



## 22A3 Monaural Amplifier



### Owner's Manual

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# WARNING



## **Never power on the amplifier without connecting a proper load**

Failure to do so will result in permanent damage to the output transformer and potentially other components in the output stage.

## **This amplifier contains lethal voltages**

High voltage can be stored in the power supply even if it is unplugged and not in use. Do not remove back cover unless you are a qualified service technician. For service, contact Bandwidth Audio.

## **High Vacuum Tube Temperatures**

Vacuum tubes get extremely hot with bulb temperatures capable of reaching 200 degrees Celsius. Do not touch or attempt to remove the tubes while hot.

## **Amplifier Bias**

With the volume turned all the way down, the bias should be set between: **50 - 60mA**. This current can be read directly off of the 2 analog meters on the back of the amplifier after power on and warm up. **See Section 3.3 – Biasing.**

# 1.0 Amplifier Setup

## Pre-Operation Checklist

- Connect speakers to proper load impedance output.
- Insert tubes into proper sockets. **See Section 3.1 – Installing Tubes.**
- Connect Mains to 120V wall outlet. Ensure a proper outlet ground connection with a ground tester.
- Turn the volume all the way down.
- After warming up, check power tube bias without attempting to input an audio signal. ***Ensure the speaker load is connected before powering on!***  
**See Section 3.3 – Biasing.**

## 1.1 Amplifier Placement

For the best operation and longest life of components, the amplifier should be set up and used in a well-ventilated area with good air circulation. Do not use the amplifier in enclosed furniture as this may result in a fire.

Overheating can damage the amplifier and diminish tube life.

## 1.2 Setting The Load Impedance

***Never turn on your amplifier without speakers connected to the proper output load impedance.*** Operation of the amplifier without a speaker load or open circuited loudspeaker voice coil can permanently damage the output transformers as well as other major components.

To be safe, always ensure your speakers are connected before plugging amplifiers into an outlet. Likewise, always unplug the amplifier from the outlet before removing the speaker load.

This amplifier comes equipped with 4, 8, and 16-ohm output impedances for maximum flexibility. If you are unsure of your speaker's impedance, contact the manufacturer.

Connect speakers between 4, 8, or 16-ohm binding post on the back of the amplifier, based on nominal speaker impedance, and the Comm. Binding posts.

### **1.3 Powering ON & OFF**

The analog backlit VU meter on the front face of the amplifier illuminates when powered on.

Tube warm up time is typically 30 seconds. It will take at least this long for music to play from speakers. Best performance is achieved after amplifier has been running for a period of time and up to a steady temperature, typically 30 minutes.

When powering off, music may still play for a few seconds. This is normal. While the tubes are hot, make sure not to move or knock into the amplifier since hot tubes are more susceptible to internal damage.

### **1.4 Input Setup**

This amplifier is designed to drive a speaker load to its full rated output power based on typical line level input signals via the RCA connector on the back.

Depending on the input source components, an additional preamp may be needed to achieve full output power.

**See Section 3.4 – Typical Specifications.**

## 2.0 Controls and Layout

### 2.1 Front Features



1. Volume

2. VU Meter 3. Power

#### 1. Volume

The volume knob controls the overall output of the amplifier by attenuating the input signal. Rather than a normal rotational potentiometer, a stepped attenuator is used. A stepped attenuator eliminates noise during rotation and also maintains volume balance between a pair of amplifiers driving separate speakers. Due to its construction, the volume knob will click into each slot, giving precise volume control.

## 2. VU Meter

The VU meter, or Volume Unit meter, gives the user an indication of the relative output power to the speakers. The backlight also indicates when the amplifier is on.

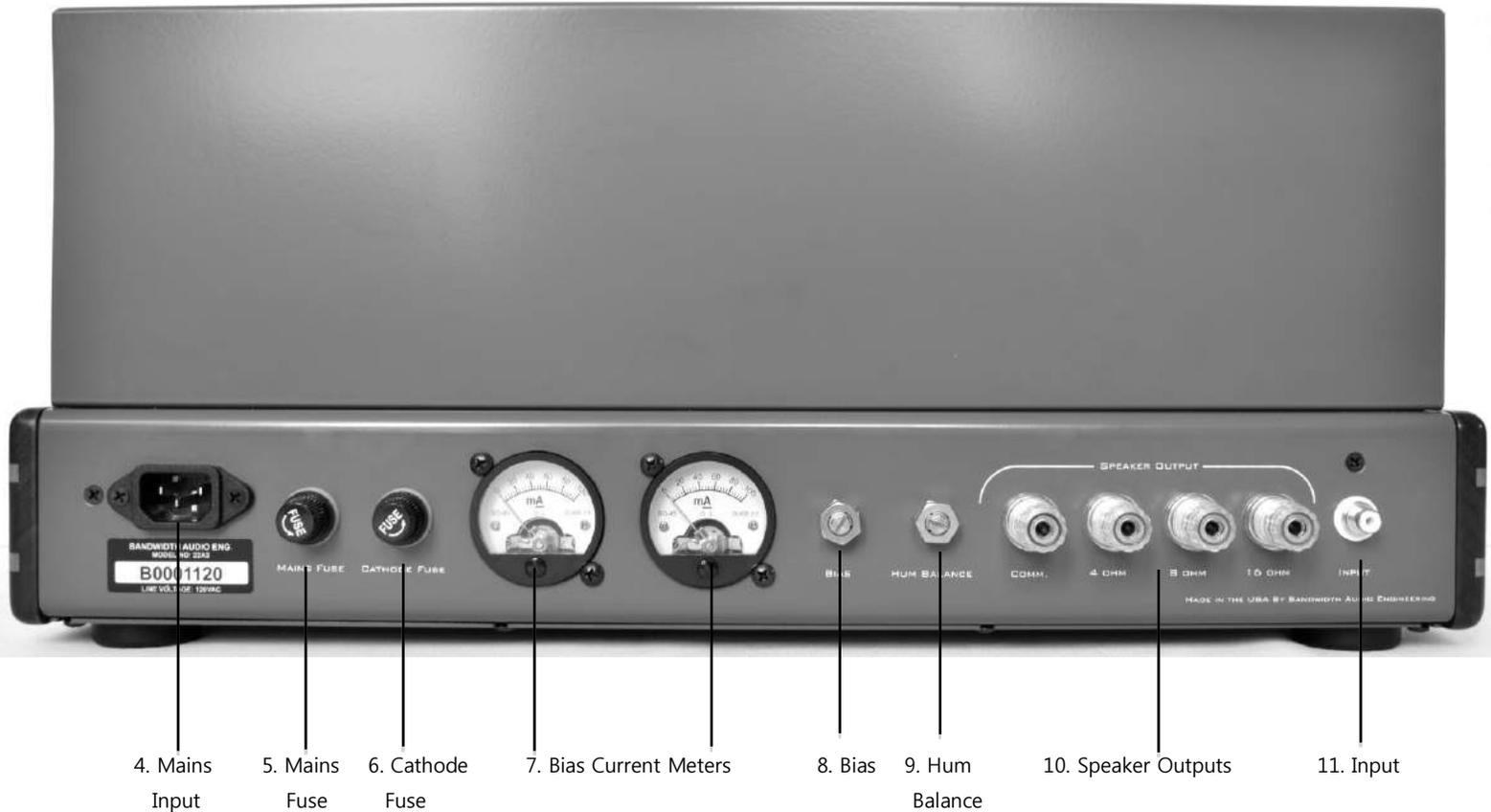
The VU meter is calibrated to indicate the amplifier's maximum clean RMS output power (rated at approximately 5 Watts of output power) when it is indicating +0dB.

Driving the output beyond this region will cause amplifier distortion. Although this is not harmful to the amp, there is a significant increase in the average output power as distortion increases. This can damage speakers rated close to the amplifier's maximum RMS output power.

## 3. Power Switch

The power switch is used to turn the amplifier on and off. **On** is in the up position, and **Off** is in the down position.

## 2.2 Back Features



4. Mains Input      Socket to connect removable wall power cord to the amplifier. ***Use only the voltage indicated on the serial number tag below mains input.***

5. Mains Fuse      ***Use only 2 Amp Slow Blow Fuse.*** Fuse in series with the mains current to protect the user and amplifier from various short circuit failures.

6. Cathode Fuse      ***Use only ¼ Amp Slow Blow Fuse.*** Fuse is in series with V3 and V4 output tubes to protect the output transformers and other circuitry from a shorted or bad tube. If blown, check performance of the output tubes before replacing the fuse to prevent damage from a failed tube.

## 7. Bias Current

### Meters

Measures the cathode current in milliamps of each power tube (V3 and V4, respectively). At idle, with no input signal, their value represents the power tube bias or idle current.

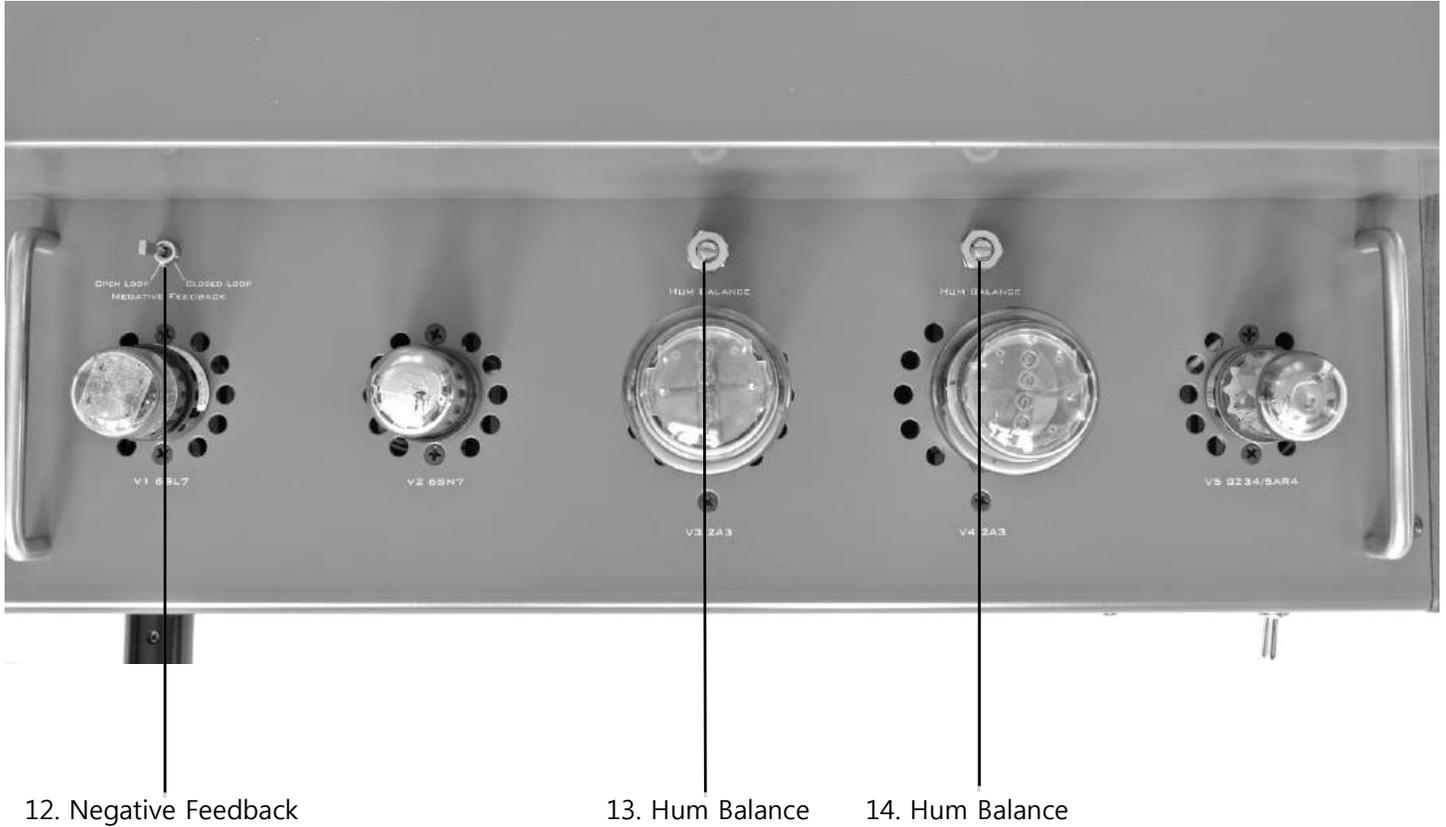
8. Bias Adjustment Screwdriver-adjustable potentiometer that is used to set the bias of the power tubes. ***See Section 3.3 – Biasing.***

9. Hum Balance Screwdriver-adjustable potentiometer that references the preamp tube filaments above voltage ground to lower the AC filament noise. This is usually set in the middle and requires no adjustment. However, if hum is discernable through the speakers, try rotating the potentiometer clockwise and counterclockwise from the center position to minimize it. If no change occurs, the hum is being picked up by another source.

10. Speaker Outputs Used for connecting the speaker load to the amplifier. Makes sure the selection matches the speaker's impedance to avoid damage to the amplifier. ***See Section 1.2 – Setting the Load Impedance.***

11. Input RCA line level input jack designed to accept audio signals from common audio components. ***See Section 1.4 – Input Setup.***

## 2.3 Top Features



### 12. Negative Feedback

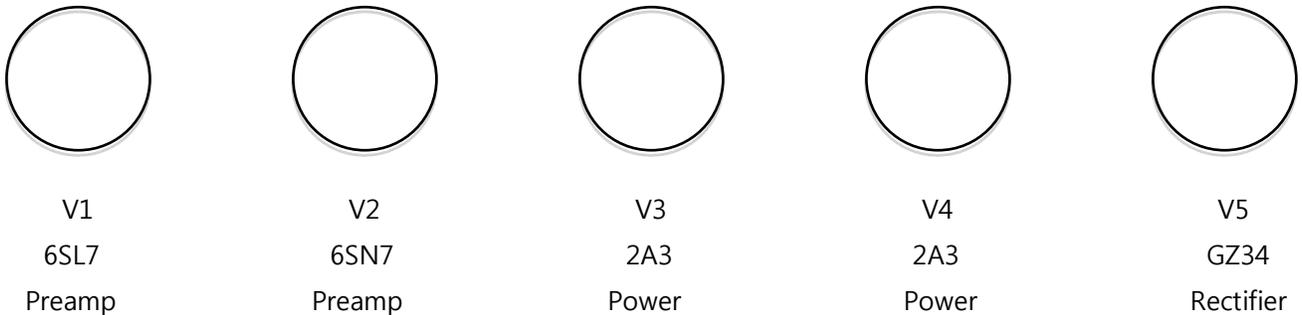
Feedback switch to select between "Open Loop" mode for feedback-free operation, or "Closed Loop" Mode for operating the amplifier with feedback. Closed Loop Mode is suggested for higher output power close to the amplifier's rated output. This will reduce distortion (THD + N) and help to maintain linearity.

Note that by closing the feedback loop, the gain of the amplifier will be reduced by 2dB. This is a side effect of all negative feedback circuits. It is recommended to bring the volume back to normal listening levels after the change of the switch position. The increased linearity and reduction of distortion is not caused by the change in volume, but instead by sampling the output and correcting for error. Increasing the volume back after moving to "Closed Loop" mode will still realize all of the benefits of a feedback topology.

13. 14. Hum Balance Screwdriver adjustable potentiometers that form the center taps for filaments on output tubes V3 and V4. Since the 2A3 tube is a directly heated triode, the center tap of the filament forms the cathode connection for signal ground. This is tuned from the factory with the output tubes provided for lowest noise. If 60-cycle hum is audible, adjust this with screwdriver. This setting will directly impact the SNR and background noise of the amplifier.

## 3.0 Technical Information

### 3.1 Installing Tubes



Position of vacuum tubes is as indicated in this top view with the front face of the amplifier toward the bottom of the page (V1-V5).

Tubes for positions V1 through V5 may be indicated on the boxes of the tubes that are shipped with the amplifier. These are selected for maximum performance, and their positions should be followed.

Tubes should always be installed and removed by handling the base of the tube, rather than the glass. Match the keyway in the tube socket with the key in the tube and install with a slight and gentle circular rocking motion until the tube is fully seated against the socket. Follow the same procedure for removal.

### 3.2 Replacing Tubes

Vacuum tubes should be replaced when a lack of power becomes apparent. Dynamics and transients may seem lazy and less crisp compared to how they sounded when new. Under extreme

cases, tubes may become noisy. A crackling or rustling sound from your speakers will indicate that an immediate tube change is necessary.

**We recommend the following tube replacement schedule:**

- Under normal bias conditions, power tubes typically last 2 years depending on hours of use and average listening volume. Speakers demanding maximum power may push the lifespan below 2 years. With very efficient speakers, which require little power for acceptable listening levels, tubes can last much longer than 2 years.
- Preamp tubes will last longer than power tubes, assuming no premature failures. We recommend changing preamp tubes every other time the power tubes are changed unless the utmost performance is demanded or they have gone bad.
- The tube rectifiers only need to be replaced when they fail. There is no need for regular change unless reliability is a concern and the amplifier has seen a lot of vibration from transportation. Moving the amps when they are on or hot can damage the rectifier and other tubes.

**Always re-bias your amplifier after changing the power tubes!**

***The bias of the amplifier should be checked immediately after replacing the 2A3 Power tubes. V3 and V4 Hum Balance adjustment potentiometers may also need adjustment and after changing tubes.***

Matching tubes between a stereo pair of amplifiers is critical for matched channel performance. Therefore, V3 on one channel should match V3 of the other channel. Likewise, V4 of one amplifier should match V4 of the other. A quad of match 2A3 tubes is recommended. However, two matched pairs can be used if they are split between channels as described above.

Preamp tubes V1 and V2 should also be tightly matched between channels. Using matched tubes ensures that the signal level is identical between amplifier channels in a stereo configuration. This is critical in the 22A3 amplifier due to the lack of negative feedback.

All tubes from Bandwidth Audio are matched in this fashion.

### 3.3 Biasing

Your amplifier has been biased from the factory. However, the bias setting should be checked on first startup and periodically thereafter to maintain performance as well as longevity of the power tubes.

**Note:** preamp tubes are automatically biased. No adjustment is needed

#### A. Checking the Bias:

To check the bias, power the amp on and let it warm up for at least 10 minutes. The bias reading for the power tubes can be made off of the two analog ammeters located on the back face of the amplifier.

#### **Bias Set Point: 50 to 60mA**

With the volume turned all the way down, the bias should be set between 50 - 60mA by the screwdriver adjustment potentiometer labeled "**Bias**" on the back of the amplifier. This range is based on sound preference as well as desired output tube life. The lower the bias, the longer the tube life with the expense of higher distortion.

If using 2 matched pairs that are split between each amplifier as discussed in **3.2**, **each meter should read +/- 5mA or Less for best performance**. A well-matched quad of tubes will measure much better than this.

## B. Bias Drift:

Under normal operation, the bias current may slowly increase or decrease as the tube characteristics change. This is normal and it is encouraged to bring the idle back to the target point whenever it is noticed to be off.

## C. Operating with Incorrect Bias:

Running the amplifier with a bias setting far below 40mA will cause no damage to your amplifier. In fact, the power tubes can last longer. However, distortion will rise steeply, causing significant distortion figures, less power, and bad sound.

Running the amplifier with a bias setting over 53mA will decrease the life of the power tubes. A bias well over 53mA will cause "red plating" or glowing of the internal metal plate structure of the tube due to excessive heat. This can be so excessive that the glass envelope of the tube melts! If red plating occurs, turn off the amplifier immediately and let it cool completely. Then turn it back on and quickly re-bias if the ammeters overshoot the 53mA bias target.

## 3.4 Typical Specifications

### Maximum Output Power

5-Watts RMS

### THD+N @ at 5-Watts 1KHz

2.75% Open Loop

2.5% Closed Loop

### Full Power Bandwidth (5-Watts)

<13Hz – 23KHz at -3dB Open Loop

<13Hz – 32KHz at -3dB Closed Loop

### THD+N at 1-Watt 1KHz

0.5% Open Loop

0.35% Closed Loop

### 1-Watt Bandwidth

<13Hz – 23KHz at -3dB Open Loop

<13Hz – 32KHz at -3dB Closed Loop

### Input Voltage for Rated Output

1.3V RMS Open Loop

1.7V RMS Closed Loop

### SNR 1-Watt into 8ohms (600-ohms source impedance, volume set to maximum)

-90dB A-Weighted Open Loop

-91dB A-Weighted Closed Loop

### SNR 5-Watts into 8ohms (600-ohms source impedance, volume set to maximum)

-95dB A-Weighted Open Loop

-96dB A-Weighted Closed Loop

**Gain**

14.5 dB Open Loop

12.5 dB Closed Loop

**Negative Feedback** (Closed Loop Only)

2 dB

**Input impedance**

100K ohms

**Speaker Taps**

4, 8, & 16 ohms

**Power Tubes**

2x 2A3

**Preamp Tubes**

1x 6SL7, 1x 6SN7

**Rectifier Tube**

GZ34

**Power Consumption**

100 Watts

**Dimensions**

20" x 13" x 9.5"

Due to the open loop design of this amplifier, actual performance will vary depending on vacuum tube quality.

## 4.0 Notes:

Date: _____	Bias Current:	V3 _____	V4 _____
Date: _____	Bias Current:	V3 _____	V4 _____
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