I agree with you on the front-panel switches. I like to be able to control the device without needing the remote. That's what the BTN lines are for. All you need is a momentary push-button switch for each function. A momentary connection to V- triggers the line.

BTN_PWR is power switch
BTN_SEL selects source
BTN_UP is volume up
BTN_DN is volume down
BTN_LF is balance pan left
BTN_RT is balance pan right