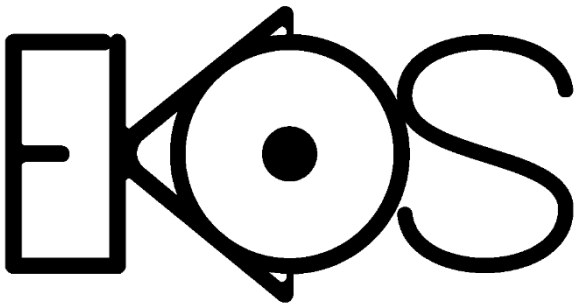


LISTEN TO BELIEVE

# THE DRIVER

## User Manual

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## Manufacturing and Assembly

In our laboratories and production facilities in Italy, full control is maintained over every aspect of development and production. Every Ekos model is diligently followed from the initial concept to the first prototype, through to final quality control.

The printed circuit boards are assembled individually, in accordance with rigorous quality-control standards and after inspection of the components. The chassis parts are produced by specialists chosen exclusively for their exceptional machining quality and are then assembled by hand. Every aspect of each Ekos product is checked and reviewed several times, both electronically and mechanically, applying the same standards of excellence to every unit.

Every unit is tested individually and, after a 48-hour burn-in sequence, is again subjected to electrical and audio performance tests.

## Placement

The Ekos unit must not be positioned near or above heat sources. Do not place objects on top of the unit that could obstruct the ventilation holes. Placement in enclosed spaces, such as cabinets or shelves, is permitted only where adequate ventilation is available. Failure to observe these guidelines may cause the unit to overheat, with possible consequent malfunctions.

## AC Power

Ekos products are made specifically for the AC voltage of the country of distribution. If the voltage is changed, the warranty is void and the unit may be unsafe. Correct AC polarity contributes significantly to achieving optimal sonic performance. If a reversible three-pin power plug is not used, please check the electrical phasing to ensure correct power supply to the unit.

## Cable Selection

Since the Ekos unit is a High-End audio device, it immediately reveals the characteristics and any limitations of the other components in the system, as well as of the interconnect and power cables used. Cabling should never be used as an “equaliser” to compensate for issues elsewhere in the audio chain. On the contrary, any error should be corrected at its source, so that the choice of cables can be based exclusively on the criterion of sonic neutrality.

## Care and Maintenance

Ekos preamplifiers are made entirely of anodised aluminium. The chassis can be cleaned using a soft cloth, moistened with water if necessary. The use of cleaning products that could stain the surfaces is not recommended. The unit must be cleaned only with the power cable disconnected.

## Performance

Ekos preamplifiers are tested and subjected to a power-on cycle before delivery. Sound quality stabilises gradually over the course of 40-50 hours of use. After this period, we nevertheless recommend switching the amplifier on approximately 30 minutes before use, so that it reaches ideal operating conditions.

## Rear Panel and Connections

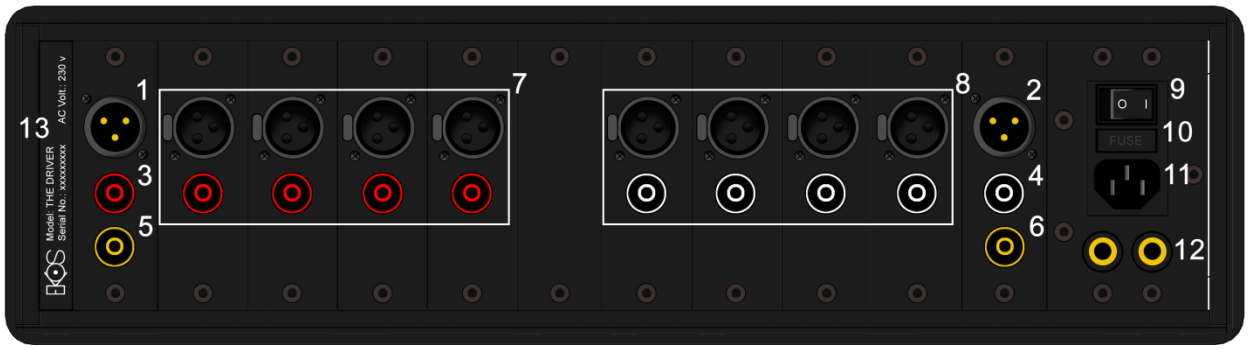



Figure 1. Rear panel

**1. XLR Right Output:** Balanced output for the right channel.
**2. XLR Left Output:** Balanced output for the left channel.
**3. RCA Right Output:** RCA output for the right channel.

**4. RCA Left Output:** RCA output for the left channel.

**5. Tape Right Output:** Fixed output for recording, right channel.
**6. Tape Left Output:** Fixed output for recording, left channel.

**7. XLR/RCA Right Inputs:** Analog inputs (balanced and unbalanced) for the right channel.
**8. XLR/RCA Left Inputs:** Analog inputs (balanced and unbalanced) for the left channel.
**9. Main Switch:** Main switch for switching the unit on and off (ON/OFF).

**10. Fuse:** Mains protection. Use a 1 A fuse for 220 V power or a 2 A fuse for 110 V power.

**11. Power Input:** IEC socket for connecting the mains cable.
**12. 12V Trigger Outputs:** Connections for synchronised power-on of other compatible devices.
**13. Unit Information:** Identification plate containing the serial number and production specifications.

**CONNECTION SEQUENCE**

- Connect the various devices to the XLR or RCA inputs, observing the correct channel assignment: **Right (7 - Red)** and **Left (8 - White)**.
- Connect the power amplifier (or amplifiers) to the balanced XLR outputs (1 and 2) or to the RCA outputs (3 and 4). The unit also has a Tape Out output (5 and 6) for any recording devices.

- If provided for by the system, connect the Trigger input (12) for power-on synchronisation.
- Only after all signal connections have been made, insert the power cable into the socket (11) and set the main switch (9) to on (I).



SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS
WARNING: HAZARDOUS AC CURRENT
Always disconnect the power cable before carrying out any connection, maintenance or relocation of the unit.




Figure 2. The Driver in standby

**ON / STANDBY**

Setting the main switch on the rear to position I (On) puts the Ekos preamplifier into standby mode. This state is confirmed by the LED ring around the volume control, which lights up red at the bottom (Fig. 2).

**POWER-ON PROCEDURE**

For correct system start-up, the following sequence is recommended:

1. **Switch on the sources:** turntable, CD player, streamer, etc.
2. **Switch on the Ekos preamplifier:** press the front volume control. The unit will run its start-up procedure and enter operating mode with the LED ring lit blue (Fig. 3).
3. **Stabilisation:** wait a few seconds for the system components to reach stability.
4. **Switch on the power amplifier:** this operation must always be the last in the sequence.




Figure 3. The Driver powered on

**POWER-OFF PROCEDURE**

To preserve the integrity of the components and loudspeakers, strictly follow the reverse order of power-on:

1. Switch off the power amplifier.
2. Switch off the Ekos preamplifier.
3. Switch off the remaining sources.

**IMPORTANT: ALWAYS SWITCH OFF THE AMPLIFIER BEFORE CONNECTING OR DISCONNECTING ANY CABLE FROM THE AUDIO SYSTEM**

## Touch Screen – Home Screen




**Input Indicator (1):** Displays the currently selected input. The input value ranges from 1 to 8 and can be changed using the remote control.
**Volume Indicator (2):** Displays the current volume level. The volume value is adjustable on a scale from 00.0 to 100.0 and can be changed both by turning the front volume control and using the remote control.
**Phase Inversion (3):** Touch button for phase inversion.
**Mute Control (4):** Touch button to instantly mute the output.
**Gain Control (5):** Touch slider to adjust the gain for the selected input (from 0 to +6 dB).
**Balance Control (6):** Touch slider for adjusting the overall balance between channels.
**General Settings (7):** Touch button to access the configuration menu (Clock and system settings).
**Clock Settings (8):** Selecting the clock icon opens the time and date adjustment screen.




Using the **Phase Inversion (3)** touch button, the electrical phase of the signal can be inverted. The change of state is indicated by the following visual indicators:
- Appearance of the word REV on the display.
- Colour change (from White to Magenta) of the selected input value (1).
- Colour change (from Blue to Magenta) of the LED ring around the volume control.

The phase inversion setting is independent for each individual input and is stored automatically by the unit. The function can be cancelled at any time by pressing the touch button (3) on the display again or using the dedicated command on the remote control.




Using the **Mute (4)** touch button, the unit's output can be muted. Activation of this mode is indicated by the following visual indicators:
- Colour change (from White to Yellow) of the volume value (2) on the display.
- Colour change (from Blue to Yellow) of the LED ring around the volume control.

Mute mode is global (it affects all inputs) and can be cancelled by pressing the touch button (4) again, turning the volume control or using the dedicated command on the remote control.

The touch slider for **gain adjustment (Gain) (5)** allows the gain to be adjusted specifically for the selected input. The default value is +0.0 dB and can be increased up to +6.0 dB in 0.5 dB increments. This function is useful for levelling the volume between different sources (e.g. matching the volume of a DAC to that of a Phono stage).

The touch slider for **Balance (Bal) adjustment (6)** allows the overall balance of the channels to be adjusted. The default value is +0.0 dB (centred). The sound output can be shifted to the left (up to +6.0 dB L) or to the right (up to +6.0 dB R) in 0.5 dB increments.

Selecting the touch button with the gear icon opens the general settings menu (7). On this screen you can customise the behaviour of the display and the system.



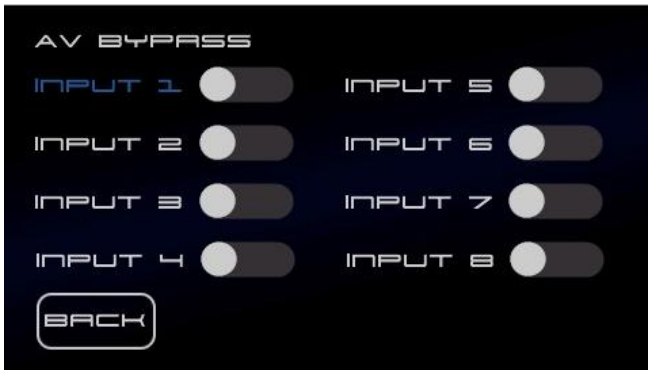

- Brightness: Allows adjustment of the display's operating brightness. The default value is set to 80%.

- Dimmer: Enables or disables the automatic reduction of display brightness and of the LED ring around the volume control. When active, brightness automatically drops to 20% after 10 or 20 seconds of inactivity. The display returns to the default brightness on the first touch or command received from the remote control.

- Display Standby: If enabled, completely switches off the display and LED ring after 20 seconds of inactivity. The display returns to the default brightness on the first touch or command received from the remote control.

- Ring Light: Allows specific adjustment of the light intensity of the LED ring around the volume control.

- Input Setting: This button opens the AV BYPASS page, where the preamplifier bypass function can be configured for integration with Home Theatre systems.

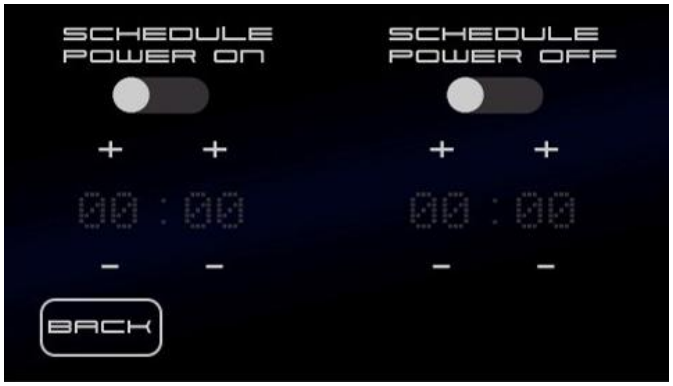



Enabling AV Bypass on a specific input disables the Gain, Balance and Volume controls on the main screen, allowing these parameters to be controlled exclusively from an AV preamplifier in the Home Theatre system.

Clicking the clock icon (8) shown on the home page opens the time configuration menu. In this section the internal clock can be adjusted and automatic power-on and power-off can be scheduled.

- SCHEDULE POWER ON/OFF

This function allows automatic power-on and/or power-off of the unit to be scheduled.
To set the schedule, follow these steps:




1. **Activation:** Select the switch button.
2. **Setting Hours/Minutes:** Select the desired time by increasing (+) or decreasing (-) the hour and minute values.
3. **Saving:** By clicking the Back button at the bottom, the system applies the entered values.

**IMPORTANT:** Power-on and power-off scheduling refers exclusively to the system's internal clock. Please check that the time shown on the home page is correct to ensure the accuracy of the schedule.

- SET TIME

This function allows the preamplifier's internal time to be set.
To proceed with the adjustment, follow these steps:




1. **Setting Hours/Minutes:** Select the desired time by increasing (+) or decreasing (-) the hour and minute values.
2. **Saving:** By clicking the Back button at the bottom, the system applies the entered values.

## Remote Control




**Power:** Switches the preamplifier on and off (Standby).

**Mute:** Activates or deactivates mute mode.

**Gain+:** Increases the gain of the selected input.

**Gain-:** Decreases the gain of the selected input.

**Bal L:** Shifts the overall balance to the left.

**Bal R:** Shifts the overall balance to the right.

**Phase:** Inverts the electrical phase of the signal.

**S1 - S2 - S3 - S4:** Direct selection of unbalanced RCA inputs (1 to 4).

**B1 - B2 - B3 - B4:** Direct selection of balanced XLR inputs (1 to 4).

**Up Arrow:** Increases the volume.

**Down Arrow:** Decreases the volume.

**BATTERY REPLACEMENT**

The remote control is powered by a 3V CR2032 lithium battery.

To replace it, proceed as follows:

- Unscrew the safety screw on the back of the remote control.
- Remove the rear panel.
- Replace the battery, observing the indicated polarity.
- Refit the panel and tighten the screw again.

## Technical Specifications

**Line gain:**
Above + 18 dB

**Analog input impedances:**
4 x RCA 47 kohms (5 Hz-100 kHz)
4 x XLR 47 kohms (5 Hz-100 kHz)
1 x optional future input

**Line output impedance:**
RCA 30 ohms
XLR 50 ohms
REC OUT < 100 ohms

**Frequency response:**
1 Hz - 300 kHz, ± 0.2 dB

**Rise time:**
< 0.8 µs

**Slew rate:**
> 34 V/µs

**Total harmonic distortion and noise (THD+N):**
-99 dB from 10 Hz to 100 kHz at maximum output + 18 dBu

**Crosstalk:**
< - 90 dB from 20 Hz to 20 kHz

**Signal-to-noise ratio:**
> 120 dB (A)

**Power consumption:**
5 - 60 watts depending on operating conditions

**Remote control:**
with all functions

**Dimensions in mm:**
440 x 335 x 136 (WxDxH)

**Dimensions in inches:**
17.33 x 13.19 x 5.35 (WxDxH)

**Weight:**
15 kg

**Fuse rating:**
115 volts: 2A (T)
230 volts: 1A (T)

## User Notes and Revisions



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