



Reinventing the wheel is a tough job at the best of times. Lighting effects tend to fall into this category as there is only so much you can do with a stepper motor, mirrors and coloured filters. Brand names such as Martin and ACME have been making some inroads to innovative design recently and the results have been rather interesting, although they still seem to remain slightly 'anonymous' if you want to get product support.

EVL is a product that I have had a lot of contact with in the past few years. These guys are based in Leicester and have managed to maintain a tight focus (pun intended) on the lighting market. The products are very stylish and well built, they are competitively priced and the most important fact of all, they have first class Technical support. It is the latter fact that makes a product stand out from the crowd as there is nothing more

important that being able to get a spare part or ask a quick technical question when you need it!

The Right Combination?

EVL's product range has conventional scanners, barrels and moonflower style effects, all of which are similar to the majority of 'staple' products from other manufacturers. However, the one item that caught my eye was the K-Scope. I say this because although there are a few kaleidoscope products in the ranges of other manufacturers, none of these have the combination of a discharge lamp, a professionally-styled case, high quality stepper motors and uniquely styled dichroic filters. What is even more impressive is the relatively low-cost of the unit.

Opening The Box

One thing EVL do well is package the product so that it is kept well protected in transit. In fact the polystyrene moulding completely

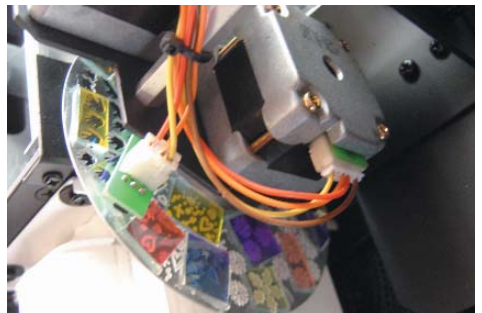
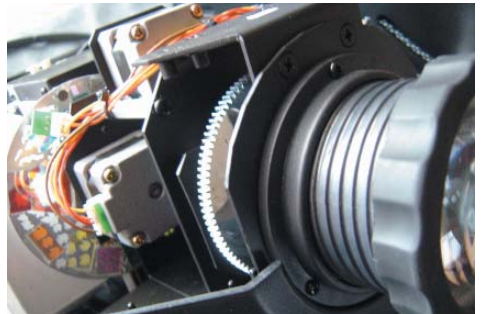
encloses the effect and has dedicated recesses to hold the supplied mains cable, DMX cable and safety wire. This is bomb-proof, seriously! Another benefit of the superstructure is that it can be transplanted into a flightcase or wooden box to continue to offer the same protection whilst on the road. The MSD 250/2 lamp is supplied and fitted to the effect and should not need to be adjusted or even touched until it reaches the end of its natural life. An instruction manual is also supplied that details the various DMX settings, safety matters and general usage information.

Preparing For Use

As with all lighting effects, precautions should be noted to allow for the heat generated by the light source. Discharge lamp effects generate a lot more heat than conventional halogen lamped effects (600 degrees C!) and it is very important to allow for airflow and to ensure that the fan and vents are not obstructed. As mentioned above, the lamp has already been adjusted to give the maximum light output within the effect itself, but it would be a good idea to familiarize yourself with the instructions incase any adjustments are needed at a later date.

The weight of the effect is 10Kg and it should be rigged by either directly bolting it to the stand / frame or using a good quality G-clamp or bracket. Because of this weight, it is vital that the supplied safety wire is attached to the eyelet on the effect (in-between the hanging bracket) and then secured to the stand. Again the instruction manual covers this subject and should be read and understood for safety reasons.

The K-Scope can be used in a variety of modes and a bank of DIP switches are available on the rear of the unit to make the appropriate selections. The basic mode is a simple, stand-alone, sound-activated projec-





tor and is ideal to get the effect up and running. Other modes allow you to connect multiple K-Scopes together in a 'master-slave' chain using the DMX connectors. You can also assign the unit a static DMX address and take control of the effect using a standard DMX controller. Four DMX channels are required and these allow control over the colour/gobo wheel, rotation of the prism, the shutter/strobe effect and finally provide access to ten sets of automatic programs.

It is nice to see that some thought has been put into the DMX firmware as the gobo/colour wheel can be 'indexed' (rotated to any fixed position), as well as left to freely rotate in either direction at any speed. Additionally, the inclusion of the fourth channel to allow the user to either take full control of the effect or simply invoke any one of 10 preset automatic programs is also of great benefit. Programming by hand (to achieve a particular 'look' or colour/pattern scheme) can be interspersed with automatic programs. This not only takes a lot of the toil of programming away, but it also avoids the clumsy trick of unplugging the DMX feed in order to get the effects to 'do their own thing' as is the case with a lot of other products on the market.

In Use

Powering the unit up is painless and the lamp strikes within a few seconds. The lamp takes a few minutes to reach its operating temperature and achieve maximum brightness. The optics are very good and the projected image is sharp and clear. Coverage area is on a par with regular projected effects and very sharp (manual focus can be adjusted accordingly). The overall combination of the colour and gobo patterns passing through the prism to create the kaleidoscope effect is rather hypnotic and quite original (as you can see from the pictures). Though it is the use of a discharge light source that

sets the K-Scope apart from halogen-based effects, as the colour temperature really brings out the purity of the colours and they look so much 'cleaner' and brighter.

Conclusion

I often hear the argument that the replacement cost of the discharge lamp is in excess of £80 but then you have to weight up the fact that the lamp life is ~2000 hours and there is no filament in the lamp to break. This means you have a reliable and sturdy lamp with a known life. If we were to say that a long-life 250 watt halogen capsule lamp (at ~£9) lasts around 200 hours at best, it is soon evident that a discharge lamp is good value for money! Add to that the vastly improved light output and purity, the value soon comes into proportion.

EVL have introduced a solid and well-constructed product into their range. It is priced at a very competitive level for a discharge effect and is a versatile addition to any mobile show, as it could be employed as a large dancefloor filler or as a wall / ceiling projector. Obviously a pair of these would look even better and getting the best price would be down to negotiation with your local supplier!

PROS

- + Discharge lamp included in the price
- + Original effect
- + Hypnotic and not boring by any means!

CONS

- Heavier than halogen-based effects