



[product reviews]

### **LPS Pro Works As Well As It Looks**

Reviewed by Jim Hunter

### **Published in *TD&T*, Vol. 40 No. 2 (Spring 2004)**

*Theatre Design & Technology*, the journal for design and production professionals in the performing arts and entertainment industry, is published four times a year by United States Institute for Theatre Technology. For information about joining USITT or to purchase back issues of *TD&T*, please contact the USITT office:

USITT  
6443 Ridings Rd. Ste 134  
Syracuse, NY 13206  
tel: 800-93-USITT (800-938-7488)  
tel: 315-463-6463  
fax: 315-463-6525  
e-mail: [info@office.usitt.org](mailto:info@office.usitt.org)  
web: [www.usitt.org](http://www.usitt.org)

Copyright 2004 United States Institute for Theatre Technology, Inc.

## LPS Pro Works As Well As It Looks

You know that metallic blue BMW Z4 roadster that James Bond drives? Sleek, fast, and functional—that's what my recent test drive of zBlueSoftware's LPS Pro (v 1.1) lighting paperwork program seemed like after years of using the industry standard paperwork program, Lightwright. LPS Pro is a theatrical lighting design management application that includes many features not found in other programs. LPS Pro's elegant interface is easy to navigate and makes use of attractive graphics to visualize important information. As good as it looks, even more attention has been given to making the program functional.

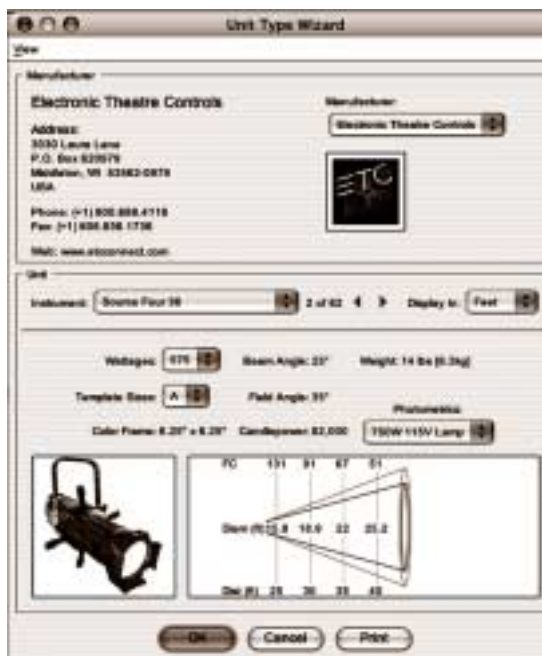
One of the best features is the Navigation and Instrument Properties Window. These two items are always displayed to the left of the main instrument schedule list. Double-click on an instrument from the navigation window (or the instrument schedule) and the Instrument Properties Window displays a photo of the unit, the color information with a color swatch, and even a photo of any templates assigned to the unit.

Rather than just stare at a long database listing of instruments, LPS Pro uses this graphical approach to make each unit and its functions more concrete. These visual aids are at the core of the program's appeal. If you double-click on the instrument photo (or the unit cell in the instrument schedule) the Unit Type Wizard pop-up window appears (see screen shot, opposite). This displays a graphic of the photometric data for the unit selected as well as the weight, template size, and such. From this window you can graphically browse all of that or another manufacturers' equipment, looking for a substitute fixture. The bottom section of the window displays additional channel control data for the unit, such as channel and dimmer assignments for scrollers, twin spins, and moving unit controls.

Gel and template selection is also supported by a graphic window. The program library includes graphics for most gel colors and templates. The library includes over 2,500 templates from Apollo, GAM-PRODUCTS, and Rosco. The Template Wizard will also spin the graphic to help in imaging how the pattern would perform in a gobo rotator. Apollo, Cinegel, E-Colour, Gam, Roscolux, and Supergel color media swatches are also included. I was disappointed that Lee filters were not supported since some of my favorite colors are from Lee.

The Color Scroller Wizard is also helpful and allows the user to create a graphic listing of color scrollers to show what the string will look like. A table that displays the colors within the scroller includes the color's number and position in the scroll. Double-clicking any color swatch in the string will display the Color Wizard for reassignment.

Normally, I draft my light plots using Vectorworks Spotlight and then export the instrument database out to Lightwright. I only had to work through a few minor quirks to get my Vectorworks data into LPS Pro the first time. Now that I know how to structure the export, it works every time.



In order for LPS Pro to recognize each specific instrument type and access the library that makes the Unit Type Wizard work so well, the unit name must be written exactly as the instance in the LPS Pro library. Therefore, only "Source Four 36" will be found in the library, not "Source 4-36." Since the LPS Pro wording is not the exact syntax that I normally use, I was worried about a time consuming conversion. LPS Pro was able to batch convert from my nomenclature to it's terminology in a few easy steps using the "Unit Type List" command—very handy.

One of the underlying concepts of LPS Pro will aid any facility that maintains a repertory plot. Each LPS Pro file is called a "light plot" and is then overlaid with specific "shows." You can layer multiple shows onto a light plot with each unit on the plot having separate properties (channel assignment, color, templates) for each show. The program can then compare one show to another to see how units are used from one production to the next.

You can download a demo of LPS Pro at [www.zbluesoftware.com](http://www.zbluesoftware.com). The program, which can be used with Windows and Mac OSX operating systems, costs \$249 and is available from any Rosco dealer.

After tooling around in this roadster I don't think I can go back to my old sedan.

Reviewed by Jim Hunter, University of South Carolina.