MX and Mantrix MX - A Manual with Memory System

MANUAL DEXTERITY OR MENTAL AGILITY?

By Andy Collier

Once upon a time dare I say in the dim past, lighting control desks were either 'manual' or 'memory'. The concept of a memory desk is now commonly understood: the memory being used to record the lighting intensities (and in some cases position and colour), plus the time taken for the change, to adjust, re-record and to perform the lighting as the designer intended. A manual desk was, in those far off days, considered as 'everything else', and generally taken to be a multi-preset desk which demanded the attention of more than one finger.

But, as ever, we couldn't rest there, and taking a look at a current catalogue reveals terms such as 'memory with manual' contrasted with 'manual with memory'. Have we missed the 'memory with memory' and 'manual with manual' or is everyone confused? So let's take a look at what all this is about.

First take a manual desk, for example an LX (Mantrix LX in North America). This gives two presets of faders with the added sophistication of dipless crossfade (so that lights at the same intensity in both presets don't dim during a crossfade), timed fades which automatically progress the crossfade to complete at a time you set, and channel flash (bump) buttons. If, after setting the lighting on a preset of faders you have thought 'wouldn't it be nice to press a button and record this automatically', you are thinking of a manual with memory desk like the MX (Mantrix MX). Although

the memory part of MX is a complete mini-memory desk, and is very powerful in its own right with recorded timed fades, patch tables, MIDI interface and programmable effects, each lighting state is created by moving the individual channel faders. During the performance, the memories are replayed in a similar way to using a manual system crossfader, but the memory is in the background, setting each new 'preset' in turn. In addition, MX also provides the feature of having the memories replayed on the bottom preset of channel faders. In this case, the faders become individual memory submasters.

Now let's take a memory desk. It offers fast setting of channel levels by typing in numbers on a keypad. It records the lighting levels in memory, and offers many ways of performing the lighting

changes through playbacks or submasters. Add to this a two-preset manual desk so that you can set individual channels manually if required, or to adjust 'specials' separately from the running multi-part fades or to vamp a one-nighter that doesn't warrant the full memory treatment. There you have a memory with manual desk like the Lightboard M.

So if you are clear about the purpose of a manual desk, and a memory desk, the manual with memory description refers to manual fader level setting and a memory system to assist with the performance. The description memory with manual implies a comprehensive memory system with keyboard entry of channel levels with a manual fader section for direct control of channels as and when needed. ✪

Lightboard M - A 96 channel Memory with Manual System