

MCR21's Vision Mixer in 1963

The Vision Mixer is central to the making of a programme, it is where the pictures to be transmitted are chosen. The vision mixer has before him or her (confusingly the same term is applied to the operator and the equipment!) a bank of picture monitors showing the pictures that are available. On our Vision Mixer there are two rows of ten buttons and two faders. There is a choice as to how the pictures are joined together:-

Cuts¹

The vision mixer will cut to one of the available camera pictures by pressing the appropriate button on the active row.

Mixing²

By selecting a different camera on the other row the vision mixer can mix between what is selected on each row by using the two faders.

Wipes³

A further option is to wipe between the two selected pictures, this is a more complicated option and the type of wipe, left to right or top to bottom and so on must be preselected using the button row at the top of the mixer.

Mixer Cues

Mixing a programme can be very stressful and every electronic help eases the workload. The 20 main buttons latch down when selected and they also light up to indicate their status. For the first 6 buttons the choices are Green = available, Red = on-air, Blue = selected but not on-air. The remaining 4 in each row have an additional colour choice of White = available but non-synchronous. In the picture both rows have Red lights as the faders are at the half way position and both pictures are on-air. When the faders reach the end of the travel the unused row will turn Blue.

Camera cues

An additional Red cue is sent to the camera(s) that are on-air so that the camera operator knows to keep the camera "on shot" till the Red cue goes out, she/he can then reposition to the next shot.

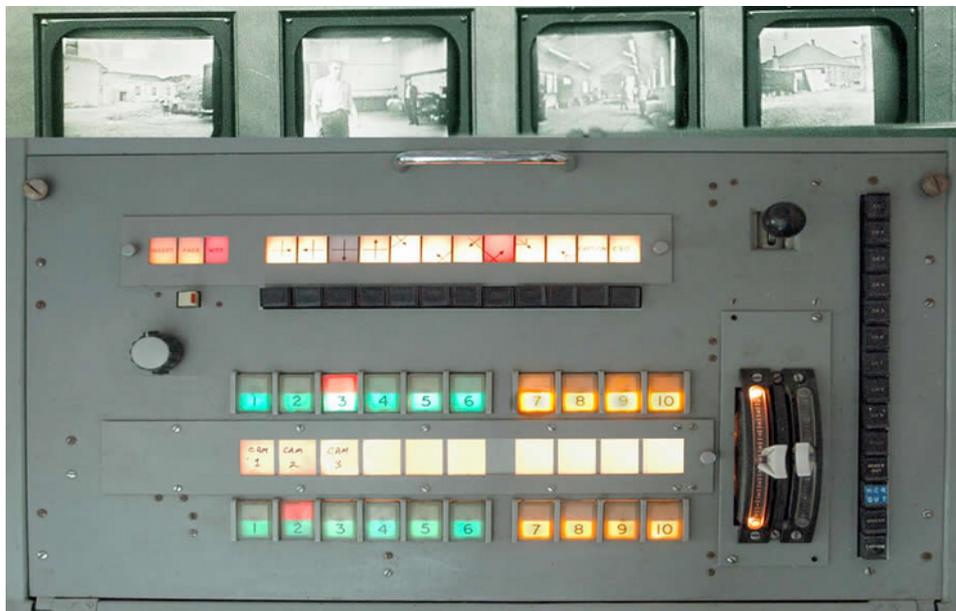
Production Talkback

On the mixing desk there is an open⁴ microphone for Production Talkback, Whilst not directly part of the mixer it forms a very important part of the control of the programme. All cameras would be listening to Prod TB. to hear instructions as to what sort of picture to offer and to gain a short warning of an impending Red Cue. "Standby camera 2, cut to 2, on you 2, standby 4...."

The development

This vision mixer, designed by the BBC in 1962 was very successful, the basic design was adapted for colour and was installed in later OB vans and studios, and in some areas serving into the 1980s!

A further technical description sheet is available on request.



MCR21's ten channel vision mixer and 4 of the preview monitors

1 A "cut" is a straightforward switch between two picture sources.

2 In a "mix" one picture is faded down to black and the other faded up from black, often quite quickly.

3 During a "wipe" parts of both pictures are on transmission at the same time, perhaps the left section of one and the right section of the other. many pattern choices were possible.

4 Open. An open microphone is on all the time to pick up all that is said. = Production Talkback = Prod. TB.