

# STRAND News

December 2004

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## Mary Poppins!

By Rob Halliday

Forty years after the classic Walt Disney film starring Julie Andrews and Dick Van Dyke appeared in cinemas, the supercalifradgillisticexpialidocious nanny *Mary Poppins* has appeared on stage in a lavish co-production between Disney Theatrical and Cameron Mackintosh.



*Mary and the Kids*

Rather than just create a copy of the film on stage, the new musical takes some favourite movie moments along with many of the Sherman Brothers' fabulous songs and integrates material from the original novels by PL Travers and new songs by the British team of George Stiles and Anthony Drew into a new book by the award-winning screenwriter Julian Fellowes.

The production has been brought to the stage by a team led by director Richard Eyre, co-director and choreographer Matthew Bourne, co-choreographer Stephen Mear, designer Bob Crowley and lighting designer Howard Harrison.

Faced with a complex show and a set that left little room for lighting equipment overhead, Harrison opted for a largely automated lighting rig - with the further complication that the director was seeking the lowest possible ambient noise level and therefore any lighting equipment used had to be as quiet as possible. The final lighting design includes the low-noise VL3000Q and VL3500Q spotlights as well as VL2000 Spot, VL2000 Wash and VL5B washlights from Vari-Lite, Revolutions from ETC, DHA Digital Light Curtains plus four colour colour-mixing fluorescent units from LDDE and colour-mixing LEDs from Howard Eaton Lighting Limited. Rainbow colour scrollers are used, with their cooling fans and lamp intensities patched so that the fans only run when the lamps are actually on.

Control for the entire lighting rig - and for a collapsing table effect, controlled via wireless DMX, four Hipotizer digital media servers, two beaMover moving video projectors and a PC running two PIGI large-format projectors - is from a Strand 500-series control system. Two Strand 530i consoles, one configured as a main console and the other as a remote, were specified for the pro-



*The Production Tables at the Hippodrome in Bristol  
All photos courtesy of Rob Halliday*

duction period, allowing programmer Rob Halliday and console operator Alex Peters to deal with the conventional and moving lights - or any combination of the two - during the technical rehearsal period. The entire rig now runs from one 530i console with a 510i console as backup, both running GeniusPro 2.8.5; ten streams of DMX are distributed using Strand's ShowNet and SN110 network nodes. Howard Harrison and his assistant James Whiteside made use of xConnect dongles on their Macintosh laptops, both wired and wirelessly, to view lighting levels and running cues at the production desk.

*Mary Poppins* opened at the Bristol Hippodrome theatre in late September, playing a short season there before transferring to the Prince Edward Theatre in London in time for Christmas. The production's lighting equipment has been supplied by Stage Electrics in Bristol, with the installation led by Production Electrician Fraser Hall and his team of Chris Luscombe, Steve Reeve, Pete Lambert, and Ben Jeffrey as well as Pete Loft and the Hippodrome crew, and Gavin McGrath and his team at the Prince Edward Theatre.

*This issue of Strand News features stories on productions from around the world including a diary from team member Bobby Harrell of his work over through the autumn and early winter, Rob Halliday's contributions from Europe and a story from Designer and programmer Nicholas Phillips from Mexico. We would appreciate your feedback on this issue and invite you to send your comments to:*

[Editor.Newsletter@strandlighting.com](mailto:Editor.Newsletter@strandlighting.com)

## Diary of a Designer and Programmer

By Bobby Harrell

Designing and programming on the Strand 500 series and 300 series desks gives me the opportunity to creatively solve design challenges through the flexibility and power of LightPalette software. As a designer, the programming goal on every show is to find the right path to intuitively and fluidly create the design. For me, this is finding the path where the console “thinks” the way I do. This often means recalling information using text based labels rather than group numbers.



*The Dream Ballet from the Oklahoma! tour*

As a programmer, the goal is to create the best programming possible. That may sound simple, but sometimes that may focus on speed of programming (because of a fast production period), auto marking for automated fixtures while other times it may emphasize designer friendly information to better communicate the way the designer prefers. Still other applications demand emphasis on the long term life of the show for productions like touring. Depending on the application, this will determine how much setup work is done, how palettes are setup via macros, screen layouts and multiple console environments.



*Opening scene for Playboy of the Western World on a US tour from the Abbey Theatre in Ireland*

Through a chronicle of my fall production schedule, I will share the programming shortcuts as well as console setup choices and accessories that I used to help facilitate the programming of each show. On some productions I held the position of designer, on others...the programmer. Sometimes I was brought in by Strand as a lighting systems specialist to consult with the design team.

Hopefully you will learn as much as I did!



### August —The Kamikaze Museum on the USS Intrepid

Auerbach Pollock and Friedlander are known for the design and planning of performing arts and media facilities.

The new Kamikaze Museum on the USS Intrepid was a welcome challenge for Steve Friedlander and Alex Bagnall and they asked me to support them as needed for programming.



*A mural of the USS Intrepid*

The show tells the story of the USS Intrepid's involvement in the World War II battles for the Pacific against the formidable Japanese fleet. The story is told from the hanger deck of the mighty aircraft carrier herself while the audience is surrounded by World War II fighter aircraft.



*Auerbach Pollock and Freidlander's recreation of the fire aboard the USS Intrepid while under attack in WW II*

A multimedia event, that runs several times a day, using a mixture of original and produced video on multiple screens that puts the audience in the middle of World War II battles, aided by APF's powerful lighting and atmospheric effects.

With intelligent fixtures and a SMTPE interface to sync with

audio and video, APF selected a Strand 310 show control console to run the show. Fixtures, scrollers, strobes, EFX 2 scene machines and smoke machines were integrated with sound and video to create the event. All attributed fixtures were used intelligently by way of the Tracker software application. This allows preset focus groups to display text based information for color and gobos while Auto Move While Dark can preset all automated fixtures before they are needed. Once the cues were written, a SMPTE cue list was recorded and it's time was edited to correspond with the video. SMPTE syncing can respond differently from one video playback system to another, so Strand gives you the choice of either using an external SMTPE clock or an internal one. An internal one was chosen after experimenting because of playback consistency.

The equipment racks were a level below the hanger deck in an equipment room that was no where near the museum. Because of this, Steve and Alex chose to add a second 300 desk (for the programming period only) to use on the hanger deck for cueing. Both desks were connected over a Strand network. At that point, the second desk could either function as a backup to the first desk or it could act as a second faceplate known as a remote console. Both console modes were used as the situation warranted.



*The equipment racks for the Kamikaze Museum on the USS Intrepid*

## **September—Oklahoma! Tour – The Second Leg**

When Oklahoma! came to Broadway, David Hersey chose Ted Mather to be the American Lighting Designer to take care of the show on tour.

Rob Halliday (programmer for the West End and Broadway versions) was available for the first leg of the tour but not the second, so I went out to program for Ted. The equipment did not change so it was mostly an opportunity to make timing and placement adjustments for the new actors.



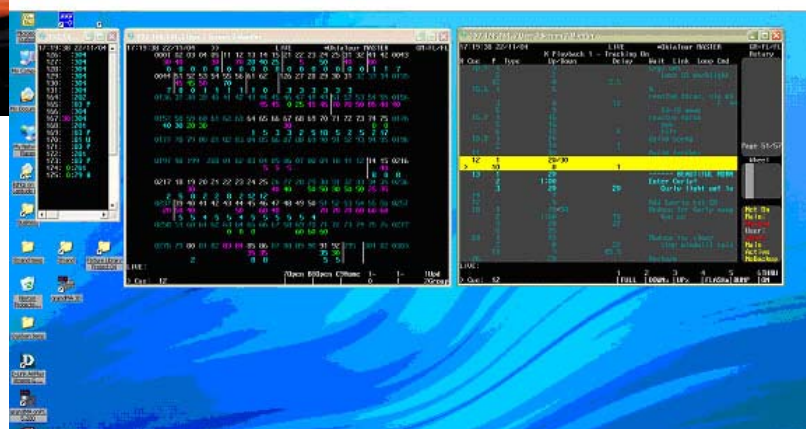
A production shot from the Oklahoma! Tour

Although a much smaller version than Broadway, there are still 17 Studio Colors, 12 VL 2000 Spots, with many scrollers and effects projectors on this touring rig along with a Strand 550i as a Main desk with a 520i that functions as an onstage remote and backup.

items using the groups. The preset focus groups are groups 1 through 750) this allows the operator to always see a text label for every attribute position making it much easier to determine if a fixture has malfunctioned over just looking at raw data.

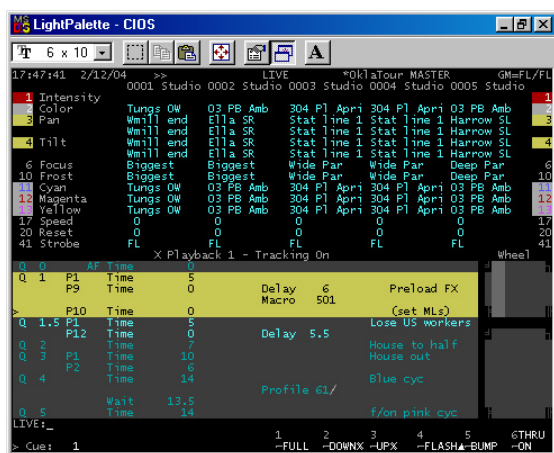
### xConnect

One of the new pieces of technology utilized was Strand's xConnect software. With xConnect, any computer can have remote video or can be turned into a remote console. The software operates on a PC with Windows 2000 or XP or on a Mac using OS X. The software comes on a USB key and also contains all manuals and tutorials. Use the software over a wired network or go wireless and take your laptop anywhere in the theatre! Below I'll explain what you're seeing on all 3 screens from the laptop screenshot below;



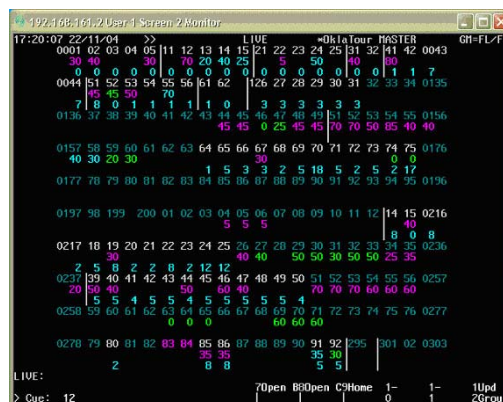
Laptop screenshot using xConnect for the designer

The two "full" screens are logged in as remote video so any screen change that happens on the console will be reflected here on Ted Mather's laptop. The middle screen is the main channel screen. This shows the first 200 channels used in the show.



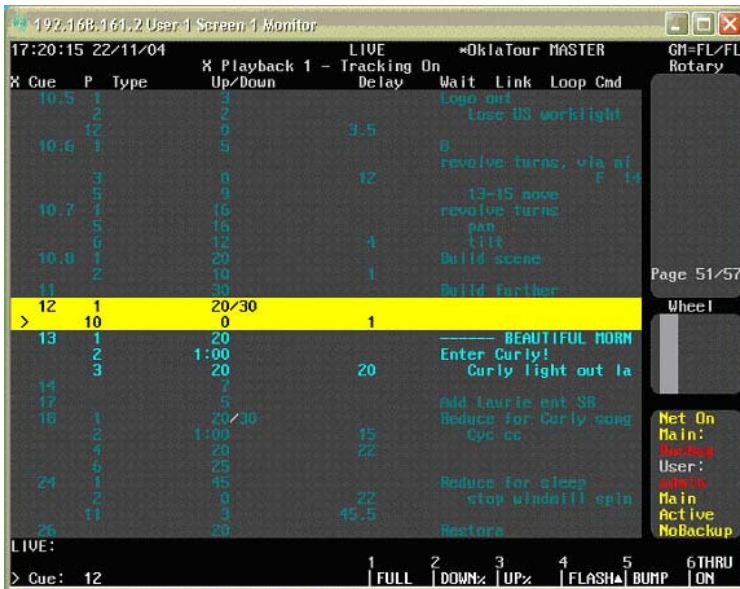
Screen shoot of a typical cue showing moving lights

All moving light attributes are always referenced to a preset focus group. (FYI, preset focus groups, sometimes called reference groups, automatically update cues, effect steps and submasters as long as channels are inserted into these



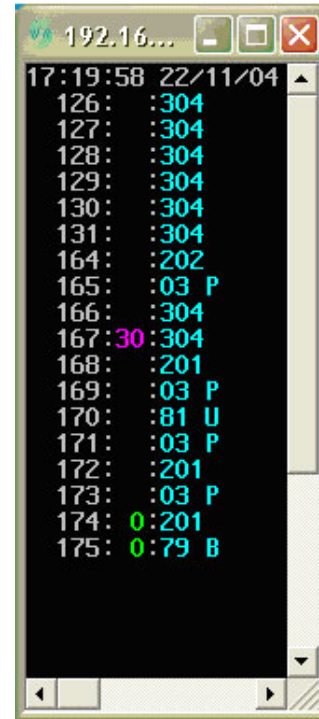
Notice that you are seeing only certain channels. When a number is skipped, a vertical line is used as a visual reference to represent a gap in the number sequence. This is not just a display option; the channels that are skipped are channels that have been deleted in the patch so you never have to bother with them during a channel check.

The screen on the right side of the monitor shows the cue list...nothing out of the ordinary here.

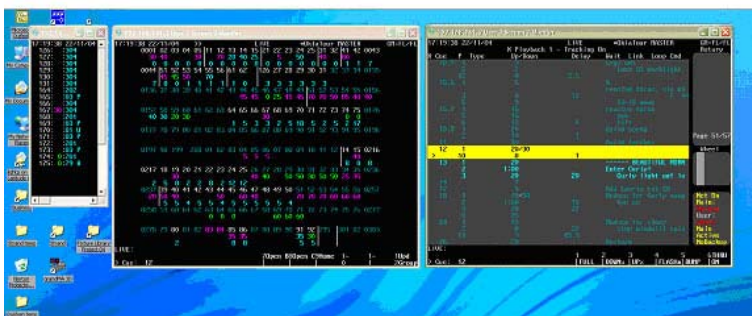


The cue list for the Oklahoma! Tour

real estate as possible and you're done! We went a step further and recorded this as a macro as we did it. That way it could always be duplicated if need be.



Scroller channel screen for Ted Mather's display



The xConnect Designer Notebook Screens

The screen shot on the left is rather unique as it is showing only the scroller channels with group reference information. This is accomplished by logging in on xConnect as User 2. Remember to use login...not monitor. Now the laptop is a console! On the laptop, go to User Setup> (Ctrl + F9) Under Display Options, change Channel Display to GALAXY+, change Channel Formatting to DISPLAY GROUP. Now, go to the Group display (Ctrl + F5), highlight group 994.2. This is the display group for User 2. Simply take out any channels that you don't want [CHANNEL LIST @ \*]. When you return to Live (Ctrl + F4) you'll see your newly adjusted display. Now just resize your screen to take up as little screen

Now we have a vertical list of the scroller channels, levels and their group text reference. This was very important to Ted as it not only allowed Ted to view the scroller information intelligently; it allowed me to enter the information intelligently. For example, if Ted wanted channel 174 in color L201, he would say just that and I would type [174 @ TEXT 201 \*]. This would search all groups for the one whose label started with 201. It would text match below the command line and then I would press ENTER. This is all based on how Rob Halliday setup the scroller groups. I took it a step further by recording the USER macro to be [@ TEXT]. This only saves one keystroke but this is a command sequence that Ted repeated many times. So it was worth it.

When Ireland's Abbey Theatre decided to bring *Playboy of the Western World* to the United States for a tour, the lighting designer, Peter Mumford, asked if I would take care of the tour for him as his associate. Travis Richardson was brought on as the lighting supervisor for the tour.



*During rehearsal of Playboy of the Western World at the Shubert Theatre in New Haven*

Production occurred at the Shubert Theatre in New Haven before it went out on the road. Similar to the previous example, the show file that I received had been programmed in GeniusPro so I did the conversion to LightPalette. The rig itself was fairly simple (at least in terms of control). It was nothing more than conventional channels and scrollers.

What we did not have here was an SN100 for remote video. So I used 2 USB keys, one connected to my laptop and one connected to Travis's laptop and we each connected a second monitor. This gave us our two dedicated console screens for the tech table.

The great thing about this is that you can adjust the screen resolution on the other monitor to have the Strand remote video window fill the screen and not have it affect the laptop screen.



*Multiple laptops using multiple USB keys wirelessly (The laptop on the right utilizing an external monitor)*

Generally, Peter Mumford does not use external monitors at the tech table. Because of the clutter, size and visual intrusion, he prefers to work without them. But once he saw that he could have monitors on his laptop, this gave him the benefits of the screens without the visual interference. He would even take his laptop on stage, place it on a soft goods hamper (for a rolling table) and he could use his drafting program to locate the channel that he needed and then we could call it up via the same Apple laptop! It was the perfect blend of flexibility, compactness and control.

We used both wired and wireless remotes for production. The wired tended to stay with one person more and the iPaq would float to wherever it was needed. With the USB keys and both remote focus units, we had all the options we needed for control.



*Both the HP iPaq Focus Remote and the Strand R120 Focus*

## A Truly Worldwide Service!

By Bethan Dickson

The specially configured 300 Series console\* used by Circus Oz to enhance their performances all over the world, was stolen just prior to their London season earlier this year. Time constraints meant that Strand had to replicate the special configuration console in London ready for opening night at the Royal Festival Hall in August.



Photo: Credit: Ponch Hawkes. Courtesy of Circus Oz

Margaret Burton, Production Manager for Circus Oz said, "Strand Lighting were show savers! Despite being on the other side of the world Strand were able to have our desk customized and ready before we'd even hit the ground in the UK."

Founded in late 1977, Circus Oz created a new sort of show for a contemporary audience, they wanted it to be funny, irreverent *and* spectacular. Since then they have performed in over 26 different countries across five continents to over two million people. They have broken box office records at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and represented Australia at scores of international festivals.

\*Original consoles supplied by Bytecraft Entertainment, Australia

## New Staff at Strand

### New Service Engineer appointed in London



Simon Ruck has joined Strand London after working in the lighting industry as a freelance service and commissioning engineer for several years and as a telecommunications engineer prior to that. He comes with considerable knowledge of many types of lighting equipment.

Simon is particularly experienced at working in the field and his keen fault finding and inquisitive mind will be a great asset to the organization. Working alongside well known industry engineering guru John Wright he has quickly established himself in his new role.

### John Sofranko joins Strand Los Angeles Project Management

John comes to Strand after 6 years at the *Ruzika Company* working as a project consultant and systems designer for projects including International theme parks, performing arts facilities and architectural lighting installations.



John has worked as a project consultant with *Schuler & Shook Consultants* in their Chicago office and also has extensive experience as an end-user of theatrical lighting equipment with several theatre companies around the country. John has recently worked with the Alabama Shakespeare Company on tour as their Master Electrician.

### David Lee leads European Projects Department

David Lee brings a wealth of experience to his new role leading the European Projects Department. David has been a senior project manager for Glantre Engineering and most recently was lecturing in Project Management at a University. David Catterall European Sales Director adds, "David will extend the depth of experience we have within our organization as we grow our global projects business. We are delighted to have him join our team".



# The Woman in White

By Rob Halliday



First to open in a busy season for new musicals in London's West End was the latest work from Andrew Lloyd Webber, *The Woman In White*.

Adapted from the classic novel by Wilkie Collins and directed by Trevor Nunn, the show features a radical set design from William Dudley created almost entirely using video projection. With physical scenery limited to a revolve, a curved grey screen that wraps around the stage and then a shallower curved grey screen that can track up and down stage on the revolve, the vast array of locations that the show demands - from railway cuttings to grand castles to the streets of London - are all conjured up using computer generated scenery projected from video projectors rigged front-of-house and on-stage. The artwork often creates a complete 'virtual world', scrolling around the projection screens as characters walk around the stage.



Of course the actors still had to be lit - both to render them visible and to integrate their reality with the virtual world of the projections. This challenging task fell to lighting designer Paul Pyant - the challenge made all the greater by the fact that many of the usual solutions adopted to light actors while keeping

light away from projection screens, such as cross-light, were rendered unusable by the wraparound screen.

Pyant and his associate lighting designer David Howe tackled the problem using an array of carefully chosen automated lighting equipment, including Vari-Lite VL3000Qs, Revolutions, AutoYokes and Strand Pirouette PCs, as well as conventional lanterns fitted with colour scrollers. The overhead rig was mounted on circular trusses following the shape of the projection screens, with the front-of-house rigged on a new auditorium truss and existing auditorium boom, side circle and circle front positions. The lighting then took its lead from the video imagery with regard to angle and colour, with four Beamlight followspots used to pick the performers out while minimizing the light spill onto the projection screens.

On occasions the lighting was also required to move with the video, with window gobos rotating into place as projections panned around the screen - a challenging task for programmer Vic Smerdon, who chose to use a Strand control system for the show.

*Woman in White* runs on a 520i console with a 510i as backup, this continuing the long association between the Palace Theatre and Strand - the record-breaking run of *Les Misérables* at the theatre was under Strand control. Paul Pyant's team also included assistant lighting designer James Farncombe and production electricians Gerry Amies, Martin Chisnall, Chris Dunford and Ian Moulds; the show's lighting equipment was provided by White Light in London.

## Console Tips

By Rob Halliday

### Effects

Effects in Strand 300- and 500-series consoles are powerful, flexible devices allowing chases to be created quickly and either played back on their own or as part of a traditional sequence of cues. Chases can contain intensities, attributes or any combination thereof.

Effects can be thought of as self-contained 'mini-sequences' of cues that can be run independently of the console's main cue list. The console can contain up to 600 effects; you can see a list of the effects in a show by pressing the [FX] display key. Each effect can then contain up to 99 steps, which you can see by selecting an effect using the trackball or [NEXT] and [LAST] keys then pressing the {EDIT FX>} softkey.

Each step has a fade in, fade out and attribute time - similar to the up, down and attribute times in cues. There is also a 'step time', which is like a 'wait' or 'follow on' time in a standard cue - the time from when one step starts until the next step starts automatically. And - in a crucial difference from standard cues - an effect step also has a 'dwell' time: the time for which any channels set by a step will stay at their set level for before fading out again. In other words, a single effect step can bring up an intensity over a set time, hold it at that level for a set time, then fade it out again, whereas a single cue can only bring an intensity to a level - it needs another cue to fade it out again.

As an example, let's take a five-step effect containing channels 1 to 5, which channel 1 in step 1, channel 2 in step 2 and so on. To record an effect, you can bring up the channels in live then record as you would record a cue - ie:

```
[1] [ @ ] {FULL}
```

```
[FX] [1.1] [RECORD] - to record effect 1 step 1
```

```
[1] [ @ ] [ 0 ]
```

```
[2] [ @ ] {FULL}
```

```
[FX] [1.2] [RECORD] - to record effect 1 step 2
```

and so on, these commands assuming single digit key entry and so being adapted in the usual way for other commands modes - eg [RECORD] [FX] [1.1] [\*] if in command line mode.

However, the danger with this is that any other channels that happen to be up at the time will be recorded into the effect. You could use UPDATE or other selective-recording commands to avoid this, but it is often quicker to make an effect by going to the effect pre-



view screen and creating it blind there. In the case of our effect:

```
[FX] to switch to the FX preview screen
```

```
[FX] [2] [*] [*] to create a new effect 2 and start editing it
```

```
[1] [ @ ] [FULL] to add channel 1 to step 1
```

```
{APPEND STEP} to add a second step
```

```
[2] [ @ ] [FULL] to add channel 2 to step 2
```

```
{APPEND STEP} to add a third step
```

```
[3] [ @ ] [FULL] to add channel 3 to step 3
```

and so on until there five step each containing one channel. If you make a mistake you can move up and down through the steps using the trackball or the [NEXT] and [LAST] keys, and remove a channel with the usual [channel] [ @ ] [.] or [channel] [ @ ] [\*] commands. If you add an extra step you can remove it using the {DELETE} softkey. Note, though, that there is no way of inserting an effect step between two consecutive effect steps. Also note that effects steps are like Move Fades - they only affect the channels they contain, leaving any other channels that are up in cues or other effects completely unaffected. An explanation of move fades can be found in the Summer 2004 issue of the newsletter.

When you've made this effect, press {EDIT FX>} to jump back up to the top half of the effects screen. This contains settings that govern the overall behaviour of the effect. Running through these quickly, there is the effect number and a text label if you've chosen to name the effect (by pressing the [TEXT] button then a label in the effects editing screen, or by typing [FX] [number] [TEXT] [label] in any other screen. These are followed by 'Type', which can be set to 'Chase' or 'Build'. This decides whether each step replaces the previous step or adds to it - in other words whether, when we ran our chase,

we'd see channel 1 come on then be replaced by 2 then be replaced by 3, or see channel 1 come on, then 2 add to it, then 3 add to it and so on.

Next is 'Dir', which governs the direction the chase runs in - FWD (runs through the steps in order, so we'd see channel 1, then 2, then 3 etc, and usually then loops from the last step to the first), REV (runs through the steps in reverse order, then loops from first step to last), BOUNCE (runs from first to last then back to first and so on) or RANDOM, which fires the steps in random order and is useful for 'flickery' type chases for flame or lightning effects.

'Dir' is followed by 'Mode', which can be IndHTP or LTP. This setting applies only to intensities, and governs the behaviour of a chase if a light is already on when the chase is run. Imagine that channel 1 was at 50% when we ran the chase we created above. Do we want the chase to take channel 1 from 50% to FL then back to 50%, or from 50% to FL then back to 0? In IndHTP ('highest takes precedence' mode), the light would go from 50 to FL to 50 in this case -the higher level from the cue wins over the lower level from the chase. In LTP ('latest takes precedence' mode), the light would go from 50 to FL to 0 then to FL then to 0 since its last instruction was from the effect telling it to go to zero.

Next is 'Level', which governs whether the chase turns lights on or off. With our chase above, in 'Normal' each light would go from 0 to FL in turn. In Negative, the moment the chase was started all five lights would go to FL and each would then switch to zero in turn. NRM NEG and NEG NRM offer combinations of these behaviours, while RANDOM will pick a random level for the lights!

'Next FX' allows one effect to automatically trigger another when it ends. Amongst other uses, this allows you to overcome the 99 step per effect limit if you have to - have one effect trigger the next then that effect trigger the first, setting both effects to only run once as detailed below.

'Fade Up' and 'Fade Dn' are the times over which an entire effect will fade in and fade out when started manually using the [FX GO] and [FX STOP] keys (for example, to run the effect created above switch to live then type [FX] [2] [FXGO]). The times which appear here by default when you create an effect are set in the Default Times section of the console's USER SETUP screen, accessed by pressing the [SETUP] key. However, if you start or stop an effect from a cue

- by entering 'F 2' (start effect 2) or 'f 2' (stop effect 2) in the CMD field in the preview screen, or using the commands [CUE] [1] [FX] [2] or [CUE] [2] [FX] [-] [2] - then the effect starts or stops using the up or down time of that cue, or cue part if you're using a multi-part cue. This allows you to re-use the same effect in different parts of the show with different fade in/out times without having to make lots of identical effects with different in/out times - though if you do have to copy an effect, this is easily done in the FX display with the command [FX] [new number] [@] {COPYFROM} [FX] [old number]. 'Profile' allows you to have a shaped fade in/out using any profile stored in the console - profiles can be found by pressing [MORE] then {PROF DISPLAY}.

'Stop After' controls how an effect ends. Usually it is set to FX STOP, meaning that an effect will continue to run until it is ended either with [FX STOP] or by a cue telling the effect to end, or by the command [FX] [0] [FXGO] which will instantly stop all running effects. 'Cycles' allows the effect to stop after it has looped a specified number of times, while 'Timed' allows it to stop after a specified time - a two second burst of lightning perhaps (-'Cycles' doesn't work very well if the effect direction is set to random!). 'Step Control' then governs how each step is triggered, usually timed but also manual - a step won't run until the [FX STEP] key is pressed - or triggered by the console's audio or MIDI inputs.

These are followed by the step timing options - step time (the time between each step), in (the time a step fades in over), dwell (how long a step holds on - if set to 'off' the step will hold for the length of the step time), out (how long a step takes to fade out), Att (the fade time for any attributes in the step) and Low/High scaling - for example, if in our example step 'FL' turned out to be too bright, you could just adjust the 'high' scaling to, say, 50% rather than having to manually adjust each step. Another useful trick is to use reference groups (see the Summer 2003 newsletter) containing intensities to make it easy to adjust levels across many effects steps.

Though times set here affect every step by default, each step can also have its own times if necessary - press {EDIT STEPS>} to jump down to the bottom half of the effect screen then navigate using the trackball and enter the individual

times as required. Effects steps will happily overlap, allowing complex wave-type chase sequences to be created. Pressing the {DEFLT} softkey will return a step's timing to the overall chase values set in the top half of the effect editing screen.

Once created, effects can be run from cues, macros, submasters or manually as shown above, and multiple effects can be run at the same time. While running it is possible to over-ride an effect to alter its speed, direction or other parameters manually - set your display to show running effects in the SETUP screen then press [FX SEL] or [SHIFT]-[FX SEL] to move down or up through the list of running effects. [FX PAUSE] will pause a running effect with [FX STEP] then running steps manually. Alternatively [FX TIME] will then allow you to alter an effect's step time on-the-fly using your console's wheel (rate wheel on 530 and 550 consoles). The new timing doesn't replace the effects programmed timing unless you want it to - [UPDATE] [TIME] [FX] [number] [\*] [\*].

As well as intensities, effects can contain attributes. Again, these can be recorded from live (only lights with intensities greater than 0 will be recorded into effects steps), but it is generally easier to create an effect in preview having pre-programmed the attributes you need into reference groups - for example, make a 'red' colour group then a 'blue' colour group then write a chase that alternates the lights between red and blue. It is also good practice to separate out attributes, and attributes and intensities, as much as possible - for example, if writing a colour chase make sure that it doesn't contain any pan or tilt information for the lights, since you'll then be able to run the chase at any time regardless of where the lights happen to be pointing at that time. And if the chase doesn't contain intensity then you can have the lights fade up already chasing by running the effect then fading the lights up in a cue.

Things to note when running effects containing attributes: when the effect starts the 'fade in' time doesn't really have any effect: an attribute will move the first time a step tells it to move somewhere. More importantly, when an effect ends you need to tell the lights where to go as otherwise they can end up in a 'semi-random' position if the effect stops halfway through directing a light to a new position. When running effects from cues, the trick is to have a cue end the effect in 0 time, give that cue a very short wait time (say 0.1second) then have a follow-on cue that then sets the lights to the position/colour you want them to go to in the time you want them get there over.

As always, the best advice is to play - don't be afraid to experiment, and see what happens! But one last tip if you do become addicted to effects and end up with busy effects sequences of effects triggered by cues in your show: you might find that the effects take a few fractions of a second to kick in as the console retrieves the effect information from its hard drive - particularly if you're using an older, slower console. If your effects run to the beat of music, this can be a problem, but it's easily overcome: write a macro that pre-loads the effects: [FX] [1] [FX LOAD] [FX] [2] [FX LOAD] and so on, and run that macro from a cue at the start of your show or in a quiet moment before a busy effects sequence. That way, the console will have the effects ready to go the instant you need them!

And finally, if you're recording cues while effects are running don't forget that the [RECORD] key captures everything - and so will store channels set as the effect has them set at that precise moment, which is usually a bad thing. On the other hand the [REC-SUB] key will ignore the contribution of any effects as well as any submasters, and [UPDATE] - see the Spring 2003 Newsletter - will also ignore channels being controlled by effects.

*A collection of Console Tips is now available on the Strand Lighting Website at <http://www.strandlighting.com> select the support tab and Newsletter and then Console tips.*



## Violinista en el Tejado Fiddler on the Roof

When lighting designer Jason Kantrowitz asked his programmer Nicholas Phillips what control system should be specified for a new production of *Fiddler on the Roof* in Mexico City, Phillips' response was indisputably Strand 500 Series. A new 520i console, SN110 nodes powered over Ethernet, and peripherals were added to an existing, near first generation 550 console the producer had previously acquired. Taking full advantage of the 500 Series' total backwards compatibility, only one console needed to be purchased to form a comprehensive control system which otherwise would have had to be deducted from the moving light and scroller budgets.



*Nicholas Phillips (foreground) and designer Jason Kantrowitz at the Tech Table*

"I like the 500 series as I really appreciate the way it is capable of controlling all of the devices on this project as a complete package today. The platform is an immense help in maintaining a high level of organization and clarity for both the programmer and designer," says Nicholas. Six universes of DMX were used to manage the system with several types of dimmers (including Strand CD80's), moving lights, scrollers, and fiber optics. The moving light package consisted of two Martin Professional MAC2000 Profile II, and six Martin Professional MAC2000 Wash fixtures. Nicholas continues, "The SN110's were most helpful to the crew as the text labels left little question as to what should be plugged into which port. Being able to use six universes of DMX kept address numbers low and easily managed."

The designer's displays were served using a desktop computer configured with a dual video card and running Strand's X-Connect. "Having two monitors and X-Connect allowed Jason and I to customize four windows that pre-

sented him with the most pertinent information while cueing the show. One monitor showed a window of two-hundred channels at twenty across, and another window with a scrollers only display group arranged in Galaxy+ Tracker Preset format. The second monitor showed him a live cue list with submasters, and the fourth window, a full screen cue list in history format. During techs and dresses I positioned the 520i console adjacent to Jason at the lighting table. Using X-Connect on my laptop, I was able to log into the 550 console that I left back in the booth and take control without having to run back and physically be there." Jason comments, "The scrollers window was great; it let me quickly glance up and see both the level and color of each fixture. No other system has shown this to me so clearly before." Stage management received cue list information via an existing SN100 node. The 520i was equipped with a second video card giving Phillips three displays at the console. This allowed him to view all channels at one time which aided him in quickly viewing levels for the entire show.

"Strand's WiFi remote application for my iPaq was a big help. Jason and I were the only two on the lighting team, and I often found myself having to solve problems in various areas of the theater while Jason was working on stage. Having the remote, and a great walkie-talkie, allowed me to be in two places at once without having to be tied down. The wireless signal was quite strong; I could control the system most anywhere in the complex, even from across the street!" An R140 wired remote was also specified as part of the system for its ruggedness in day to day operations over the life of the system which is sure to see several more open-ended production runs.





As for programming a show like *Fiddler on the Roof* on the 500 series, Nicholas says, "AutoMod and the new Track-back command proved useful. As the design developed I could easily rearrange channels for Jason using AutoMod either temporarily or permanently, globally or selectively. Although, by far the best aspect of this system is the ability to spreadsheet style edit in the live command line. Moving channel levels and selectively updating is graceful on the 500 and is something that we constantly do. Having the ability to assign macros to comfortable buttons for me is a level of customizability I am finding hard to live without on other consoles. Overall, there is little doubt of the 500 Series' superiority in controlling Broadway and theatrical style shows today."



Strand provided comprehensive support throughout the fit-up and cueing process. The dealer for the new control package was Stagelight, Inc. of Houston, Texas.

## New Application Resource Guide Available

We are pleased to announce that our latest edition application Resource Guide CD ROM is now available. Packed with useful information the guide features:

- Informative PowerPoint presentations
- Technical documents including console manuals
- Quartzcolor Product Spares
- A complete set of Data Sheets for 120 and 230 volt products
- AutoCad drawing files for main system components
- Product tutorials
- Product Specifications



Disks are available from your nearest Strand Sales office.

*Nicholas Phillips is a lighting and projection designer having designed for such companies as American Ballet Theater, Houston Ballet, Miami City Ballet, Washington Ballet, Ballet Memphis, Dominic Walsh Dance Theater, and Stages Repertory Theater. He is a regular contributor to both Lighting Dimensions and Entertainment Design magazines. We appreciate his contribution to this story*

## Introducing the OneLight Family of Studio and Location Lights from Quartzcolor

The new OneLight range from Quartzcolor provides a host of benefits from these powerful and low energy family of luminaires. In the studio the new 150 watt and 250 watt CDM Fresnels provide 3000<sup>0</sup> K and 3200<sup>0</sup> K colour balanced sources in two compact bodies.



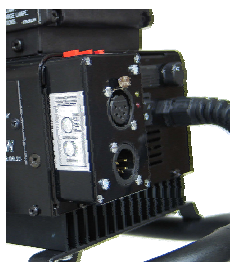
*The 250 watt and 150 watt CDM Studio Fresnels*

The 250 watt CDM fresnel is provided with a Universal Power supply and may be used for 120 and 230 volt applications and its powerful lamp provides light levels approaching a 1kW Tungsten Fresnel. The 250 watt CDM unit offers hot restrike capability. The more compact 150 watt unit is currently only available for 230 volt applications and matches many 500 and 650 watt units. Both feature exceptional lamp life.

The new CDM fresnels are ideal for a range of studio applications where long lamp life and low energy consumption is required. News studios will particularly appreciate these compact and cool light sources. The CDM 150 is available with 3000<sup>0</sup> and 4000<sup>0</sup> CDM short arc lamps to colour balance with a wide range of tungsten and fluorescent lamps.

On location the new OneLight 575 watt MSR Par and Fresnels offer the power of a standard 575 watt daylight source in a compact integrated enclosure. All OneLight 575 watt luminaires feature:

- Universal Voltage Operation
- Fully Integrated Flicker Free Electronic Ballast
- Hot Restrike Operation
- Built in Dimmer with a range from full to 50%
- Optional Plug in DMX control module for remote operation
- Remote Start on Power up



*Optional plug in DMX module*



*The OneLight 575 watt Fresnel and Par*

Both units feature new PowerGems ClearArc technology ballasts that dramatically improve light output throughout the life of the lamp. ClearArc Ballast technology can Reduce de-vitrification which means lamps burn cleaner through and beyond their rated life. Lamp 'sing' is also reduced keeping the sound engineers happy.

All OneLight units are easy to maintain and offer rapid exchange of ballasts. Ballasts can be exchanged by removing a few fasteners and plugging in a new ballast in less than a minute.



Cost effective OneLight Fresnels and Pars may be used in a variety of applications from Film location work to Trade Show and Exhibition Lighting.

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***The Strand Newsletter is published electronically four times a year. If you received a copy of this newsletter from an associate and would like to receive a copy directly please email us at: [newsletter@strandlight.com](mailto:newsletter@strandlight.com)***

**We hope that you enjoyed this issue of the Strand Newsletter and would like to wish all of our readers a Happy and Successful New Year.**



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