

KORG SR-1 SOUND ON SOUND DIGITAL RECORDER £234
RECORDING



Korg SR-1 Sound On Sound Digital Recorder £234

Record anywhere and make as many overdubs as you like with Korg's unlimited track recorder *by Trevor Curwen*

Hand-held, go-anywhere digital recorders have taken off in a big way, now that they're tiny, sound good and have tons of memory potential. Several companies now produce a wide range of models that record stereo audio and there a couple that enable overdubs or multitrack recording – none of those, though, allow an unlimited number of overdubs, each recorded as separate sound files, as the new Korg SR-1 Sound On Sound digital recorder does. And with amp

simulators and onboard rhythms, there ought to be plenty here to endear it to guitar players.

Just the right size to be held in the palm of your hand, the SOS's wedge-shaped design makes it ideal for sitting on a desk or tabletop. Four tiny rubber pads on the bottom surface stop it slipping around and the display is clearly visible from all sorts of angles. All the controls are on the top surface while the inputs and outputs, (guitar in, mic in, line in, headphones out), are on the right hand side panel. If you

have nothing plugged into the inputs, the SOS defaults to recording via the internal stereo mic.

Recording takes place to a tiny micro SD card – the supplied 2GB card will give you about 200 minutes of recording, but the unit will take cards of up

to 16GB. The recordings are made as wav files and the SOS lets you make an initial recording and then overdub as many extra recordings onto it as you wish without having to worry about running out of tracks, automatically letting you monitor everything you've previously recorded. Each overdub is stored as a separate wav file so, once you have completed all the overdubs, you can transfer them all as individual tracks to a computer DAW for further work or mixing. All of the individual audio files contain timing information for automatic alignment in a DAW, meaning that even a short overdub in the middle of a song will line up correctly with the rest.

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The Rivals

Tascam's GT-R1 (£264) is a portable stereo recorder designed for guitarists. It includes amp sims, onboard rhythms and phrase-training facilities and also offers an overdub mode, although individual overdubs aren't stored as separate files.

Zoom's H4N (£329) is another portable stereo recorder that comes equipped with amp sims and phrase training facilities, but features a metronome rather than rhythm patterns. It also offers a four-track multitrack mode for building up songs and can also function as a USB interface.

The SOS has a chromatic tuner onboard, plus 50 preset rhythm patterns (each with four variations) in a variety of styles. There are also effects that can be applied to the input and recorded, or to the playback sound or overall sound. These include a bunch of REMS amp sims and effects for guitar that can be used for practice when not recording. Other practice aids include the facility to

import songs via the SD card, set up loops and use the onboard Sound Stretch to change playback speed without pitch change.

In use

The SOS controls are very intuitive. You can power it up and be recording in seconds, which is great if you want to use it to quickly capture any musical ideas that pop into your head, either via guitar or humming into the onboard mics. While those mics are very small, they still do a decent job of recording a gig or rehearsal. An internal speaker is convenient for checking what you've recorded, but it's way too quiet for playing guitar through or making overdubs, so headphones are essential.

It's the overdub facility that sets the SOS apart and it works flawlessly – quick to operate and dead easy to layer up guitar parts into a big arrangement with, the REMS amp and FX sounds providing an array of tones that encourage you to play in a variety of styles. Simply sliding your finger along the touchscreen makes quick work of tweaking a pair of parameters for the guitar sound and also changing the tempo of

the rhythm parts, which cover a lot of ground as the foundation for a new recording or practice – it takes no time at all to dial up a rhythm then whack down and loop a chord sequence to play over. Our only disappointment with the SOS is that it's not equipped with USB for file transfer to computer – you have to invest in a card reader for that.

Verdict

Fulfilling a number of essential functions for a guitarist – stereo location recorder, songwriting sketchpad, practice tool/phrase trainer – the SOS is a brilliant all-round utility that will easily slip into any pocket or guitar case – maybe yours? **G**

The Bottom Line

We like: Ruggedly portable; nice range of guitar effects; unlimited overdubs

We disliked: No USB; quiet speaker; power supply is an optional extra

Guitarist says: A portable stereo recorder, multitracker and practice tool in a palm-sized package



Korg SR-1

PRICE: £234

TYPE: Portable personal digital recorder

ORIGIN: China

RECORDING FORMAT: PCM audio format, wav format, BWF compliant, 44.1 kHz at 16-bit

TOTAL RECORDING TIME: Memory card dependent – up to 26.6 hours with a 16 GB card

MAX CONTINUOUS RECORDING TIME: Six hours

FREQUENCY RESPONSE: 20 Hz-20 kHz +/- 1dB

SIMULTANEOUS RECORDING: Two tracks (stereo)

OVERDUBS: Number depends on memory card space

TOTAL NUMBER OF SONGS: 200

CONNECTIONS: 6.4mm jack guitar input; line input, mic input, stereo mini jack headphone output (all stereo mini jacks)

EFFECTS: 100. Guitar (36), Mic (25), Master (30), Touchscreen effects (9)

POWER REQUIREMENTS: AA/LR6 (alkaline or nickel-metal hydride) battery x 2, AC adaptor (not included)

BATTERY LIFE: About 10 hours of recording (alkaline battery), 11 hours (NiMH battery)

OTHER FEATURES: Tuner; 50 onboard rhythms

DIMENSIONS: 68 (w) x 135 (h) x 43mm (d)

EXTRAS INCLUDED: 2GB SD card, Korg Utility software (download, see website for system requirements)

Korg UK

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www.korg.co.uk

Test results

Build quality ★★★★★
Features ★★★★★
Sound ★★★★★
Value for money ★★★★★

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★



The controls are intuitive and easy to get to grips with