

digital edition

Lighting & Sound international

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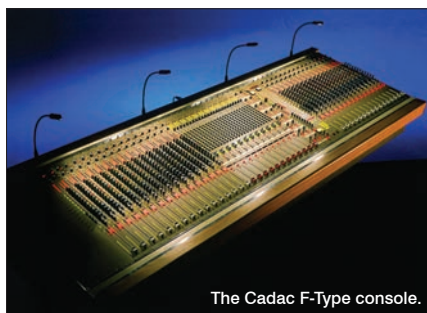
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Classic Gear: Cadac Mixing Consoles

Rob Halliday takes a nostalgic but instructive look back at the tools that have shaped the industry . . .

As a lighting person, I've always thought it rather unfair that Cadac chose to make products for people who work in sound. I want the lighting Cadac - the lighting control version of those gorgeous mixing desks you'll have seen at the back of the audience if you've visited any major musical in the last 25 years. Why? Because they are led by raw functionality and cost-no-object engineering aiming to be the best at what they do, rather than by the desire to simplify, to use off-the-shelf components or to value engineer that seem to be the more common design practices these days. As a result, they make you feel good just standing behind them, even as a lighting person . . .



The Cadac F-Type console.

They have been a mainstay of musicals big and small, successful and less successful, but also on the biggest award ceremonies, rock concerts and in permanent installations ranging from television studios to the world's most demanding theatres.

The Cadac look and feel is familiar across all of their console lines: the rugged construction, the modularity allowing empty frames to be arranged to suit the control space available then filled with an assortment of modules - the range increasing in

response to user demands - to suit the needs of the show (also allowing modules to be swapped out easily in the event of a fault), the high resolution column meters nestling between the faders that give the consoles instant visual appeal to casual observers, the clear alphanumeric displays showing the function of each VCA fader as it changes under the control of Cadac's console automation software. Oh, and a real, solid-wood arm-rest.

They are beautiful to look at in an elegant, functional way. Talk to the audio cognoscenti and they will tell you that they are also the benchmark for audio quality, even in this digital age, Cadac themselves delaying entering that market until they were sure they'd matched the audio quality of their analogue ranges. Their S-Digital has quite some reputation to live up to, but its stated design goal - to 'sound, look and behave like a familiar analogue console' - doesn't seem like a bad place to start.

Cadac online: >>> www.cadac-sound.com

Cadac didn't start out in the live events market - formed in 1968, the name coming from the initials of the founders, the company originally made mixing desks for recording studios. It was a recording engineer moving in to theatre who brought Cadac with him: Martin Levan, designing *Little Shop of Horrors* at the tiny Comedy Theatre in 1983, needed to cram a desk into an awkward control position. In just over four weeks Cadac designed and built a custom console, supplied through rental company Autograph. A year later the trio were re-united for the seminal *Starlight Express*, where Levan needed computerised control of the console to allow the operator to keep up with the complex, high speed show and its 21 radio mics. The show ran for 17 years.

Since then the consoles - A-Type, B-Type, C-Type, later the E-Type, the current F-Type and J-Type, have been seen on live events of all types.

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