Patrick Dierson's grandMA Console Setup

Explanation of "Views" Layout

This is designed to give an explanation of how I prefer to setup my views on the GrandMA console. The basic structure of how & why I do this stays consistent no matter which lighting desk I'm using. It is based on ergonomics and rapid access to the tools that I need when programming and playing back a show. As you view this layout you will notice that many of the presets have already been labeled although nothing is assigned to them. This "phantom" labeling allows me to store values to the presets positions that I use the most without having to really "think" about where I would normally put them. Another nice feature that this brings is that since the presets are already labeled they will automatically take that name once some values are stored thus eliminating the need to type names in during the programming process.

Also, since I plan for external monitors being a mere luxury and not a definitive piece of on-site equipment I leave only two views on those screens. One screen contains my currently running cuelist while the other is a fixture sheet showing the actual show output.

CENTER SCREEN VIEW BUTTONS:

Physically, I tend to stay centered on the desk, mainly standing directly in front of the center screen. You will notice the top most view button on the center screen labeled "MAIN". Being fairly self explanatory, it is the main view that I use when programming. It sets up all three screens with the tools that I need the most.

The left screen has a "Group" window starting with Group Preset #1. These are my "independent" or generic groups mainly consisting of "ALL", "ODD", "EVEN", etc. groups for each specific fixture type in my show. Directly next to that window is a single column of "Dimmer" presets. Those presets will start with a "FULL", "OUT", and then decreasing increments in 10% values. Altogether, this window allows me to quickly access sections of my rig and instantly get light out of them without having to move down to the console's numeric keypad to set a dimmer value.

The center screen consists of 3 windows. The top most window is that of Pan/Tilt presets starting with preset #1. You will notice that many of these presets have phantom labels in them already. This particular window is showing the basic "plan" view of the stage with labels for DSC (down stage center), USR (upstage right), etc.

The middle window is designated for Color presets. The first row of color presets has been reserved for color wheel functions such as spinning at various speeds. The second row starts the color mixing values. My values are laid out in a ROYGBIV style across that row giving me quick access to my most saturated colors starting with RED, then ORANGE, YELLOW, GREEN, BLUE, CONGO, CYAN, MAGENTA, and then WHITE. Think of these saturated presets being the top preset in a downward column. Each of the presets below is an incremental fade toward white. Thus all the presets directly below ORANGE fade through the amber, and light bastard amber range of colors before hitting white. When completed, this gives me fast access to not only the heavily saturated colors but also a complete pastel range as well.

Note: without jumping too far ahead you will see another view button on the center screen labeled "COLOR". This view simply expands the current color preset window to a full screen view so that I can get quicker access to these lighter shades of color.

The bottom window is reserved for "Quikeys" presets. This window never changes in my programming views. It holds the majority of functions that I need the most. The main reason that it is placed on the middle screen is for quick access. My hands will normally be playing around in that area whether it be on the touchscreen itself or on the playback faders directly under it. This keeps my eyes in that area and, at the very least, I will always have a peripheral view of the live stage. I don't like taking my eyes off the stage at any point so if it is in my peripheral vision than I know that I will notice a potential problem immediately.

The right screen has several important features assigned to it. The top window is a Gobo preset window. It too has a very graphical layout, similar to how I've laid out the color presets. The second row is reserved for static or wheel 1 gobos. These presets contain ONLY wheel 1 gobo information and nothing else. The third row is reserved for Rotating or wheel 2 gobos, again containing ONLY that information. The rows directly above and below those designated wheel presets pertain to that particular wheel's rotation properties. Thus the fourth row of presets contains the "FAST", "MED", & "SLOW" rotation speeds of only the wheel 2 gobos while the first row of presets pertains to the wheel 1 presets.

The exception that I will sometimes make comes in terms of "focus" and "zoom" values. I will sometimes force those values into the gobo presets so that I can immediately sharpen the edge of the desired gobo wheel.

Ie: I choose Static Gobo 2 and then Rot. Gobo 4 to overlay on it. I can then choose Static Gobo 2 again to sharpen the focus on that particular gobo to get the aerial beam effect that I'm looking for quickly.

Below the Gobo window is an area for Beam presets. These will contain various Iris, Shutter, and Prism presets. They are all rather self-explanatory and often will contain access to fixture-based software effects such as iris pulses, random strobing, etc.

At the bottom of this screen I keep a row of preset headers. By pressing any of these headers you will call up their respective parameters to the encoders directly below them. Directly above those headers is a row for the Command Line. Just like the position of the Quickey preset window on the center screen these two things never change. I come from a WholeHogII background which has a rather similar setup. Because of that this was a fairly intuitive choice for me and I highly suggest it for others coming from that style of programming.

Note: I have another view in the "Views" preset window that is labeled "CLEAR SCREENS". This view does in fact clear all of the screens with the exception of the "Quikeys" on the center screen and the "Command Line" & preset headers on the right screen. This allows me to quickly setup another set of views while keeping the basic structure of my screen layout.

For the most part all of the other views are merely extensions of the "MAIN" view. Let's go back to the center screen views and work our way downwards.

The next view down is my "FLYAWAYS" view. Pressing it doesn't change much at all. The center screen stays pretty much the same except the Pan/Tilt preset window has now scrolled itself downward automatically. You will see more phantom presets for "STRAIT HIGH", "CROSSED HIGH", "FANNED HIGH", etc. So as the original Pan/Tilt window was very much a plan or top view looking down at the stage this "FLYAWAYS" window is a front view or FOH perspective of the stage showing the lights being positioned out at the audience.

Below the "FLYAWAYS" view are the expanded or full-screen views for COLOR, GOBO, & BEAM. All of these views only change the center screen and are designed to allow me greater preset access.

LEFT SCREEN VIEW BUTTONS:

Looking at the left screen view buttons you will notice that the top view button is labeled "INDIES". Upon pressing it you will not see any change on the screen. It is merely a snapshot of the existing Groups window.

Below that you will see views labeled "WASH" & "SPOTS". These will normally be topographical layouts of my rig consisting of single fixture group presets. All wash style fixtures such as MAC-600s, V*L-5s, StudioBeams, etc. will be laid out in the "WASH" view while spot or gobo style fixtures will obviously be placed about the "SPOT" view.

Moving downward you will see a "DIMMERS" view. This just shows a dimmer level window and allows for quick access of channel values. Below that there is a "Fixture Sheet" view. I have two views for fixture sheets. One is here on the left screen while the other one,

which I prefer to use, is placed on the right screen directly over the encoders. The reason for having two locations for this sheet is that if you decided to "Edit" an Executor you will have the edit screen automatically pop-up on the right touchscreen completely overriding the current window. I will sometimes need to look at a fixture sheet while editing and thus need to have access to that view on another screen. Likewise, if you "Assign" an Executor you will get the Executor Assignment window popping-up on the center screen. For this reason it is best to have this desired view located on the left screen.

On the final button you will see the view labeled "PLAYBACK". This is the only other ALL SCREENS view that I have. I puts the Dimmer levels on my left screen, a small font Fixture Sheet on my right showing me as much information as possible, and an Executor Sheet in the center. This sheet has been stored to automatically follow my currently SELECTed cuelist so that I can always be viewing the song that I'm currently playing back.

RIGHT SCREEN VIEW BUTTONS:

The right screen views are the only ones that I will alter from show to show. However, I do have some consistent views that will always show up on there. First and foremost is a Fixture Sheet. I am always referring to it during the programming process for individual values, tracking storage, and timing. The other two views that are sure to be there are reserved for Effect Presets. The first is for generic effects that can effect all types of fixtures. The second is for Isolated Effects. These are effects that are specific to the current show that I am working on. This is mainly for show management and quick editing of very specific show effects.

MISC. ITEMS:

When all is said and done the "Main" view style of this layout allows me to start the creation of my "look" as follows:

1- Left Screen: Grab my first group of lights
2- Immediately set their dimmer levels
3- Center Screen: place them in position
4- Set their color
5- Right Screen: select their respective gobos and set rotation speeds
6- Set Iris, shutter, FX information, etc.
7- Center Screen Again: Access my "Quikeys" for storing the look to the Executor Fader(s) directly below them.

This left-to-right ergonomic motion combined with a layout that consists of all the most commonly used presets can set the stage for extremely rapid programming sessions.

For playback I always work backwards across the faders, thus Executor Fader #20 is usually my main cuelist while the other are reserved for specific group mastering and speed

controls. The Executor buttons are reserved for specific effects, flyaway cues, Molefay bangs, etc.

If I'm programming chases that will be triggered via linked macros I will then place those on Executor Button pages in the highest ranges starting on page 64. This becomes very similar to the Hog's "Virtual Masters" except they are now on actual hard buttons.

One of the main features on the console that consistently saves my posterior is the preset's "Set Time" fader. Combing this feature with a very well laid out set of views will get you in and out of jams quickly and accurately before anyone ever notices that something went wrong. It doesn't matter whether you doing a concert tour or live television, this feature is your friend and it's use should be mastered!

I hope this helps explain how I do things and more importantly gives you a better working knowledge of the console. This is simply one person's perspective as to how to setup this very powerful desk. Take my knowledge for what it's worth and use it to help mold the desk to your particular style.

Happy Programming,

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