

turers on a world-wide basis. Secondly the system will eventually be provided with self-test facilities whereby the user will be able to harness the computer to carry out a simple point by point check on its own



behaviour and the continuity of all controls and connections. Thirdly, by using the software/computer technique, problems of equipment obsolescence are made minimal. Any refinements made to a program can be made available to existing users simply by inserting the modified program during an annual service routine. Furthermore, Rank Strand can continue to develop this type of system for other applications using the same basic electronic hardware. This will undoubtedly have ultimate benefits to the user in so far as spares availability and system costs are concerned.

The computer gives the system enormous capability in terms of complex functions and also the ability to extend the system to cover additional channels and/or facilities. Although interest in DDM systems as small as 90-ways has been expressed by potential users, it would be difficult to justify its use as yet in such a small installation on purely commercial grounds. However the incorporation of the computer pays off handsomely as the number of channels and facilities are extended. Thus a tape cassette unit or stalls control can be incorporated at relatively modest cost despite their operational comprehen-

siveness. This virtue is attributable to the fact that whilst the data and address line structure needs to be extended to connect each of these additional peripherals, their functional operations are controlled by the computer which is already incorporated in the system.

Lastly, whilst for commercial reasons it is desirable to standardise on a limited number of variants of the system, nevertheless, it is feasible to consider specific operational variants as required by individual users. Special programming would have to be undertaken in each instance and the cost of this might have to be borne by the user. In fact it is fair to say that many of the advantages which the computer



brings have only been perceived during, or subsequent to, the design of the DDM equipment. Hardly a week goes by without some further advantage or possibility becoming apparent.

One cannot help but sense that we have only just begun in so far as future possibilities and opportunities are concerned. The inherent capability of the computer is so enormous that such functions as group mastering, the recording of crossfade times and the control of sound effects, slide change mechanisms, servo positioning and focusing systems for spotlights and so on