

REVIEW**EVL NLDJ 80G (£229.99)**

EVL's first foray into the world of laser effects was first introduced to the UK DJ fraternity at the NADJ's AGM back in April. The NLDJ 100RGY multi-colour and NLDJ 80G green laser units are now available to buy and I have been able to get hold of one of the single colour green units for a review.

After opening the box and removing the unit from its packaging, my first impressions were very good. The casing looks like it would be at home on the bridge of the star ship enterprise, with its shiny metal body and smooth moulded black plastic end pieces. The laser aperture is positioned at the front of the unit and a recessed panel at the back is home to various controls and connections. At either side of the control panel are cooling fans, one sucking cool air in and one blowing hot air out. These fans are also set back into the moulded plastic and are covered by spherical grills, further adding to the futuristic look of the fixture.

The hanging bracket, which is supplied separate to the main unit, is worth a mention at this point. When I first removed the NLDJ 80G from its box I thought that the unit was faulty and that something was rattling inside. I soon realised that the rattling noise was actually coming from outside of the casing. Small metal blocks drilled with bolt holes are mounted on tracks at either side of the case. These are used to mount the hanging bracket to the unit using the bolts and thumb screws that are provided. When the fixings are tightened, the blocks are held in place, however when they are loose the blocks allow the bracket to move along the body of the unit. This means that the bracket can be positioned in the most suitable place for the desired mounting angle. For example if the laser is being used to project images on a ceiling, the bracket can be positioned towards the front of the case. This will mean that the unit will naturally tilt upwards.



72 Pro Mobile EVL NLDJ 80G

After being suitably impressive with hi-tech look of the casing and the clever mounting system, it was time to fire up the laser. I plugged the unit in using the supplied IEC mains lead. I then turned on the power switch that lit up with a dull red glow. The fans sprang into life and the stepper motors made a familiar shrill whirring noise as they reset. Finally, I turned the safety key switch and prepared for the laser effects to burst forth! ... Unfortunately nothing happened and I was forced to consult every DJ's last resort, the manual!

We now come to one of my two complaints regarding the NLDJ 80G, the 'user instructions'. I remember reading a polite comment in a previous issue of Pro Mobile where a reviewer referred to the text in a manual 'as obviously not written by someone for whom English is their first language'. If I were to use the same phrase, I would be guilty of a serious understatement. This manual is not only comical, but sometimes extremely confusing. It took me a while to realise that the phrase 'Protect to fix the decals cannot tear, otherwise our company will be irresponsible to protect to fix' simply meant don't break the 'warranty void' sticker! I admit that I wouldn't know where to start if I were asked to write a manual in any language other than English, but as EVL are a UK brand I don't think it is asking too much of them to re-write a simple instruction leaflet.

All that said, it didn't take long for me to work out why my review unit wasn't producing the expected laser projections. A set of DIP switches on the back allow selection of a number of control modes: standalone automatic, standalone sound-activated, master automatic, master sound-activated, slave and DMX controlled. My sample was set to DMX controlled mode, but as soon as I flipped a couple of dip switches to change to standalone automatic mode the unit leapt into action. Incidentally this is the second of my two complaints; DIP switches are fiddly and outdated. I would have preferred the LCD display menu driven interface that is rapidly becoming the norm. Of course at this juncture it is important to remember the age

old pearl of wisdom 'you get what you pay for'!

The actual effect produced by the unit is stunning, with a combination of bright output and effective patterns. Thanks to a laser diode rated at 80mw the NLDJ 80G is suitable for medium to large sized venues either for projecting patterns onto surfaces or for midair effects in a hazy atmosphere. The unit features a total of 80 effects, which are made up from 40 static patterns (lines, triangles, circles etc.) and 40 moving patterns. I have to admit that I was surprised at the quality of the patterns provided by this budget effect. Don't get me wrong there are no girls dancing or text patterns, but in the low-cost DJ laser market this is one of best collections of effects I've seen.

For DMX control the unit requires a total of seven channels. The first allows selection of one of four modes: Closed (blackout), dynamic patterns, static patterns and sound activated. The second channel allows selection between one of the forty static patterns (in static mode) or one of the forty dynamic patterns (in dynamic mode). The third and fourth channels offer control of x and y position. This means that with a DMX controller it is possible to alter the position of a pattern and even scan it. The fifth channel controls scan speed, which alters the rate at which the laser beam is moved around to create a projected pattern. The faster the scan speed, the smoother the projected pattern; however a slower scan speed can make for more striking midair effects. Finally, the sixth channel controls the animation speed for dynamic patterns and the seventh allows alteration of the size of static patterns.

Despite my couple of minor complaints (I wouldn't feel as if I had done my job if I didn't find anything that was wrong), the NLDJ 80G is a great laser unit. Its casing is robust, output is bright, patterns are effective and price is low. If you are looking for a stunning laser effect on a budget and enjoy deciphering cryptic instruction leaflets then this is definitely the unit for you!