

THE SUPER STAR GALAXY NOVA

Galaxy Nova™ has attained its position as the leading high-specification console through a high quality pedigree. The original Galaxy was launched in 1980, and it owed much to the console specified by Richard Pilbrow for London's National Theatre in 1974 - the Lightboard.

The Lightboard (or 'Total Control System' abbreviated to TCS as it was originally known) was developed from Richard Pilbrow's concepts for the total control of all the attributes of light; intensity, colour, position. It was a 'playable' control, intuitive in operation, working the way the lighting designer thought, and providing lighting changes, effects, and projection changes at the push of a button. Its huge capacity enabled each lighting outlet in the theatre to be individually controlled through a dedicated dimmer, avoiding the use of patch panels. The concept of 'finger-tip control of various live blocks of light for comparative balancing' spawned a 'palette' of wheels, and passed an idea and a name across the Atlantic to Century and the Lightpalette.

Galaxy was launched in 1980, and its internal architecture was designed to accommodate the ideas of Lightboard, with the ability to expand in the future as new requirements evolved. The fact that Galaxy has grown, through four major re-designs, to its latest invocation, Galaxy Nova, is a tribute to the forethought of the original design team.

GALAXY - A COMPLETE SYSTEM

Nowhere else in the range of lighting equipment is the word 'system' more pertinent. Galaxy Nova isn't a single product, it is a combination of hardware and ideas which integrate to provide a central lighting control facility. Take the control surface as an example. The primary functions of the system are divided into individual modular panels, and it's not just the type of the panel which affects the operation of the console, but the quantity of each module chosen. The process of selecting panels from an extensive library of ten basic types actually moulds the 'personality' of the system. For example, a playhouse may require only a few panels giving straight-forward recording and playback facilities whereas a variety theatre would choose more panels offering 'spontaneous' features, and programmable special effects, but not the advanced automated playback functions. A TV studio

would concentrate on panels offering multiple simultaneous control from different locations, fast record and re-recording and shot by shot playback features. An opera house system would provide the lighting designer the means to 'paint with light' using panels to mix and blend lighting states, and to remotely control the functions of an automated spotlight.

INTUITIVE DESIGN

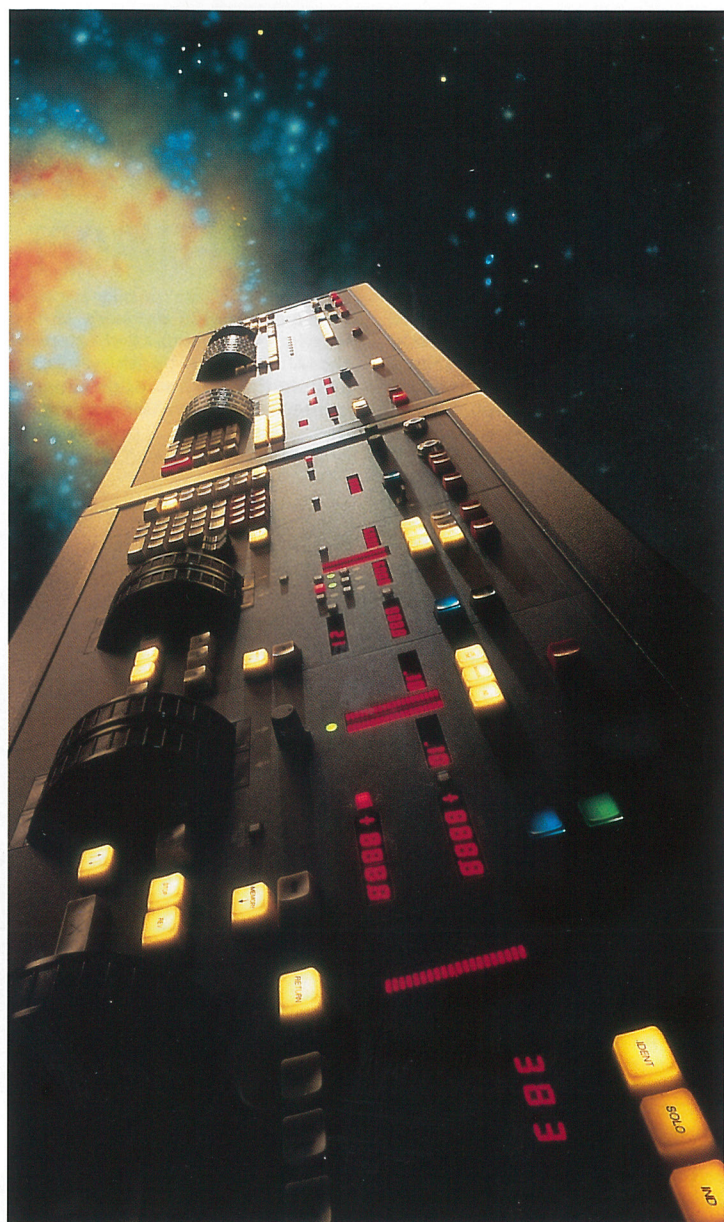
Unfortunately, there isn't space here to even list all the functions of Galaxy Nova. It is a lighting designer's system; a lighting control which is more of an artistic tool than a computer. Galaxy's pedigree is obvious from the intuitive and rapid operation to the sophistication of some of the facilities which can only have been included with the help of user experience.

The Advanced Playback, an example of a customer specification, includes overriding access of up to 6 parts of a multi-part fade, and the ability to record and replay the 'profile' of a fade. Perform the fade manually, and Galaxy will record and reproduce the fade, with any pauses and variations in speed. The AutoMod feature accommodates the loss of a lamp or a spotlight which has been accidentally repositioned by temporarily over-riding the recorded cue sheet with selected alternatives.



Galaxy Nova with version C1 software was launched in 1992, and it is immediately distinguished from previous versions by its new appearance; grey control surfaces and housing. Hardware improvements included some redesigned panels, plus a new electronics crate, processor and memory cards. The dimmer status feedback facility, DFD, was included to receive and display the performance data from EC90™ MDplus or EC90 Supervisor dimmers.

Colour and motion control were further integrated into the



Galaxy Nova.

primary functionality of the system, with colour controls being directly accessible from the channel control, and positional recording facilities available on both the motion control and memory panels.

The colour control of Galaxy is particularly interesting, and it was developed in conjunction with the custom electronics of the ColourCall™ scroller. The Galaxy can be configured with colour scroller addresses linked to the channel number controlling the intensity of the host spotlight, avoiding the necessity of remembering a separate scroller number. With the scroller identified as a separate entity, the Galaxy Nova then excludes the scroller signal from general fades. For this level of control, the Galaxy outputs signals in its PALS™ protocol, called MRL. The added advantage of this is that the protocol supports a time parameter which provides the means for very smooth colour changes of up to 4 minutes.

NOW WITH NEW SOFTWARE

Version C2 software has recently been released, and this has added even more functions to the base program. For example, there are more options for system customisation, and for setting default information. Improvements were made to the motion control and playbacks (through the preset masters and group masters panels).

For those situations where full tracking backup systems are specified, Galaxy Nova can operate with dual electronics.

Galaxy Nova has already proved itself as the premier lighting control system, with recent installations at Glyndebourne, The Royal National Theatre, Edinburgh Festival Theatre, and imminent installations at the BBC Television Centre's Studio 8, Royal Opera House Covent Garden, and the Bolshoi Theatre.