

## The Little Console that Can

### Checking out the Leprecon LP-X24

by Kathleen Eddy

The task at hand was to profile the Leprecon LP-X24 console, so I made a few calls to some end users. I thought I would get the pros and cons of a board that promises a lot without breaking the bank. Well, I got the pros, lots of them, and the cons, not so many—actually, none. This is one console that meets the promise and is winning converts.

Let's start with the promise: The LP-X24 console allows you to cross-program conventional dimmers and intelligent lights. It is designed to be a cross-functional console for a wide variety of situations. Ideally, it will be used in productions that incorporate both intelligent fixtures and dimmers; however, it is well suited to run either individually. It is an intelligent light console designed with the theatre in mind, so cross-programming allows users to quickly program both intelligent lights and dimmers.

Some of the many features included are

color, beam, focus, and intensity presets with individual fade times for each attribute. It has fader and keypad access to dimmer channels, 20 pages of preset playbacks, and the ability to run six cue lists at once that include both moving lights and dimmers. The console has quick fader/button access to 24 dimmers and 24 intelligent fixtures; however, conventional channels are not limited to the number of front panel faders; the keypad allows users to access additional dimmers/fixtures. The recent upgrade to VGA monitor, mouse, and keyboard support now allows for expanded views of Set-Up, Run Time, Edit, and Programming screens, not to mention easy data entry. It has been designed to program quickly, allowing access to features with a limited number of keystrokes.

Now let's take a look at how it has lived up to that promise so well. I spoke with George Studnick IV of Creative Stage Lighting in

New York, Richard Rutherford of Rutherford Designs in California, and, from Rainbow Sound & Lights, also in California, both David Raybould and Sheldon Vicks. For programmer Studnick the main use of the LP-X24 console has been in small concert venues and clubs. He often has the task of programming a club show with the venue's lights, so from night to night he is not always using the same fixtures. In his experience, the console is "very versatile from club to club. I was always able to find the fixture I was using that day."

"The library is extensive, out of the box," says designer Rutherford. Not every fixture can be in there, so how is adding in new fixtures? "Really simple and very straightforward," according to programmer Vicks. "I've had no problems." Rutherford concurs: "The manual is well written and adding fixtures is very easy."

The extensive fixture library is an example



of the support Leprecon has put behind this board, support that has not gone unnoticed by the users. "The manufacturer has been great about updating what the end user needs," states Studnicky. For example, he points out, "The recent upgrade of adding monitors helps things move very fast; you have all your channels displayed to you on the screen now and you can just point and click." Rutherford, whose main use of the board is in system designs for churches, schools, clubs, and

### *The LP-X24 is designed to cross-program conventional dimmers and automated lights in a variety of situations.*

small theatre venues, has been a convert to the board since he saw it in beta-test. "I wanted to put it in on a job the next day." Vicks has used the console mainly in concert events and clubs after Raybould brought in the LP-X24 as part of a package deal with a number of Coemar fixtures. Raybould points out, "Nine months later I bought a second LP-X24, so yes, we are very happy with the product."

One of the standout features that all the users agreed on was that the LP-X24 is easy to learn. "The training learning curve is really short," Rutherford says. "I have had to train a lot of non-lighting people at schools and churches and in a few hours they are able to do the basics and then some." Studnicky, after putting in a few hours over two nights, was well into the console's advanced features. "There are multi-

ple ways to program, so you can find your own style with this board," he says. "It works both as a moving lights console and a theatre board so you can find the way you are comfortable."

We have all had the experience of a good product, good price, but a short life in the real, knock-about world. How does the LP-X24 weather the demands of real life? Very durable, well built, and smartly packaged to help protect it. "It is not too big and not too heavy. It is laid out very ergonomically; ports are recessed and

protected," says Rutherford. Vicks concurs: "It is light and compact, making it hard to get too abused." Studnicky says, "It is the size of a briefcase so I don't need an extra stagehand to help get it up to the balcony or move it to front of house; less hands, less risk to the board."

Come on, guys, there have to be some cons. Studnicky's only con was the constant paging because of having only 24 faders but Leprecon has added the ability to have everything available at a glance with the VGA monitor, keyboard, and mouse update, so that con is now gone. Vicks thought that it would be nice if, when you program several steps in a cue, you could fix just step three, but he has his own programming style to work around that. Rutherford felt that the set number of dimmers might be an issue if he ever reaches

capacity, but that hasn't happened yet.

What are their favorite features? Vicks says, "I love the effects generator and ease of programming. I have had the experience of taking three hours on another console to do what I can do in one hour on the Leprecon." Studnicky appreciates a very considerate feature. "The set-up menu has this cool ability where they have macroed the basics; you can select to turn the light off, home it, or douse the lamp, so you can just select it and hit enter without having to do the programming yourself. A cool little thing that saves time."

Everyone agrees that the Leprecon LP-X24 lives up to its promise. Raybould states, "It is a lot of board for a very good price; a lot of bang for your buck." Studnicky assures potential buyers, "You can make the show look like any of the \$30,000 consoles out there." I'll give the last words to the position that chooses the board most often, the designer. Richard Rutherford calls it "one of those products that fills the gap between inexpensive and expensive and does it really well. It is an excellent compromise between conventional dimmer channels and moving lights, it makes programming and playback really easy, and has a tremendous amount of memory. The LP-X24 console is really powerful and for real-world applications it is excellent."

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