➤ absolute position of the Graphic Tablet pen to the required pan/tilt position for each fixture.

When Avolites were demonstrating this at *PLASA* they had three reference points only a few feet apart from each other, from which you could move around and away with pretty stunning accuracy. The Graphic Tablet colour mix control gives instant access to the full spectrum of colours without touching a wheel. This makes finding and experimenting with colours simple and intuitive.

AVOLITES DIAMOND II

Comments Carl Burnett: The lovely thing about the Diamond II is that it is so familiar. It feels comfortable standing in front of the board as on the surface it just appears to be a normal Avo desk, with the quality, looks and feel that I've come to expect — with Penny & Giles faders, add and swap buttons on all 180 faders etc.

When it comes to operating the board with generic lights, the board programmes and behaves in much the same way as the original Diamond except with the addition of a 'memory' button as found on the Sapphire, which must be pressed before a swap button can accept the memory. This is a safety feature to stop the chance of making an embarrassing mistake while programming.

The Diamond II comes into its own when programming moving lights and colour changers. The desk is completely software-operated so any button can perform any function, allowing me to customise the board to fit the way I operate. As with most of the new generation boards it is preferable to have a day in the warehouse setting it up, laying out colours, preset focuses etc., to make the job of programming at the actual gig much easier.

When in programme mode, all the add buttons can be used to store colours; these are to be found on the colour table wheel and by the miracles of computers, microchips etc., the colours can be called up by name. So if for example, colour faders or VL5s are to be used on the rig, spin the colour table wheel until the colour required appears on the screen (say LEE 139), grab this onto one of the swap button of your choice then when programming your light or colour changer you can send the fixture to LEE 139 by grabbing it off the add button. Using this method it is possible to set up a Library of the colours (or 'Presets' of colours) before leaving the warehouse.

The preset focus for moving lights works in the same way, so by doing a little pre show/tour work all of the colours, gobos, focus positions etc. can be recalled by simply reaching over to the button that holds that preset, and grab it to the fixture. One nice feature on the Diamond II is the graphics screen; using this, it is possible to programme moving lights in seconds, to do circles, ballyhoo, Mexican wave and all of those tricky moves that some people may usually steer clear of. The circles, for example, need only two points (centre and circumference) and that's it programmed! The board automatically sets up a chase to execute the command, which brings me nicely to another great feature, the chase unfold. When you need to modify a chase or view the memories used, grab the chase and press the unfold button, the LEDs above the submasters go blank and show all steps of the chase across the submaster page. It is now simple to grab the step(s) to modify.

I recommend the Diamond II to any LD wishing to operate the whole show themselves, with a familiar looking lighting desk, rather

W H O L E H O G

than a computer style desk. Most people should be able to operate the Diamond II in a day or two; however you should not expect to be completely fluent until you've used it in a gig situation a few times.

WHOLEHOG II

Following in the footsteps of the successful Wholehog desk, Flying Pig Systems have been working furiously all year to bring us Wholehog II — a control system so advanced that it is claimed it can actually programme itself!

It features various options designed to make theatre, television, concert and even disco LDs feel completely at home. Yet it builds upon all the features which have helped make Wholehog the choice for bands such as The Rolling Stones, Pink Floyd, Peter Gabriel, Rod Stewart and Prince.

As the Wholehog II will not be available until March '95 it is not possible for us to review the console first hand, but distributors, A C Lighting offered a sneak preview.

Handling everything from intricate theatrical shows to unstructured television or concert events, it will programme moving lights as quickly as conventional lights.

This versatility results from an easy operating system, numerous sophisticated software features and a robust hardware platform.

To get started, enter the number of each fixture type to be used; the console automatically patches the fixtures and configures itself for immediate use.

Programming is also blindingly fast. There are no endless key sequences or menu layers; you need only touch the display with your finger to select fixture, colours, gobos, or anything else. Programming works the same way, whether you're using VL5s, Cyberlights or dimmers. It's also possible to use command line syntax on the keypad to fast-access standard features, such as multi-part cues, split fade times, and countless others.

Alternatively, the console can programme itself. The AutoFX function automatically generates sequences such as ballyhoos, circle movements or shutter chases. Simply select the fixtures and the desired effect or create your own custom effects and transfer them to other shows.

Cues, cue lists, and presets can also be copied from one Wholehog II to another, allowing shows programmed simultaneously on separate boards to be played back on one. Likewise, programming can be transferred between fixture types, so it's easy to switch back and forth between using Golden Scans and Intellabeams.

Updating preset focuses is also effortless because the Wholehog II keeps track of fixtures' positions in three-dimensional space. A simple recalibration effort is all that is ➤