

Olympus LS-10 PCM Digital Recorder

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Okay, so maybe you don't PLAY a digital recorder as much as you PLAY WITH IT.

But many brass and woodwind musicians use these devices to record their practice sessions, their students, rehearsals, performances, clinics and masterclasses.

I saw the Olympus LS-10 at the most recent NAMM show and the folks at Olympus were kind enough to send me one to play with for a couple of weeks....

The specs:

Recording Format: Linear PCM (Pulsed Code Modulation) WAVE

MP3 (MPEG-1/MPEG-2 Audio Layer 3)

WMA (Windows Media Audio)

Recording Media: Built-in 2 GB NAND Flash memory, SD Card (512 MB to 8 GB)

Recording Time Built-in 2 GB memory: Linear PCM: Up to 3 hours 10 minutes

MP3: Up to 35 hours 35 minutes

WMA: Up to 69 hours 35 minutes

Card Format: SD, SDHC

Input Level: MIC SENSE HIGH –59 dBv

MIC SENSE LOW –39 dBv

LINE IN jack input: –6 dBv

PC Interface: USB

LCD: 35 x 29 mm

Speaker: 2 16mm round dynamic speakers, 8 ohms, 200 mW output

MIC Jack: 3.5mm stereo mini-jack, impedance 2 kohms

LINE IN Jack: 3.5mm stereo mini-jack, impedance 2 kohms

EAR Jack: 3.5mm stereo mini-jack, impedance 8 ohms

Maximum Headphone Output: 3 mW per channel at a load of 16 ohms

Batteries: 2 AA Alkaline, Lithium, or NiMH batteries, Optional external Power Supply: Olympus D-7AC AC Adapter

Size: 131.5 mm x 48 mm x 22.4 mm (without protrusions)

Weight: 165 grams (including alkaline batteries)

OS Supported: Windows: 2000/XP/VISTA, Macintosh: Mac OS 10.2 or later

Minimum Requirements: Windows: Intel Pentium or AMD Athlon 1.4 GHz processor, 512 MB RAM, Windows DirectX compatible, ASIO compatible sound card recommended for low latency performance

Macintosh: Power Mac G4 1 GHz or Core Solo 1.5 GHz, 512 MB RAM, Core Audio compatible audio hardware

Software included: Steinberg Cubase LE4 software

Accessories included: Padded case, windscreens, USB cable, 2 X AA batteries

Audio Output: Earphone output or speakers

Audio Samples

These are samples recorded with the LS-10 in different situations where a wind or brass player would likely use it (except maybe for the cat sounds). I've indicated the settings I used, the distance from the source and the environment. Apart from the fade-in/fade-out, and conversion to mp3, the recordings have not been processed.

Big Band: John Macleod's Rex Hotel Orchestra:

48KHz/24bit, jazz club, 15 ft. away {mp3}BSblues{/mp3}

Brass Band: Weston Silver Band

48KHz/24bit, auto-level, rehearsal room, behind conductor {mp3}westonreh{/mp3}

Interview: Gord Wolfe (1st trombone, Toronto Symphony)

48KHz/24bit, auto-level, theatre lobby {mp3}Gwolfe{/mp3}

Foley: Hungry Cat (large)

96KHz/24bit, 4 inches from his face {mp3}sam{/mp3}

Bass trombone duets: Me and a student

48KHz/24bit, 9X12 room, 7 ft away{mp3}Melissa{/mp3}

I like...

- Build quality- Nice and solid. Aluminum body.
- Design- Fits in a shirt pocket, all controls easily accessed by one thumb. Big, easy-to-read backlit LCD display. Rounded edges give it a very sleek look. Built-in stereo speakers, though quiet, are handy. 2GB RAM, plus up to 8GB with SDHC slot
- Sound quality- Great! (make sure you use manual level control) Plenty of options for tweaking to your liking (listen to samples below)
- Battery life- No problem here
- Cool factor

I like less...

- Price- Street price at around \$399 US (some dealers sell for less- check out Google Products). Priced higher than comparable units like the Zoom H4, Edirol R9, etc, but arguably a different feature set, and it's small! Still, if it were \$299, it would be a no-brainer for most...
- Speakers- I wish they could be bit louder. Unless you're in a very quiet room and/or you press the speakers to your ear, it's difficult to hear much.

Should you buy it?

If you're looking for a digital PCM recorder that is very compact, easy-to-use, sturdy, has great specs, sounds great and you don't mind shelling out a few more bucks than some of the other units out there, then YES, absolutely. (I did.)

More information

Comments or questions? Email me at [colin\(at\)mrequipment.net](mailto:colin(at)mrequipment.net).

