

used with the Galaxy system, and until now there have been operational restrictions to the control of common channels from the various panels. This has now been resolved and the channel controls will operate in tandem without restriction.

To distinguish between the channels controlled by various channel control panels, the VDU will display colour-coded colons (:) adjacent to the active channel numbers.

Although this facility may be considered a little academic, and of interest to T.V. only (where multiple channel controls are common) many theatres use the main control and stalls control simultaneously, so it is of equal importance to these users too.

#### Thru ON:

The Galaxy 2 Premier facility of 'thru on', where the active channels only, in a range of channel numbers, can be rapidly addressed – will be available as standard.

#### Record Move:

Another Premier facility, Rec Move, will be available on the Arena channel control to record the difference between the current output and the previous state. This will be actioned by use of the 'Mem-Track' button which becomes a double

action control when used with the added 'shift' button.

#### Record Mods:

Is the Studio facility which originally replaced 'Mem Track'. Now, with the use of the shift facility, Mem Track is added to the Studio system channel control.

#### Soft Start:

A switched option will be available to choose whether Galaxy powers up to a clear, blank output or to the output which was current when power was disconnected.

#### 'On' Level:

The use of the Arena 'On' button has been expanded to follow that of Studio and Gemini systems, which offer quicker, direct response and the facility to switch channels off instantly.

### ACT 6

The immensely successful range of budget-priced combination dimmer packs has been extended to include new versions, with French, Italian, Swiss and 16A CEE17 sockets.

### PIP

Strand's latest installed dimmer system, the Plug-In Professional range is now in production and offers circuit breaker protection, plug-in modules and a choice of two dimmer specifications. Racks are available with 10 Amp, 25 Amp and 45 Amp dimmers for both professional theatre and T.V. applications.

So, although Gemini marked the completion of our range of major control products, life has been far from quiet in the dark corners of the 'back room' ...



The new Galaxy 2 Premier Programmable Effects Panel.

appeared on the list – cycle – making six in total (for the time being!).

So, our matrix of variables had multiplied by the six effects, and any concern over the speed of setting up an effect with so many choices was answered by the use of a prompting, effects set-up 'questionnaire' presented on the colour VDU. The two-page display asks for information, and adjusts the questions as the effect is created, to prevent any invalid decisions. For example, only two steps are permitted for a flash, on or off, random effects have no step options, and if the final state is on, the 'fade out time' questions disappear from the form. Similarly, the fade time of a chase step is entered as a percentage of the step time, thus it is impossible to mistakenly attach a 50 second fade time to a 4 second step, which would result in very little happening on stage!

I briefly mentioned the use of memories and channels for each step. Any combination of the two can be used, but channels will always be controlled from zero intensity to the programmed 'ceiling' level,

whereas memories can be used to control a collection of channels with different levels. Providing a memory, or combination of memories, is residing in one of Gemini's eight submasters, any step of an effect can be routed to control that submaster. And to save the console operator the effort of loading the submasters prior to the effect, Gemini will automatically preload the submasters before the effect starts! One of the most powerful effects is not an effect at all. By programming an effect to preload the subs without defining any steps, Gemini will prepare for a manual sequence in the midst of a timed fade.



Editing step 9 of Effect 46 on the VDU.

Gemini the latest in the long line of Strand memory lighting systems.

It is easy to think that with all this programming power, Gemini effects will fall into the usual trap of minicomputer programs: the operator loses control whilst the machine enjoys itself. But this 'child' of Galaxy is far from precocious, as it provides full manual override at all times: speed adjustment; three function manual flash buttons for the subs; instant, overriding stop facility and if all else fails, a master effect fader.

Another failing of many sophisticated controls is the inability to modify a recorded effect. But with Gemini, even with multiple effects in operation, any programmed 'form' may be selected and modified, and when the effect is restarted, the new parameters are followed. This feature enabled us to meet a request of David Hersey who, during the 'Guys and Dolls' tour, asked for a chase to be manually adjusted for time and subsequently recorded. By altering the step selection from variable to automatic, the running effect is monitored and the manually adjusted time is automatically taken as the new programmed time.

If you are still with me, here's some brain damage: the statistics. The Gemini system will record up to 99 effects; any chase or cycle effect may have up to 255 steps; control of up to 180 channels or 384 dimmers; any number of channels or memories per step; step times recorded from 0.1 second to 20 minutes; any effect may link to another automatically on completion ... and UP TO TEN EFFECTS PERFORMED SIMULTANEOUSLY!

To keep track of the wonders recorded by the effects panel, a notepad is provided at the end of the memory list showing all the effects recorded along with a cross reference of any memory number which may start or stop an effect automatically. The effects may be transferred onto disc, at any time, providing a library copy of favourite flashes as well as a simple means of expanding the range of effects – if 99 is not sufficient! And Gemini's printer is always at hand to provide a typed copy of the effect parameters if needed.

A postscript for Galaxy readers: please don't feel despondent, because 1986 will see a new programmable effects package for you too. Designed for Galaxy 2 Premier systems, our latest creation will offer all the facilities of Gemini effects plus a little more (well Galaxy has a bit more processing power after all). And if you want to know what the little more is ... why not give us a ring?