

# MOMENTUM PREAMPLIFIER

OWNER'S MANUAL



Dan D'Agostino  
MASTER AUDIO SYSTEMS



*“I stake my reputation on its performance—  
and on your satisfaction with it.”*

## ***A note from Dan D'Agostino***

FOUNDER, CEO, AND CHIEF DESIGNER OF DAN D'AGOSTINO MASTER AUDIO SYSTEMS

Thank you very much for purchasing the Momentum preamplifier. The Momentum is the first preamplifier I've designed and built under my own name. As with the Momentum monoblock amplifier, the Momentum embodies everything I've learned in decades of designing high-end audio products. It incorporates a unique blend of the very best and most advanced parts with the same labor-intensive, through-hole construction we used in the very early days of my career. This is the only way to make a preamp that meets my standards and that will last for decades to come.

Your Momentum was built by hand under my close personal supervision at our own Connecticut factory, and individually tested to ensure every circuit in it works perfectly. I doubt you can find a high-end audio product that has more hand-craftsmanship, more attention to every tiny detail ... and more of its creator's soul ... than this one.

I hope you find that your Momentum gives you the best sound quality you've ever experienced in your home. And I hope your eyes enjoy its singular, elegant design and impeccable craftsmanship as much as your ear enjoys hearing it.

The Momentum is only the third product of the hundreds I've created that carries my signature. That means I stake my reputation on its performance—and on your satisfaction with it. The Momentum will reveal new musical horizons for you, as it has for me. I hope you love it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel D'Agostino". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Daniel" and last name "D'Agostino" clearly legible.

# LEGAL NOTIFICATIONS

Dan D’Agostino Master Audio Systems is a registered trademark of D’Agostino LLC. The information in this owner’s manual is subject to change without notice. Current Version 1.0 of this manual was produced by the Dan D’Agostino LLC engineering, sales and marketing departments.

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**CAUTION:** NO USER SERVICEABLE PARTS INSIDE. Do not open the amplifier’s chassis or remove any of its screws. Contact D’Agostino LLC or your dealer if you have service needs.

**WARNING:** Do not expose this preamplifier to moisture or excessive humidity, and do not use it outdoors. Fire hazard may result.



The lightning flash with arrowhead, within an equilateral triangle, is intended to alert the user to the presence of uninsulated “dangerous voltage” within the product’s enclosure that may be of sufficient magnitude to constitute a risk of electrical shock to persons.



The exclamation point within an equilateral triangle is intended to alert the user to the presence of important operating maintenance (servicing) instructions in the literature accompanying the appliance.

# UNPACKING AND INSTALLATION

## Package contents

If any of the following items are missing, please contact your dealer:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| ✓ 1 Momentum preamplifier encased in protective-static cling vinyl | ✓ 1 remote control                                |
| ✓ 1 content checklist  | ✓ 1 AC power cord                                 |
| ✓ 1 owner’s manual   | ✓ 1 power-supply cable                            |
| ✓ 1 pair of white lifting gloves                                   | ✓ 2 single-ended (RCA)-to-balanced (XLR) adapters |
| ✓ 1 microfiber cleaning cloth                                      |   |

## Unpacking the Momentum preamplifier from the Pelican case

While the preamplifier is still in its case, please move it to a location near the place where it will be installed. Remove all jewelry including watches, rings and belts from your person to avoid damage to the exterior of the preamplifier during the removal and installation. We recommend that two people lift the Momentum preamplifier. Because it is machined from a solid block of aluminum, it is much heavier than it looks.

## Installation requirements

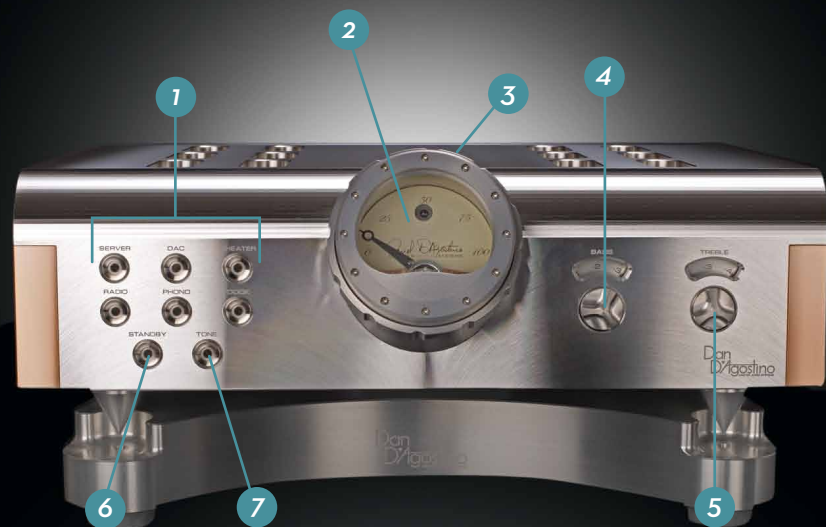
The Momentum’s dense metal chassis makes it much heavier than the average preamp, so make sure the surface that will support the Momentum preamplifier can safely hold its weight.

Adequate ventilation must be provided for the preamp. There should be at least 3 inches of clearance on each side of the preamp and 3 inches of clearance at the top, and the bottom vents must not be obstructed by thick carpet, dust, etc. We recommend that the preamp be installed in an open equipment rack or on an amplifier stand to ensure proper ventilation. The preamp may be installed in a closed cabinet in an equipment closet, but the cabinet or closet must be designed with substantial ventilation at top and bottom; active ventilation (i.e., powered fans) is preferred. Do not place the preamp directly on a carpeted floor.

The Momentum preamplifier is designed with special cone feet that screw into the bottom of the preamp chassis and match up with indentations on the top of the power supply.

The bottom of the power supply has soft feet designed to isolate the preamp assembly from vibration. (These feet will not stain or mar the surface underneath them.)

To attach the cone feet, use two people to turn the preamp chassis upside down and place it on a soft but secure surface—a few towels draped over a sturdy table, for example. Screw the feet all the way into the threaded holes on the bottom of the chassis. Now place the power supply in the place where you want to install the Momentum preamplifier. Use two people to turn the preamp back over again. Place it carefully atop the power supply chassis, lining up the points of the cone feet with the indentations on the top of the power supply. ■

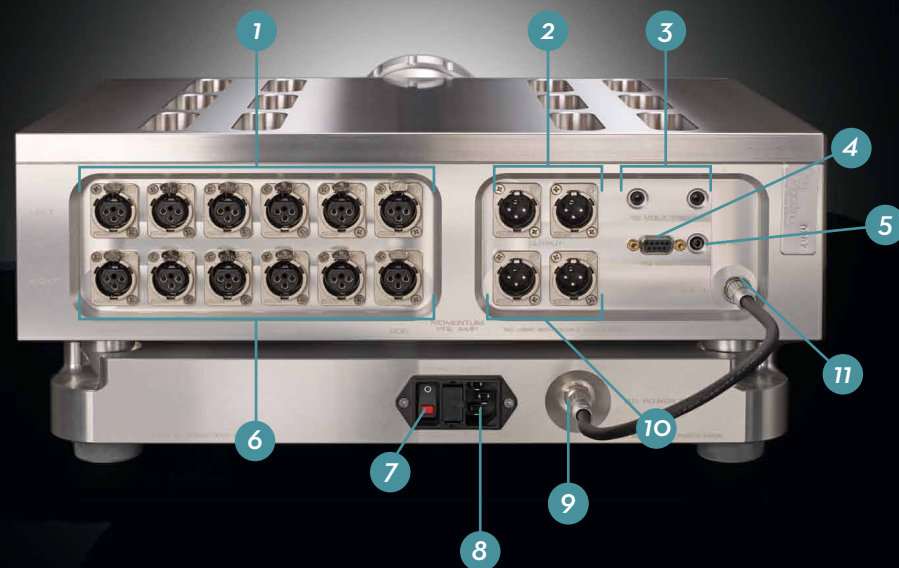


## FRONT PANEL

1. Source selector buttons
2. Volume setting indicator
3. Volume control knob
4. Bass control
5. Treble control
6. Standby/Power On button
7. Tone bypass button

## REAR PANEL & POWER SUPPLY

1. Left-channel XLR input jacks
2. Left-channel XLR output jacks
3. 12-volt trigger outputs
4. RS-232 control connector
5. Remote control input
6. Right-channel XLR input jacks
7. Main power switch
8. IEC power cord connector
9. Power supply DC output
10. Right-channel XLR output jacks
11. Preamp DC input



## REMOTE CONTROL

The remote control provided with the Momentum preamplifier offers the following functions:

1. Server input selector
2. Balance button
3. Radio input selector
4. DAC input selector
5. Phase button
6. Power on/off button
7. Tone controls bypass/on button
8. Phono input selector
9. Theater bypass button
10. Mute button
11. Dock input selector
12. Volume up button
13. Volume down button



# MAKING CONNECTIONS TO THE MOMENTUM PREAMPLIFIER

## *Interconnect cables*

We recommend the use of high-quality balanced XLR audio interconnect cables with the Momentum preamp. If you have a source device that does not offer XLR connections, use the high-quality XLR-to-RCA adapters provided with the Momentum preamp. If you need more adapters, please contact your D'Agostino Master Audio Systems dealer. Do not use XLR-to-RCA adapters to connect the preamp to your amplifier—use only an amplifier with XLR balanced inputs.

First connect the source devices (phono preamp, CD player, etc.) to the appropriate inputs. Connect each XLR cable (or XLR-to-RCA adapter) to the appropriate XLR jack by pushing the plug into the jack. To release the plug, push on the small tab atop the jack and gently detach the plug. Never grasp interconnect cables by the cable itself—you could damage the cable. Be sure to connect left channel to left channel, right channel to right channel.

Note that the Momentum Preamplifier does not incorporate a phono stage; you will have to add an external phono stage in order to use the Momentum with a turntable. We recommend getting a phono stage of the best possible quality in order to get the best from the Momentum.

Now connect the Momentum's line outputs to your amplifier. Connect each XLR cable to the input by pushing the cable onto the jack. To release the XLR cable, push on the small tab on the top of the plug then grasp the cable by the plug and gently pull it out.

## *Power supply connector cable*

The Momentum preamp is supplied with a special power connector cable that connects the power supply to the preamp main chassis. The connectors are surrounded with a collar. To connect them, pull back on the collar, push the connector onto the jack on the power supply or the preamp, then release the collar. To disconnect them, slide the collar back to unlock the connector, then pull the connector loose.

Be sure to hook up the power supply connector cable before you connect the power supply to the AC outlet.

## *AC cord*

The Momentum preamp power supply is supplied with a high-quality AC cord tipped with a 15-amp IEC connector at the preamp end and a three-conductor AC plug at the other end. You may use a different power cord with the Momentum if you wish, as long as it is tipped with a 15-amp IEC connector and a three-conductor AC plug.

After the speaker, interconnect cables, and power supply connector cable are connected, push the IEC connector on the power cord into the IEC jack on the Momentum preamp.

## *12-volt trigger outputs*

These 3.5mm jacks emit a 12-volt DC control signal when the preamp is on. You can connect them to any devices that take a 12-volt DC control input, such as an amplifier.

## *Remote control input*

This is a standard IC5-type 3.5mm input for a remote control signal. This can be used with home automation systems, or with an IR repeater system in situations where the Momentum preamp is installed in a cabinet.

## *RS-232 input*

This DB9-type input allows the Momentum preamp to be controlled by home automation systems that use the RS-232 protocol. Consult your D'Agostino Master Audio Systems dealer for more information. ■

# OPERATION

## *Initial power-up of the preamplifier*

To power-up the Momentum preamplifier, you need to use two switches. One is located on the back of the power supply; this switch turns the AC power on so the power supply will be active. The other is the Standby button located on the front of the preamp.

First, flip the switch on the back of the power supply to the On position. Then press the Standby button on the front of the preamp. This will power up the preamp and illuminate the volume indicator.

After power is switched on, the Momentum requires approximately 30 minutes to reach optimal operating temperature. Although the preamp will sound excellent upon initial listening, the sound quality will improve as it warms up, much as the flavor of a fine red wine improves if it is allowed to breathe for a few minutes.

## *Basic operation*

The Momentum preamp offers only a few basic functions: power on/off, volume, source selection, phase and mute. Operation is simple but a brief description follows.

**Standby:** The Standby button is located under the front edge of the preamp. When the preamp is in standby (Off) mode, the LED in the middle of the button will be lit. Push the button to turn the unit on. When power is on, the LED in the middle of the button will go off and the volume indicator will illuminate. Push the button once more to turn the unit off. The light for the volume indicator will go out and the LED in the middle of the Standby button will light up.

**Volume:** Turn the ring around the volume indicator clockwise to raise the volume and





counterclockwise to lower it, or use the Volume +/- buttons on the remote. The needle indicator will move toward the right as you increase the volume and to the left as you decrease it. We recommend you turn the volume down when you initially power up the system, and raise it only when you are assured that all components in the system are operating properly.

**Source selection:** Simply push the front-panel button or remote button that corresponds with the source you want to hear. The LED in the middle of the front-panel button for the currently active source will light up.

**Theater:** By using the Theater Bypass input, you can interface the Momentum preamp with a multichannel home theater audio system. To use it, connect the left- and right-channel outputs of your surround-sound processor to the Momentum preamp's Theater Bypass input. This input bypasses the preamp's volume control; use your surround-sound processor's volume control instead. Push the Theater button on the front panel or remote when you want to listen to surround sound. Push any other source button to return the system to stereo mode.

**Tone:** To activate the tone controls, push the Tone button on the front panel or remote. The LED in the middle will light up, indicating that the tone controls are active.

**Bass and Treble controls:** When the LED in the middle of the front-panel Tone button is on, these controls will be active. Turn them clockwise to boost, counterclockwise to cut. The front panel indicates the level of boost or cut in decibels (dB). When adjusting these controls, we strongly recommend you turn the preamp's volume all the way down. This is because the preamp is DC-coupled, with no capacitors in the signal path. This design gives the best sound quality, but it can result in some noise when the treble and bass knobs are turned.

**Phase (remote control only):** The Phase control inverts the phase of the entire system. While the Momentum preamp does not invert phase, many source devices do, and many recordings are produced with inverted phase. Because you have no way of knowing what the proper phase is, you must set this control by ear. Push the Phase button on the remote control to invert the phase. The light on the preamp's front dial will turn from green to red when the phase is inverted. Try listening with the phase normal or inverted, and use whichever setting sounds better. If you can't hear a difference, don't worry about it. Depending on the recording, the effects of phase inversion are often subtle and sometimes even inaudible.

**Mute (remote control only):** The Mute control simply mutes the volume temporarily. Press it once to mute, and again to restore the volume. When the sound is muted, the light in the volume indicator will flash.

**Balance (remote control only):** The Balance control lets you shift the stereo balance to right or left. To activate it, press the Balance button on the remote. The volume indicator on the face of the preamp will swing to show the current balance setting. Use the volume +/- buttons

on the remote to change the balance setting. If the needle points straight up, the balance is even between left and right. If the needle points to right or left, the balance is shifted to that side. To return the balance to the center, hold down the Balance button on the remote for 2 seconds. The remote backlight will flash and the needle will return to center.

## Maintenance

The Momentum preamp requires no user maintenance other than to keep it clean and ensure that the vents remain unobstructed.

To clean the preamp, first disconnect the AC plug. Spray a small amount of distilled water or a cleaning solution such as Endust or Pledge onto the supplied microfiber cloth and gently wipe the preamp's surface. Do not spray the cleaner directly onto the preamp.

If dust or other contaminants or objects collect around the vents at the top and bottom of the preamp, remove small objects by hand and use a shop vacuum or hand vacuum to remove the dust. Use a brush attachment on the vacuum to avoid scratching the preamp's surface. ■

## TROUBLESHOOTING

### *Preamp will not power up*

If the front meter is not illuminated, follow the procedure outlined below. If one step succeeds in activating the power, stop there and ignore the other steps.

1. If the LED in the middle of the Standby button on the front of the preamp is lit, push the button to turn the preamp on.
2. If the LED in the middle of the Standby button is not lit, check to make sure the AC cord is plugged into the wall outlet.
3. Check at the back of the power supply to make sure the 15-amp IEC connector is pushed all the way into the jack on the back of the power supply.
4. Check to make sure the power supply connector cable is firmly connected to the power supply and the preamp.
5. Unscrew the fuse at the back of the power supply. Check to see if the fuse is blown. (The conductor inside the fuse will be severed and you may see burn marks on the fuse.) Be sure to replace the fuse with one of the proper value. Consult your dealer or D'Agostino LLC.
6. Check your household electrical box to make sure the circuit breaker has not been tripped. If it has, flip the breaker back on.

### ***Preamp will not power up (continued)***

7. If the breaker trips again, check the speaker cable connection on your amplifier and the speaker to make sure that the terminals are not shorted, and check the entire length of the cable to ensure there has been no damage to it.
8. If all of these steps fail to return power to the preamp, consult your dealer for service.

### ***Front indicator is illuminated but you hear no sound***

Follow these steps in order. If one step succeeds in restoring the sound, stop there and ignore the other steps.

1. Check your amplifier and source device to make sure they are both turned on.
2. Check the source device to make sure it is playing, i.e., if it's a record player, make sure it's spinning and the tonearm is lowered, or if it's a CD player, make sure it's in play mode and not in pause.
3. Make sure the preamp is not muted and that the desired source is selected.
4. Check the line-level connections between the source device and the preamp, and between the preamp and the amplifiers. Reconnect any cables that may have become disconnected.
5. Check the cables between the amplifiers and the speakers to make sure they are properly connected and that the cables have not become damaged.
6. If you have a spare pair of interconnect cables (even cheap ones will work temporarily), try using them instead of the interconnect cables between the source device and the preamp and between the preamp and the amplifier. If this restores sound, replace the defective cables.
7. If all of these steps fail to restore sound, consult your dealer for service.

### ***Sound comes from only one channel***

Follow these steps in order. If one step succeeds in restoring the sound, stop there and ignore the other steps.

1. Push the Balance button on the remote to see what the setting is. If the needle on the front dial is moved to one side, hold the Balance button on the remote down for 2 seconds. The remote's backlight will flash and the needle will return to the center.
2. Check the interconnect connections between the source device and the preamp and between the amp and preamp to make sure all cables (and XLR-to-RCA adapters, if you're using them) are securely connected.

3. Check speaker cable connections for the malfunctioning channel. Reconnect any cables that may have become disconnected. Inspect the cable to make sure it has not been damaged. If it has been damaged, replace it.
4. If you are using monoblock amplifiers, such as the Momentum amplifier, make sure both amplifiers are turned on.
5. Swap the left-channel interconnect cable from the preamp to the amplifier with the right-channel interconnect cable. If the malfunctioning channel now works but the other channel does not, replace the defective interconnect cable with one of the exact same type. You may have to replace both right and left cables to make sure they match.
6. Swap the left-channel interconnect cable from the source device to the preamp with the right-channel interconnect cable. If the malfunctioning channel now works but the other channel does not, replace the defective interconnect cable with one of the exact same type. You may have to replace both right and left cables to make sure they match.
7. Try using a different source device. If the alternate source device delivers sound in both channels, it is likely the original source device is defective. Consult the manufacturer of that source device or your dealer for further information.
8. If possible, try using a different amplifier. If the alternate amplifier delivers sound in both channels, it is likely the original amplifier is defective. Consult the manufacturer of the amplifier or your dealer for further information.
9. If all of these steps fail to restore sound, consult your dealer for service.

### ***Preamp functions but remote control does not***

Follow these steps in order. If one step succeeds in restoring the operation of the remote, stop there and ignore the other steps.

1. Try pointing the remote directly at the preamp (or at the IR receiver if you're using an IR repeater system).
2. Check the IR emitter on the front of the remote to make sure it is not dirty. If it is, wipe off any dust and/or fingerprints with a soft cloth.
3. Change the batteries by removing the screws securing the back plate of the remote, replacing the batteries with fresh ones, then replace the back plate.
4. If all of these steps fail to restore operation of the remote, consult your dealer.



# MOMENTUM PREAMPLIFIER

## LIMITED WARRANTY

D'Agostino LLC warrants the Momentum Stereo amplifier against manufacturing defects and defects in materials for **five years from the date of purchase** from an authorized Dan D'Agostino Master Audio Systems dealer, subject to the conditions listed below:

1. The warranty covers only new products purchased from an authorized D'Agostino LLC dealer.
2. The warranty is non-transferable and is valid only for the original purchaser.
3. The warranty is valid only if the product has been used according to the instructions in the owner's manual. Damage due to accidents or owner abuse or neglect is not covered under this warranty.
4. All service must be performed by an authorized Dan D'Agostino Master Audio Systems dealer. Damage resulting from service by other parties is not covered under this warranty.
5. All products returned for service must be packaged in the original container and must include a photocopy of the original purchase receipt. If the original container has been lost or discarded, contact D'Agostino LLC for a replacement.
6. If the product must be shipped back to D'Agostino LLC for warranty service, the customer shall pay shipping costs. D'Agostino LLC will pay for return shipping.
7. Before shipping the product to D'Agostino LLC for service, the customer must first obtain a Return Authorization (RA) number by calling D'Agostino LLC. The RA number must be marked clearly on the side of the package.
8. This warranty covers only defects in products made by D'Agostino LLC. It does not cover incidental or consequential damages, or damages to other products resulting from defects in D'Agostino LLC products.
9. U.S. residents: Depending on which state you live in, you may have other rights not elaborated in this document. For further information, contact D'Agostino LLC.
10. Residents of other countries: Your authorized importer or dealer bears the direct responsibility for warranty coverage of your amplifier. Please contact your importer or dealer with requests for service under warranty. D'Agostino LLC will work with your importer or dealer to assure that the terms of the warranty are fulfilled. ■

For questions on warranty and service matters, contact D'Agostino LLC at:  
+1.203.644.8743 or [service@dandagostino.com](mailto:service@dandagostino.com).

### SPECIFICATIONS

Frequency Response	0.1 Hz to 1 MHz, -1 dB / 20Hz to 20 kHz, ±0 dB
Distortion (Full output @ 8Ω)	<0.006%, 20 Hz to 20 kHz
Signal-to-Noise Ratio	-105 dB, unweighted
Gain	+6 to +12 dB, adjustable
Power Consumption at Standby	<1 watt
Inputs	6 balanced XLR stereo
Outputs	2 balanced XLR stereo
Weight	40 lbs with power supply/ 18 kg
Dimensions (preamp)	4.3 x 18 x 12 inches (hwd) / 10.8 x 45 x 30 cm (hwd)
Dimensions (power supply/base)	3 x 11 x 8 inches (hwd) / 7.5 x 27.5 x 20 cm (hwd)





*For more information about Dan D'Agostino Master  
Audio Systems, please visit: [www.dandagostino.com](http://www.dandagostino.com)*

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