

ORIGINS OF DISCO LIGHTING EFFECTS

BY FRANCO BERTINI

As the first lighting element of performance, there was the psychedelic lamp. It was one simple colored lamp, turned on according to the volume and the tone of the music.

The real discotheque light came from the aeronautical Par 36 lamp, used for the first time by Italian companies to create concentrated rays of light visible through artificial smoke.

It was followed by the famous Spider, or a series of Par 36 lamps mounted on several arms and put into motion. Even if the invention of this effect is of Spanish origin, it is worth noting that an Italian firm (La Coemar Di Castelgoffredo) perfected it and distributed it on an international level.

After the Spider came bands of lights on both an axis of vertical rotation, and a second, horizontal axis arising from a sphere from double rotation. This version was commercialized for the first time by an Italian firm, L'Amplilux di Rimini. Over the years, many variations have arisen, all based upon this model, always with bands of lights in rotation on two or even three axes. Of all of them, the Saturn has enjoyed particular prominence by the firm La Sear of Naples.

One milestone of particular importance was the use of one lamp only and a series of lenses that give the effect of bands of light. The Astrodisco is the leader of this generation of light, also invented by an Italian firm — La Clay Paky of Bergamo.

An important variation of the first model was the lamp of Castel Goffredo with models Krypton and Derby that use moving lamps on the inside of the apparatus, and that use lamps with long filaments for the creation of sheets of colored lights.

Now comes the idea closest to my heart — the production by my firm of the Moon Flower effect. The innovation of this effect

was to utilize one lamp one lens to create many rays of light depending upon how many mirrors are inserted on the spherical reflector cap. In addition, for the first time, 40% of the total light emitted from the lamp has been exploited. Studio Due Light Division of Viterbo produced and commercialized this product.

Either paralleling the Moon Flower, or shortly after it, another innovation hit the market — the Scanner Effect. It is characterized by a band of lights that move thanks to a mirror controlled by telemetry from a distance. Credit for this robot is given to an Italian firm, Coemar. It was refined by many firms until we arrive at the sophisticated models of today.

You see that most of these milestones are the fruits of the technology of Italy. It is difficult to predict the next milestone in this sector, but you can bet that 90 of the next 100 will be Italian.

■ The Spider (below), with its series of Par 36 lamps mounted on several arms, was one of the first disco lights, perfected and distributed by Coemar Lighting. Over the years, Italian companies such as Coemar, Amplilux, Sear, Clay Paky, and Studio Due have manufactured products on the cutting edge of lighting technology.

● *Le Spider (ci-dessous), avec sa série de lampes Par 36 montées sur plusieurs bras, fut l'un des premiers effets de discothèque, perfectionné et distribué par Coemar Lighting. Au cours des années, des entreprises italiennes telles que Coemar, Amplilux, Sear, Clay Paky et Studio Due ont fabriqué des produits en pointe de la technologie d'éclairage.*

▼ Die Spinne (unten) mit ihrer Serie von Par 36 Glühlampen, die auf mehrere Arme montiert sind, war eine der ersten Discobeleuchtungen, vervollständigt und vertreten durch Coemar Lighting. In den vergangenen Jahren haben italienische Firmen wie Coemar, Amplilux, Sear, Clay Paky und Studio Due Pionierprodukte der Beleuchtungstechnik hergestellt.

