Getting Started Guide - Programmer - What is it and why do you need it

In previous chapters we looked at how to change the values of dimmers.

What we actually did, was taking values into our Programmer and having these output from the programmer live on the outputs (DMX out of our system).

It works as a temporary place for values until you choose to store them somewhere or release the values again (back to their defaults).

You might have noticed that when we changed the values of the fixtures there was a red line on the Dimmer button on the right side of screen 1. It looked like this:

Figure 1: Dimmer button with programmer values.

And when we pressed Clear, it went away.

This indicated to us that we had dimmer values in the programmer.

If you want to see more detailed what you actually have in your programmer you need to look at the Fixture Sheet View.

This changes the view to something like this (depending on what you have in your programmer):

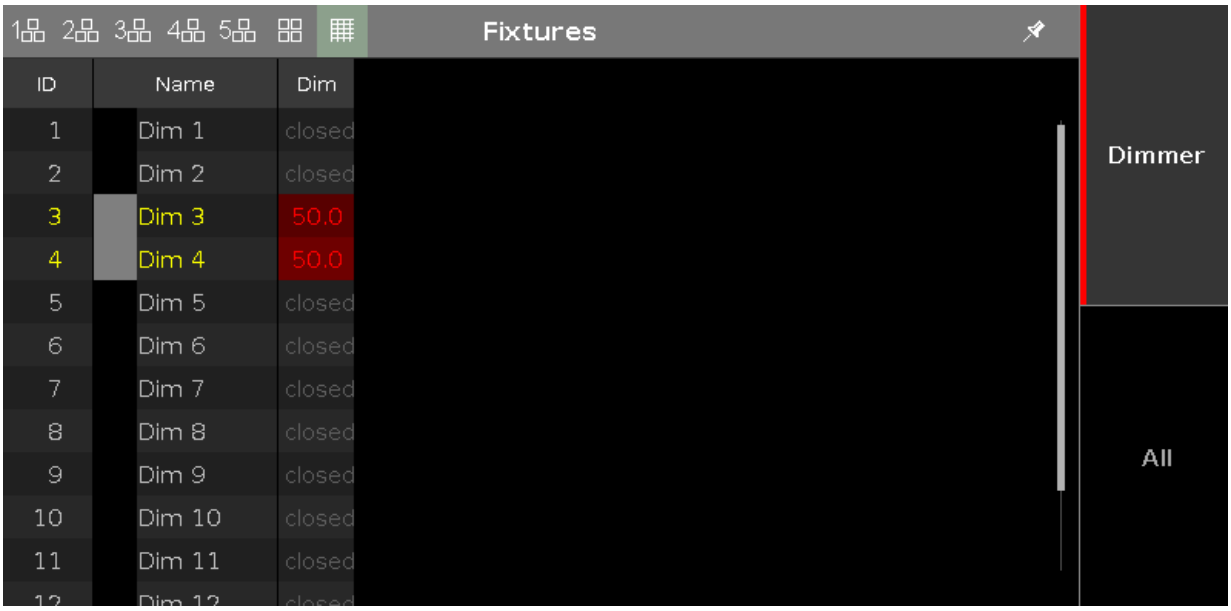

Figure 2: Fixture Sheet View with programmer values.

Notice that I have fixture 3 and 4 at 50% in the picture above.

Try to set your fixture 3 and 4 at 50%.

Notice how the fixture ID and name are yellow instead of gray. This shows us that these fixtures are selected - just as the yellow frame color in the Fixture Layout and Symbol views- and if you change the value, the fixtures will be affected.

The dimmer value have a red background and the value are in red text. All this indicates that we have this value active in our programmer and it will be saved if we store it somewhere.

In the previous chapters we also pressed Clear a lot. This also has to do with our programmer. We use clear to remove stuff from our programmer.

Try to press the Clear key once.

Now the fixture ID and name tuned back to gray. This fixtures aren't selected anymore. When you turn the level wheel, nothing happens.

But we still have the values in our programmer and it will still be stored if we chose to do so.

Press Clear once more.

Now we have released the values from the programmer and the background and text turned gray. This means that if you chose to store a cue now, you wouldn't store any values. Said in a different way: Every value with a red text and **background** will be saved when you store - this is called active values. The red background is the important one.

Notice that when you store the values, you might still have them in your programmer. The value text is still red to show this, but the background isn't red anymore. This means that it will not be stored if you now try to store again. You'll need

to give the fixture an active value again, before storing them again.

Instead of pressing the Clear key two times, you could keep it pressed for 1 second - it's the same thing.

I'll tell you more about the programmer when we begin to store cues.

Highlight

I'll like to introduce you to the Highlight function before we move on. Clear you programmer and then press the HighIt key. Now press the Next key. This should show you that fixture 1 is selected, but notice that you don't have anything in your programmer.

If you are still in the Fixture Sheet View then you can only see that you are actually doing output in the "Symbol Output", but if you change back to the Fixture Symbol View, you'll might see it more clearly. The Fixture Symbol View will always show you the current output (including the percent value) and the Fixture Sheet View will show your programmer and executor output (I'll tell you more about Executors later) in the different attribute columns - the small "symbol output" will show the actual output. Make sure you are looking at the Fixture Symbol View and then press Next again.

Notice how it's now fixture 2 that is selected and giving 100% output and fixture 1 is back to 0%. Press Prev. Now we are back to number 1. If you press Prev again, then fixture 12 gets output.

When highlight isn't active and If you press and hold the HighIt key, then the selected fixtures will begin to flash. This is very useful when you try to locate a fixture in your rig.

Try to play around with Next and Prev and toggle highlight on and off by pressing the HighIt key. Even try to give the fixtures a value in the programmer and still use the highlight function - look at the difference in the programmer value and the "symbol output" in the Fixture Sheet View.

When you feel you have a good understanding of the programmer and the highlight function, you should move on the next chapter where we are going to create groups.