

Roland CD-2i SD/CD Recorder **£569**

Maybe bigger is better after all – Roland gives us stereo recording done large! *by Trevor Curwen*

We've been seeing a lot of pocket-sized stereo recorders lately, and very useful they are too for capturing rehearsal ideas. But operation of such small units can be fiddly, the playback from an internal speaker (if it has one) is often barely audible and it can't be edited without a computer. So how about a larger, easily operable unit that provides playback people in the room can hear and an instant hard copy? That's what the new Roland CD-2i can do – it's a tabletop stereo recorder with inbuilt stereo mics and speakers, plus a CD burner.

Roland says that the CD-2i is designed to make recording and CD production easier than ever – you simply point, record, play and burn. Everything is clearly laid out on the front panel with dedicated buttons for most functions and a small but crystal clear LED display. You can record using the onboard mics or any mic or line sources plugged into the sockets conveniently located down the left hand side-panel. The input levels are set using large, easily grabbed knobs, with the output volume (from the speakers or the headphone out) taken care of with an equally large knob.

Audio is recorded to an SD card and can later be burned to CD, but if you're using mains power rather than batteries, you can record directly to a CD.

In Use

The CD-2i isn't designed specifically for guitarists so it's no surprise that it has no dedicated Hi-Z instrument input. What is a little surprising is that there's only one XLR mic input with phantom power – disappointing for anyone who owns a pair of condensers. But there are two 6.4mm jack mic inputs, so anyone who wanted to use something in place of the



onboard mics for stereo recording would have options.

As far as operation goes the CD-2i couldn't be easier. Roland has included an 'easy guide' button that scrolls through seven basic functions (record, erase, SD to CD write, CD backup, karaoke, overdub and rehearsal). This leads you step-by-step through each operation, so it's difficult to go wrong. While the display clearly shows the input level so that you can set it manually, in rehearsal the input level can also be set automatically by the machine 'listening' to a run-thought of the song. There's also a limiter that you can turn on in order to prevent overload.

Recorded sound is really good, the onboard mics doing a decent job of capturing whatever is in front of them, while the onboard speakers offer clear playback at a reasonable volume. Burning a CD is straightforward enough, and although there's no USB connection you can always transfer audio to your computer by copying the files directly from CD or using a card reader.

No problems with recording, then, and there's also a bonus in the form of onboard practice and phrase-training features including a metronome, on the fly selection and repeat of

sections of audio for repeated listening, pitch and speed change and centre-cancelling.

Verdict

This allows you to make decent stereo recordings without wrestling with a tiny control surface or needing a computer. You can keep it at home, take it to band rehearsals, record the lot with instant playback and give everyone a CD to take home. The same could go for gigs too. You record the show, perhaps operating the CD-2i from the stage with its included remote control, and sell a few CDs of it instantly to all the happy punters – a potential money-spinner, which could see you paying off the cost of the CD-2i in a matter of weeks if you do enough well-subscribed gigs. With practice facilities as well, the CD-2i is a fine utility to have at hand. **G**

The Bottom Line

We like: Easy to use; quality mics; playback system

We dislike: Only one XLR socket; no USB; expensive

Guitarist says: A very useful asset to have around – if only it was more affordable...

The Rivals

Tascam's BB-1000CD (£542) is designed to do pretty much the same thing. If you want a 'portastudio'-style multitracker that can fulfil the role, there's the **BOSS BR-800** (£409), the **Zoom R16** (£399) and the **Tascam DP-004** (£203) and **DP-008** (£312).

Roland CD-2i

PRICE: £569

ORIGIN: Taiwan

TYPE: Tabletop SD/CD recorder

TRACKS: Two (stereo)

RECORDING MEDIA: SD and SDHC Card 64MB to 16GB (32GB card not supported), CD-R, CD-RW

RECORDING TIME (CD): 650 MB

disc: 74 min, 700 MB disc: 80 min

RECORDING TIME (SD card): 1,511 minutes (16GB), 5 minutes (64MB).

Maximum recording time of one song is 74 minutes

SAMPLING FREQUENCY: 44.1kHz

AD/DA CONVERSION: 24-bit

CONNECTIONS: XLR mic input, 6.4mm jack mic inputs (L/Mono, R), RCA phono line/phono inputs (L&R), RCA phono line outputs (L&R), stereo minijack headphone output

OTHER FEATURES: Internal stereo microphone, internal stereo playback speakers, metronome, tuner

PHANTOM POWER: Yes

DIMENSIONS: 275 (w) x 50 (h) x 196mm (d)

WEIGHT (kg/lb) 1.3/2.9

POWER REQUIREMENTS: 6 x LR6 (AA) or nickel-metal hydride batteries (not included), AC power adaptor PSB-1U (included)

BATTERY LIFE: Approximately five hours (alkaline), six hours (nickel-metal hydride)

INCLUDED ACCESSORIES: Remote (with battery CR2025), AC adaptor (PSB-1U), power cord, SD card, CD-R disc (blank media), SD card protector, quick start, owner's manual

OPTIONS: CB-CD2e carrying bag (£45), SS-PC1Stand (£69)

Roland UK
01792 702701

www.roland.co.uk

Test results

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

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★