

EDITORIAL

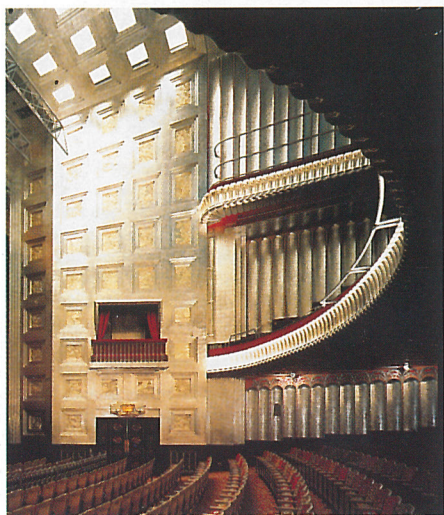
This issue of *Lights!* marks a departure from the format we have evolved over the last few years. Turning the pages it will soon become evident why this became necessary. One explanation is that the subject of creative lighting for entertainment and the equipment that does its bidding has become increasingly complex and varied, to the point where a brief resumé is simply not enough. So in this issue we have taken the bold step of only talking about a single subject - that of lighting controls. We have not set out to write another catalogue of what is currently available, but have attempted to put into context everything from a basic two preset manual LX desk to Galaxy. We have also added some background explanation, not just of what they do, but why. And we hope to have shown the progression and development of lighting controls in response to and indeed in close consultation with, designers and operators and how technical advances in electronics and software have been harnessed for this cause.

We have moved a long way from the days of brass and rosewood switch boards, in fact many of the control systems are extremely recent in introduction with Strand now probably having the most modern range anywhere - not bad for a company that started life in 1914! But it is because of this long involvement with the theatre and subsequently television and architectural control needs that we have been able to distil these decades of knowledge into equipment using the most advanced electronic designs and methods of manufacture.

Today, however the desk itself is only part of the lighting control system. It was not long ago that analogue signals were the common means of communicating fader levels to dimmers to control light intensity. But then came DMX 512 which rapidly became embraced as the international protocol for control to dimmer communication. Now we have ethernet systems such as Strand's ShowNet borrowing from the computer world a new proven standard of connectivity. But there is also MIDI and a whole number of other standards for different purposes. What are they all for? What is suitable for my theatre or TV studio? And where do I go to find out?

We hope this special issue of *Lights!* will answer some of these questions for those of you considering upgrading to a new system or designing for a new venue. At one time you didn't have much real choice. If your needs and budget were modest you had a suitably modest control desk. But today the entry level is highly affordable and the level of capability high. With the advent of user selectable software, it is you who choose just how much or how little control capability to purchase to match your aspirations and budget. The age of customised, bespoke lighting control systems has arrived.

But even if you are not planning to buy a new control desk now, why not keep this copy of *Lights!* ready for when you do. But having read this issue you might just decide that perhaps it is time to replace your old system. After all, high capability lighting controls have never been so affordable as they are today.



Savoy Theatre, Auditorium.

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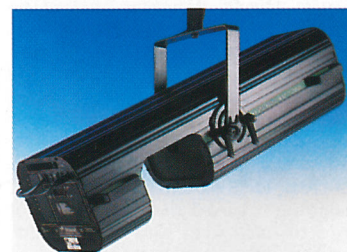
Off-Line Editor - Genius for GSX and LBX and GeniusPlus for the Strand 430, 530 and 550 consoles - for use on your PC.

14 PRODUCT FEATURE

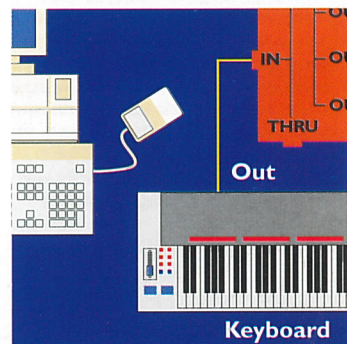
Topping the range of lighting consoles - the Galaxy control desk, including all it's latest features.



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Front cover: Strand Control Desks.