

BRYSTON

A Lifetime of Music

MEMO: To All Bryston Customers

SUBJECT: BDP-2 Digital Player Review

Notes from The Old Audio Guy Thoughts on the Bryston BDP-2

My initiation into the digitized music world has not been an easy one. Growing up with vinyl LPs and cassettes if you can believe it – digital for me was really just the skill set required to put a record on the turntable or push the play button on the Akai 760D.



After a disastrous and costly fling with a batch of pricey British streamers that just never sounded “right” to me, I decided to “think globally but shop locally” and was introduced to the Canadian engineered and manufactured Bryston BDP-2. I will save you the trouble of looking at the end of this review by telling you now that the Bryston does sound right to me. In fact it sounds “more right” than any of my vinyl (we will leave cassettes for another time) and better than my CD oriented front end of \$15k components.

The BDP-2 hits all the notes. It is eminently affordable (by audiophile standards it is a bargain) but nowhere can one see any evidence of cost cutting. The casework and controls are beautifully made and everything works at the level of an Omega watch. The BDP-2 does not flaunt itself and is not really “audio Jewellery” but is quietly elegant and totally reliable in operation. Bryston’s record of reliability is unmatched in the audio world. Music played through the Bryston sounds natural and encompassing. It sounds like music and not like Hi-Fi even though all of the Hi-Fi triggers are there. It images better than anything I have had in my system. Tonality is accurate and unforced – the control over the bottom end of things is

especially tight and tuneful. There is absolutely no indication that this piece is “digital” in any way. The sound is organic and is easily as good and holistic as anything I have heard from a class A turntable.

The BDP-2 reminds me of another smartly engineered, self –effacing item that is likely better than it needs to be and seems built to work forever – the Swiss Army Knife. The Bryston has outputs (SPDIF, AES/EBU, Optical) that will accommodate themselves to pretty well any DAC one chooses to use it with- though the matching Bryston BDA-2 is a natural choice. The front mounted USB inputs make playing music from a USB stick easy. In the rear more USB inputs allow connection of USB sticks or portable hard drive devices. It has 2 Ethernet inputs rather than one (I still have not figured out if using both of them improves anything – I will have to ask Mr. Tanner from Bryston) – and in keeping with its timely updating from theBDP-1 the Ethernet is now Gigabit rather than 10 Base 100. This is a huge improvement as the BDP-2 not only plays music from an attached hard drive but will stream from a NAS across your network. With Gigabit bandwidth the streaming is as good as the playback from attached drive – there are no latency issues - and uploading operations are much faster than anything I have tried before.

Accessing it on your Apple device – either iPad or Pod is convenient and elegant using an inexpensive app called MPad. If you are PC centric Bryston has their own PC based access to the BDP2 which while not as mature and swooshy as the Apple based software is functional and reliable. It also works with the stand alone Bryston remote or from the front panel controls on the BDP-2 itself.

I love this piece and I have purchased my demo sample, replacing the pricey British streamers and the tuneful but input restricted Moon 180 Mind in my system. It has changed the way I interface with my music and makes the playback process transparent and easy leaving one’s mind open to appreciate the music. Which is the whole point of Hi-Fi in the first place.

FIVE STARS!
