

MEZZABARBA

CUSTOM AMPLIFICATION



SKILL HEAD

USER MANUAL

IMPORTANT:

PLEASE READ SAFETY INFO ON PAGE 9 BEFORE TURNING ON THE AMP

Index

Introduction.....	3
Front panel.....	3
Rear panel.....	3
Turning on your SKILL.....	4
Channel selection.....	4
Basic sounds.....	6
Usage and periodical maintenance.....	6
Replacing tubes and adjusting bias.....	7
Troubleshooting.....	7
Fuses.....	8
Warranty.....	8
Important safety information	9
Technical specifications.....	9
Contacts.....	10

Introduction

Your SKILL is a 30W amp (nominal 30W, 40W Max) which is unique in its class. In fact, despite of its contained weight and size, it is able to deliver an incredible variety of sounds that range from Clean, to Crunch, to Lead, all of which pack an incredible punch and clarity.

The signal is processed through 5 12AX7 tubes in the preamp and phase splitter sections and 2 in the power amp section.

The channels are selected through a very simple switching system and through sealed relays with gold-plated contacts. This allows the signal to maintain the utmost pureness and dynamic. Furthermore, our microprocessor-controlled, click-less commuting system allows for seamless switching of effect loops, without altering the quality of the sound.

Channel switching and effect loops commuting are achieved through the SKILL Control pedal board

Front panel



From left to right:

- a) Guitar input jack
- b) Preamp section with **Boost** and **Brite** switches and **Drive** and **Overdrive** pots
- c) **Equalizer** section: **Bass**, **Middle** and **Treble**
- d) **Volume** pots for the two channels
- e) **Power amp** section with **Depth**, **Presence** and **Power** pots
- f) **Stand-by** switch
- g) Power indicator

Green led lights indicate that the **Drive** channel is active whereas red led lights indicate that the Overdrive channel is in use.

Rear panel



From left to right:

- a) IEC plug
- b) Mains fuse
- c) Master power switch
- d) HV fuse
- e) **Footswitch** input for connecting an external pedal board and controlling the amp
- f) Effects Loop with **Send**, **Return**, and manual **Switch**
- g) Speaker output jacks (2 X 4 Ohm, 2 X 8 Ohm, 16 Ohm).

Speaker Outputs

Two, **4 ohm outputs**, two, **8 ohm outputs**, one, **16 ohm output**. You can connect one or two speakers at the same time as long as the total impedance is equal to that indicated on the connectors.

For example, you can connect only one, 4 ohm speaker to one of the two connectors marked as "4 Ohm (2X8 Ohm)"; or two, 8 ohm speakers to the two connectors marked as "4 Ohm (2X8 Ohm)". In the same way, you can connect only one, 8 ohm speaker to one of the two connectors marked as "8 Ohm (2X16 Ohm)"; or two, 16 ohm speakers to the two connectors marked as "8 Ohm (2X16 Ohm)".

Finally, you can only connect one, 16 ohm speaker to the connector marked as "16 Ohm".

Whenever connecting only one speaker, the maximum input power must be equal to or greater than 50W Rms. Whenever connecting two speakers, the maximum input power of each speaker must be equal to or greater than 25W Rms.

IMPORTANT: Do not connect two speakers to inputs with different impedance values (e.g. one to the 4 ohm input and the other one to the 8 ohm input)

Switching on your SKILL

IMPORTANT: Before switching on your SKILL, make sure the power cable is intact and has a ground connection, the electrical system you are plugging into is properly grounded, and the impedance of the speaker is equal to that of the output jack to which it is connected.

- a) Before connecting the power cable to your SKILL, make sure the power switch is on the OFF position and that the Standby switch is on STANDBY.
- b) Rotate all of the pots in the Preamp section to zero (counterclockwise) and those in the Power Amp section to about 50%.
- c) Plug in your guitar.
- d) Switch on the amp keeping it on STANDBY mode;
- e) After about 2 minutes, move the Standby switch to ACTIVE.

You are now ready to start experimenting the SKILL's amazing potential.

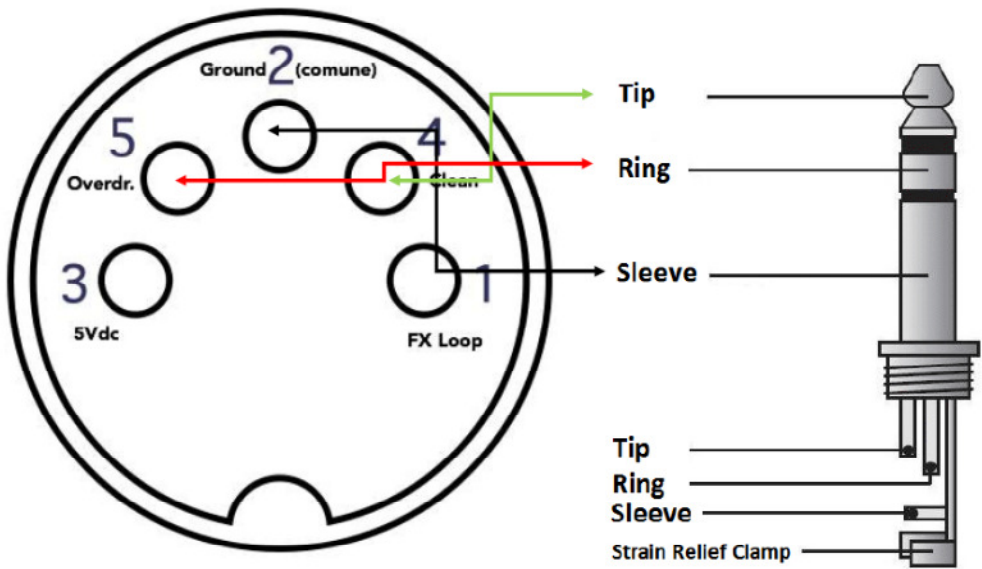
When switching off the amp, turn the Standby switch to STANDBY, wait 15-20 seconds, and turn the main power switch to OFF.

Selecting the channel

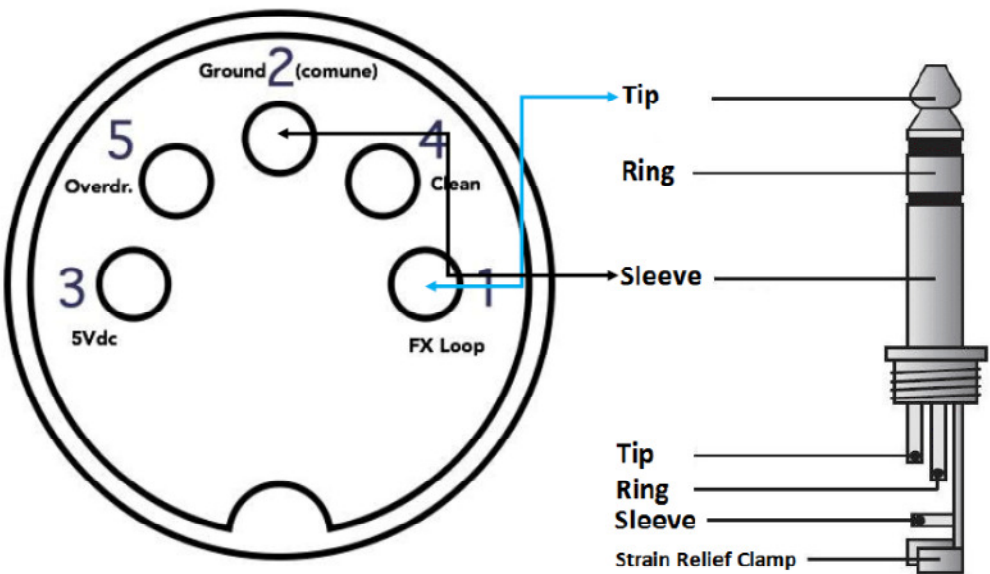
In order to activate the SKILL's Drive and Overdrive channels and activate the effects loop, you need to use the SKILL Control pedal.

If you use an external switcher see the diagram below. You can use Momentary or Latching switches.

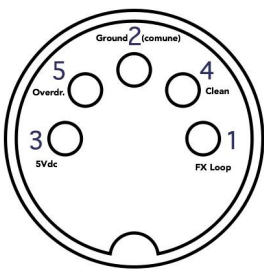
CHANNEL Selection



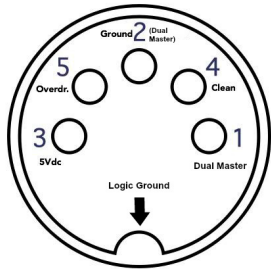
FX LOOP Selection



Skill Standard



Skill with Dual Master



Basic sounds

The SKILL was conceived to deliver the widest possible array of sounds. Ever. This was achieved through an original, innovative engineering of the Equalizer section.

Equipped with EL34, the SKILL is inspired by British sound, which it reinterprets in a bolder, aggressive, yet elegant fashion. Dedicated to all of you who love vintage sounds combined with a modern amp.

Drive channel: Ideal for clean to medium-saturated, rock rhythm sounds. Thanks to the SKILL's incredible dynamic response, you will be able to obtain an immense variety of overtones just by controlling your guitar volume, with no sound degradation whatsoever. Switching on the Boost will add a just enough gain to achieve a more aggressive sound, both for lead as well as rhythm guitar. **Tip: try setting a clean sound just below the break-up threshold, with the Boost on, and low Drive.**

Overdrive channel: Ideal for heavy rhythm and lead guitar. You will be amazed by the unusual richness of the harmonics and the fat, spacious, sound your SKILL's Overdrive channel is able to deliver. Incredibly reactive to your picking, it will yield a heavy yet "liquid" sound with a bunch of sustain. All of this, with no compromise whatsoever on clarity, definition, and musicality.

Aside for the preamp controls, the front panel also features the **Depth, Presence and Power pots, all of which are** common to both channels. The Depth parameter controls the speed of response and the richness of the bass frequencies. The Presence parameter allows you to open and add "freshness" to the mid-high frequencies. Finally, the Power control is a proprietary gem that we are particularly proud of. The Power pot scale runs from a maximum value of 0 to a minimum of -10. When you don't have any particular volume constraints (e.g. neighbors, late hours, etc.) you can keep the pot at 0 (i.e. maximum level) thereby utilizing the amp at its full power. Should you however be forced to play your amp at lower volumes, by reducing the amount of Power, you will be able to "scale down" the SKILL's power amp. The result? You will be able to achieve the warmth, countour, and kick of a high-volume saturated amp even when playing at low volumes!

Usage and periodical maintenance

Your SKILL does not require any more precautions and maintenance than any other tube amp. Make sure you do not obstruct the air cooling grids located on the top, front, and back of the amp, in order to allow for optimal cooling.

When turning on the amp, it is of crucial importance to wait for at least 2 minutes before deactivating the Standby switch in order to allow the power tubes to reach their ideal temperature.

The external chassis can be cleaned with a clean, damp cloth. The paint is resistant to normal cleaning products but not to aggressive solvents (benzene, acetone, etc.) which should therefore be avoided.

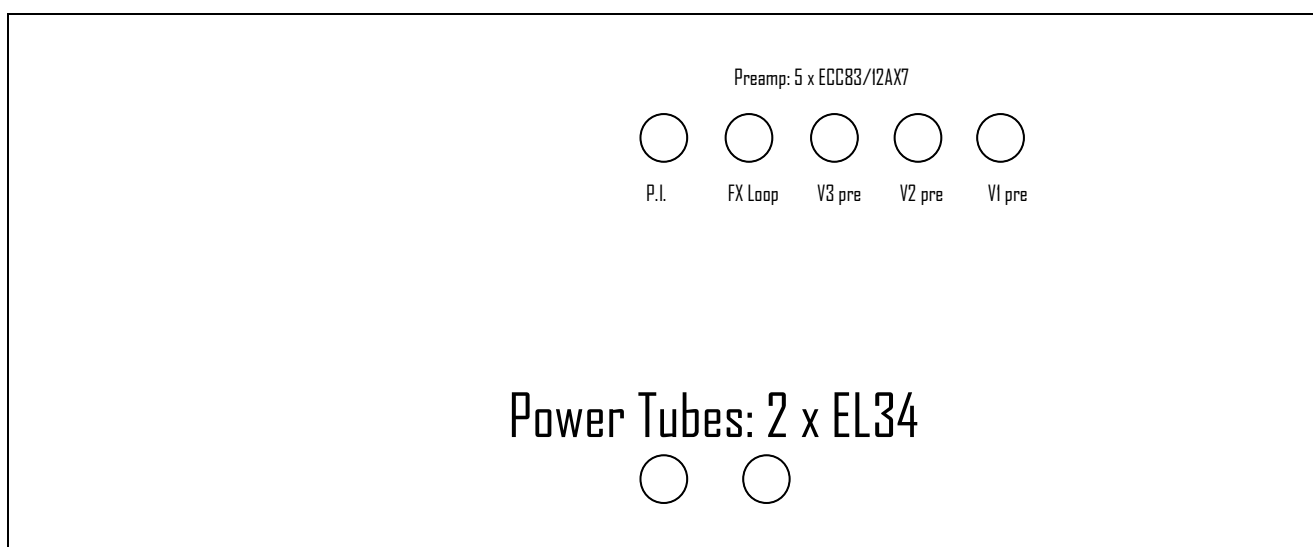
If you are using your SKILL mostly in a studio setting, you will simply need to periodically replace the tubes, especially the power ones, just as you would in any other tube amp. If on the other hand, you use your SKILL mostly on the road, it is advisable to periodically (once a month when using intensively on a daily basis) check that all of the internal components are properly connected and functioning. Given the heavy-duty build quality of your M ZERO, this might be necessary as little as once a year, and in any case only if you use the amp on the road every day.

Warning: the afore-mentioned checks must be carried out solely by qualified MGD (Masotti Guitar Devices) personnel and/or authorized technicians. Before scheduling any such check, please contact MGD for full advise.

Replacing tubes and adjusting bias

All of the factory-supplied tubes in your SKILL are accurately handpicked. The five ECC83/12AX7 have a life expectancy of many months and their replacement requires no additional adjustments. You can experience various sound possibilities simply by trying 12AX7 tubes of different makes.

The layout of the tubes is represented in the following diagram:



The life expectancy of the two EL34 power tubes depends on the average volume the amp works at, and can range from about 6 to 24 months. It is crucially important to replace them all at the same time, with high quality brand tubes. You will most likely need to adjust the bias with the internal trimmer.

In-tube short-circuits due to faulty tubes can lead to blowing up one or more internal fuses, which must be replaced solely by qualified personnel.

Once again, please feel free to experience various makes of tubes for the preamp and power sections, in order to customize your sound. We are happy to offer our advise upon request.

Warning: replacement of tubes and internal fuses, adjustment of the bias and any other operation inside the M ZERO must be carried out by qualified MGD (Masotti Guitar Devices) personnel and/or authorized technicians, while the amp is powered off and has been completely disconnected from a power source for at least 30 minutes!

Troubleshooting

Here below are some of the problems that you might experience when operating your SKILL. Some of them are trivial whereas other ones might require the intervention of **qualified MGD (Masotti Guitar Devices) personnel and/or authorized technicians**. Please do not hesitate to contact us when in doubt, we are at your complete disposal for any help you may require.

- ✓ **SKILL is not turning on.** Check whether there is power running to your socket. Check the power cable. Check the fuse on the rear of the unit and replace it with an identical one. If the problem persists, contact MGD.
- ✓ **The LED lights are on but no sound is coming from your amp.** Check that all of the jacks are plugged in correctly. Check the Drive, tones, Volume, and Master pots are not on zero. If the tones of the active channel are set to zero, no sound will come out of the amp. Check that the effect loops switch on the back is not activated.
- ✓ **You hear a scratchy noise while turning one or more pots.** Do not attempt to clean with spray products! Please contact MGD and we will be happy to replace the faulty pot(s)
- ✓ **Sound quality has deteriorated; the amp tends to feedback or makes strange noises.** One or more tubes need replacement. Please contact MGD for advise and service in order to continue getting the best out of your SKILL.

Fuses

Your SKILL is equipped with 5 fuses:

- 1) Internal heaters fuse (power tubes): 250V 5A-T delayed;
- 2) Internal heaters fuse (preamp tubes and logic): 250V 2,5A-T delayed;
- 3) Internal bias fuse: 250V 100mA-T delayed;
- 4) External, High-Voltage fuse. 250V 500mA-T delayed;
- 5) MAINS FUSE: External Mains fuse: 250V 2A-T delayed.

The external Mains fuse can fault also following a series of power outages and must therefore be replaced by qualified personnel with an identical one.

Warning: replace the external fuse with one with identical characteristics! Internal fuses must be checked and replaced only by MGD personnel or authorized technicians.

Warranty

Limited Lifetime Warranty: New Mezzabarba Amplifiers are lifetime warranted to the original purchaser against failure of parts/materials and workmanship if purchased through an authorized dealer. No other warranty applies.

Tubes, transformers and speakers are warranted for a period of ninety days. Pots, connectors and switches are warranted for a period of two years. This warranty applies only if the amplifier has not been damaged by accident, misuse or as a result of repair or modification. The use of non-authorized Mezzabarba tubes and replacement parts may void this warranty. Mezzabarba reserves the right to make any design changes without notice or obligation to incorporate these changes in products previously purchased. Masotti is not liable for any freight or duty charges.

Return Authorization is required for all products returned to Mezzabarba Custom Amplification. In most cases we will be able to supply the technical information needed to repair the amplifier thus avoiding the shipping issues and costs. All shipping costs to/from Mezzabarba shall be borne by the owner, after 90 days from purchase. Mezzabarba will be responsible for the factory-to-customer return shipping cost to the original owner only for the first 90 days of ownership. Authorized Returns should be shipped in the original Mezzabarba box and the original packaging. A return packing/handling charge may be applied to any product shipped to Mezzabarba in sub-standard or damaged shipping box and materials. This is to make sure your amplifier is packaged safely in a new box and to recover our costs for

doing so. Since the courier doesn't honor damage claims for non-original packaging, Mezzabarba is not responsible for any factory-to-customer return shipping damage to products shipped in non-original box and packing materials. A copy of the final Sales Receipt from an Authorized Mezzabarba Dealer is required with this Warranty Registration.

WARNING: it is not possible to replace the default power tube type with another one. Please ask us for any advise in this sense.

Important safety information

Your SKILL was engineered and built according to the strictest electrical safety standards as per international norm, EU IEC-62368 and according to the electromagnetic compatibility requirements specified by international norms EN 55032. It thus fully complies to EU standards and therefore carries the CE marking on the rear panel.

Our amps utilize as much as possible eco-compatible materials. Do not however dispose of any parts of the amp in the environment and please use special containers as per EU regulations.



To reduce the risk of electric shock or wounds, please follow the instructions on this manual very carefully, with particular reference to the following ones:

- Do not open the chassis for any reason. Removing the rear grid or removing the metal chassis from the wooden frame will expose you to live circuitry that is powered by potentially hazardous electric tension. Should you need to replace the tubes or the internal fuses, please contact either MGD or an authorized technician.
- Do not remove any screws from the amp.
- Do not expose the amp to rain or moisture, steam, metal particles and anything that may penetrate inside the amp through the air cooling grids.
- Do not obstruct the air cooling grids. Always make sure that the top and rear parts of the amp are not obstructed.
- Do not introduce any foreign objects (metallic or insulating) in the air cooling grids.
- Do not use the amp without the protective metal grid on the rear.
- Do not insert objects other than the standard jacks inside the amp's input and output jacks.
- Do not expose the amp to excessive heat.
- Do subject the amp to excessive vibrations or shock, especially when it is powered on.
- When setting up the amp in a room temperature environment following storage and/or transportation at very low temperatures one, dew might form on the outside and/or inside of the amp. Make sure that the amp stays at room temperature for about 10 minutes before turning it on in order for the dew to evaporate.
- Always use standard power cables making sure they are intact. Do not remove or interfere with the ground connection of the plug or socket.
- Always check that the mains power complies to the specs written on the rear panel of the amp.
- Disconnect the device from mains during thunderstorms. □
- Should the HV fuse fail in absence of exceptional external events such as violent power surges, severe thunderstorms, etc., the cause might be one or more faulty power tubes. Do not attempt their replacement on your own. Contact MGD or an authorized technician.
- Do not force pots and switches.

Technical specifications

Power supply: 230V \pm 10% 50Hz

Power consumption: 150VA

Input impedance: 1M Ω .

Max Output Power: 42W

Output impedance: 4-8-16 ohm

Tubes: 5 x ECC83/12AX7, 2 x E34L/EL34

Environmental operating parameters: 10-40°C, 30-90% humidity without condensation

Dimensions: 440(L)X240(D)X210(H) mm;

Weight: 11.5 kg

Contacts

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