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FASHION



THE ONES

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Ardell
Active Lash
in "Gainz,"
\$11

RAINBOW BRIGHT

Makeup artist Alexx Mayo is flipping the concept of tour makeup on its head by creating a different intricate look for each stop of Lizzo's *The Special Tour*.

By **SOUZAN MICHAEL GALWAY**

Music stadium tours are known for being many things. (Think intense, physically demanding and long.) An opportunity for makeup experimentation and complex beauty looks? Not so much—unless you're Alexx Mayo, that is. The makeup artist has been working with singer and rapper Lizzo for the past six years, and during that time, he has created countless show-stopping looks that have solidified him as one of the most impressive celebrity makeup artists working today. At the end of July, Mayo completed a 10-month-long run of doing Grammy Award winner Lizzo's makeup for *The Special Tour*, which was in support of her album *Special*.

"Somebody recently told me that they can't think of another artist who has changed their look on tour as much as Lizzo has," says Mayo over the phone. "I thought of icons like Madonna, Janet and Cher, and I realized it's true. They each have a look that's specifically designed for a tour, and it's very consistent. You know what the look is going to be every

night." Mayo, on the other hand, comes up with Lizzo's varied makeup looks on the morning of each show. And we're not talking about deciding between winged eyeliner and a smoky eye. Lizzo's *The Special Tour* makeup has included multicoloured polka dots rising up to her forehead, neon negative-space eyeliner and a graphic cat-eye topped with glued-on black stars. "I was wrapping a gift for someone and had extra confetti stars from the craft store," says Mayo of the celestial look. "I thought they could be useful."

It's not that Mayo intentionally avoids repeating makeup looks—"it's just organic, in-the-moment creativity," he says. His star client's unwavering confidence helps, too. "There's no mirror in front of Lizzo while I work," says Mayo. "So she has no idea what she looks like during the process, but she has the confidence to know that she can rock anything. I think that that attitude helps everyone on the team, too." While the vibe in the makeup room is free-flowing and creative, both Mayo and Lizzo have

just one non-negotiable: Each look has to be finished with false lashes. Mayo relies on Ardell's vast selection of lash styles to help execute his artistic vision each night. "I just love the glitz and glam of false lashes," says Mayo. "They help Lizzo emote when she's performing."

Mayo started wearing makeup himself at age 14, around the same time he came out as gay, but he certainly wasn't donning the vibrant looks he's known for creating today. "I hung out with the punk and goth kids," says Mayo. "We were all really misunderstood, and makeup was my way of expressing my sadness and anger. I thought that wearing dark eyeliner and eyeshadow would make people back off from me and my sexuality—and it worked." So how does one go from being a misunderstood goth kid in Los Lunas, N.M., to the go-to celebrity makeup artist for bright, vibrant looks? "It's the music," he says. "The makeup is what Lizzo's music sounds like to me. It's colourful, it's rainbows, it's glitter. It's just happy." ■