Welcome to Palette Programming Tips and Tricks

#10 – April 2012

The goal of these bulletins is to share information about powerful features within the Palette and LightPalette console lines. PaletteOS, the software that runs on all Palette consoles, is very powerful and has a long rich development history that has taken customer’s comments to heart to address programmer’s issues and requested features.

This tenth bulletin will begin the discussion of Show Options or Show Setup. These are settings that allow the programmer to configure how the show file responds. This means that if you transfer your showfile from one console to another, these settings will transfer with the file. This is different that Hardware Setup where these settings stay with the desk.

*Show Options* will allow you to configure settings in the typical PaletteOS dialogue box solution. Once the dialogue box appears, there are Environments on the left and Settings on the right. Most Environments or Settings can be accessed by either graphically by clicking with a mouse or by the Function keys of an external keyboard or by the Softkeys (S1-S12) on the console directly.

*Show Options* separate all settings into 4 environments and this bulletin will cover the settings in the General environment.

**General Settings**
These are settings for basic interface and response issues on the console.

**Cue Only Mode**
This determines if the console will store information to *Track* or *Cue Only*. Tracking will allow level changes to continue or “track” through the cues until that fixture gets another instruction. Cue Only will insure that the level changes that are stored will be stored in the current cue only.

Tracking is a very powerful tool and can sound scary if it’s not understood. Once it is understood, it becomes a great feature.
The console defaults to tracking mode and will be visible at the top of the software screen. Just check the box to put the console into Cue Only Mode.

**Default Cue Record**

Determines what information is stored when the record action is initiated. The options are…

**Live** – will snapshot all DMX values that the console is outputting. (Whether this includes or does not includes levels from Submasters is a separate setting that we’ll discuss later.) Recording Live is the traditional way that a conventional theatrical console records. If it’s going out the DMX or network line to a DMX device, then it gets stored. I recommend this for single cue list environments.

**Delta** – will record only changed information. Every change gets marked with a Delta (the little triangle which is the Greek symbol for change.) Recording only changed information is more appropriate for multiple cue list environments. This way, if you have one cue list for audience lights, one cue list for stage lights, changing the stage lights won’t interfere with the cue list controlling the audience lighting.

**Block Cue List** – will record all levels for all channels used in the cue list placing hard values on everything used in that cue list. With the exception of this applying to only one cue list, this is a memory equivalent to a preset desk where every channel has a value. While some consider this the safest method there is no way to go back and track items through as each cue will have a hard value for each channel in the cue.

**Block Everything** – will record all levels for all channels that are patched placing hard values on every channel, fixture and parameter that is patch in that showfile. This is a memory equivalent to a preset desk where every channel had a value.

Block cues are a tracking designer’s best friend. If you are programming multiple dance pieces and you want to track the gobo wash through all cues in the second piece but not affect the third, then Block the cue that starts the third piece (or the last cue of the second…or both) and that way there is no chance of tracking contaminating the next piece or scene.
**Default Look Record**

Determine what information is stored when the record action is initiated for Looks. Remember that Looks are the top level component that stores lighting art (collections of fixture levels and can include parameter data). The different types of Looks are Submasters, Groups, Position Palettes, Color Palettes, Gobo Palettes and Lens Palettes. The options are…

**Live** – will snapshot all DMX values that the console is outputting. This is the same definition as for cues but will apply to Look recording. I recommend this for conventional desk environments.

**Delta** – will record only changed information. This is the same definition as for cues but will apply to Look recording. I recommend this for moving light desk environments.

**Up/Down Percent**

On every Palette and LightPalette console, there are UP% and DOWN% keys. This allows the programmer to respond when the designer just wants the selected fixture to go “up 10%” or “up a bit”. Some users prefer this to be set to 10% (default), some prefer 5%, you may want it to be a different level but the UP%/ DOWN% keys are great tools.

**On Key Level**

Near the FULL key there is an ON key. This is a preset level that can be accessed quickly. The default is 80%. Use this for the most common level you need. That way, when you need a light to go to your most common level request, you can have it on a single button press.

**Default Color Space**

With color mixing fixtures, this will allow the selection of any color mixing fixture to start in the color space that you prefer. If you are using moving lights with the secondary color system of Cyan, Magenta and Yellow, you may prefer CMY. If you are primarily programming LEDs that use the primary color system of Red, Green and Blue, you may prefer RGB.

*Note: This is a system setting and will not take effect until the software is restarted.*
**Group Key Look Page**

This setting determines which Look Page is accessed when using the Group key. Most people will leave this at the default setting of Group so that typing GROUP 1 FULL will bring up the contents of Group 1. However, this can access any Look Page that you want.

**Default Colors**

These settings will determine both the background (field) color of the cues box and the foreground (text) colors.

**Additional Tips and Tricks**

If you are most familiar with a conventional lighting desk and you primarily work with conventional fixtures and dimmers, then you will probably benefit most from the Default Cue Record being set to *Live*. Since this snapshots everything that is going out the desk (with the exception of how you have the “Record Includes Submasters” set in Hardware Setup), this will mimic a standard theatrical desk. This is best used in a single cue list environment.

If you are most familiar with a moving light desk and you primarily work with automated luminaires and multiple cue lists, then you will probably benefit most from the Default Cue Record being set to *Delta*. This will ensure that only “changed” information will be stored. That way if you are have the stage lights stored in one cue list and audience lights stored in another cue list, you can keep the information separate and not capture all data (Live) and corrupt your separated cue lists.

Now a word about Cue Only / Tracking. When you are working frantically and lighting a show, which way do you normally think? Should the lights that you turned on stay that way until you turn them off? If so, turn Tracking on. If you think that the lights that you turned on should not affect the next cue or any other, set the showfile for Cue Only mode.

This will insure that the console works the way you think.

Good luck and Happy Programming.

Philips Strand Lighting