

## SUPERSCOPE PSD300 CD RECORDING SYSTEM: BURN, BABY, BURN

The latest addition to Superscope's growing line of CD players and recorders, the PSD300 CD recording system is full of incredibly useful features for students, educators, arrangers, composers, transcribers and performers.

The PSD300 incorporates two CD drives—one strictly for playback and one that both plays back and records—in a lightweight, easily portable unit. The top-loading CD drive is for playback only. Users may play a CD, change the tempo (increase 50 percent and decrease 33 percent) of the CD's music, change the key (up to one octave above and below the original pitch), reduce a vocal track of a CD to sing along with the music and loop segments of music for infinite repetition—a great option for transcribers who may want to listen over and over to a section of music. These functions are also found on previous Superscope models such as the PAC770 sound system and PSD230 CD player.

What makes the PSD300 more powerful than its brethren is the front-loading CD-R drive, which can record CDs. Users can put a CD in the top-loading CD drive and record that CD to a blank CD-R or CD-RW disc in the CD-R drive. And by using the tempo and key change features as well as voice reduction and looping points—options that are only available when playing a CD in the top-loading CD drive—you may record an amazingly diverse array of practice CDs. For instance, you could burn a whole CD of one song from a playalong CD, but have that song at different tempos and in different keys throughout the CD so you are constantly practicing the song along with the CD in a variety of ways. That's just one option of many. The CD-R drive can also burn entire CDs at half speed so when the recorded CD is played back, the tempo will be halved and the sound will be an octave below the CD's original pitch, a blessing for transcribers listening to fast, difficult music passages. Once that disc is finalized, it may be played on any CD player. I tested this

option by burning a recently released Michael Brecker solo sax performance of John Coltrane's "Naima" at half speed. The sound proved reliably clear through the PSD300's onboard speaker, even at one octave lower than the original pitch, with no distortion or ambiguity as to what note was being played. Listening to half-speed solos by musicians such as Brecker offers



remarkable insight into the musician's playing technique and approach, making the PSD300 an excellent choice for education and study.

The PSD300's two XLR and two 1/4-inch input jacks up the ante by letting users record directly to CD. You may record instruments or vocals by themselves, or play along with a CD in the CD drive and record the results to CD. And because tempo, key and vocals can be manipulated with CD playback drive, you may play along with a recording in different keys and tempos—or sing the melody along with the CD—and burn the result to a CD in realtime. The possibilities in band rooms, practice rooms and on the gig are enormous. For example, a teacher may choose to record a big band rehearsal directly to CD and then make copies of the CD to distribute to all the big band members. A small group may want to record its gigs for reference and critique, and students will certainly want to record themselves playing along with CDs. Testing

my guitar chops by recording at different tempos and in different keys with a playalong CD, I found the recordings to CD were clear and clean, making it easy to hear the results and find the spots that needed work. I also recorded to CD using the voice reduction function by singing along with old Motown hits, replacing the high vocals with my pinched falsetto.

Although my performance wasn't pretty, the PSD300 did the job beautifully, reducing the lead vocals to a barely audible state and letting me belt away with the backing help of the brothers Jackson. Obviously, more serious vocalists will be able to use this option easily for their purposes.

Controls on the PSD300 are logically configured and quite easy to comprehend. CD player and CD recording controls are on the right side of the unit's top for easy access. The left side of the unit's top has key and tempo controls as well as 10 buttons that, in conjunction with the select rotary knob, may be used to

control features such as CD programming, voice reduction, text insertion, A-B loops, record modes (record with CD, record CD, convert to halfspeed, record 2X with finalize, etc.), mic EQ recording balance and filter select, among many others. The front of the unit is home to input jacks for recording, speaker volume and select, line in/out volumes and other controls for recording an instrument or vocals to CD. The rear panel offers line out, mix out, aux in and digital in/out jacks. The well-written manual explains all of the PSD300's functions in depth and with understandable language so you'll be playing and burning in a matter of minutes.

Like its Superscope predecessors, the PSD300 (MSRP \$1,149) is a powerful tool for learning music. And with its flexibility that lets musicians record directly to CD in whatever context they want, the PSD300 will certainly be on the wish list of educators, students, and performers.

—Dave Zaworski