What’s the buzz?
by Jimmy Den-Ouden

B-Eye K10 units all feature 19x 15W RGBW LED engines. On the “K10 CC”, these are addressed as a group with no scope for individual control. The “K10 Easy” model adds individual “pixel” control over the engines. The B-Eye K10 adds to this a rotating lens assembly, and the K20 adds more engines bringing the total to nearly double at 37 of the Osram Ostar RGBW chips. Which is a lot.

We didn’t look at the entry level models, instead reviewing the K10 and K20 models side by side.

K20 weighs in at 21kg, and K10 is 6kg lighter. Both include PowerCon connector for power as well as 5 pin XLR in and loop for DMX, plus Ethernet. K20 has a bigger base and, presumably for no other reason than they could fit it in, it also gets a pair of 3 pin XLRs. Operationally the menu system is identical between the pair – a backlit LCD with navigation and okay keys. It’s straightforward to operate and the only disappointment is the lack of any interesting form of “standalone” mode. Granted there is a test sequence that is very logical if a bit boring. If you just want to address the fixture you can do this without applying power – an internal battery allows menu operation even with no mains connected.

If you had to categorise the B-Eye you’d probably call it an LED wash fixture, and you certainly wouldn’t be wrong. Both K10 and K20 can zoom between 4 and 60 degrees, and at the wide end you can soften the beam edges by rotating the front lens a little. So you see, it’s also quite a good beam light as well. The LED modules are punchy to start with, and looking at the output of a single module it seems like Clay Paky has really done a very good job with getting the optics right too. There’s a 1-25 flash / sec strobe.
function, tungsten emulation, and CR emulation between 2500 and 8000K.

Fundamentally the main difference between K10 and K20 is more LED chips, and inherently a few additional control parameters associated with colour control. Well okay, many more control parameters. K20 uses 169 channels in extended RGBW mode, but if this isn’t practical (or, like me, you think it’s too much work to write a fixture profile), there’s a 21 channel “standard” mode, or my preferred option the 35 channel “shape” mode.

Standard mode gives you colour control over all the engines as a single block, but does allow you to use the zoom and zoom rotation functions. “Shape” mode adds a selection of preset shapes with speed, colour, fade, transition and intensity control. You can also change the background intensity separately – it takes its colour from the main RGBW channels. “Full mode” (146 channels) gives you pixel-by-pixel RGB as well as all the shape effects.

Here’s where it gets really clever. Once you zoom in fully, you can engage the front lens rotation. This has the effect of splaying the individual beams outward at different angles. You can zoom a little bit within this rotated area to change focus on the beams – Clay Paky calls this the kaleidoscope mode and it’s a pretty apt name. Once you combine this with the shape effects and some different colours, you can achieve a surprising number of different looks. I even managed to come up with something reminiscent of the Astroraggi Power (another Clay Paky offering from more than a decade ago).

I expected to rather like the B-Eye, and actually getting my hands on some units really drove this point home. I love it, and from a guy who doesn’t really get excited about lights that’s high praise. It’s a really versatile fixture with loads of cool features, none of which have come at the expense of being able to do the simple things well too.