

THE SHOW DID GO ON FOR ITN

In the few weeks when the world was poised on the brink of the Gulf war, staff at Independent Television News, in London, had more to handle than just the frantic pace of unfolding world events. They also moved home.

As we reported in a previous issue of *Lights!*, ITN was one of the first TV stations, after London Weekend Television, to install Strand Lighting's revolutionary EC90 dimming system. This was an opportunity taken during the fitting-out stage of its new studio and headquarters at Grays Inn Road.

But when the first phases of the move were under way from ITN's former collection of sites in London, the Gulf crisis meant that the viewing public became increasingly hungry for news.

Not only did ITN complete the move into the new building successfully but throughout the entire operation, round-the-clock news bulletins and full-length programmes kept on the air without interruption.

ITN had very sensibly called on Strand Lighting for advice in planning the lighting aspects of the new studio. In the event, the installation of the latest studio lighting technology passed off without a hitch.

With the world in crisis, ITN had its own problems to deal with. But 'the show' still went on. Newscasters Fiona Armstrong and Trevor McDonald are seen here running through stories for their next programme, while installation of Strand Quartzcolor luminaires continues above them.



ACTION

Time to put the theory into practice. The setup was configured as in Fig. 2 and all required scenes were recorded into the MX memory as per normal prior to any musical action. Twenty scenes allowing five songs to have four automatic scene changes. No effects were added at this stage. Next, the MX was set to MIDI Out and the first song was played back. At the correct moment the scenes were faded in and out manually by using the C/D faders. This information was input to the sequencer on a spare track, an overdub, just like a music track.

On playback, the whole thing worked just as planned; even the manual fade times were remembered. Fig. 2 shows the sequencer clock pulse number that corresponds to the changes, and Fig. 3 shows that track five now contains the MX code for the song lighting changes. The other songs were dealt with in a similar manner, but this time effects were introduced manually. Flashes, chases etc. were added in real time to the already pre-recorded scenes. Once again on playback all worked in perfect harmony — most impressively.

A computer setup is not necessary in order to get something like this working as a couple of alternatives are available. First, as long as a keyboards sequencer can transmit and receive over MIDI the lights can be automatically controlled as mentioned. Secondly, and of more interest to the live musician who doesn't like sequencers, some of the patch change buttons can be programmed to switch scenes instead of changing voices as they normally do.

This is only scratching the surface really and as the MIDI/Lighting concept begins to get recognised some spectacular results are assured, and at a reasonable cost.

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