ANNOUNCING THE STRAND 430, 530 & 550 RANGE OF LIGHTING CONSOLES

THE CONCEPT

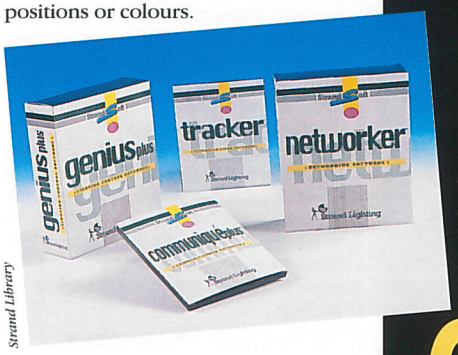
When Strand launched the revolutionary GSX console in 1993, a new era in lighting control systems began. Leaving a past behind where memory lighting controls were designed for one purpose, with a capacity and functionality defined at the time of manufacture, the GSX, soon joined by the LBX, offered a common hardware platform where the number of channels and the control functions available were chosen by the user from a suite of software products.

The success of this philosophy which has been tried and tested throughout the world, provides users the opportunity to customise their lighting control to their needs. Users only pay for their required level of facilities, with the option to upgrade at any time. There is a standardisation in the hardware specification which is produced using high-tech manufacturing processes in our plant in Kirkcaldy, Scotland, and there is the opportunity of maintaining a dialogue with customers through the life of the console as new features are added to the software.

Strand has taken this concept, and taken it forward for the mid-range, high capability sector. This didn't mean that we simply expanded the software to a higher capacity desk. We took account of the current requirements and future desires of the operators of mid range consoles; requirements which included a greater use of DMX 512 (the digital multiplex dimmer protocol) for functions other than dimming, plus the future ideas for lighting system networks, and particularly user customisation.

The adoption of DMX for other non-dimming functions has been growing for several years, particularly for colour scrollers, and automated lights. Adding a colour scroller to a luminaire means that the unit has 2 independent DMX addresses, one for the dimmer intensity, one for the colour. With an automated unit (such as a Hyperbeam scanner with its beam diverting mirror, and integral dimming, colour changing, gobos etc), the number of DMX signals required jumps to over 20.

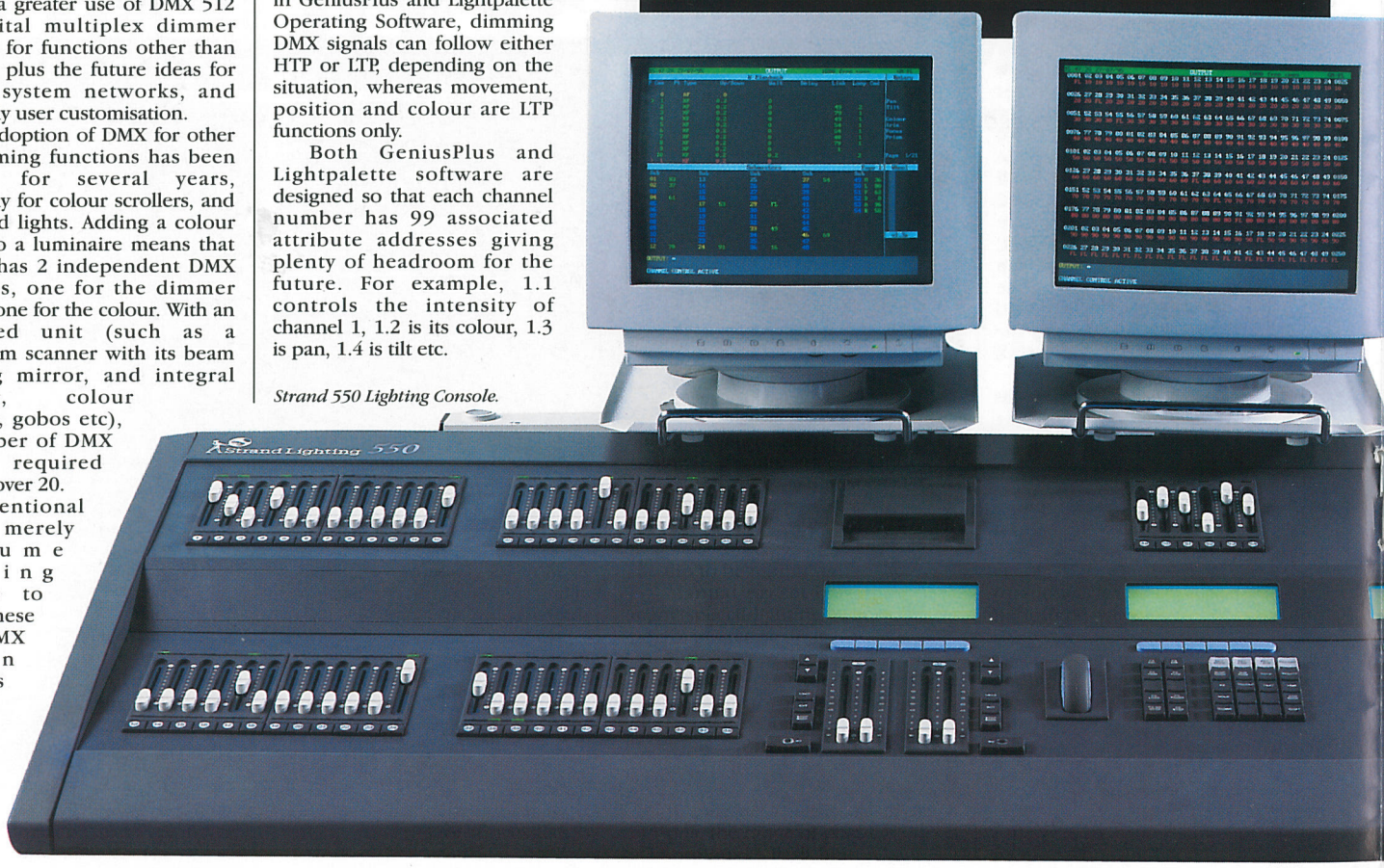
Conventional desks merely consume dimming channels to control these other DMX driven functions (called "attributes"), but the process becomes impossible to manage for an automated light with in excess of 20 attributes. Not only are these attributes costly in control channels, they are difficult to address and control. Although setting up positions, colours and intensities is a simple extension of the intensity memory system process, when the recorded cue is played back not only do the dimmers fade to another level, the position and colour changes too. Thus careful planning is needed to prevent an action like, "fade to blackout" from resetting all the attributes to their zero levels, positions or colours.



Strand Library

In memory system language, intensities can be controlled as either the Latest action Taking Precedence (LTP), or, in the case of the same channel being controlled by a group of submasters, the Highest level Taking Precedence (HTP). Obviously, the idea of highest level of pan and tilt, or the highest colour is meaningless, but the latest colour selected is logical. Thus in GeniusPlus and Lightpalette Operating Software, dimming DMX signals can follow either HTP or LTP, depending on the situation, whereas movement, position and colour are LTP functions only.

Both GeniusPlus and Lightpalette software are designed so that each channel number has 99 associated attribute addresses giving plenty of headroom for the future. For example, 1.1 controls the intensity of channel 1, 1.2 is its colour, 1.3 is pan, 1.4 is tilt etc.



Strand 550 Lighting Console.