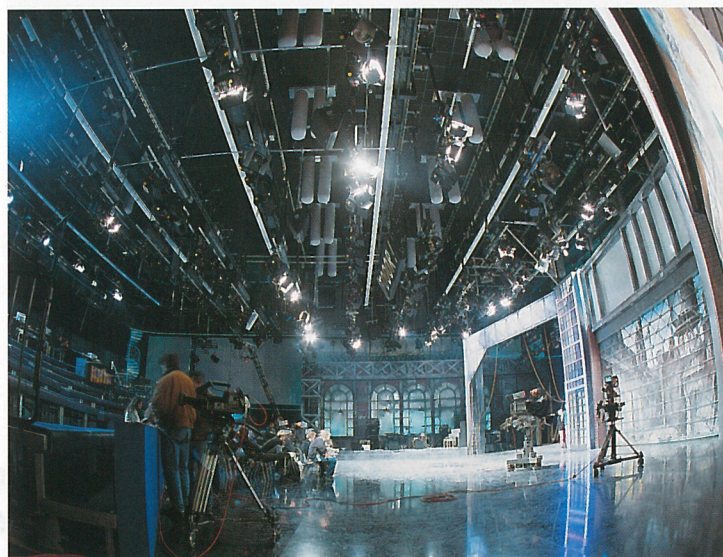


# MEGA PROJECT FOR STRAND GERMANY: THE MMC STUDIO IN COLOGNE

The German TV market is positively booming. The reason for the boom is the success of the private programming companies which have been allowed to operate in Germany for the past few years and are, quite rightly, challenging the established public organisations. Their rivals for the public's attention having been identified, an offensive has now been launched which has resulted in a severe shortage of studio capacity. In Cologne in particular, huge studio complexes have sprung up; this provincial capital having established itself as the stronghold of the broadcast media - and there is no sign yet of demand being satisfied.

One of the more sensational developments of recent months is without doubt the studio of MMC, the Magic Media Company, in Hürth, just outside Cologne. A TV studio had been in operation on this spot for several years, and this has now been considerably expanded in scale. The origins of the studio date back to a factory building which was converted with the help of Strand Lighting GmbH. As the capacity of the studio had already been inadequate for some time (RTL and SAT 1 in particular both constantly needed more space), a new building housing three studios has been added. The floor areas of the three studios are 600, 1100 and another 1100 square metres respectively. A further studio, the Maxima (a double studio of 1740 sq. m.) also needed equipping.

The entire project management of the new building was entrusted to Strand Lighting. Planning permission was obtained at the end of March 1993 with the first programme being produced on September 6th; an extremely tight schedule for a project of this size. Especially as it had to encompass not only construction and installation but also pre-planning and detailed scheduling. The CAD planning department at Strand's offices in Wolfenbüttel, which has been equipped with the very latest technology, now proved its worth. The crucial planning phase of the project coincided with ShowTech trade show in Berlin, at which Strand traditionally exhibits. On this



occasion, it had been intended to demonstrate the potential of the CAD department, and as the planning work for the MMC studio had to continue, a complete CAD work station was set up at the exhibition so that the work could proceed whilst the exhibition was in progress.

But this, of course, was not the end of the story. A studio project of this scale requires a great deal of lighting equipment. Consequently, for weeks on end Strand's Scottish manufacturing unit at Kirkcaldy put special resource to work on this project for Cologne and our Italian colleagues in Pomezia had their work cut out producing all the studio luminaires to schedule. Ulrich Kunkel, Marketing Manager of Strand in Germany commented, "The MMC studio project was only feasible because of close collaboration between Strand in Germany, Britain and Italy and in particular the experience and resources of UK based project management and production planning. It was a real team effort."

A total of almost 3000 individual dimmers have been installed in the MMC studios, in 38 Strand EC90 dimmer racks. Installation began immediately after ShowTech in Berlin and was supervised on site by the project leader, Bernhard Berger, with Jens Stuckmeier. These two Strand staff set up a production office in the old MMC building and supervised the project over a period of weeks, with great personal involvement. Naturally, one requires certain creature comforts in that situation; Bernhard Berger even saw fit to take his office chair with him from Wolfenbüttel.

The installation phase was speeded up thanks to the assistance of Malcolm White, the "Red Adair" of the studio division. Wherever he turns up there are "sudden conflagrations" to be dealt with. Malcolm needed to use his entire box of tricks in order to ensure that the installation was completed on time.

A few figures may help to illustrate the scale of the project. The MMC studios contain, amongst other things, three Strand Galaxy Nova control desks, the 38 EC90 dimmer racks mentioned above, 28 cyclorama hoists, 262 motorised self-climbing hoists (with remote control and patching capability for the movements) and 100 pantographs. There are also 450 Strand Quartzcolor Castor 2 kW spotlights, 225 Pollux 5 kW and 120 Polaris 1 kW in studios 1 to 3, plus a further 100 Castor 2 kW, 100 Pollux 5 kW and 100 Polaris 1 kW in the Maxima studio. All the dimmer racks and the requisite distribution equipment for studios 1, 2 and 3 are centralised in a room which, during the installation phase, gave any passing visitors the impression of being in a copper mine, such was the mass of gleaming metal cables.

