Nord Stage

The Nord Stage is a digital keyboard or stage piano , manufactured by Clavia Digital Music Instruments of Stockholm in Sweden . There have been four editions of the instrument as of 2016 ? these are the original Nord Stage in 2005 , the Nord Stage EX in 2008 , the Nord Stage 2 in 2011 , and the Nord Stage 2 EX in 2015 .

The Nord Stage follows the success of earlier keyboard instruments from Clavia , and contains similar emulations of vintage electromechanical keyboards such as the Hammond Organ and electric pianos as found on the Nord Electro 2 , with additional functionality including a weighted piano @-@ like keyboard on certain models , a synthesizer section based on the Nord Lead , a more versatile organ section and extended effects processing . Unlike the Electro , the Stage is multitimbral , which means it can play more than one sound at once , either by splitting the internal keyboard or connecting an external MIDI controller .

The Nord Stage 2 also has the ability to play samples , allowing it to reproduce the functionality of a Mellotron or Chamberlin . Individual samples can be downloaded from Clavia 's website , and a community has developed that provides new instruments and sounds .

History

By 2005 , Clavia had found commercial success with the Nord Lead synthesizer , which emulated analog synthesis , and the Nord Electro virtual electromechanical keyboard , which emulated the Hammond Organ and Rhodes and Wurlitzer electric pianos . The goal of the Nord Stage was to combine these two technologies together into a flagship instrument .

The Nord Stage was unveiled in April 2005 at the Musikmesse music instrument convention in Frankfurt , Germany . A full @-@ range , 88 weighted key version , the Stage 88 , began shipping in July 2005 ; a 76 weighted key version , the Stage 76 , was announced at NAMM in January 2006 , and a 73 semi @-@ weighted key version , the Stage Compact , started shipping in August 2006 .

An expanded version , the Nord Stage EX , was released in November 2008 . It included an increased memory size . A revised edition , the Nord Stage 2 appeared in September 2011 , containing an improved synthesizer model and sampler functionality , as seen in the Nord Wave . The three models of the Stage 2 are the HA @-@ 88 , containing 88 fully weighted keys , the HA @-@ 76 , containing 76 weighted keys , and the SW @-@ 73 , containing 73 semi @-@ weighted keys . An updated model , the Stage 2 EX , with extended memory capacity , was announced in 2015 .

Like all other Nord keyboards , the Stage 's metal panel is bright red , and the Stage also features similar wood panels to the Nord Electro , also in red .

Sound sections

The Nord Stage is divided into three sound groups , the Organ Section , the Piano Section , and the Synthesizer Section . Each section can be played independently or simultaneously , divided into specific key ranges (splitting) , and blended with independent volume controls .

Organ section

The Nord Stage Organ Section provides physical models of three electric organs ? the Hammond B3 , the Vox Continental , and the Farfisa Compact . Instead of physical drawbars , the Organ section features " drawbuttons " with a set of red LED strips to indicate the position of each drawbar from 0 (fully in) to 8 (fully out) . For the Hammond and Vox organ emulations , pressing the " down " button illuminates more LEDs to visually emulate a drawbar being pulled out , while pressing the " up " button does the reverse . Since a real Farfisa organ selects sounds via rocker tabs instead of drawbars , the drawbuttons behave as tabs when the Farfisa emulation is selected on the Stage . The standard set of Percussion , Chorus and Vibrato settings as found on each of the three organs

are available , and a rotary speaker emulation (similar to a Leslie speaker) , including speed selection and overdrive , is also available . The Organ section is fully polyphonic .

Piano section

The Piano section uses samples of acoustic and electromechanical pianos . The Stage 's 128 MB of internal memory allow multiple sample sets to be installed . While additional sampled piano sets are available as free downloads from Clavia 's website , the Stage ships with Yamaha C7 and Steinway Concert Model D grand pianos , Svenska Pianofabriken and Yamaha M5J upright pianos , Yamaha CP80 Electric grand piano , Rhodes Piano , Wurlitzer Electronic Piano , and Hohner Clavinet samples . The Clav EQ buttons allow users to adjust the sound of the Clavinet . Acoustic Piano sounds are stereo samples , which can be switched manually to " Mono Mode " , and can be played at 40 @-@ note polyphony ; electric piano samples are mono and can be played with 60 @-@ note polyphony .

Synthesizer section

The Stage Synthesizer combines wavetables with analog oscillators and FM operators . Featuring filter and envelope controls , the Synth Section 's timbre knob allows users to move through different sound groups . A number of programs are available to store sounds under three categories ? Synth , Pad or Bass . The Synth also includes a 2 @-@ band EQ , a glide (portamento) function , and a unison function which is used to thicken the sound . The Synth Section is 16 @-@ note polyphonic .
The Nord Stage 2 introduced the additional capability to act as a sampler , playing back pre @-@ recorded instrument sounds . Samples can be downloaded from both Clavia 's and other third party websites , and installed using a software application running on a PC or a Mac . Amongst the samples included as standard with the Nord Stage 2 are those for the Mellotron and Chamberlin tape @-@ based keyboards , which have been exclusively licensed to Clavia . Users can also create their own samples , and load them into the Stage 2 using the tools supplied .

External section

This section , unlike the others , does not directly generate sound . Instead , it allows users to control other gear connected via MIDI . Common parameters such as zone , channel , and volume are controllable from the Stage .

Other features

Effects

The Stage 's Effects Section expands on the Electro 's effects selection . Included are the Electro 's modulation effects (tremolo , auto @-@ pan , ring modulation , auto @-@ wah , and 2 manual wah algorithms) , " stomp box " effects (2 algorithms each of phaser (effect) , flanger and chorus) . The Stage adds a delay module , amplifier modeling (Wurlitzer speaker , Fender Twin Reverb and Roland Jazz Chorus) , overdrive , and expands the Electro 's 2 @-@ band EQ to 3 @-@ band . Piano , Organ , and Synth sections can be independently routed through these groups . Two Master Effects are included ? a simple compressor , and a 5 algorithm reverb .

Programs

Sounds can be stored as Programs , which include the instrument source , effects types , and settings . There are 400 storage locations ? 4 banks with 100 programs in each ? all of which can be overwritten with user programs . There are 300 independent storage locations for Synth patches .

The Nord Stage is multitimbral ? each of the Piano , Organ , and Synth sections can sound independently . There are two Panels ? A and B ? each of which provides a separate configuration of the three sections within a single Program . Panels can be played independently , with one of the panels being controlled via an external MIDI keyboard controller , or they can be layered together , allowing for a maximum of 6 part multitimbral . Most of the buttons and knobs on the Stage , such as volume , instrument selection , drawbar levels (for organ) or filter controls (for synthesizer) can also be adjusted by the external keyboard .

= = = Controllers and accessories = = =

The Nord Stage includes a spring @-@ mounted wooden pitch stick , and a ceramic mod wheel , similar to the Nord Lead and Nord Modular synthesizers .
Many of the parameter knobs are simple potentiometers , however there are several 360 @-@ degree lighted rotary encoders . These rotary encoders control parameters that can be " morphed " . Morph Grouping is Clavia 's technology that allows users to assign multiple parameters to one control , such as the mod wheel , a control pedal , or aftertouch .
The connectors at the back of the Stage allow the connection of a sustain pedal , a swell pedal for organ , a footswitch to select the rotary speaker emulation speed , and a control pedal to modify effects such as wah @-@ wah . A set of screw @-@ in legs are an available option for the 88 and 76 note models and a custom designed soft case is also available from Clavia . A third party company , Ocean Beach Digital , has manufactured a set of MIDI controlled drawbars for the Nord Stage , for users who prefer to use real drawbars instead of the buttons provided as standard .

= = Reception = =

The Nord Stage 2 received a Platinum award from Future Music magazine (who described it as " A huge upgrade , cementing its status as the most authentic stage piano / organ / synth available ") , and won the 2011 MIA Award for best hardware , and the 2011 MIPA Award for best Stage Piano .
Derek Sherinian , already well known for using Nord keyboards , started using the Nord Stage 2 in 2011 . Other notable musicians who have used the Nord Stage include Little Feat 's Bill Payne , Scott Kinsey , The Ark 's Jens Andersson (who played a Nord Stage 2 on the band 's final tour) , Bryan Ferry and Elbow .
Sound on Sound criticised the pitch stick on the Nord Stage , noting its range is permanently fixed to two semitones and cannot be adjusted . Performing Musician magazine felt that the piano sound " is a little uneven in places " , particularly towards the lower end , and were concerned it wouldn 't work well as a music workstation , describing its External section as " useless in any real @-@ world situation " , though they did praise the quality of the organ sounds . Reviewing the Stage 2 , Keyboard Magazine criticised the lack of MIDI thru and said " even with dedicated controls for most functions , it can be difficult to grasp at first . The few hardware buttons for changing programs are shared with Live settings . " However , they also stated the acoustic pianos sounded " beautiful " .