

## USER STORY

# PSD230 CD Player is Great for Guitarists

by Kynch O'Kaine

My name is Kynch O'Kaine. I have been part of the guitar faculty at the University of Miami's Studio Music and Jazz Program for the past 10 years. I have transcribed countless amounts of music over the years and felt privileged to have the opportunity to review the Superscope PSD230.

The quality of this innovative CD player is outstanding! The clarity of the signal and crispness of the stereo image through headphones was second to none. If you purchased this unit for the sole purpose of owning a high-fidelity CD Player, it would not be difficult to understand. But this is much more than just a high-fidelity CD player.

Those who purchase the PSD230 are musicians who need a unit that can slow the tempo of a difficult solo, or passage, without altering the musical pitch.

### Tempo Control

The PSD230 can slow down any piece of music by 33% without affecting the pitch. This process is done "on the fly" with no time lag. The tempo can be adjusted anywhere from 1%-33%. Pressing a button brings the tempo slower or faster. As someone who transcribes difficult music often, I found no use for making a track play faster. The unit scrolls down to 33% at a medium-slow pace (in 50 intervals). It also scrolls up at the same pace. I felt that there should be a parameter that allows the tempo to go immediately back to regular speed. If I were doing a leisurely transcription with no deadline, this feature is bearable. If I were under pressure and had to do quick A/B comparisons, this feature could become maddening. In addition, cueing to the middle of a track moves at the same "Sunday driver" pace. I feel that after 10 seconds of pressing the cue button down, the software should be geared to move quicker.

### Key Control

After the tempo is adjusted, the option to fine tune the pitch can be enlisted. It is also possible to adjust the key

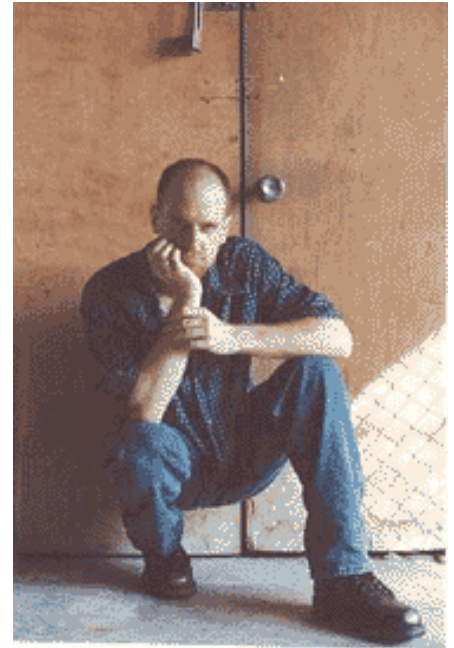
of the music without affecting the tempo. This is wonderful! You can take any song and change its key to match the one you wish to play. However, I ran into a roadblock when I attempted to change key AND slow it down. If you opt to change the key the PSD230 does not allow you to then alter the tempo and vice versa. However, the PSD300 will allow you to do both simultaneously.

### Practice Loops

If you need to loop a section, no problem. There is a button that lets you choose loop point A and point B. After loop point B is selected, the unit automatically plays from points A thru B. It's perfect for figuring out difficult section that you want to hear over and over. Once again, there is also a catch here. Accurately marking the beginning of your loop is no problem. Accurately marking the end of your loop is not possible. There is approximately a 1/2 second lag in between the time you press the button to make the end of your loop and when the loop is actually formed. When playing back your loop, you will not get a seamless playback of your selected music either. Expect approximately a slight lag between every playback. The lag time between playbacks is surely a livable feature.

### Fine Tuning Feature

Raising or lowering the key is no problem. Fine-tuning works in the same way. Press the up or down button and away you go. It is cleanly done, and remember that this does not affect the tempo! As nice as this feature is, the read out on the display is one step away from being useless to any musician wanting to work quickly. The readout goes up & down in cents. The manual gives a very clear description of how this table of cents works. (Cudos to its author).



It proceeds as follows; 0.00 is your home key, +0.13 is the next step up, +0.25 is the next step after that until you reach +1.13, which is a full octave up. Going down reads the same except with a negative sign before the number.

### **Lead Vocal Reduction**

The voice removal featured worked incredibly well on most recordings. It enhanced the background vocals and the lead vocal was virtually wiped out. On a few recordings, it sounded as though the lead vocal was submerged in a distant reverb tank and could be faintly heard.

### **Available Accessories**

Being able to plug directly into the unit was great. There is a mix-pod which allows you to adjust the mix between the line in and what is being played on the CD player. The footswitch which accommodates pause and play is a well thought out option. Is a great idea as well in conjunction with the superb carrying case with cutouts in the foam for the adapter (which is just about as heavy as a shot-put), RCA cables, Footswitch, and CD's, it is the perfect transportable transcribing machine. The carrying case inspires much confidence.

I did not use the digital out. Esthetically, the unit looks wonderful. The switches feel sturdy and the all the input jacks are solid. The display is not easy to read unless the backlighting is on. If the unit is set on a table, using the backlight would be your only option to read the display. The screen is much lower than eye level when set on a table. I found propping the unit up on a telephone book to be helpful to see the read out. Mind you, seeing the display is not imperative to the operation of the unit after the desired track is selected.

### **A Great Portable Tool**

In conclusion the PSD230 is really a great unit. Indeed, there are some points that could be addressed in future models. This unit is portable which is a huge plus. No longer are you tied to your computer to transcribe. The PSD230 will work very well in classroom situations with its stereo RCA outs. There is also an optional remote control available. This is the 1st model of its kind made by Superscope. It will be interesting to see what happens with the up and coming models.

### **About Knch O'Kaine**

Kynch O'Kaine, Lecturer (Jazz Guitar), holds a B.M. in Studio Music and Jazz, and an M.M.degree in Jazz Pedagogy from the University of Miami. Aside from being a faculty member for the past 12 years, O'Kaine is a singer/songwriter whose songs have been recognized in national songwriting competitions. Having written and produced "Traces," his debut CD, he was signed as recording artist to the Magic City record label.

O'Kaine appears regularly with Celtic Cross, a traditional Irish group, where as a multi-instrumentalist, he plays uilleann pipes, concertina, concert flute, whistle, and guitar.



**PSD230**

