



# KARA Balanced Discrete Differential Solid State Preamplifier Owner's Manual

[Home](#) » [KARA](#) » KARA Balanced Discrete Differential Solid State Preamplifier Owner's Manual 

# KARA

BALANCED, DISCRETE DIFFERENTIAL  
SOLID STATE PREAMPLIFIER



## Contents

- 1 INTRODUCTION
- 2 CONNECTIONS
- 3 OPERATION
- 4 REMOTE
- 5 FAQ
- 6 IN THE BOX
- 7 WARRANTY
- 8 Documents / Resources
  - 8.1 References

## INTRODUCTION

Tubes, schmubes. Sometimes all you need is a great solid state preamp. And Kara is a super-amazing, over-the-top fully discrete, fully balanced differential solid state design, running on 64V rails (meaning it can swing over 100V differentially at the output—a completely bonkers feat for a preamp), while delivering top-of-class THD+N performance... and while also sounding fantastic!



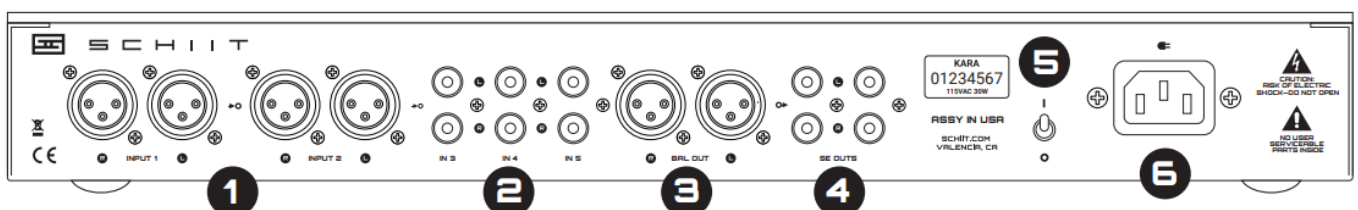
The following is required by the roughly 9,542 government agencies and regulations we have to comply with. If you have some common sense, they should seem pretty straightforward. In any case, read these instructions before proceeding farther, follow all instructions, and heed all warnings. Or else!

1. If you don't know how to install audio devices, get a qualified professional to help.
2. Never use this device near water, and clean only with a dry cloth.
3. Assure adequate ventilation, do not block any ventilation openings, or place near heat sources.
4. Use only the supplied power cord or suitable replacement. Route cords away from traffic areas and protect them from being pinched. Unplug the cord from the outlet if the apparatus is unused for a long period of time.
5. To prevent electric shock, do not use the plug with an extension cord, receptacle, or outlet unless blades can be fully inserted.
6. Refer all servicing to qualified service personnel. Service is required when the device has been damaged, including cord or plug damage, liquid has been spilled or objects have fallen into the device, the device has been exposed to rain or moisture, does not operate normally, or has been dropped.



**WARNING:** TO REDUCE THE RISK OF FIRE OR ELECTRIC SHOCK, DO NOT EXPOSE THIS DEVICE TO RAIN OR MOISTURE.

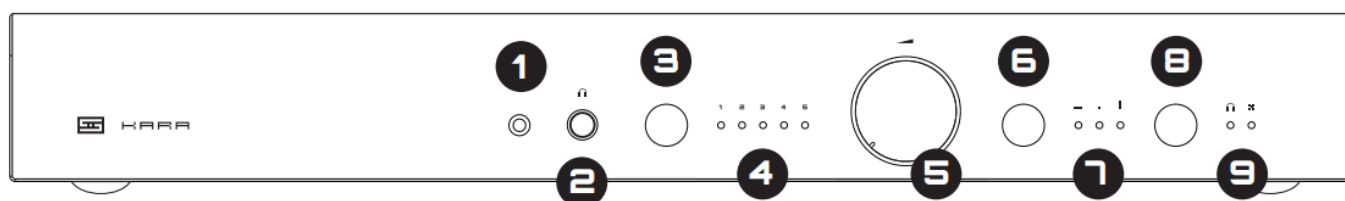
## CONNECTIONS



1. Balanced inputs. We've provided two pairs of balanced inputs. Connect to any components with balanced

- outputs using XLR cables. There won't be any conversion to SE inside or any other funny business going on.
2. Single-ended inputs. Connect any SE source with RCA cables. They'll automagically be converted to balanced with the wonders of Nexus™.
  3. Balanced outputs. Connect to your amps with balanced inputs using XLR cables—or add a Loki Max afterwards if you're feeling froggy.
  4. Single-ended outputs. Connect to your amps with single-ended inputs using RCA cables.
  5. Power switch. Up is on, down is off. Sound only comes out when it's on.
  6. AC input. Connect the supplied AC cord here, or you won't get any sound even if the power switch is on. You can even use a fancy power cord if you like; not that it'll make any difference.

## OPERATION



1. Remote window. Don't block this window if you want Kara's remote to work correctly.
2. Headphone output. Yes! Kara has a headphone output. This is a real-deal, fully discrete, same-as-the-SE-stage as Kara, 64V rail headphone output, so feel free to treat your headphones. Preamp outputs are muted when headphones are inserted, and the Headphone LED (9) turns on.

**Note:** Kara's headphone jack is fully protected against all faults. It will mute on first plug-in, and mute again when unplugging headphones.

3. Input select. Push this button to step through the inputs, 1-5. The first two are balanced, the last 3 are single-ended.
4. Input. Your selected input is indicated by the LED to the right of this control.
5. Volume. Turn up for more, down for less. Simple, right? Same as you've been using for years, at least before the crazy carmakers started putting everything on screens. Buttheads.
6. Mode select. Push to step through output modes. Kara offers pure passive operation, as well as low and high Nexus™ gain.
7. Mode. The LED corresponds to your mode.

From left to right:

- Passive
- Low Gain
- High Gain

Passive runs only the resistor ladder and bypasses the gain stage.

**Note:** Passive mode can't convert between SE and balanced. The other modes can.

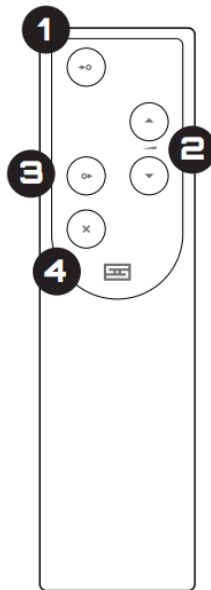
8. Mute/HP Override. Press to mute all outputs. Press and hold for 2 seconds to force the preamp outputs on when a headphone is plugged in.
9. Muting and Headphone Indicators. These LEDs indicate conditions in which the output is muted, as follows:

- 🎧 Headphone connected
- ⋮ Preamp muted

## REMOTE

Yes, Kara comes with a remote control. Unlike earlier Freyas, this is now a fancy milled aluminum model. It's still inexpensive to replace in case you lose it or want another one, however.

1. Input. Press this button to select the input you want to listen to. If you skip the input, keep pressing—it cycles back around.
2. Volume Up/Down. Press the up arrow to turn volume up, press the down arrow to turn it down. Simple as that.
3. Output. Press to change between passive, low gain, and high gain mode.
4. Mute. Press to mute the preamp.



## Changing the Battery

1. Flip the remote over to reveal a single hole on the back.
2. Push the remote open by inserting the end of an open paper clip into the hole in the back and pushing firmly. It's held together with magnets.
3. Replace the battery inside with one of the same type.
4. Reassemble the remote by first inserting the clear LED in the front, then dropping the panel down onto the matching magnets. Press down gently to pop the panel in place.

## FAQ

I hear hum, what do I do?

You may have a ground loop. Try a ground loop isolator or a device like the EbTech HumX to eliminate the ground loop.

I hear small pops when I change modes.

This is normal with DC-coupled preamps like Kara. Minor changes in DC level may make small pops.

There's no sound after I turn Kara on.

Kara delays the output for 40 seconds after you first turn the preamp on for self-checks, during which time the Mute LED flashes.

No I mean there's still no sound.

Do you have headphones plugged in? That will mute the output.

What if I want headphone and preamp output at the same time?

Press and hold the Mute/HP Override button to enable simultaneous output. Be careful—don't forget you have headphones connected when you crank it up!

What's with the clicking noises when I turn the volume?

That's the sound of the mechanical relays in the relay-switched stepped attenuator. Totally normal.

Does Kara convert from SE to balanced?

If you are using the Low or High gain settings, yes. You can also run balanced inputs and get SE outputs in both gain modes.

Can I use both balanced and SE outputs at the same time?

Most of the time, yes. If you have products that short the input when turned off, then that can cause distortion.

I have the volume all the way down and still hear faint music.

Yes, that is normal with a relay attenuator. If it's bothersome, hit the Mute button to completely mute the preamp.

It doesn't turn on, what do I do?

Plug it in to a different AC socket. Ensure you are not currently in a blackout. Then email us if it still doesn't work.

## **IN THE BOX**

- (1) Kara
- (1) Power Cord
- (0) Op-amp gain stages
- (0) Tubes
- (0) Switching supplies

(Various) Stickers and stuff

(Infinite) Appreciation from the whole Schiit crew in Valencia, CA and Corpus Christi, TX

(Even more) Thanks from our chassis and PCB guys in California, Nevada, and Utah.



This product is in compliance with standards and regulations of the European Community.

## WARRANTY

Schiit Audio warrants to the original purchaser that this product shall be free from defects in material and workmanship for five (5) years from the date of purchase. If a defect covered by this warranty occurs during this period, Schiit Audio will repair the defective product, free of charge. Date of purchase will be based on customer receipts, otherwise date of manufacturing will be used.

If you believe you need warranty service, contact us first.

Schiit Audio products sent back to us without a Return Authorization (RA) will be returned to the sender without repair.

To contact us and obtain an RA, email [info@schitt.com](mailto:info@schitt.com).


**Warranty Limitations.** This warranty shall not apply if a product: (a) is modified or tampered with; (b) is damaged by negligence, accident, unreasonable use, or other causes unrelated to defective materials or workmanship, or (c) has had the serial number altered or removed.

Any implied warranties, including warranties of merchant- ability and fitness for a particular purpose, are hereby limited in duration to the warranty period of 5 years. In no event shall Schiit Audio be liable for consequential or incidental damages resulting from the breach of any implied or expressed warranties. Some states do not allow these limitations, so they may not apply to you. You may also have other rights which vary from state to state or province to province.



[SCHITT.COM](http://SCHITT.COM)  
[INFO@SCHITT.COM](mailto:INFO@SCHITT.COM)

## Documents / Resources

	<a href="#">KARA Balanced Discrete Differential Solid State Preamplifier</a> [pdf] Owner's Manual Balanced Discrete Differential Solid State Preamplifier, Discrete Differential Solid State Preamplifier, Differential Solid State Preamplifier, Solid State Preamplifier, State Preamplifier, Preamplifier
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## References

-  [Schiit Audio: Audio Products Designed and Built in Texas and California](#)