Names have now been replaced by numbers. After all it is not the hardware that defines the characteristics and capabilities of the console but the software. It is worth repeating the hardware description which appeared in the last issue of *LIGHTS!*

"The Strand 430, 530 and 550 consoles are based on proprietary PC components, with a PC processor, power supply and hard disk at the centre of the system. The Strand 430 originally had a 486 DX2 processor hence the "4", but is now upgraded with a Pentium 75 and controls up to 600 dimming channels and 400 attributes. The "30" refers to 30 submasters. For more channels, up to 1500 and 500 attributes, the Strand 530 has a Pentium 90 processor and 30 submasters, and the Strand 550 has a Pentium 90 and 54 submasters."

The 430, 530, 550 family of consoles has become the envy of the competition and is eagerly sought and bought by lighting professionals worldwide. With numerical naming, upgrading consoles is simplicity itself. There is no longer the brain trauma of thinking up new and catchy names for consoles that can be radically changed as software techniques advance. This is just as well for at the beginning of 1996 we announced updated versions of a variety of software products.

(Right) Strand 430 Memory Lighting Console.

Readers were given a detailed introduction, in Volume 6, Issue 1, of LIGHTS! to a revolutionary range of Strand Lighting control consoles. The article covered in depth the new era in lighting control systems which had begun in 1993 with the launch of the GSX, closely followed by the LBX. The architecture of memory lighting controls, designed for one purpose became a thing of the past. GSX and LBX offered a common hardware platform which gave the end-user the facility to customize the number of channels and functions to their specific needs.*

LIGHTPALETTE™ V1.5

This software optimises consoles for a tracking style of operation and will be familiar to users trained on previous generations of Strand Lightpalette consoles. Live, Preview and Cue Sheet display formats will be very familiar to existing Lightpalette users. Most LP90 commands are supported plus many more advanced features made possible by the new Pentium platforms. The new features of GeniusPlus are not lost as Spreadsheet Cue Preview editing is still available as are all the user set-up options. Dual playbacks is a first for new Lightpalette. Individual channels can be assigned to either or both playbacks and combined on a Latest Takes Precedence or Highest Takes Precedence basis. This provides two pointers into the same cue sheet, and two GO keys, but still preserves tracking through channel assignment.

TRACKER™ V1.5

This software adds fully integrated moving light control to the basic GeniusPlus or Lightpalette operating software. It is easy and fast to use. Tracker includes a library of standard

GENIUSPLUS™ V1.5

This software optimises consoles for a presetting style of operation. The new software adds several new functions to further speed up configuration, plotting and allow those last minute changes.

GeniusPlus has grown. Now console capacity has increased again. With up to 2000 cues, 1000 groups and 600 effects, 30 simutaneous FX playbacks and 128 cue fades on the new Pentium consoles. Auto-Preheat allows each channel to be given an independent preheat level to which the channel is faded just prior to the channel being used in a cue. For users with large fixtures this could present a considerable timesaver. It is no longer necessary to spend hours recording tedious preheat cues and keeping them up to date as a show evolves. Auto-Prompt is a neat feature that displays any text associated with a cue, group, submaster, fixture etc. as it's number is entered. This gives a prompt to the operator and allows a last minute change of mind or search.

(Above) New operating and application Software packages for Strand 430/530/550.

fixtures such as Strand PALS and Hyperbeam, Vari-Lite, Martin, Clay Paky, High End Systems, Pani. This library, which is continually being expanded, allows complex fixtures to be patched in a matter of seconds. Auto-Move-When-Dark is a novel new feature that enables the console to automatically reposition scrollers or moving lights ready for the next cue, between cues, when the instrument is dark. This virtually eliminates the need to program 'dark' cues and can save valuable plotting/rehearsal time. When required Auto-Move-When-Dark can be overridden on a cue by cue basis. Additional display formats have been introduced to help display moving light information. Tracker automatically switches into the most appropriate display format depending upon the type of channel being controlled (regular dimmer, scroller, or moving light.)

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