

# Organ Differences In The Lowrey Line

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The NT series was the first to offer all-digital voicing, but the technology was fairly new and not enough memory existed to really have great nuance of orchestral sounds. I still have an MX-2 that is at my Father's house so when I visit him I can play- and I do love the flute sounds- they really are warm and lovely. This organ had the beginnings of the rhythms, intro and endings that came on the LX (many were on those style cards that are no longer available- the technology is now obsolete and no vendors sell the blank cards) and are on the organs even today- like Broadway and Chicago Swing (the old MX1 Big Band) but you can hear the difference as you play an NT, then an LX then the SU. The NT's piano, though much improved from the G series was still kind of tinny in the higher octaves. Always sounded like a honky tonk when you picked the grand sounds. When used in a rhythm it too was only adequate. There was a really nice Slide Trombone tab that became a sound on the SU series- Trombone: NT Slide.

The LX510 Majesty and the Millennium had a return to the Alesis reverb that was used in the NT series. The LX500/600 Celebrations had a built in reverb that left the sound very dry. The LX sound engine was a drastic improvement in orchestral sounds over the NT series, but the flute tones were debatable, mostly because the reverb just was not there. Also the LX series got the addition of 1 3/5', 1 1/3', and 1' flute tabs as well as the percussion tab that was adjustable (if you knew someone who would tell you how to do it, it was never mentioned in the manual). On the LX the sounds are all on one circuit board. Lanny Davis made an amazing set of Theater Organ presets that I believe can still be purchased that really made those organs "sing".

The SU series sound engine is an even greater improvement, but this time it affected not only the orchestral but also the tab sounds. There are 5 different boards in this and the flute tabs are now adjustable (sort of like on the Technics G, F and E organs). You can select from Lowrey flute tabs (the lights above the tabs are red), Jazz (ala Hammond) flute tabs (the lights above the tabs turn green), and Theatre Tibia tabs (the lights turn yellow above the tabs). If you have all the tabs on and hold a chord and change the tab TYPE you will notice the difference right away. The orchestral sounds are REALLY much better than even on the LX, the brass and reeds are very rich, and you can actually modify the sounds with vibrato and effects such as delay, chorus, trem, flange, etc. On the SU530 Stardust you even have a sound shaper, which can adjust the attack and decay of many sounds.

Also, the tab voices, like string and vocal are much more "organ" voices now, instead of trying to be "true" strings and vocals. The orchestral vocals and strings are magnificent, the tabs sounds are much more "theatre organ" like. It is a fun organ to play on because you can literally make yourself sound like you are playing on an older organ and in the next preset have a true symphonic experience.

The SU530 also has a newer speaker arrangement with tweeters inside the woofers at the player's level and a better slower clock rate than on the Royale which makes certain

reverb types like "Canyon" even richer. There is an equalizer with 8 preset settings that really can bring out the brightness or change the mood of the whole organ. I did not pay much mind to it when I first got it, but over time have found that it really is useful. This organ has the extra songs and rhythms from the Grand Royale- but not the console pedals, or bench with back, though it does have a much nicer "leather' like tufted bench than the Royale. If you ever get the luxury of hearing a Royale next to a Stardust, you will pick the Stardust as the winner in sound. Both organs though are using the same sound engine, it just channels better with the new speakers, equalizer and reverb clock speed. Never heard the Grand Royale but I know someone who has it and says he thinks he'll never get rid of it.

In my experience, I have always had fun with the differences in the organs over time, and though the sound has improved, sometimes it is a real joy to go back and play an old organ. I had an MX-1 (still sorry I gave it away) that was one of my favorites, but as it aged I grew tired of it and wanted better sounds, easier setup and better keyboard feel. My Stardust is great, and I am very creative because all the ideas in my head can now be implemented, but there was something about only having 12 backgrounds, 20 some odd rhythms, basic flute tabs and a handful of orchestral sounds to pick from and change on the fly! Ah.... Memories! :)



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