CLAY PAKY SHARPY WASH

by Jimmy Den-Ouden

PART SHARPY, PART WASH LIGHT, TOTALLY ITALIAN.
When Clay Paky released the original Sharpy, people kind of went a bit nuts for it. Probably because it was a really cool, different kind of fixture to anything we’d previously seen. Beam lights are great, but ultimately limited to generating, well, beams. Sharpy Wash is the next evolution of the Sharpy. Physically they look pretty similar to each other, the real tell being how the pointy end looks. The Sharpy Wash has a different lens, as well as a motorised top hat. You can buy it in black, white, gold-plated or mirror chrome finishes. Very bling.

The unit is pretty weighty for its size – 18.5kg. Power input is PowerCon, and the unit pulls a bit over 2A when lamps on and actually producing output. When the unit is idle and dimmed to 0% output, the current consumption drops back to around 1.7A. It actually reduces the lamp intensity when it’s not needed – clever. Sure it’s only one third of an amp, but it’s still something. Dimming is a combination of mechanical and electronic processes.

DMX is input via 3pin or 5pin XLR with the same for loop outputs. The unit requires 22 channels of control, and you address it via the backlit LCD menu system. The menu is really simple and logical, but quite basic. There are basic...
test sequences for pan/tilt, beam, and colour but there’s no automagical standalone operation mode. Clearly Clay Paky don’t expect it to land in the hands of backyard users, and that’s probably a fair expectation. There’s an EtherCon for Ethernet too. Software updates can be performed with the fixture turned off thanks to an internal battery, which allows the control circuitry to run with no AC connected.

Because wash fixtures spread light over a much greater area than a beam fixture, they require more light to achieve the same kind of concentration. Hence they have bigger lamps. Sharpy has a 185W lamp, and Sharpy Wash a 330W source. That’s pretty low consumption for a wash light, considering the output is compared to that of a 1kW fixture. Native colour temperature is 8000K, and expected lifespan of a bubble is 1500 hours.

Pan and tilt are 540 and 240 degrees respectively, and both these functions happen at mind-blowingly fast speeds. If knocked, the head is capable of re-aligning itself to the correct position without needing a full fixture reset. Colour is a CMY mixing system, with the addition of an 11 (plus open) position colour wheel allowing quick matching to Sharpy colours.

The beam from the Sharpy Wash is 6.5 degrees at the narrow end and can be zoomed out to 48 degrees, with the motorized top hat automatically engaging. There’s a rotatable beam shaper, which kind of turns the circular...
beam into a rectangle. The beam tricks continue with a soft edge filter, and a heavy frost. Because the fixture doesn’t care about orientation you can mount it upright, inverted, sideways, or any other ways you can think of.

Just sitting idle the Sharpy Wash metered at around 45dBA from about one metre away, and this went up a bit when it was moving. It’s not real quiet, but in the places it will likely be used the noise won’t matter a jot.

The whole thing about the Sharpy Wash is that it’s really just a bit obscene. It’s obscenely bright, and obscenely fast, and just generally obscenely good. It’s lots of everything in a really tiny box, and it makes me want to go and light the next Eurovision.