

# Holmes Harp Commander Junior “HC Jr.”

## Owner’s Manual

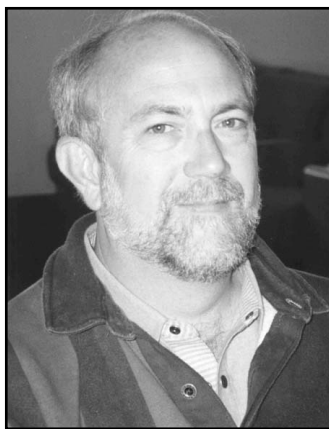


**Holmes Engineering**  
**PO Box 20879 Bakersfield, CA 93390-0879**  
**<http://www.holmeseng.com>**  
**[Sales@holmeseng.com](mailto:Sales@holmeseng.com)**

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Holmes Engineering  
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## Contents

<b>Look inside the Harp Commander Junior (HC Jr.)</b>	<b>Page 1</b>
<b>Front</b>	<b>Page 2</b>
<b>Rear</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
<b>Battery Drawers</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>Specifications</b>	<b>Page 5</b>
<b>What you can do</b>	<b>Page 6-7</b>
<b>Compression</b>	<b>Page 8</b>
<b>Suggested settings/understanding the features</b>	<b>Page 9-12</b>
<b>SAFETY FIRST</b>	<b>Page 13</b>
<b>Warranty</b>	<b>Page 14</b>
<b>Optional power supplies (wall warts)</b>	<b>Page 15</b>
<b>Photos of standard connectors and plugs</b>	<b>Page 16</b>



**Ron's  
promise  
to you.**



**Big fat juicy tones. No Mud.  
Very fast, liquid high-impedance input stage.**

**Clean, open match to any microphone.**

**Big range of tones possible without tricks.  
Tone circuits revamped  
for vintage amp sound  
with increased range.**

**Use gain and output settings to create compression or clean jazz  
tone.**

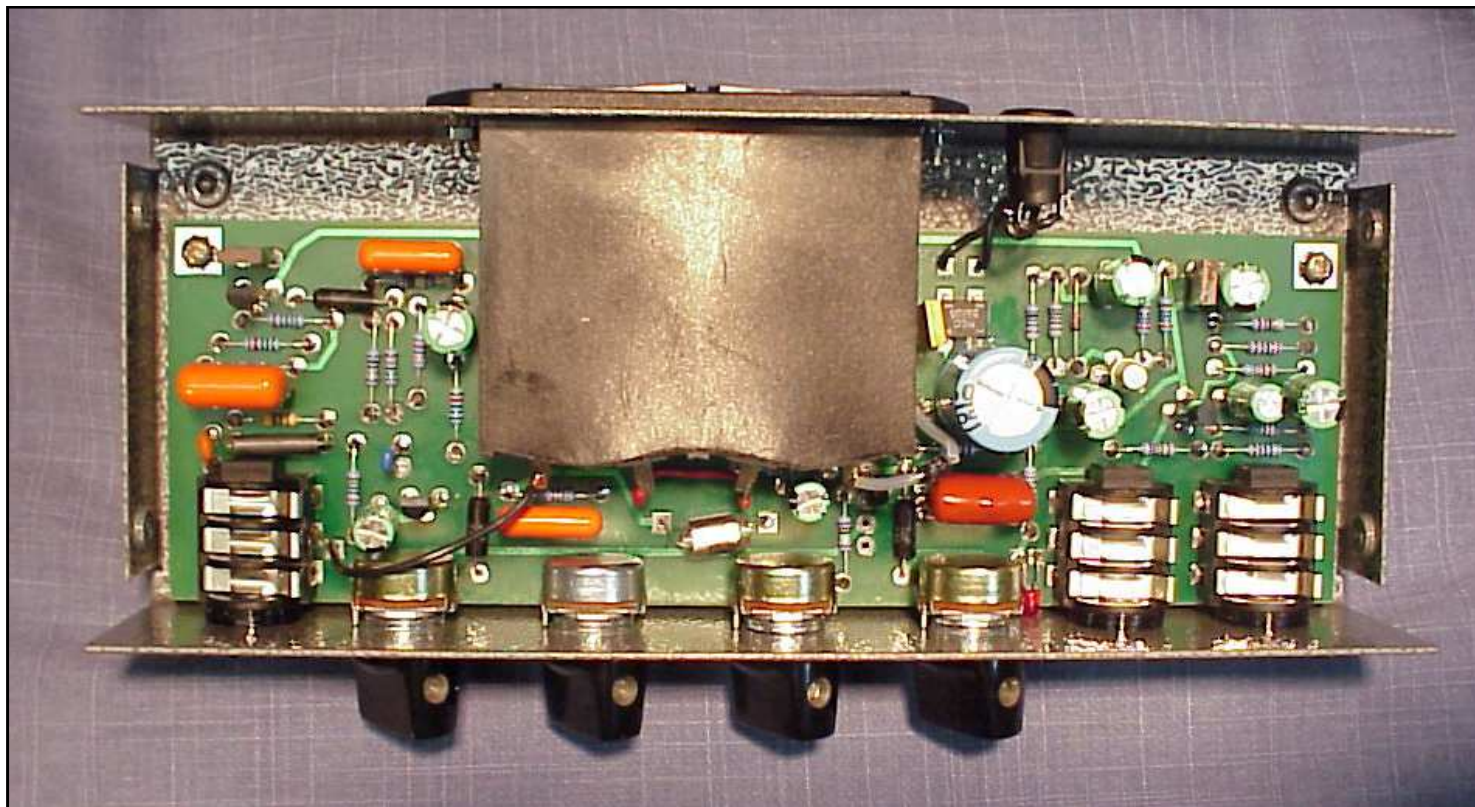
**Use with PA only or with amp & PA.**

**Get your tone ANYWHERE without a hassle.**

**Perfect for home studio digital recording.  
Just plug into your computer.**

**Sturdy, but weighs under 2 pounds.**

**INSIDE the  
Harp Commander Junior**



**Ron uses real Tantalum and film/foil capacitors. No nasty ICs or cheap parts. Ron uses his own Class A, FET discrete circuit. Inspired by the best audio equipment of the 1960's that Ron actually worked on in the 60's. Truly, high-performance vintage tone. The real deal! Made in the USA.**

**Holmes Harp Commander Junior**  
[For the weekend gig or home studio.](#)

Updated from the original HC  
Huge bottom end + better high control.  
More range where you need it.  
Use with combo amps, PAs and  
digital recording.

**Very simple to use.**  
Long life with two 9 volt batteries

## The Holmes Harp Junior (Front)



**Red  
On Light**

### Plug in microphone.

Use dynamic mic  
Crystal mic  
Ceramic mic  
Any vintage harp  
mic-unbalanced in

### Gain

Adjusts  
the mic  
level

### Bass

Adjusts  
the low  
tones.

### Treble

Adjusts  
the high  
tones.

### Output Level Adjust

Instrument  
Out  
Plugs into  
combo amp.  
Same level  
as the mic-  
in.

### Line Out

Plugs into PA line  
in  
Or record card.  
Unbalanced.



**Do not place the HC Jr. within two feet of your computer.  
Computers are noisy and the HC Jr. will pick up this noise if  
it is sitting too close to your computer.**

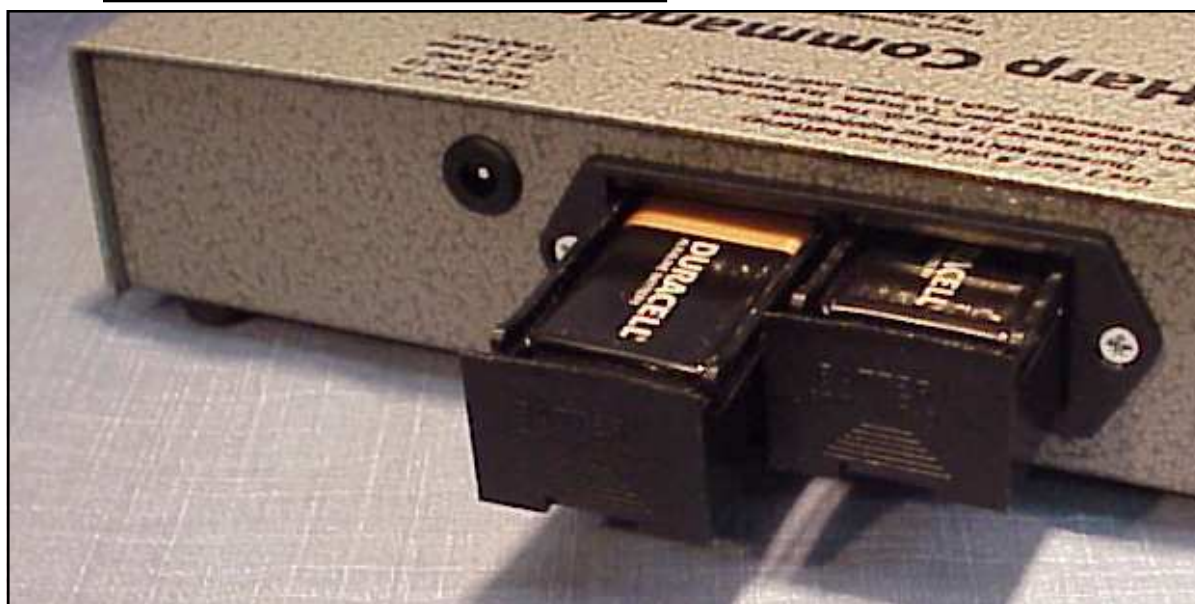
## Harp Commander Junior: Rear

### Remote Power Connector.

Uses 2.5 mm X 5.5 mm  
circular power connector

Will accept 12 to 24 volts  
AC or DC (any polarity)

Low current, approximately  
6 mA



**Power Information:** The HC Jr. gives you reverse polarity protection. The power input connector will accept AC or DC power-any polarity from 12 volts to 24 volts. Its internal steering diodes will fully protect the unit. You can leave the batteries in when you use a wall wart power supply. But always remove the batteries when you plan to store the unit and not use it for a while.

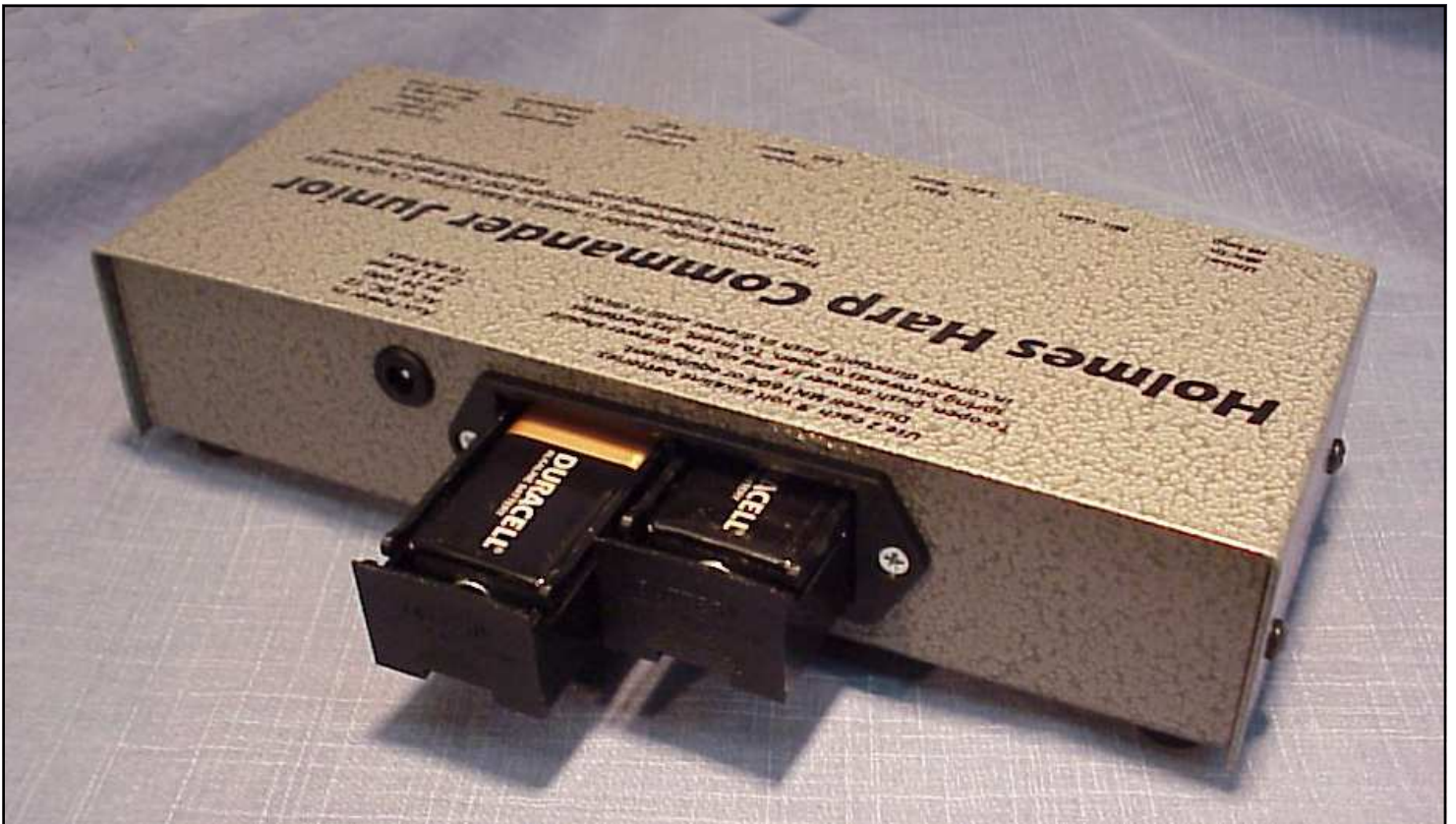
### Battery Drawer.

Uses two 9 volt batteries.  
Use alkaline cells.

Rechargeable batteries can be used, but will not be recharged using this unit.  
Rechargeable batteries will drop the performance due to their lower voltage.

Batteries are not included.

Rear (continued)  
Showing battery drawers  
For quick, easy replacement.  
Battery life:  
Approximately 20 hours.



## Harp Commander Junior Specifications

Low gain structure.

Input impedance 5 megohm resistive

Built-in RF noise filter

18 gauge steel case

Heavy-duty screwed in rubber feet.

Instrument Out: Less than 1000 Ohms  
nominal -23 dBv(50 mV)

Line-Out: Approximately 150 Ohm  
Nominal -10 dBu (250 mV)

8 1/2 inches wide

2 inches tall

4 inches deep (includes knobs and feet)

Remote power in  
uses 2.5 mm X 5.5 mm connector

Ron's own design power input accepts 12 to 24 volts,  
AC or DC- any polarity.

Install new 9 volt batteries\* and use a wall power  
supply without damage or discharging batteries.

Ron's unique power steering network  
provides pop-free power change over from  
battery to remote power supply.

The internal batteries disconnect  
with removal of the microphone plug.

Durable premium baked power coat finish with baked  
epoxy screened graphics.

Only the finest parts were selected.

Expensive parts for long life. All hand-wired.

Carefully hand-tested by Ron.

Optional Power Supply available.

\* Does not come with batteries.

Front panel has Red LED "on" when the power is  
on.

All connectors are Caig™ S-5 Fader Lube  
treated for heavy use and low-oxidation.

All connectors are premium Neutrik connectors.

Printed circuit board is FR-4 premium fiberglass,  
plated-thru holes. Traces many times the width and  
quality commonly seen these days.

The hyper-expensive Tantalum coupling caps, film  
& foil caps, premium HF noise decoupling bypass  
caps combined with all 1% metal film resistors pro-  
vide long, quiet life and the finest in audio.

You can hear the difference. That's why we go the  
extra 10 miles for the best. We would not offer our  
loyal customers less.

## What You Can with the Harp Commander Junior

The unbalanced input of the HC Jr. is approximately 5 megohms. It will accept virtually any sort of unbalanced signal.

You can use the following with the HC Jr.:

- crystal mics
- ceramic mics
- piezo pickups
- magnetic mics
- dynamic mics
- controlled magnetic mics
- guitar pickups
- bass pickups
- any instrument pick-up or sensor

The unbalanced input has an RFI filter that will eliminate most induced noise so common on high impedance cables and shields. Interference can be a problem with high-impedance mics.

The HC Jr. functionally is a combination of mic preamp, gain control, tone control, and adjustable dual direct box output.

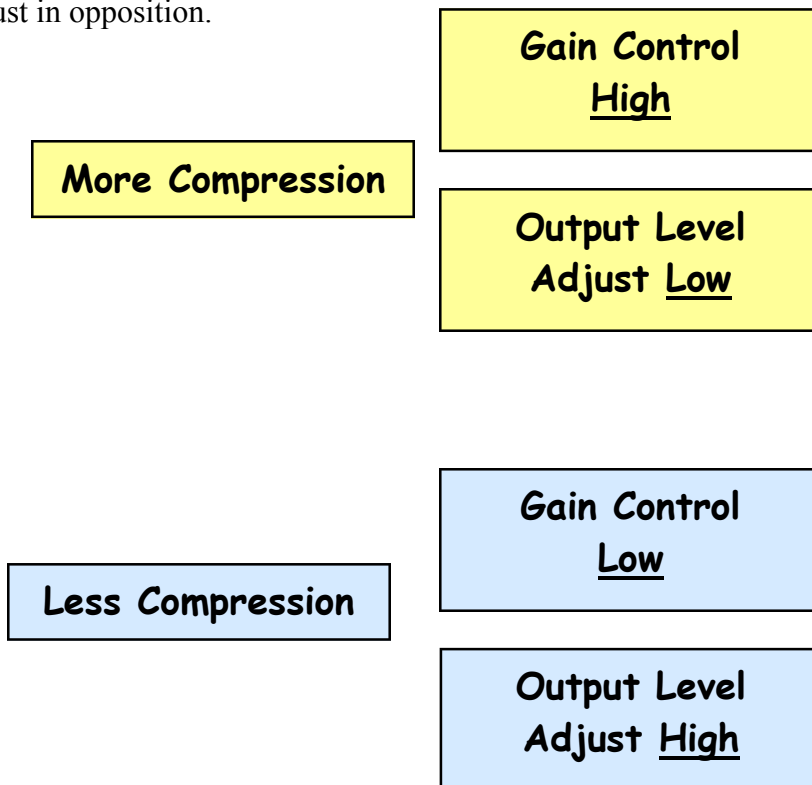
The HC Jr. allows you to go easily into the PA system. The PA system is good for harp players because the PA speakers are typically in front of, overhead and to the side of the harp player. The harmonica is difficult to distribute acoustically within a room. The lower register harmonica tones get masked easily by the guitar(s) and keyboard. The traditional setup for harp players of using a single loud amplifier sitting on the floor behind them is not an efficient way to distribute harp sound. It is very prone to feedback and does not fill an acoustic space evenly. The PA system can do that much more efficiently. Or, use both for a terrific sound.

## What You Can with the Harp Commander Junior (Continued)

By using a combination of the line feed to PA system and a small amplifier fed by the instrument out operated at the same time, the player gets heard throughout the room and s/he can hear themselves well to get the right intonation and pitch. This means a single amplifier doesn't have to try blast the room creating endless feedback problems. And still get buried by guitar player and drummer. Audio masking and room acoustics eat up the beautiful sound coming from a single floor-standing amp.

In many cases, using only the PA system is a really easy, fast, simple way to get your harp sound heard. And no need to lug around a heavy amplifier. And no worries about finding a place to plug in your amp!

To add or reduce the amount of signal compression, use the Gain and the Output Level Adjust in opposition.



**Compression and the  
Harp Commander Junior**



**More Compression**



**Less Compression**

## Try these Settings First



**1. Mic Gain:** This knob sets the signal level through the preamp. This is the last knob to be adjusted. Start with the knob at 12:00.

**2. Bass:** This adjusts the low-end response. Counter-clockwise reduces bass. Clockwise is more bass. Start with the knob at 11:00.

**3. Treble:** Counter-clockwise reduces treble (high frequencies). Clockwise is more treble. A brown blues tone is counter-clockwise. A bright tone is clockwise. You can get rid of those high-unpleasant overtones with this knob. Start with the knob at 2:00.

Try these Settings First



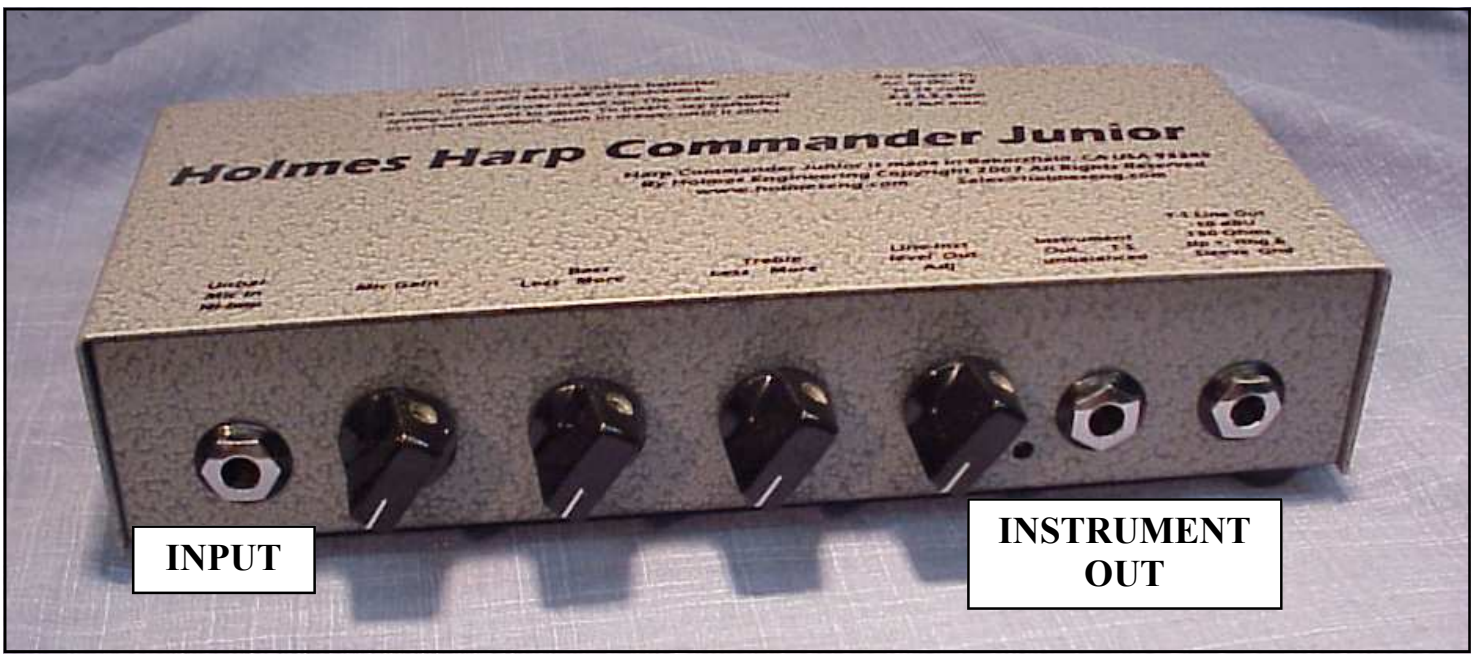
**4. Output Level Adjust:** This knob adjusts both the instrument out and the line out. It was created so that the instrument amp (combo amp) and the PA can be used at the same time. Start with the knob at 2:00.



**5. The Far Right Jack** is line out, TS (tip sleeve). The line-out is nominal  $-10\text{dBu}$ , unbalanced signal. You can feed a PA line in, a computer record card of any device that needs a line-level signal. The T (tip of the quarter inch jack) is plus phase. The R (ring of the jack) and S (sleeve of the jack) are grounded.

If a mono quarter inch plug (T-S) is inserted into the TS jack, the signal will be feed unbalanced, low impedance. This would be typical for a computer record card.

**Feeding Your Record Card:** Use an audio cable with a quarter inch mono (T-S) plug on one end and the other end terminating with a one-eighth inch (3.5 mm.) mono plug. Use the line-in jack on the computer card which is typically a one-eighth inch (3.5mm) jack. Most record cards have a headphone out jack, a mic in jack and a line-in jack. Plug the HC Jr. line-out into the line-in ONLY. The signal level the record card wants to see is  $-10\text{dBV}$  which is approximately one quarter of one volt audio.



**6. Instrument Out Jack:** This is a tip sleeve (T-S) jack with an unbalanced, instrument level signal. Impedance is less 1000 Ohms. It is for feeding your instrument amp or any amplifier that requires this level such as a harp or guitar amp. With a typical setting for the output level control, the level on this jack is perfect for any amplifier.

**7. Input Jack:** This is for use with any harp microphone or any instrument with a pick-up, unbalanced. The input impedance is very high (5 megohm) and is suitable for any crystal mic, ceramic mic, dynamic mic or any pro type balanced microphone using an external adapter transformer.



**RECOMMENDATION:** Use both the PA and a small amp as a monitor whenever possible. You can take advantage of the numerous PA speakers to fill the room and use your amp as a near monitor. You can then hear yourself and get good tone without trying to fill a whole room with the amp. This is also a good way to combat feedback.

You can get good tone with or without an amp by using the PA system. Great for portable or on-the-road use.

**WITH THE HC Jr., YOU ARE ALWAYS READY TO PLAY!**

## WARNINGS! SAFETY FIRST!

When you are using the HC Jr. with **vintage amplifiers** that are ungrounded (using obsolete 2 wire power cord) safety issues ***must be considered***.

I strongly recommend replacing any two wire cord on a vintage amplifier with a three wire grounded cord and plug. Have a professional do it. If you plug a metal microphone into the HC Jr., the mic frame is at the same potential as the metal case of the HC Jr.. If you plug an ungrounded amplifier into the instrument-out of the HC Jr., the HC Jr.'s case is at the same potential as the amplifier chassis. In ungrounded amplifiers, one side of the power cord is connected directly to the chassis (or thru AC coupling capacitor). This was an old scheme for lowering hum in tube amplifiers in the days before grounded electrical wiring. ***If the position of the plug or grounding switch happens to be in the wrong position, a 120 volts AC is on the chassis! And on the shield of the cord coming in and on the HC Jr.'s frame and on the mic case. If you hold the mic and touch any grounded metal around you, you will be injured.***

Replace the power cord in your vintage amplifier with a safely grounded cord. Have a professional do it!

This is also a **safety issue** for **users of wireless microphones** as both the instrument out connector and the mic in connector are connected to the HC Jr. case. Wireless systems are typically used with a receiver at the amplifier. The wireless receiver will be hard grounded to electrical ground and that would connect to the HC Jr. ground. If you feed a vintage ungrounded amplifier with the instrument out, you are connecting the HC Jr. case to the chassis of the amplifier.

By doing this, you will have connected the input ground of the HC Jr. to hard ground and the instrument out connector to a floating ground, you have put the HC Jr. across 120 volts AC! This can **damage the HC Jr.** and pose a **safety hazard** to the user. Have a professional rewire all two wire cords to three wire safety cords with a grounded plug. This is especially important when you are using the HC Jr. with other **commercial sound equipment** as that equipment will be hard grounded.

**To avoid electrical shock**, do not use the HC Jr. in or near water or other liquids. Remember, the HC Jr. will be plugged into things that are plugged into the wall!

Always remove the batteries **when you store the unit**. Otherwise the batteries can leak and damage the HC Jr..



**View of the screw-mounted rubber feet.**

**Warranty:** The HC Jr. is warranted for six months from the date of purchase. If a problem develops, contact Ron at [Ronald@holmeseng.com](mailto:Ronald@holmeseng.com)

## The OPTIONAL power supplies (“wall warts”)



Available for:

**1. Australia/New Zealand**

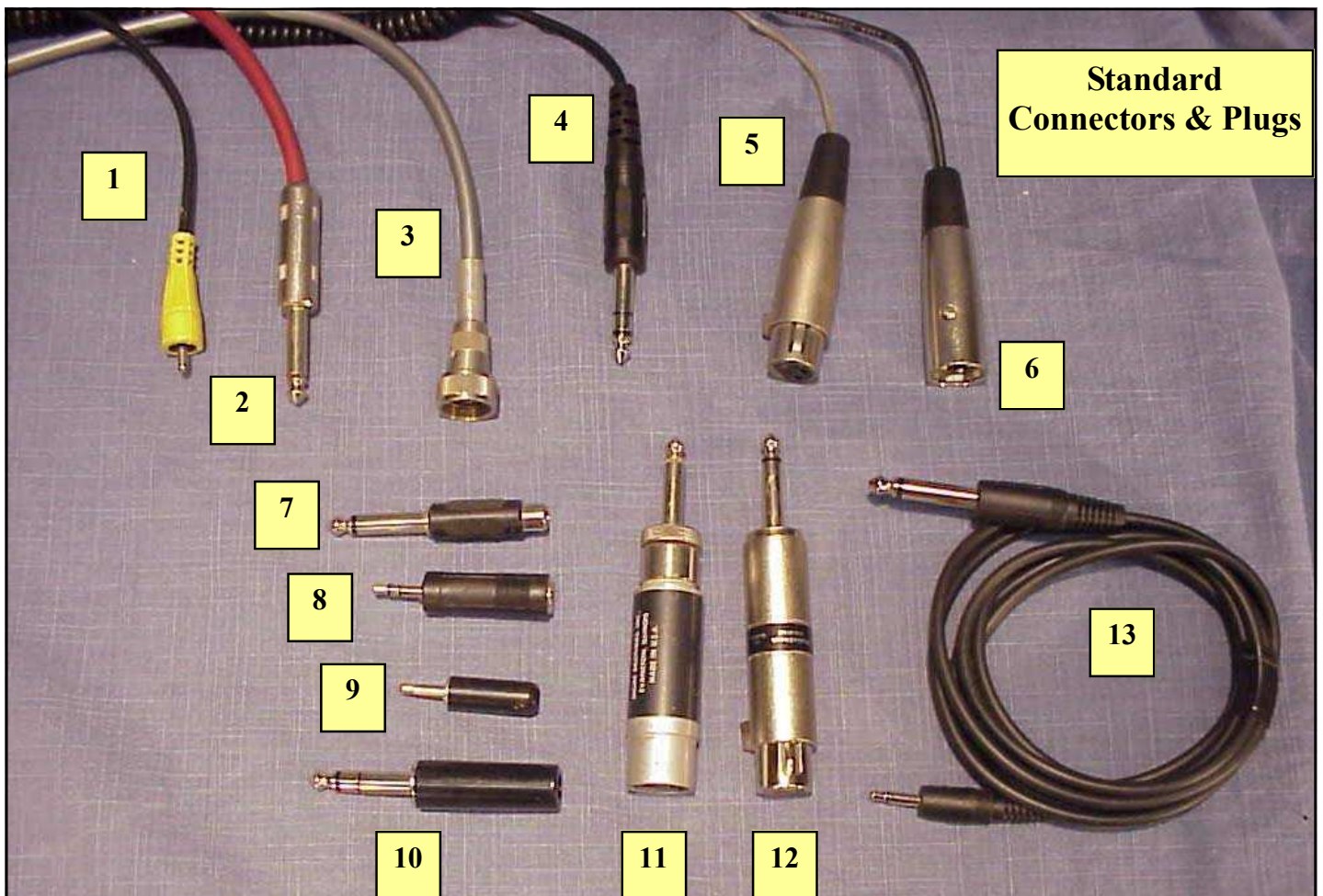
**2. Euro Plug**

**3. United Kingdom**

**4 . USA/Canada/Mexico -120 volts 60 cycle (not shown)**

**This supply also works fine for the Japanese areas with 100 volts, 50 Hz**

Shipping is added to all supplies. Prices subject to change without notice.



1= RCA male plug on cable.

2= TS (Tip-Sleeve) or 1/4" (6mm) mono male plug on cable.

3= Older "Amphenol" microphone jack. Steel ring screws onto chassis mount threaded male assembly. Used on many vintage microphones.

4= TRS (Tip-Ring-Sleeve) or 1/4" (6mm) stereo male plug on cable.

5= XLR-3 female cable connector.

6= XLR=3 male cable connector.

7= Adapter: TS (Tip-Sleeve) or 1/4" (6mm) mono male plug to RCA female jack.

8= Adapter: mini TRS (Tip-Ring-Sleeve) or 1/8" (3.5mm) male plug to TRS (Tip-Ring-Sleeve) 1/4" (6mm) stereo female jack.

9= Mini TS (Tip-Sleeve) or 1/8" (3.5mm) mono male plug.

10= TRS (Tip-Ring-Sleeve) or 1/4" (6mm) stereo male plug.

11= Convertor/Adapter for microphones. XLR-3 male plug to TS (Tip-Sleeve) or 1/4" (6mm) mono plug. It contains an internal set-up transformer for balanced mic to high-impedance, unbalanced output.

12= Convertor/Adapter for microphones. XLR-3 female connector to TS (Tip-Sleeve) or 1/4" (6mm) mono male plug. It contains an internal set-up transformer for balanced mic, low impedance, to unbalanced, high-impedance output. It is used for adapting a Pro balanced, low-impedance mic to an amplifier.

13=Adapter cable with a TS (Tip-Sleeve) or 1/4" (6mm) mono male plug on one end to a mini, TS (Tip-Sleeve), 1/8" (3.5mm) mono male plug on the other end. This cable can be used to connect the HC Jr. Line-Out to a computer sound card input-Line-In connector only.