big
by Langley

A PRODUCT OF THE AMEK TECHNOLOGY GROUP
BIG by LANGLEY is nothing less than a revolutionary step forward for mixing console technology.

For the first time ever, the sophistication, flexibility and computer automation found on consoles usually costing fifteen to twenty times the price of BIG are affordable by virtually anyone in the professional audio industry. Features which were the preserve of the elite can now be in your hands. For the price other manufacturers charge for a standard product, we give you not only an In-line console with AMEK-designed signal path, but also Recall and Mix automation. The position of almost every knob and switch on the console can be memorized for later use. Mutes, faders, and some channel switches are automated using AMEK’s SUPERTRUE automation software.

BIG takes into account the versatile production environment found everywhere today. Different synchronization requirements, audio for picture, music production, songwriting, multi-source systems combining MIDI-triggered keyboards, tape and hard disk recorders - all can be handled with ease by BIG.

BIG has more audio facilities than the world-famous AMEK ANGELA, which sold over 500 consoles from its introduction in 1982. ANGELA’s famous equalizer is virtually duplicated in BIG - the fat, punchy low end, clean transparent highs and accurate, detailed midrange are all retained.

Dual path modules and eq which can be split between both paths double BIG’s capabilities. The standard 28-channel console has 56 paths; the large 44-input console has 88 paths, and, additionally, all versions of BIG have 4 stereo line inputs and 4 stereo effects returns.

So how do we do it? AMEK software has been developed to run on low-cost, powerful desktop computers. In our opinion, SUPERTRUE software is at least equivalent in power to competing systems which cost much more - so you lose nothing there. Good audio hardware is still relatively expensive, and will remain so for many years. What your money buys is the hard part - audio signal path. Coreful design, precise value engineering, cost-saving production techniques and 20 years’ console building experience have all been brought into play to create BIG. Nothing has been sacrificed or compromised to deliver features for price.

AUTOMATION

The AMEK SUPERTRUE system is used in over 350 installations worldwide. You can take a mix disk from BIG and go to work on an EINSTEIN, HENDRIX or MOZART right now. Basic SUPERTRUE data is upwards or downwards compatible. You can work on an AMEK MOZART-RN designed by Mr Rupert Neve by day and take the disk home and perfect your mix on BIG by night.

If your work involves sound-to-picture, SUPERTRUE has both SMPTE and MIDI synchronization capabilities. The Cue List allows you to trigger external events - such as sound FX and music cues - and internal events, such as Mutes or Fades - to 1/4 frame accuracy. If someone recuts the picture, you can easily regroup your Events List to follow it. You can even save multiple versions of the Cue List.

SUPERTRUE also has an extensive offline editing system, the Mix Processor. Here you can Merge one mix into another, Splice mix data from one part of the mix to another part, time Shift mix data to follow edits, and other time-saving functions which speed production work.

RECALL

BIG has a Recall system which allows you to store the positions of the knobs and switches on the console. You can recreate a mix exactly by copying the screen icons to the functions they represent. If you don’t want to look, you can listen; BIG’s Vocal Recall talks to you and tells you which knob or switch to move next, and when it’s reset properly. The rapid scan system only stops at functions which need resetting; if a knob hasn’t been moved, you don’t have to move it.

If your record company or the video producer asks for a slightly different mix, you don’t have to worry about what you did with the console last time. The settings are stored right alongside the mix Title, and you can store up to 10 different console configurations for each Title.
VIRTUAL DYNAMICS™
For those of you who want something which leading-name consoles (except AMEK) don’t have, you can fit the AMEK VIRTUAL DYNAMICS™ option. This virtual domain product simulates different types of Dynamics devices which operate on the fader VCAs from screen icons. One of 9 devices may be selected to each individual channel. All selected devices are stored with the Title, so that when you load the mix, you bring back the set of Dynamics equipment which you customized for that mix. All this, without taking up one inch of rack space or being locked into a piece of hardware.

CONCLUSION
BIG is one of the audio products for the ‘90s which you cannot afford to ignore.

The boundaries between the various audio disciplines are rolling back. Equipment has to have the ability to cope with many different situations. Versatility is the order of the day.

The introduction of low-cost digital recorders has required a response from console manufacturers, and BIG is it. If you’re working in digital, you need the kind of signal quality AMEK designs give you.

If you’re working in high-pressure production environments, you need automation and repeatability. If you’re writing songs or creating scores, you need to be able to compare different mixes quickly. This you get from BIG’s proven automation and recall systems.

BIG will open up a new vista of creativity and opportunity for you.

Graham Langley, co-founder of AMEK and designer of BIG, says:

"I started out life as a long-haired guitar player who wasn’t satisfied with the sounds he could get. I started modifying guitars, and continued with amplifiers and speakers. I then went to College to study electronics, and at that time I built organs and synthesizers. When I graduated, I started building consoles, and subsequently founded AMEK with Nick Franks in September 1973.

At that time 16-track recording was state-of-the-art, basic console automation was becoming possible, no-one had dreamed of MIDI and desktop computing did not exist. Things have moved very far and very fast in the past 20 years, and AMEK has been deeply involved in that development process.

BIG is an 11th generation AMEK recording console. Historically, we designed and produced the X-Series; the M-Series; 2016; M2500; ANGELA; APC1000; G2520; MOZART; HENDRIX and EINSTEIN, not even counting the TAC range. This means that we have built and delivered thousands of recording consoles. Over the years, a mountain of hits has been recorded on AMEK.

BIG is a distillation of all that knowledge. It summarizes concepts in recording consoles which have been developed through this 20-year historical period, and makes them available at a fraction of the cost which was previously possible. Even two or three years ago it would have been unthinkable to make BIG at the price we can now offer it.

BIG is also designed for use in the 1990s. Many new areas of audio production have opened up which require a different type of console. BIG can be used for every application from straight microphone recording to stereo through to complex audio-for-picture post production. No other console currently available for this price can compete with what BIG offers.

I am very pleased with this product and consider it to be one the finest systems we have made."

Amek Systems & Controls © 1993
Channel POlh.
sends. When AUX 3/4 TO TRKS is selected it culs aH
The buss ouUlputs are eleclronically-balanced and may
All 8 send, return bUs in Ihe .,nmR Polh
Aux 3 goes 10 odd-numbered busses and Aux 4 goes 10
Ihe Channel Palh.
AUJe
normally fed from Ihe Buss/Tope signal on the Mix Polh.
pre wililhen source Ihe sends pre the level knob .
PRE (1.4) sources Aux sends 1 - 4 wi lh Ihe pre-fader
XlR connector on Ihe rear panel of the console.
AID(
FX Return section. This can be useful if you wanl 10 record
LPF
The FX Return panel allows left-Right adiu slmenl of
MUTE
controls Ihe oulpul of the F/ X Relurn.
END LEVEL
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is an extra 10dB of gain above this point.
APF provides a Stereo After Fade Listen (APF) to the monitors. This allows you to check the FX Return signal in isolation from other signals in the console.
MUTE cuts all outputs from the FX Return section and is automated using the SUPERTRUE automation system.
STEREO GROUP/ LINE INPUT
The Stereo Line input (labeled ‘GROUP’ on the module) can be used either for subgrouping to the stereo or multibus inputs, or as a Multi-function stereo line input.
Subgroup operation: assignment is via the multiband routing.
BIG 2 1 Input Module
BIG 2 Stereo Line / FX

SIGNAL
The BIG 1 Module is based on the Dual Path system, first developed by Amek Eystems & Controls. This concept offers the creative engineer an immense variety
of mixing options, as he has two complete signal paths through the module.
These are designated Channel and Mix. Channel is used to send Mic or Line signals to the multibuss. Mix is used to listen to the buses output or return signal, and to send that signal to the stereo bus. These Paths, however, are one r.ig ht. Various switches are aplied (fied in red) en able you to recognize the signal flow inside the module. Inputs to and outputs from each Path can be completely rearranged. Both Paths can also be routed to the stereo buss at the same time, providing double the number of inputs for mixing.

MULTIRACK ROUTING
BIG 2 has stereo inputs assigned in pairs. The buses follow the path: left-addresses odd-numbered outputs, right- even-numbered outputs and centre selects odd and even busses, equally. Output is via parallel stereo jack connectors, numbered 1 - 12. Bus 1 feeds either track 1, track 2 or both, depending which is push-in record coat.
The bass outputs are electronically-balanced and may be adjusted on the Big 3 module to aperale wi lh eilher
numbered 1 to 24. Buss 1 feeds eilher track 1, rock
Stereo buss.

CHANNEL PATH
Monophonic or line level sources are connected via the XlR connectors. Source signals are monitor signals. The Mix outputs are connected to the Amp inputs.

EQ
A seperole MUTE swilch IS filled on auxiliary sends 3
FX return section. This can be accessed by two stereo iack sockets on Ihe rear of Ihe console.

MUTE
normally heard with Effects returns left open (using Solo Defeat).
Solo In Place mode is operated through SUPERTRUE and is only available on the Mix path. The mode is selected by pressing the Solo In Place switch on the Big 3 module, which operates the SIP icon on the screen (located over the stereo master fader). Solo Defeat is also selected in SUPERTRUE.

AFL (After-Fade Listens) is provided on the Channel path.

AUTOMATED CHANNEL MUTE
Programmed mute options allow outputs from the Channel path. Pre fader sends, however, remain open.

MIX PATH
The Mix path is normally used to listen to the Buss out or Tape return signals.

UP FLIP
Merge Mix and Tape signals.

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controls Ihe oulpul of the F/ X Relurn.

RETURN LEVEL
controls the output of the F/X Return. The only gain point is at 1 ‘clock on the travel; there
is an extra 10dB of gain above this point.
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BIG 2 1 Input Module
BIG 2 Stereo Line / FX

The four BIG 2 modules each have one Stereo FX Return and one Stereo Line input, giving every BIG 2 console a total of 4 FX Returns and 4 Stereo inputs.

MIXING
The MIXING process is beginning to migrate from the analog and the multibus to the digital, with the increasing importance of post-production applications. Of special interest is the development of the BIG 2 Stereo Line Input is an 8x8 Matrix (see below) which, yet further underlines the flexibility of the BIG console.
The FX RETURN path will accept any stereo line source, but is generally intended for use with external signal processing devices such as multireflectors.

MULTIRACK ROUTING is sourced from the output of the multibuss section. Since the signal is stereo, the 12 buss outputs are assigned in pairs; selecting buses 1 & 2 puts the channel into bus 1 and the Right channel into bus 2.
The FX Return path sends the Mix to the Stereo Line Path.

AUXILIARY SENDS
BIG 2 has 8 auxiliary sends, arranged as two groups of four dual concentric knobs. Odd-numbered sends are the upper knobs and even-numbered sends are on the lower knobs.

AUX 5 - 8 & F
These mono post fader sends are normally sourced from the FX Return Path.

Signal
Stere o Line input section.
PRE sources sends from FX Return to the Stereo Line input section.
FX Return section.

The Channel path.

All 8 sends can be monitored using the SUPERTRUE automation system. One complete signal path is available on each module, allowing equalization on both paths in the BIG 1 input module.

The insert point allows external equipment to be placed in the signal path. This insert point is unbalanced and sends after the equalizer and return before the fader. The mixer's return circuitry ensures the insert point remains in the Mix path.

Mix path.

In isolation from other Signals in the console.

Stereo F/X RETURN
The FX Return section is electronically-balanced and on accessed by two stereo jack sockets on the rear of the console.

MONO
combines the Left and Right signals to the F/X Return section. This can be useful if you want to record the output of a stereo effects device onto one track.

F/X RETURN GAIN
sets the input gain to the FX Return section and is available from -20dB.

LPF high Pass Filter.

SUPER TRUE
This is especially useful to help remove undesirable high frequency noise from some effects devices and synthesizers.

PAN is centre indented -3dB. STL assigns the output of the FX Return to the main stereo buss.

RETURN LEVEL controls the output of the F/X Return. The unity gain point is at 1 ‘clock on the travel; there
is an extra 10dB of gain above this point.

Solo In Place and Solo Defeat
A Solo switch is located on the Mix path. This provides a Stereo After Fade Listen (APF).
Solo In Place and Solo Defeat are operated through SUPERTRUE.

The automated MUTE cuts all outputs from the Mix path (except prefade sends).

The FADER has 100mm travel and is fitted with a VCA, which allows it to be automated.

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Subgroup operation: assignment is via the multiband routing.
BIG 2 1 Input Module
BIG 2 Stereo Line / FX

The four BIG 2 modules each have one Stereo FX Return and one Line input, giving every BIG 2 console a total of 4 FX Returns and 4 Stereo inputs.
The Group output can then be routed to two tracks on the tape machine, or to stereo, or to both. It is also possible to subgroup combinations of 5X Returns and other line inputs using the multitrack buses and stereo assigns switches.

Stereo Line Input mode: If any signal is plugged into the Stereo Line input jacks it will cut off the subgroup feed and replace it with the external source, typically a multi-effects device or a stereo output from a sampler or synthesizer.

The signal then passes through the Stereo Line section of the channel in the normal way except that the section is functioning as an independent stereo input.

STEREO A-PHASE INVERTER
Normally the input to the Subgroup/Stereo Line Input path would be a stereo signal. However in some cases you may have, or require, a mono feed. An example is when you wish to record a stereo signal on one track of a multitrack machine.

MONO L sends the left channel signal only to both sides of the stereo path.

Pressing MONO L and MONO R together presents a +/– 18dB. Turn of the left and right signals to both sides of the stereo path.

STEREO EQUALIZER
A four-band stereo equalizer with Low and High Pass, LF (High Frequency), HF (Low Frequency), Mid Frequency and Band Switch (12kHz, 6kHz, 3kHz and 1kHz) can be selected.

LOW PASS FILTER: The LF switch on both sides of the stereo signal and gives a cut-off of 12kHz/Octave above 6kHz.

STEREO BUMPER: This unit operates in conjunction with the STEREO EQUALIZER. Turn on the STEREO BUMPER to compensate for any phase shifts the signal may encounter while traveling through the system.

STEREO LEVELER
This is an automatic unit that corresponds to the Left and Right Out put signals. Any signal input to the Subgroup/Stereo Line Input path. The channel has a gain range of 0dB.

TALKBACK
This allows the talkback signal to be input to a separate stereo monitor feed. Any talkback signal will be heard on both sides of the stereo signal.

STEREO FADER
This acts on both sides of the stereo signal and gives a level control of +/– 18dB.

GROUP PAN
This allows the stereo signal to be panned to the left or right side of the stereo signal.

SOLO
This allows the stereo signal to be isolated from the output feed. Any soloed signal is heard on both sides of the stereo signal.

MUTE
This allows any signal to be muted. Any muted signal is not heard on both sides of the stereo signal.

PHASE (RII?J) REVERSE
This switch reverses the phase of the Right signal only. This can be used for special effects or more typically where one signal is out of phase with the other as a result of crossover wiring.

STEREO FADER (STEREO OUT)
This acts on both sides of the stereo signal and gives a level control of +/– 18dB. The channel has a gain range of 0dB.

STEREO MUTE
This allows any signal to be muted. Any muted signal is not heard on both sides of the stereo signal.

STEREOSEL
This allows the user to select either the Left or Right stereo signal and gives a level control of +/– 18dB. The channel has a gain range of 0dB.

STEREO DUCKING
This allows any signal to be ducked. Any ducked signal is not heard on both sides of the stereo signal.

STEREO VCA
This allows any signal to be processed by a VCA. Any VCA processed signal is not heard on both sides of the stereo signal.

STEREO VCA FADER
This allows any signal to be processed by a VCA Fader. Any VCA Fader processed signal is not heard on both sides of the stereo signal.

STEREO COMPRESSION
This allows any signal to be compressed. Any compressed signal is not heard on both sides of the stereo signal.

STEREO LIMITER
This allows any signal to be limited. Any limited signal is not heard on both sides of the stereo signal.

STEREO ON/OFF
This allows any signal to be switched in or out. Any switched signal is heard on both sides of the stereo signal.

STEREO ATTENUATION
This allows any signal to be attenuated. Any attenuated signal is not heard on both sides of the stereo signal.

STEREO SIGNAL GENERATOR
This allows any signal to be generated. Any generated signal is not heard on both sides of the stereo signal.

STEREO LFO
This allows any signal to be modulated. Any modulated signal is not heard on both sides of the stereo signal.

STEREO MODULATION
This allows any signal to be modulated. Any modulated signal is not heard on both sides of the stereo signal.

STEREO ASSIGN
This allows any signal to be assigned to any bus. Any assigned signal is not heard on both sides of the stereo signal.

STEREO BUS LEVELER
This allows any signal to be levelled. Any levelled signal is not heard on both sides of the stereo signal.

STEREO BUS LIMITER
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There are various basic automation modes, READ, WRITE and UPDATE, and an auto-nuling function, AUTO TAKEOVER. In READ mode the VCA reads back fader levels and Switch information from the automation computer. The fader itself is not operated.

In WRITE mode the fader can write information to the VCA and the automation computer. Thus, the fader is active.

In UPDATE mode the channel now reads information from the automation computer and the fader simultaneously. Thus previously-recorded fader movements can be modified by further fader movements. These additional changes can also be saved.

Once you have created a mix or set of mixes, SUPERTRUE gives you the opportunity to edit the data, wordprocessor fashion, using the MIX PROCESSOR.

There are 8 routines in the Mix Processor. Five concern global mix data and 3 concern channel data. Edit points can be specified to quarter-frame accuracy.

SPICE allows you to copy the mix data for faders and/or switches for selected channels between selected timecode points to another timecode point.

Suppose you are mixing a song which has a complicated chorus with many automated changes, and the chorus occurs four times in the piece. Using SPICE, you only need to mix the chorus once and you can then copy the moves to each timecode point where the chorus occurs, thus saving the need to recreate the mix each time.

MERGE allows you to join mix data from a mix stored on the hard disk, between selected timecode points, into the mix currently held in memory to make a composite of the two mixes.

SHIFT allows you to move the mix data for faders and/or switches for selected channels between selected timecode points to another timecode point.

Suppose you are working on a soundtrack and there is a major edit which requires a reorganization of the mix data. The Shift function allows you to move the mix data to a new timecode position which matches the audio to the new position of the picture. Shift can also be used to make minute adjustments, as small as one quarter frame, in order to get exact synchronization of sound effects or pieces of dialogue.

ERASE allows you to delete switch and/or fader data for selected channels between selected timecode points.

EXTRACT allows you to keep switch and/or fader data for selected channels between selected timecode points, the rest of the mix data being deleted.

EXTRACT also has extensive online HELP routines which can be accessed to assist with any function which is not obvious.

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SUPERTURE AUTOMATION

Up to 4 Cue Groups can be made on the Cue List. The Groups can be individually turned on or off. This means, for example, that if all MIDI Events are on Group 3, you can turn 3 off and hear the mix without the MIDI Events.

Individual and Grouped Cues can also be sorted and edited using Delete, Copy and Paste functions. Settings can be saved into the computer at any time, up to 10 different Pages per Title are allowed.

RECALL allows the positions of all knobs and switches on the Big 1 and Big 2 modules to be saved, except for the M/S VCA’s, of course the SUPERTURE-automated functions.

The FADER JOBS window allows you to use standard fade curves or draw your own, which can be saved for later use. Drawing tools include iterative shaping from various directions; shifting left, right, up or down, smoothing, reversing and undo.

The FADE JOBS window allows you to use standard fade curves or draw your own, which can be saved for later use. Drawing tools include iterative shaping from various directions; shifting left, right, up or down, smoothing, reversing and undo.

SUPERTRUE also contains a Time Calculator which enables you to work out timecode start and end positions, tempo, offsets, frame to milliseconds conversion etc, from incomplete data.

The curve represents two axes, Amplitude and Time. Amplitude is determined by the current stored position of the fader, t.e if the fader level is "10dB then faders will be to or from -10. Time is set by the fade start and end trigger points in the Cue List, and can therefore be as long (or as short) as required.

RECALL

Apart from SUPERTRUE, the most exciting innovation in the RECALL system, RECALL has never been offered in a console of this type before, and introduces a new array of possibilities in audio production.

Unlike hardware, however, Virtual Dynamics™ occupies no rack space, and all settings are saved with the Title, when you reload the Title, your Dynamics controllers are automatically in place.

Three Gates are available. Two Gates offer standard features at varying levels of complexity, but the ADSR Noise Gate (the Super Gate) provides a complete waveshaping facility with advanced features such as Hysteresis, Peak Level, Mask and Treble Frequency Control. The three Compressors have range of control options, but the Advanced Compressor has not only Dual Slope Compression Ratios but also a comprehensive downwards Expand/Expand envelope section.

The Limiter and Expander once again provide standard features but the Auto Fader (requiring two channels) allows a large number of possibilities in image shifting including Divergence and Width controls, triggered panning (by threshold or external key) and numerous modes from one that is continuous panning with several LFO options.

Each control knob is adjusted using the mouse. Clicking on a control produces a subwindow which displays the knob in a larger format. It can then be turned by moving the mouse left or right.

VINTAGE DYNAMICS™ is based on digital control of all parameters and therefore gives the user the ability not only to specify gain contours with great accuracy but also to produce gain control effects difficult to emulate with standard analogue hardware.

VIRTUAL DYNAMICS™ units are resident within the software and can be called to the screen at any time, offering a choice of any one of the nine available devices. One device can be assigned to each channel, so that a 40-input console can have 40 Dynamics units operating simultaneously.

The VIRTUAL DYNAMICS™ system requires additional microprocessor control hardware which is located within the chassis of the console. Channel insert points are not used leaving these free for additional external units if required. Each of the nine devices has a virtual front panel with knobs and

switches that emulate the controls of a conventional hardware unit. Eight channels are displayed on screen at any one time.

Switches are operated simply by clicking on them. Adjacent devices (at the same type) can be linked for stereo operation. Libraries of favourite settings can be assembled and loaded directly into the virtual rack space as required.

Extended Virtual Dynamics options include a MIDI output per 8 channels, which allows audio triggering of MIDI devices. Audio performance is stunning with clean, distortionless, transparent sound even on the most complex of signals.

VIRTUAL DYNAMICS also possess the further advantage in that no additional VCA's are added to the signal path.