



# Little Chopper

## Owner's Manual

# ***Important safety instructions***

## ***WARNING: THIS APPARATUS MUST BE EARTHED!***

- A PLEASE*** read this instruction manual carefully before switching on.
- B ALWAYS*** use the supplied mains lead, if a replacement is required please contact your authorised Audio Kitchen dealer.
- C NEVER*** attempt to bypass the fuses or fit ones of the incorrect value.
- D There*** are no user serviceable parts.
- E Refer all servicing to qualified service personnel including replacement of fuses and valves.***  
*Servicing is required when the apparatus has been damaged in any way, such as when the power supply cord or plug is damaged, liquid has been spilled or objects have fallen into the apparatus, the apparatus has been exposed to rain or moisture, does not operate normally or has been dropped.*
- F NEVER*** use an amplifier in damp or wet conditions. No objects filled with liquids should be placed on the apparatus.
- G ALWAYS*** unplug this apparatus during lightning storms or if unused for long periods of time.
- H PROTECT*** the power cord from being walked on or pinched particularly at plugs, convenience receptacles and at the point where they exit from the apparatus.
- I ENSURE*** that any extension cabinets used are of the correct impedance.

***Note:*** This equipment has been tested and found to comply with the requirements of the EMC directive (Environments E1, E2 and E3 EN 55103-1/2) and the Low Voltage directive in the E.U.

***Note:*** It is recommended that all audio cables used to connect to the Little Chopper are of a high quality screened type. These should not exceed 10 Metres in length. Always use Audio Kitchen approved speaker leads with the Little Chopper and speaker cabinets.

***WARNING:*** Do not obstruct ventilation grilles and always ensure free movement of air around the amplifier!

***USA ONLY - DO NOT*** defeat the purpose of the polarised or grounding type plug. A polarised plug has two blades with one wider than the other. A grounding type plug has two blades and a third grounding prong. The wide blade or the third prong are provided for your safety. When the provided plug does not fit into your outlet, consult an electrician for replacement of the obsolete outlet.

***FOLLOW ALL INSTRUCTIONS***

***HEED ALL WARNINGS***

***KEEP THESE INSTRUCTIONS !***

## What is The Little Chopper?

The Little Chopper is the first proper amp I developed. Of course, when I say developed, the design is ever-evolving so it is still develop-ing! The catalyst was a conversation with a session-player friend, about the difficulties he experienced trying to record his favourite 30W, EL84 based amp, at home. The idea for what it might *sound like*, however, was burnt into my mind's ear almost 10 years previously.

Another good friend and I were on a month long amp demoing kick, travelling far and wide and listening to as many different amps as possible, in an effort to distil and crystallise the sound of his 'dream amp'.

And how much saving would be required to buy it.

One wet Autumn Saturday, found us in the basement of a shop in London's West End where we fired up a Matchless Lightning 1x12.

My memory of leaving the shop, trying other amps that day, and our subsequent conversations seem to be silent, as if the sound of that amp has burned away all of the rest of the soundtrack to the day. That aural image simmered in my mind during the intervening years, no doubt becoming ever more rose-tinted as time passed, and the resultant sound was the benchmark to home-in on, and for the project which would turn into The Little Chopper.

The Little Chopper is quite a few years down the road now, and that benchmark in my head continues to morph and push the boundaries of clarity and responsiveness a little bit further every time I make an improvement. Perfection is always just one more tweak away, and I'll continue to tweak, down to the minutiae for as long as I'm able, in an effort to bring you the most enjoyable and enlivening amplifier you have ever experienced.

My desire is that The Little Chopper will inspire you in the way I was inspired all those years ago.

May it continue to do so *à gogo*.

How do I use The Little Chopper?

The Little Chopper is primarily intended as a studio amp, and as such has found favour with many of the top producers, engineers and artists all over the World. That said, a few folk have played arenas, festivals and club gigs with them. 7W is actually pretty loud through an efficient speaker or two, and monitoring has improved so much over the past few years, that most of the time, the engineer would prefer that you didn't have a 100W amp shredding your trousers, as it makes his job much easier.

So connect a speaker cabinet to the output, plug your guitar into the input, turn up the Gain, and off you go!

The power switch on the back is Off in the bottom position, Standby in the middle, and On in the top position.

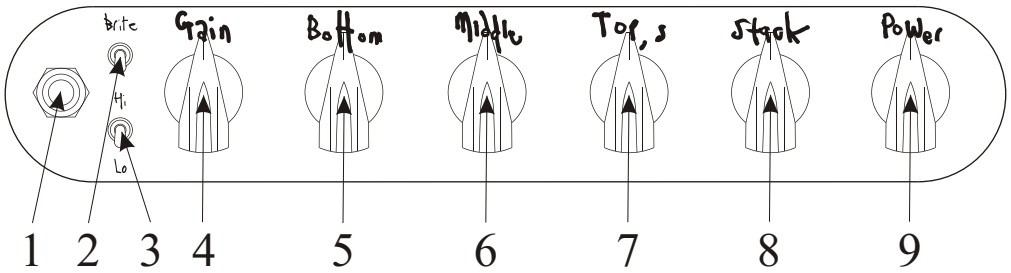
**Gain** works as you would expect; **Bottom**, **Middle**, **Tops** likewise.

**Stack** disables **Bottom** and **Middle**, and re-purposes **Tops** as a high end roll-off.

**Power** is a headroom control for the output stage: as you turn it down the *volume decreases* but you get an *increase in break-up*. **Gain** and **Power** are very interactive so play around with them together.

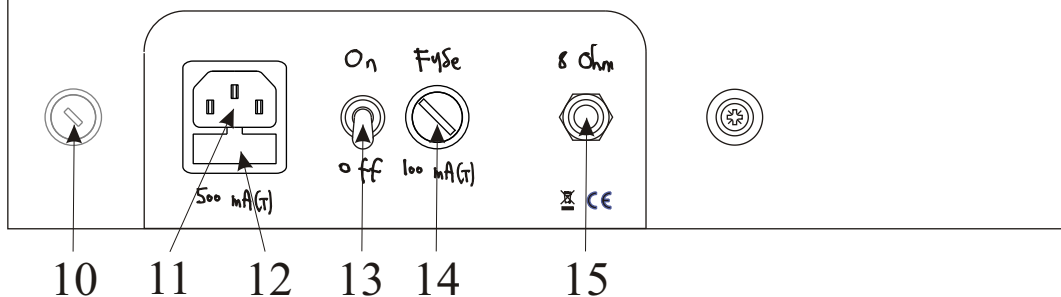
The Little Chopper sounds 'all there' as soon as you plug in, so you won't need to spend time hunting for the sweet spot. There are so many sounds available however, that I strongly recommend spending time with the amp, playing and experimenting with the controls to familiarise yourself with the possibilities:

I can assure you this will NOT feel like a chore.



## Controls

1. The **In** jack is where you plug your musical instrument in. Yes, really.
2. The **Brite** switch boosts high frequencies in your tone. Because of the way this is implemented, the effect reduces the higher up you sweep the Gain control.
3. The **Hi/Lo** switch replaces the traditional Hi and Lo jacks on the front panel. The idea was to remedy the loss of top end which always seems to occur when you plug into the Lo jack. Many people accept that, but it has always frustrated me.
4. **Gain** controls the level of preamp signal presented to the power amp (EL84).
5. **Bottom** controls the level of bass frequencies present in your tone.
6. **Middle** controls the level of middle frequencies present in your tone.
7. **Tops** controls the level of high frequencies present in your tone.
8. **Stack** is a two position switch. Pointing at 12 o'clock the tone stack (Bottom, Middle and Tops) functions as normal, but when the switch is moved to 1 o'clock, Bottom and Middle controls are disabled and Tops is repurposed as a top end roll off. Because of the frequency response of the B,M,T tone stack, once Stack is at 1 o'clock a perceived mid-boost occurs along with a large increase in gain. If you want the frequency response change *without* the extra gain, just flip the Hi/Lo switch to Lo and that will compensate.
9. The **Power** control is a little more complicated. Turning the Power control **anti-clockwise** simultaneously *decreases the output level and the headroom of the power amp*, so it gets **quieter but more broken up**. Using this control in tandem with the Gain control you are able to achieve a given level of break-up at many different volume levels.



10. The **Voltage Selector** must be set to the correct position for your local mains voltage.  
Your amp should be completely powered down before the selector is turned. Adjustment from 240V to 120V or vice versa will require the mains fuse to be changed to the corresponding value as detailed on the rear panel.
11. **Mains Input** - Your amp is provided with a detachable mains (power) lead which is connected here. Before connecting for the first time, please ensure that The Little Chopper is compatible with your electricity supply. If you have any doubt, please get advice from your Audio Kitchen dealer.
12. **Mains Fuse** - The correct value of mains fuse is specified on the rear panel of the amplifier. Please refer to Important Safety Instructions, Page 2.
13. The **Power Switch** is the On/ Standby/ Off switch for the power to the amplifier, middle position being standby.  
Please use the Standby position to allow the Little Chopper to warm up its valves for a couple of minutes when you turn the amp on, and likewise, to cool when you are switching it off. Also, to extend the life of the rectifier valve and the EL84, flip the amp to Standby if the Little Chopper will be left un-played for over 10 minutes.
14. The **HT Fuse** is there to provide protection in the event of a shorted valve or any other problem which compromises the high voltage or **High Tension** side of the power supply.  
Specification for this fuse is written below the fuse holder.
15. The **Speaker Output** jack is for connecting to an external load, i.e. speaker cabinet.  
As you will see, it is labeled '8 Ohm' which is its ideal load, but you can try a 4 Ohm or 16 Ohm cabinet without upsetting it too much.  
***NEVER attempt to use the amplifier without a speaker attached!***

# Recall Sheet

Write

Hi

Lo

Gain

Bottom

Middle

Top, s

Stack

Power

Write

Hi

Lo

Gain

Bottom

Middle

Top, s

Stack

Power

Write

Hi

Lo

Gain

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Middle

Top, s

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Power



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