

Skunkie Designs Color Pre-amp

This preamp is a very unique product in the tube pre-amplifier market in that it allows you to adjust the second order harmonic distortion that's created.

There are two small potentiometers next to the input jacks that can be adjusted both for balance between the two channels and for adjusting the signal strength on the grid of the first input triode, which in turn controls the amount of THD created. You then use the main volume knob, which is on the output of the pre-amp, to control the gain and the signal strength going into the main amplifier.

This allows you to control how much "tube sound" is inserted into the signal, and the amount of good harmonic distortion that is pre-set with the input adjusters remains constant at all volume level adjustments made via the main larger volume control knob.

First make sure if your source has an output volume adjustment, it's turned up all the way. You want all of the volume control attenuation to be done via the color pre-amp itself.

The pre-amp comes burned in and setup to work well in most situations. It is pre-set with the potentiometers on the input side around 1/4 volume. The idea final setup will have the output volume control at approximately 1/2 volume at around 85db of room SPL (moderately loud), or at your normal critical listening level.

You can then play around with the balance between the input pots and the output knob to taste. Turning down the output and adjusting the input higher add more second order harmonics or "color" and vice versa. Normally the input adjusters will only need very slight adjustments, less than 1/16 turn, and I would recommend you never go above 1/2 scale on the input adjusters to avoid excess harmonic distortion from over driving the input triode.

The tubes used are a 6CA4 rectifier tube, which is the rear tube socket next to the transformer and a pair of 12AU7 dual triode tubes used in the front two tube sockets. Make sure the tubes are installed and fully seated before powering up the amp. Also, avoid "short cycling" or turning the amp off and then instantly back on as this can damage the rectifier tube! The input jacks are the ones in the rear with the small adjusters next to them and the output jacks are near the front. These locations were chosen to keep the internal signal paths as short as possible. If you have any questions, feel free to email me!