

HIFI STATEMENT

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TEST

BRYSTON 4B3

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40 years and still going strong – that’s the length of time that the high end icon Bryston 4B has been available, and now comes the same model under the brand new cubed series, once again with a 20 year warranty. An eternity in our fast paced world.

They’re still available, the timeless classics which never gets old and whose current model always inspires the purchasers again. If we think about automobiles then a Porsche 911 surely belongs to this group, but also in the high end arena it is possible to always invent something new, and nevertheless demonstrate continuity. The Canadian firm Bryston also succeeds with this with their 4B power amplifier, which has already been available for forty years. Reason enough for Heinrich Schläfer, a trained recording engineer at the Bryston Austrian marketing firm AVITECH responsible for communication among other duties, to create a particular offer under the somewhat ambiguous motto “Let go of the old one”, wherein he offers the owner of even the oldest verifiable Bryston 4B amp until the 30th of April 2017 an exchange for an actually tested here Model 4B3 amplifier.

The marketing firm AVITECH which was founded by Edvard Potisk in Vienna, Austria, in 1998, stands on two solid pillars and incorporates besides the classical high end arena, also the professional sector with broadcasting, TV, sound studios, and complex public address systems in its focus. The Bryston 4B power amplifier was the first product in 1976 which the still at that time young Bryston concern offered for both private HiFi consumers as well as for professional studios. Even now the demand of both target groups is about equally high at Bryston, and therefore the Canadians offer both the so called C-Series as well as a PRO-Version. While the C-Models for the consumer market are supplied in 17 and 19 inch width, either in silver or black, the PRO-Models for the professional market are available only in black and only in 19 inch width.



Besides the 4B3 amplifier, Bryston in 2016 brought five other models of the so-called Cube Series into the market place, all of which were newly developed by an engineering team under the aegis of CEO Christopher Russell. The prices for the series begin with 4,105 Euro for the small 2.5B3, and end with 11,159 Euro for the top model 28B3. The output into 8 ohms varies from 135 Watt up to 1,000 Watt. In this hierarchy the Model 4B3 tested here lies fairly in the middle and costs 5,978 Euro with an output of 300 Watts into 8 ohms. When Bryston brings a new series into the market place, then this does not happen as with so many other products where already a Mark-II-Series is offered when just a few little screws are colored differently. In the 40 years since the introduction of the first model, this is now the sixth relaunch of the model, and with all of the continuity each time there were significant improvements. Besides the excellent product quality the certainly unusually long 20 year warranty are

deciding factors for the marketing success. The fair dealing policies at Bryston above and beyond the extremely long warranty period are also very generous, as one hears from dealers and customers.



With the replacement of the previous model 4BSST2, which reached the marketplace in 2009, one primarily achieved considerable improvements in the area of low distortion and random noise. Extremely low distortion was achieved especially in the input stage, which shows measurable distortion of less than one thousandths of a percent. Bryston also achieved exceptional improvement with the suppression of induced electromagnetic and radio frequency interference. With all of this a more

open sound picture with more reproduction of Nuances and generally more richness of detail is achieved. The patented circuit design which was developed together with Dr. Alexandru Salomie, is responsible above and beyond for more realistic spatial reproduction. The so-called "Quad Complementary" output stage imitates the characteristics of Class A circuitry with extremely low distortion and incorporates four pairs of bipolar transistors per channel. Each channel includes its own power supply with a separate transformer, a classical double mono construction.

It is astounding that the Bryston 4B3 only consumes 500 milliwatts in standby mode, and also contributes to the fact that German electric power suppliers do not attain appreciable profit from the energy transition. A genuine plus however is the new appearance and haptic because in my opinion it has been clearly improved visually in comparison to the previous model. The clear lines of the twelve millimeter thick front panel and excellent workmanship go hand in hand.

Prior to leaving the factory in Ontario, Canada, the amplifier must undergo a hundred hour long burn-in test, wherein thermal stress is tested alternatively with full load and standby phases in thirty minutes intervals. Additionally every amplifier of the cubed series is supplied with a comprehensive individual performance certificate and a record of its measurements. The power output specifications supplied by



Bryston are absolute minimum values and are regularly exceeded in practice. Our Bryston 4B3 amplifier with a specified 300 Watts into 8 ohms, actually supplied 332 Watts according to our measurements, and in bridged mode which is rated at a nominal 900 watts, it actually supplied 1080 Watts.

For the listening tests the actual output was to play an important role. To start I listened for two days with the most recently tested compact XTZ Divine 100.33 loud-speakers, and

then the Bryston 4B3 had to submit to a stress test of a special nature. Because a friend of mine will move to Singapore for two years, I recently purchased his mighty 180 kilogram (almost 400 pounds) each Wilson Audio MAXX loudspeakers. The operation of these acoustic transducers is truly not a

simple assignment for a power amplifier, and owners of such a caliber of speakers usually orient themselves during a search for a power amplifier in extremely high price ranges. Will the comparably reasonable Bryston 4B3 amp succeed in getting the heavyweights to fly? They should, because not only does an Austrian, highly sugared beverage bestow wings, but apparently also the new Bryston electronics of the Cubed Series.



Not only in a figurative sense the Bryston 4B3 immediately achieved a thunderbolt with Patrice Heral's "Improvisation." I have seldom heard such a forceful, mighty, and at the same time very defined bass, with very good tonal depth. This selection can bring many details into the foreground, but it can also sound incredibly nervy, when the electronics are not appropriate. The fact that I listened to this song still many more times, already says quite a bit about the fun factor of the new Bryston 4B3 amplifier.

At the EM 2016 the Dutchmen could not participate, but Hans Theessinks "Call Me" is a welcome fellow player, especially for the bass region, and if the power amplifier fades here, then it simply sounds swampy. However the Bryston 4B3 was wide awake, and conveyed Theessinks deep voice very sonorously and exceptionally strongly.

For the other end of the frequencies I selected Radka Toneff's "The Moon is a Harsh Mistress", in which the so inclined listener is moved to ecstasy by her extremely clear and open voice, but also by the clear



as glass piano strokes. The same tendency also resulted with Sophie von Otter's "Mariengesängen", and moreover the strong colorful timbre of the strings delighted the middle ear.

Paco Lucia with "Live in America" was then allowed to reveal his high art and his enormous speed, and with the Bryston 4B3 power amplifier one was there, live, and experiencing terrific dynamic leaps and rhythmic castanets. Likewise with Shostakovich's "The Age of Gold" on Living Stereo the dynamics

are trump. The brass instruments are difficult here, but they were very realistically mastered by the Canadian 4B3 power amp, and furthermore it succeeded in clearly separating the instruments from one another, and in not depicting them exaggeratedly large.

Piano strokes are a supreme discipline in music reproduction; here often the wheat is separated from the chaff. Therefore I let Monty Alexander appear with "Send for Me", and I experienced Boogie Woogie of the finest. Music that breathes, and with much air around the instruments which ensured that I would also savor this song many times.



Finally Muddy Waters still made a major appearance with his “Big Leg Woman” because his voice emanated wonderfully from the loudspeakers and attuned the for me especially important height of the voice reproduction and also the precise localization of the singer. So what is there actually to fault with the new Bryston 4B3 amp, or to put it in other words what does a three to four times more expensive power amplifier still do better? Naturally this depends greatly on the chain, but the Bryston 4B3 by no means had

an easy task with the large Wilson Audio speakers. Naturally everything still goes a bit better with an appropriate budget. If one reaches very deeply into ones pocket, perhaps even more extreme spaciousness and a pinch more resolution is possible. The Bryston 4B3 amp, with genes from the professional sector, actually does not make the claim to be a typical audiophile power amplifier, and yet especially in this discipline it overtrumps many a competitor.



STATEMENT

For the vast majority of music lovers the new Bryston 4B3 power amplifier of the Cubed Series is a large leap forward. Power and control go hand in hand with detail richness and strong tonal colors. Its ability to be universally deployed and not least the twenty year warranty are further plus points which make a purchasing decision easy.

HEARD WITH

Record Player	Le Tallec Stad S
Tone arms	Clearaudio Souther, Eminent 1
Phono Cartridge	Aurender N100
D/A Converter	MYTK Brooklyn with Audiobyte Hydra Z USB Bridge
Preamplifier	Classé Audio Omega
Loudspeakers	Wilson Audio MAXX, XTX Divine 100.33
Cables	Audioquest, HABST, Sun Wire Reference
Accessories	Copulare Aural Power Amplifier Stand, Copulare Turntable Stand

- **Translated from the German by Peter Ullman**