



# ***Strawberry Blonde***

## **OWNER'S MANUAL**



**SWR • CORONA, CA • USA**

## **IMPORTANT SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS**

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**CAUTION: TO REDUCE RISK OF ELECTRIC SHOCK, DO NOT REMOVE THE COVER OR BACK. NO USER-SERVICEABLE PARTS INSIDE. PLEASE REFER TO A QUALIFIED SERVICE TECHNICIAN.**

**A. Read Instructions:** All safety and operation instructions should be read before the product is operated.

**B. Retain Instructions:** The safety and operating instructions should be retained for future reference.

**C. Heed Warnings:** All of the warnings on this product and in the operating instructions should be adhered to.

**D. Follow Instructions:** All operating and use instructions should be followed.

**E. Cleaning:** Unplug this product from the wall outlet before cleaning. Do not use liquid cleaners or aerosol cleaners. Use a slightly damp cloth for cleaning.

**F. Water and Moisture:** Do not use this product near water; for example, near a swimming pool, wet basement, and the like.

**G. Accessories:** Do not place this product on an unstable cart, stand, tripod, bracket or table. The product may fall, causing serious injury to a child or adult, and serious damage to the product.

**H. Ventilation:** Slots and openings in the unit are provided for ventilation and to ensure reliable operation of the product, to protect it from overheating, thus these openings must not be blocked or covered. This product should not be placed in a built-in installation such as a bookcase or rack unless proper ventilation is provided or the manufacturer's instructions have been adhered to.

**I. Grounding:** This product is equipped with a three-wire grounding-type plug, a plug having a third (grounding) pin. This plug will only fit into a grounding-type power outlet. This is a safety feature. If you are unable to insert the plug into the outlet, contact your electrician to replace your obsolete outlet. Do not defeat the safety purpose of the grounding-type plug.

**J. Power Cord Protection:** Power supply cords should be routed so that they are not likely to be walked on or pinched by items placed upon them, paying particular attention to cords at plugs and the point where they exit the product.

**K. Lightning:** For added protection of this product during a lightning storm or when it is left unattended and unused for long periods of time, unplug it from the wall outlet. This will prevent damage to the product due to lightning and power-line surges.

**L. Overloading:** Do not overload wall outlets or extension cords as this can result in a risk of fire or electric shock.

**M. Object and Liquid Entry:** Never push objects of any kind into this product through the openings as they may touch dangerous voltage points or short out parts that could result in a fire or electric shock. Never spill liquid of any kind on the product.

**N. Servicing:** Do not attempt to service this product yourself as opening or removing covers may expose you to dangerous voltage or other hazards. Refer all servicing to qualified service personnel.

**O. Damage Requiring Service:** Unplug this product from the wall outlet and refer servicing to qualified service personnel under the following conditions:

- 1) When the power supply cord has been damaged
- 2) If liquid has been spilled or objects have fallen into the product
- 3) If the product has been exposed to rain, water, or other conductive liquids
- 4) If the product does not operate normally by following the operating instructions
- 5) If the product has been dropped or damaged in any way
- 6) When the product exhibits a distinct change in performance.

**P. Replacement Parts:** When replacement parts are required, be sure the service technician has used replacement parts specified by the manufacturer or have the same characteristics as the original part. Unauthorized substitutions may result in fire, electric shock, or other hazards.

**Q. Safety Check:** Upon completion of any service or repairs to this product, ask the service technician to perform safety checks to determine that the product is in proper operating condition.

**R. Heat:** The product should be situated away from heat sources such as radiators, heat registers, stoves or other products that produce heat.

## **INTRODUCTION**

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The Strawberry Blonde, a smaller version of its big sister the California Blonde, is a single channel, 80 watt combo that produces a warm, dynamic tone full of crisp acoustic flavor.

Equipped with both a custom designed 10-inch SWR speaker and a piezo tweeter, the Strawberry Blonde compliments all types of acoustic instruments including violin, cello, acoustic bass, mandolin and guitar.

### **FEATURES INCLUDE:**

- Gain Control
- Aural Enhancer
- Bass Control
- Midrange Control
- Treble Control
- Spring Reverb
- Discrete Solid-State front end
- Master Volume Control
- Side Chain Effects Loops
- Balanced XLR Line Output
- Headphone Jack
- Extension Speaker Jack
- Top Strap Handle
- Bottom Slot Port
- Blonde Tolex Covering
- Chrome Protective Corners
- Vibration-Free Speaker Grill



### **SPECIFICATIONS**

Speaker Compliment: (1) Custom SWR 10" speaker, (1) Le-Son TLX-1 Piezo Tweeter

Power Output: 80 Watts RMS

Enclosure Impedance: 8 Ohms

Dimensions: 18.5"H x 16"W x 13.75"D

Weight: 40 lbs.

## **FRONT PANEL FEATURES**

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### **INPUT**

The instrument input accepts a 1/4" mono phone plug. The input "senses" either a magnetic or piezo pickup, therefore separate inputs or a selector switch is not needed (as on other acoustic amplifiers). If you hear any distortion when using this input, make sure to check the battery in your instrument.

### **GAIN CONTROL**

Proper use of this feature will ensure maximum signal to noise ratio (quiet operation) and prevent unwanted clipping (distortion) in the pre-amp section. The following procedure should be followed.

1. Turn the Master Volume to the "MIN" position. Plug your instrument into the input jack. The volume control on your instrument should be set at maximum (because we all know sooner or later it will get there during the night!). Start with the Strawberry Blonde's tone controls set to the "0" (flat) position and the Aural Enhancer in the 12 o'clock position.

2. Starting from “MIN,” raise the Gain control while striking your loudest chord or note. If you begin to hear distortion, back off the Gain control until the distortion is no longer present.

3. Use the Master Volume to set the overall desired loudness.

The Aural Enhancer and tone controls can have an affect on the optimal setting of the Gain control. After you have set these to your liking, repeat steps 1 through 3.

To accommodate a wide range and variety of instruments and mics, the Gain control’s taper or action was designed to start slowly. This allows a better finite position to achieve the proper Gain setting for your instrument. In other words, you may notice that the volume changes more rapidly after the Gain Control reaches about the 11 o’clock position. This is normal and was done for the reason stated above.

The Gain control also “drives” the effects send signal and internal reverb circuitry. Effects units used in the effects loops should be able to accept line level signals. If your effect is being overdriven at the input, you can turn down the Gain to alleviate this condition. Reset your Master Volume for desired overall volume.

## **AURAL ENHANCER**

SWR’s Aural Enhancer Control was developed to bring out the fundamental low notes of all instruments, reduce certain frequencies that help mask the fundamentals, and enhance the high end transients. Basically a tone shaping control, the Aural Enhancer is a passive R/C network that alters the frequency response throughout the frequency spectrum. This pre-shaping is “blended” into the original signal via the Aural Enhancer Control. Exact frequencies affected are dependent on the characteristics of the instrument used.

## **TONE CONTROL SECTION**

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The Strawberry Blonde’s Tone Control section is a three-band set of level controls centered around the frequencies 80 Hz (Bass), 800 Hz (Mid Range) and 5kHz (Treble). Each control can cut or boost its band a maximum of 15dB. Each control has a flat (center click) position that defeats its function. In this position, the tone controls are inactive. For each tone control, rotating the knob counter-clockwise from the center click position will reduce or cut its designated frequency. Rotating the knob clockwise will boost its designated band or frequency.

## **USING THE TONE CONTROLS**

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To get the most out of the Tone Controls of your Strawberry Blonde, it would be best to first understand how the Aural Enhancer works, and how it interacts with the Bass, Mid Range and Treble controls. Think of it as a variable tone curve, changing with its position. As you raise the control from its “0,” or fully counterclockwise position, you are elevating the whole range of sound (lows, mids, and highs) at frequency points different than those selected for the individual Tone Controls.

This remains true up to about the “2 o’clock” position, at which point selected mids start to drop off. The curves involved here are gentle, as opposed to the very extreme curves you can create with the Tone Controls. Most significantly for basses, the Enhancer will help bring out the fundamentals of your lower registers without masking them with overtones, such as the Bass control. At the same time, it opens up the sibilance characteristics of all instruments without being harsh.

Most players prefer setting the Aural Enhancer between 10 and 2 o’clock. Try playing a chord and move the Aural Enhancer from one extreme to the other. You should find a setting that is pleasing to your ear.

The Bass control works in a range that will be useful under most “normal” conditions. Its musical use might be thought of as a “fatness” control. The overall “punch” of your instrument will be determined with this control. With passive instruments, this will be straightforward. With active instruments having bass-boost/cut functions, more exploration will be worthwhile.

The Mid Range control operates in a crucial area for most instruments. Many basses, particularly those strung with roundwound strings, and some pickups for acoustic instruments, can have a very “honky” or nasal sound. Dropping the Mid Range control can go a long way toward smoothing out your tone. We suggest, though, that what sounds best when your listening to your tone by yourself may not be what works best in a band or recording. Sometimes that objectionable quality may be just the right “hair” on your note to still have an audible presence in the track or on stage.

The Treble control operates in a tonal area that extends through and beyond the usual Treble control range. It may be thought of as a “transparency” control. Over time, we have found this approach to result in a more musically useful treble. Boosting the the control will open up the sound of a dull instrument, particularly in conjunction with the piezo tweeter in the Strawberry Blonde’s speaker complement. However, this is also the range of string rattle, finger slides, pickup clicks, etc. Again, we recommend you experiment with the control

alone with your instrument while finding your tone, and listen again in a band context, both near to and away from the Strawberry Blonde. Qualities like punch, fatness, presence and bite can be fairly well spread out. Treble, despite the broad dispersion of the piezo tweeter, is a very directional quality. Spend some time exploring what you can hear in this area as you move around.

### **EFFECTS BLEND**

The effects loop circuitry in the Strawberry Blonde is a “side chain” design, the same concept as used in studio mixers or consoles. The Effects Blend control mixes the signal coming from your instrument with the sound coming from your effect. With the Blend control fully counter-clockwise, no signal from your effect will be heard. As you turn this control clockwise, more of the effect can be heard in the overall sound. When the Blend is fully clockwise, no dry or unaffected signal is heard other than the output of your effects device.

This type of control and patching arrangement is very effective in reducing noise caused by effects units and in maintaining a more natural sound. If your effects device has a similar control, we suggest leaving it set to its maximum effect/minimum dry signal position and using the Effects Blend control for this function. Please read the “Effects Loop” section for more information.

### **REVERB CONTROL**

The Reverb control blends signal from the internal spring reverb with the main signal. The reverb circuitry is on a side chain as well, so the natural sound of your instrument is always maintained. Rotating this control clockwise will add more reverb to the overall sound.

### **MASTER VOLUME**

The Master Volume adjusts the signal level going to the power amplifier, Stereo Headphones jack, extension speaker and the internal speaker system. It does NOT affect the Balanced XLR Line out. For optimum signal to noise ratio, it should be used in conjunction with the Gain control. Losses caused by effects units can be recovered by increasing the Master Volume.

### **STEREO HEADPHONES JACK**

By inserting a set of stereo headphones into this jack you will be able to monitor your sound or practice without disturbing your neighbors. The volume level is adjusted by the Master Volume. We suggest you begin with the Master Volume off (fully counter-clockwise), then slowly bring the volume up to your desired level. If you hear distortion in your headphones that is not present with the speakers on, turn down the volume as you are probably overdriving your headphones and could cause them damage.

To practice silently, position the 3-way selector switch on the back panel to the “Head Phones” (middle) position. Any impedance stereo headphones will work. However, optimum impedance is 75 ohms. Do NOT use mono headphones as they will short out one channel.

### **3-WAY SPEAKER PHASE SWITCH**

This switch serves two purposes. First, it sets the phase position of the speaker output. Second, it can act as a speaker mute for silent practicing or tuning.

When the switch is set to the IN (up) position, the output (speaker) is in phase with the input. In the OUT (down) position, the reverse is true. The purpose of this feature is to inhibit regenerative feedback. This method is superior to a notch filter as it does not alter the overall tone. If your instrument starts to feedback, set the switch down to the OUT position to reverse the phase. It should be noted however, that the distance between you and the cabinet is a factor. Depending on your proximity to the cabinet, changing the phase could actually cause an increase in feedback.

Most feedback in acoustic instruments occurs in the lower registers. If ample volume is not obtained through use of the phase switch or changing your position in relationship to the amp, try putting the Strawberry Blonde on a chair or stand off the floor.

The middle position, labeled HEADPHONES, disconnects the signal going to the internal speakers and extension speaker jack. Use this position when listening through headphones only or for silent tuning (refer to "Tuner Send" section). The Headphones jack is always active regardless of the position of this switch.

### **POWER SWITCH**

Pressing the Power switch to the “On” position activates the Strawberry Blonde’s electronics as indicated by the green LED above the switch. A slight pop will occur when the unit is first turned on. This is normal and will not harm any of the components in your amp or speaker cabinet.

## **REAR PANEL FEATURES**

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### **TUNER SEND**

This feature allows the user to connect their instrument tuner to the Strawberry Blonde without having to unplug and go back and forth from amp to tuner to amp. The Tuner send is isolated from the rest of the circuitry and no other controls other than your instrument affect the signal. Being on a side chain (isolated) also avoids loading down of the instrument which can cause a loss in dynamic range. To use the Tuner send, connect a shielded patch cable from this jack to the INPUT of your tuning device. Turn the amp on and you're ready to go. If you don't want to monitor your sound while tuning, turn down either the Gain or Master Volume or position the selector switch on the back panel to the "Head Phones" position.

### **EFFECTS LOOP**

The Strawberry Blonde's Effects Loop is located POST EQ and PRE Reverb & Master Volume in the signal path. The level appearing at the Send jacks is controlled by the Gain functions on the front panel. If you are getting too hot a signal at the input of your effects unit, reduce the level of the Gain control. You can raise your Master Volume to retain similar overall volume levels. By using the Gain, Master Volume and Effects Blend controls, optimum performance should be easily obtainable with any effects device.

Because the Effects Loop is on a side chain, it should greatly reduce noise generated by effects devices (as compared to in-line effects loops). Additional features of this type of loop can be found below under the Receive jack section.

### **SEND JACK**

Run a shielded patch cable from the Send jack to the input of your effects device. This jack may be used as an additional line level output, in which case its level is determined by the setting of the Gain control.

### **RECEIVE JACK**

Run a shielded patch cable from the output of your effects device to the Receive jack.

One unique feature of the Receive jack is the ability to practice along with pre-recorded music. Insert a sound source into the Receive jack (make sure it's a mono signal). Use the Effects Blend control to mix the level of the recorded music with your instrument's level. The combined signal will be heard through the internal speakers or your headphones. The Send jack is not used.

**NOTE:** Inserting a plug into the Receive jack activates the Effects Blend control by receiving a "command" through the ground created. Therefore, only a mono (2-conductor) phone plug should be used.

If you are not getting any "effect" through the speakers, check the position of the Effects Blend control on the front panel.

### **BALANCED LINE XLR OUT**

Being a "line" out, the signal appearing here is similar to that heard through the speaker system. All of the controls on the front panel, except the Master Volume, will affect the sound.

To use this feature, run an XLR cable from the Balanced Line out to the input of a mixing console, tape machine, etc. This output is also suitable for sending a signal to a house mixer in live situations.

Wiring for the XLR connector is American standard: Pin 1= ground, Pin 2= +, Pin 3= -

### **3-WAY TWEETER MODE SWITCH**

This switch gives you three different options for operation of the piezo tweeter. In the **ON** (left) position, the tweeter will reproduce a full range, unattenuated signal of every frequency it sees (roughly 2 kHz up to 15 kHz, within certain tolerances). The -6db (right) position reduces the level of the tweeter's outputs by 6 decibels, which to the ear sounds roughly as if cut in half compared to the Full Range position. The **OFF** (middle) position will defeat the tweeter's output entirely.

Try starting with the switch in the **Full Range** position. If this sounds too "treble-y" to your ear and you still want the touch of crispness that a tweeter provides, you can: a) set the Tweeter Mode Switch to -6db; b) adjust the Treble tone control on the front panel; c) a combination of both.

**NOTE:** We have found that most fiddle and violin players prefer the tweeter out of the circuit (Horn Off position). This can be true for some upright bass and cello players as well. Guitar, Dobro, bass and mandolin players tend to like the horn activated. Try it both ways and pick the setting that sounds best to you. The Treble control's range is very similar to the response of the tweeter and can be used as a "high end pad."

### **EXTENSION SPEAKER JACK**

Use an unshielded 2-conductor cable (NOT A GUITAR CORD!) to connect an additional speaker cabinet. Use a high quality, heavy gauge cable of at least 18 gauge (the lower the gauge, the heavier the cable). The impedance of the extension speaker should be 8 ohms or greater. If you wish to connect two additional cabinets be sure their combined load impedance is not less than 8 ohms (equivalent to two 16 ohm speaker cabinets in parallel).

### **A/C LINE (MAINS) FUSE**

The line fuse can open (blow) due to power surges or high power line transients. This fuse will also open in the unlikely event of an electronics failure inside your amplifier.

Correct size and rating of the line fuse: 3AG, 2 amp slo-blow for 120V operation. 3AG, 1 amp slo-blow for 240V operation. Do not defeat the purpose of this fuse by using a higher amperage rating. This could void your warranty.

### **A/C LINE CORD RECEPTACLE**

Accepts a standard A/C power cable (supplied with the Strawberry Blonde in the United States), used with almost all current musical, professional and household electronic devices. If it becomes misplaced, replacements can be found at almost any computer, electronics, or pro audio store. Please note: the rating for this cable is 3-conductor, 18 gauge, 10 amperes. If replacement is necessary, or if you wish to buy a longer cable, look for the correct rating on the cable.

## **CABINET FEATURES AND INFORMATION**

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### **SPEAKERS**

(1) 10" stamped frame woofer, 100 watts, 8 ohm impedance; (1) high frequency piezo tweeter, 150 watts (4kHz and above), 8 ohms. Crossover point fixed at 4kHz. Frequency response: 30Hz to 16kHz.

### **CABINET**

Made from a combination of plywood and particle board. Interlocking dado and rabbet joints, glued and nailed. Covered in a "sandstone" vinyl covering. Metal corners. Comes with our "Texas Bar Proof" powdercoated speaker grill. Front slot port located at bottom.

## **STRAWBERRY BLONDE LIMITED WARRANTY**

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The **STRAWBERRY BLONDE** from SWR is warranted to the original consumer purchaser for ONE YEAR from the date of purchase against defects in materials and workmanship, provided that it is purchased from an Authorized SWR dealer. This warranty applies only to products purchased in the USA or Canada.

This warranty is VOID if the unit has been damaged due to accident, improper handling, installation or operation, shipping damage, abuse or misuse, unauthorized repair or attempted repair, or if the serial number has been defaced or removed. FMIC reserves the right to make such determination on the basis of inspection by an Authorized FMIC Service Center.

All liability for any incidental or consequential damages for breach of any expressed or implied warranties is disclaimed and excluded herefrom.

Some states do not allow limitations on how long an implied warranty lasts, or the exclusion or limitation of incidental or consequential damages, so that the above exclusion may not apply to you. This warranty gives you specific legal rights and you may also have other rights which vary from state to state.

### **SHOULD YOUR SWR AMPLIFIER REQUIRE SERVICE OR REPAIR, PLEASE USE THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURE:**

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- 1** Locate your original receipt showing date of purchase, model and serial number.
- 2** Determine the closest Authorized FMIC Service Center to your location. The fastest way to get a complete list of Authorized FMIC Service Centers is on the web at:  
  
<http://www.mrgearhead.com/faq/allservice.html>  
  
You can also get this information by calling FMIC Consumer Relations at (480) 596-7195
- 3** To receive warranty service, return the complete product to an Authorized FMIC Electronics Service Center, with proof of purchase, during the applicable warranty period. Transportation costs are not included in this Limited Warranty.
- 4** Defective products that qualify for coverage under this warranty will be repaired or replaced, at FMIC's discretion, with a like or comparable product, without charge.

**For a complete list of Authorized FMIC Service Centers, and the latest SWR news, interviews, and more, check out our website:**

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***swrsound.com***

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