in a growing variety of market segments, chances are you've experienced Elation lighting at a concert, special event, TV, theater, late night venue, House of Worship, theme park, cruise ship, exhibition, architectural space or elsewhere. For more information, please visit www.elationlighting.com

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