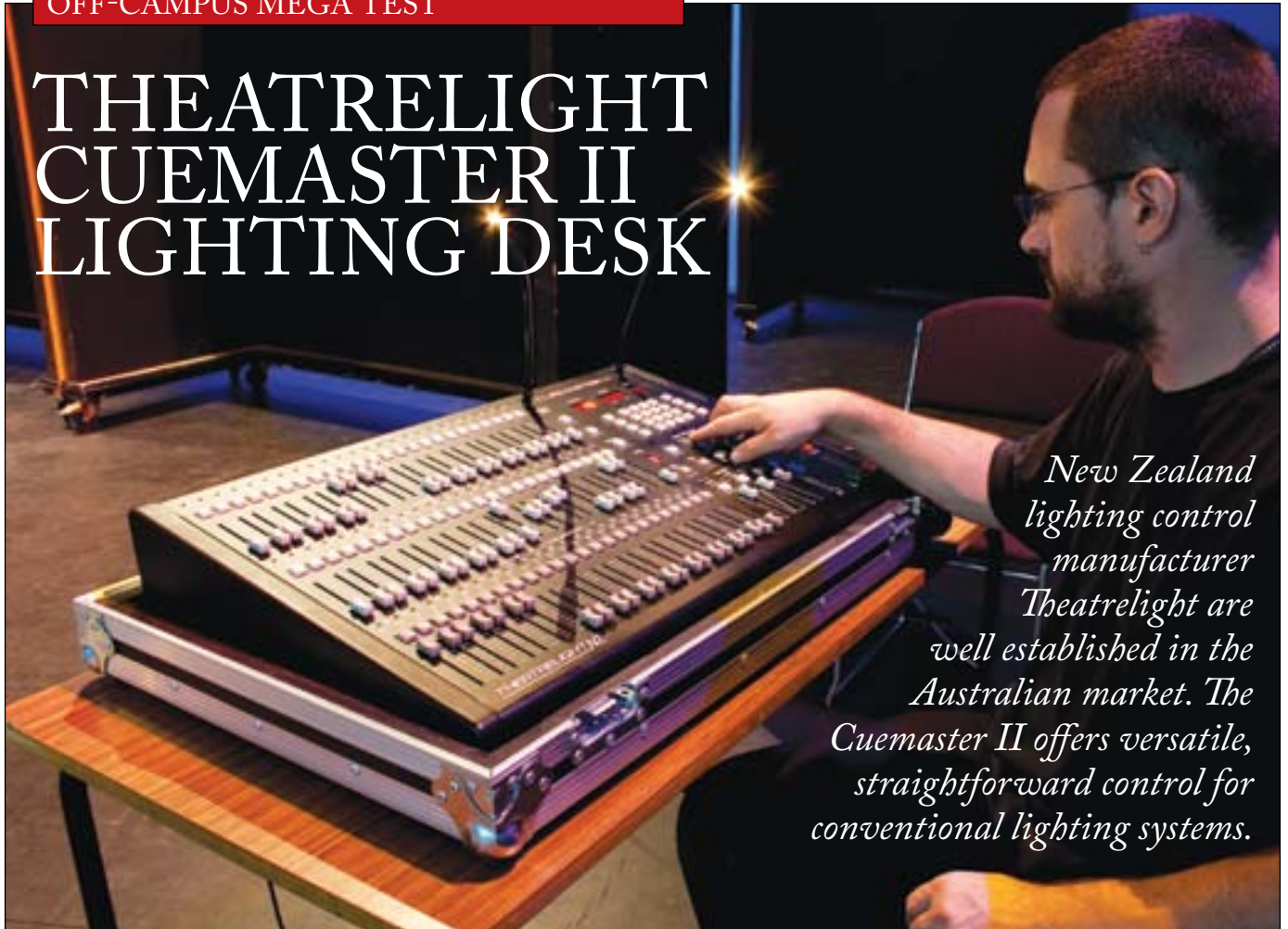


# THEATRELIGHT CUEMASTER II LIGHTING DESK



*New Zealand lighting control manufacturer Theatrelight are well established in the Australian market. The Cuemaster II offers versatile, straightforward control for conventional lighting systems.*

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By **STEPHEN DEAN**

It first came across Theatrelight desks over 20 years ago and installed one of the first ones in SA into a high school. It was at the time a desk that was built tough and therefore ideal for a school. It also had a cheat sheet stencilled to the front panel for when the manual went missing. Since that time they have moved forward and improved but they are still solid and well built.

**FIRST IMPRESSIONS**

The CueMaster II model that I have in my hot little hands is their top of the range model. When you purchase this console it comes in a custom made flightcase, complete with desk light, dust cover and the instruction manual. It is nice to get the desk with most of the accessories included in the price. The only thing you need to purchase is the memory card to back up your shows. Even that is likely to change in the near future - Theatrelight are promising they will be changing the memory card for a SD card and supplying one with the desk.

On first impressions this desk is solid and well laid out. It outputs 2 DMX universes and the expected monitor signal



*Theatrelight monitor.*

and there is even a port for a printer. On power up the monitor shows the default screen which has all the relevant details that you need to at least understand what is happening. A quick glance at manual reveals that the first page is a very quick reference guide to using the desk and recording a variety of lighting states. This is very handy for those that do not like to read the manual. Theatrelight have always written good manuals, and this one is very helpful - almost like a tutorial that takes you through the console's functions in easy to understand instructions

The layout of the desk is very neat and well labelled. Coloured buttons add to the clarity. The faders and buttons all have a good feel to them and the LED displays are big and easy to read. The only thing that is slightly different from other common desks is that the flash buttons are above the faders. The surface is easy to read under low light conditions. When a monitor is connected it displays all of the relevant information without trying to overload you with data like some desks. Another nice feature is that with a press of one button on the console you can darken the monitor so you can

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*Theatrelight full desk.*

observe the lighting state without the monitor destroying your vision.

## IN USE

The Cuemaster II desk is a 72 channel lighting desk. It operates as a single preset but with the use of their park function you can store the preset live and then set up the next preset. This is a space saving way of giving you a 2 preset 72 channel desk. Each bank of 24 faders can be with the press of a button 24 normal channels or 24 recorded scenes.

You have access to 288 channels from the faders with the press of a button. With the softpatch function you can then patch 1024 dimmers at any level to any of the 288 channels.

You can record lighting states on the first 48 faders only and on the last bank of 24 faders which have multiple uses as lighting states, chases or cue stacks (or shows as they are called in the manual) Here you can build whole shows complete with timing and play them back from one fader and the GO button. Where this desk shines is that you can record a show with many different acts, allocating each act its own fader, with a stack of cues on it. So if the acts change

sequence you can bring up each fader in what ever order you require it. You can also stack the stacks into another stack, so the whole show is one stack. Chases are also easy to set up. You can link events and have a show run by itself, a fun but scary concept - press the GO button once and walk away. Maybe not.

It does not take long to be able to record a variety of lighting states and get them playing back. At its simplest you have 4 pages of 72 lighting states. All the states, chases and cue stacks are totally editable and a handy feature is the Compare function that lets you compare an edited lighting state with the original state. Recording is just a matter of setting a lighting state up then pressing the record button. You then press and hold the record button and then press the Flash button of the location you want to store the state. For recording shows or chases you just press the record button after you set up each state or step and when you have completed that you then assign it to one of the last 24 faders by holding the record button and pressing the appropriate flash button. You can convert chases to shows and vice-versa. You can also record blind lighting cues

very easily.

With the desk you could record lighting states for moving lights. But it will be a long winded effort, similar to doing the task on a Jands Event or an LSC Maxim desk without the Patpad. This desk is primarily designed for dimmers and dumb lights.

## TO BUY OR NOT TO BUY

For those used to a Jands Event or LSC Maxim, operation is different but no more difficult. This is the market it is up against and it competes very well in that arena. Unlike many current consoles, the Cuemaster II is not designed to have any relationship with moving lights. This desk is designed for the more basic venues with dimmers and conventional lights, and a lot of schools, churches and community venues fall under this heading.

This desk is great for one night stand style shows as it takes very little effort to get a show happening, but if you require more complex lighting or the show is a long run you also have the ability to do these with very little effort. Someone walking into a venue to do a show will have no problems in getting their head around this desk. The operating system is very easy to learn which does make it ideal for schools and community groups. These users will benefit from having a desk that combines the use of memories to store cues and also the ability to function as a manual desk. Overall impressions of this desk are good, and by following the manual you will discover how versatile this desk is. So get yourself a demo, you will be pleasantly surprised.



### BRAND: THEATRELIGHT

Model: Cuemaster II

RRP: \$7417.50 inc GST

Product Info: [www.theatrelight.co.nz](http://www.theatrelight.co.nz)

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