

Superscope PSD340: *Recording & Playback Ease*

Superscope has expanded its line of music practice CD recording systems with the PSD340 dual drive CD recorder and MP3 CD player. Taking its cue from previously released Superscope units, the PSD340 is an exceptional tool. It allows musicians at all levels—students, educators and professionals—to practice and transcribe music from CDs using the unit's tempo and key change features, record music directly to CD using the unit's mic and line input options, and duplicate CDs.

The PSD340 features two CD drives. The CD playback drive that is capable of playing CD, CD-R, CD-RW, CD-MP3 and CD+G discs, and shifting keys and tempos of the music on the disc. The CD recording drive lets users record directly to CD-R or CD-RW discs.

Song tempos of CDs on the CD playback drive may be slowed down up to 75 percent of the original speed, while retaining the original key. The sound quality is clear up until the 60 percent point. Beyond that point, there's an increase in digital fuzziness that can make the slowed-down sound difficult to comprehend. The slowed-down tempo doesn't affect the song's key. Conversely, with the PSD340's key change feature, users may shift the song's key either in half steps or increments in between, without affecting the song's tempo. This is helpful for transcribers or practicing musi-

cians, who won't need to retune their instruments each time they want to work on a different song. The PSD340 may also be used to loop parts of music on CDs for repeated playing, listening and practice.

As a recording tool, the PSD340 offers excellent quality. Users may copy CDs, record to CD with a CD accompaniment (perfect for jazz players to hear their practicing with playalong CDs) and record rehearsals. Recording direct to CD using bass guitar, guitar and vocals, I found the sound recorded clearly, and the PSD340 was easy to set up. The PSD340 comes with built-in reverb and delay that may be added to the sound that's being recorded. Input capabilities on the PSD340 include mic and line inputs with two $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch and two XLR inputs. I also recorded myself playing along with CDs at half speed and in different keys, which helped me to compare my playing with that on the CD. The uses of the PSD340 as a practice tool are virtually infinite, and with the high quality of the sound of slowed-down CDs as well as CDs that are recorded, it's a good choice for student instrumentalists and educators. For vocalists, the PSD340 has a vocal reduction



feature that almost completely erases vocal tracks, so one may sing over the actual accompaniment on the CD. This may also be recorded.

The PSD340's controls are laid out simply and labeled intelligently, so users will have an easy time getting started working with the unit without much manual reading, although the manual is easy to understand and written clearly.

Other features on the PSD340 include a built-in tuner and metronome, 15 dB mic input attenuator and automatic record level switch, built-in 48V phantom power, four-position headphone/speaker selector, independent aux input and line output controls, three independent duplication modes, remote control and digital input and output. It has a suggested list price of \$1,099.

—Dave Zaworski