

# PRODUCT NEWS

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## ELTEC launch SCEPTRE

*Would you like a memory lighting system?  
Think you can afford it?*

So goes the teaser on the front of the glossy ELTEC leaflet for their new memory lighting control aimed at the schools and small amateur and professional markets.

Now, there are still some people who are frightened of memory lighting systems and there are also many more who are quite satisfied, for the moment, with the memory system they have got. But Eltec clearly believe that there are lots of small theatres that would be delighted to buy a memory control if only they could raise the money. So, what is it about the price?

Can ELTEC really be offering a 24 way SCEPTRE for £999 rising to £2239 for 120 ways, and can such a low price provide a system that will be worth buying?



*Sceptre Control by Eltec for up to 120 dimmers.*

As a lighting board SCEPTRE has a lot to offer. 199 memories with stored fade times, manual or automatic fades, link and sequence for chases, simple but clear VDU display, memory mixing and that useful new idea, Help messages available on the screen for quick reference to important bits of the handbook when you need to double check that you know what you are about to do. The specification is well able to stand comparison with the old Strand Duet, their more recent M-24 and the smaller boards from Eurolight, AVAB etc. Software and the operating philosophy were designed in-house by their Technical Director Peter Wiggins, himself an accomplished professional lighting designer, in close co-operation with many theatre and educational experts. Of course, there are shortcomings. Channel adjustment uses up-a-bit, down-a-bit keys like the early Colortrack and Kliegle boards which, though workable, are much less satisfactory than the wheel controls now standard on the higher cost systems. Only one fade time can be stored for auto-fades so upward and downward moving components have to be simultaneous. And, for no apparent reason, the

keypad is arranged with 1 at the top like a telephone instead of at bottom-left like all other lighting controls, pocket calculators and computers designed for repeated numerical entry; an aberration which can only encourage operating errors.

So, re-stating the question: for the many lighting people who will decide that SCEPTRE is a control that they would be pleased to use, does it really only cost £999 for 24 channels? The answer depends on whether you already own a BBC computer, monitor and disk drive. If you do, then SCEPTRE is specifically designed to add on to the BBC to use its computing power and the £999 is all you have to fork out for full memory control of your existing 24 dimmers. Eltec have targeted their product on schools, who nearly all nowadays have one or more BBC computers in their classrooms, and are confident that their idea will be welcomed with enthusiasm both as a way of saving money and as a working practical example of computing in action. However, even if you do not already own a BBC you will only have to add about £500 to this cost to buy the missing items and will then, if you take a little trouble to learn how to use it, have a powerful, flexible and provenly reliable computing tool to do all manner of other useful jobs about the theatre.

Eltec demonstrated SCEPTRE extensively during November and the control is available immediately through their usual agents.

## Lee Colortran 12kW HMI Spotlight

At the other end of the affordability range, in the world of no-expense-spared television and film production, Lee Colortran have launched a 12kW HMI spotlight. When you realise that HMI metal arc lamps produce two or three times as much light per kilowatt as an incandescent lamp this is a big lamp!

Lee say that their 12kW luminaire easily beats the existing largest available source, the 250amp 'Brute' carbon arc—the mainstay of indoor and outdoor filming throughout the world for over half a century. A special feature that adds greatly to the usefulness of the design is the flicker and strobe free lightweight semiconductor ballast. Lee have paid special attention to this feature because film cameras are especially prone to exaggerate flicker produced by beats between light from an ordinary a.c. supply and the camera shutter. In the past whole takes have had to be scrapped because the problem had not been anticipated. Another advantage is that the semiconductor ballast, weighing a mere 39kg (the lamphead weighs 49kg) is very much lighter than wire wound choke ballasts used by other manufacturers.

Not a lamp likely to be used in theatres of any sort unless brought in by a film company but of interest as an example of the tools that the top professional lighting director can now call on when needed.

## Eurolight Move Factory

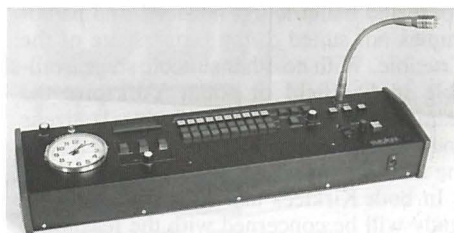
Lighting control system manufacturer Eurolight Ltd. have recently moved to a new purpose built factory at Feltham, Middlesex so that they can expand their manufacturing operations.



*Eurolight Micron Memory Control with built in teaching functions for schools.*

Eurolight have been around for over fourteen years and are widely known for their Micron and Microlite range of professional memory lighting controls. Essentially a firm with engineering and computing skills they see their future in development of new control systems for all aspects of theatre and are putting most of their design resources into a revolutionary new theatre management system due for launch next year.

The company continues to manufacture hardware for the Micron and Microlite and a range of stage management consoles, paging and show relay systems, lighting



*Eurolight Stage Management Panel*

bars and grids. Recent improvements to Micron include menu guided self teaching facilities for ILEA schools offering the new theatre technology options in their syllabus.

They also market Green Ginger dimmers and controls and Technical Projects/Canford Audio intercom systems. Like many manufacturers, Eurolight have found that their customers need a wide range of advice and assistance with the general design of the technical installation and so have built up a consultancy service for entertainment venues. Current projects are for a new media centre in Norway with