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klare worte. guter ton.



Do you know a hi-fi manufacturer that gives a 20-year warranty on its power amplifiers and puts each of its devices through a 100-hour stress test before delivery? Bryston from Canada does something like that (Sales for Germany: www.avitech.at/de/). But in addition to longevity and reliability, the customer expects good sound. Because if the sound does not "taste" the listener at home, the aforementioned efforts are in vain...



Bryston has a finely graded portfolio of power amps in the program - from the small 2.5B³ with 2 x 135 watts into 8 ohms, up to the 28B³ monoblock, which produces a real kilowatt of 8 ohms. Here and today I would like to deal with the "second smallest" power amplifier, the Bryston 3B³ (6,250 Euro), which is expected to deliver more than enough power with 200 watts per channel for most living room applications. But first, in the sense of redundancy avoidance.



If you want to know more about the manufacturer Bryston, I would like to recommend Jörg Dames' [review of the Bryston 7B³](#) as well as Martin Mertens' test of the [Bryston 4B³ in conjunction with the precursor BP17³](#). Let's go straight to the jamb and take a closer look at the subject.

The Bryston 3B³ comes as a stereo power amplifier, which can be placed on the rear rocker switch on the demand in the monoblock mode. Access is

possible either via [XLR](#) or [RCA](#), the active input must also be selected via a toggle switch. A third switch allows the overall gain to be adjusted, 23 or 29 [dB](#) are available. The professional appeal of all Bryston power amps is reflected not only in the bastion-like workmanship, but also in the fact that they are available in two versions: a "house-and-run version" and a studio or PA version with mounts for 19-inch racks and practical handles for pulling out and pushing into it. But while these are still mere outward appearances, it is also paddled under the hood instead of spotted.



On the back of the Bryston 3B³ are toggle switch to select the gain, the mono-bridged or stereo operation and the input selection

An essential part of the circuit design criteria for this and other representatives of the current "Bryston Cubed" series has been an optimal power curve "from the first to the last watt," Avitech sales said. While many other high-performance amps would only have a good [signal-to-noise ratio](#) upwards of one-third of the maximum output power, Bryston wanted to offer a completely unadulterated sound experience even at single-digit wattages. On the one hand, the selection of selected, extremely fast driver transistors has almost completely eliminated crossover [distortions](#).

The Bryston 3B³ is circuit-wise including two toroidal transformers in double mono

In turn, the output stage design has been chosen so that the capacity "seen" by the driver transistors is as small as possible. In this way, "transient delays" in the end section, which contribute to non-linearities in the zero crossing range, could be virtually eliminated.



The next central starting point is the suppression of RF distortions. This applies not only to driver and power amplifier, but also and in particular for the power supply - here, too, have made with highly effective suppression measures already at the source that over the mains current no harmful RF components can get into the circuit. Speaking of mains power: Instead of - as often happens - a transformer with two taps, the Bryston 3B³ were two separate [toroidal transformers](#), for each channel one, donated. Sophisticated, solid technology, of course, always pleases the tester's heart - but what does the whole thing do in the listening room?

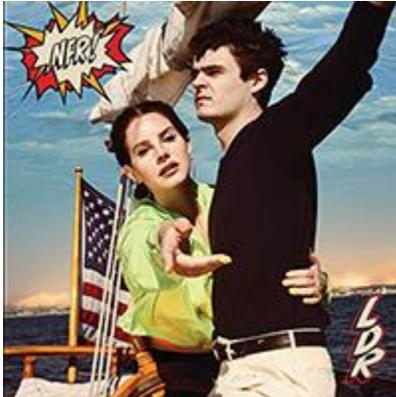
Bryston 7B³: Sound test & comparisons



Oh boy, it brings a lot! It's really hard not to rave about what this power amp delivers. The author of these lines began his hi-fi review career almost ten years ago and since then has dragged a three-digit number of components and speakers through his listening room. Rarely enough, a device impresses so much that you

remember the test for years to come - the Bryston 3B³ power amp is definitely one such candidate. But once again something less emotional and from the beginning!

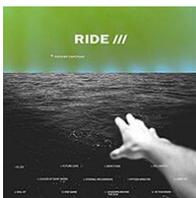
Central talents of this final stage are their broadband and linearity. That makes it wonderfully easy to describe the tonality of this final stage: It has none! We hi-fi editors always wrestle for the small details, accents, shades in middle, low and high pitch: Does it sparkle or darken on top, does it tend to growl in the bass? To be honest, these criteria can easily be skipped in the Bryston 3B³, because it does only one thing, and rightly so: it is the much-quoted "reinforcing wire" that completely unfiltered and unbounded tonal really goes through everything the feeders deliver.



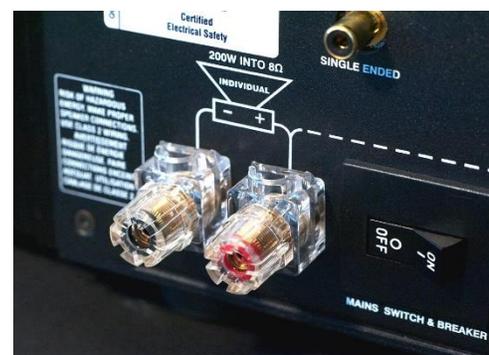
For example, let's take a track that goes full throttle across the frequency band: *Lana del Rey's* "The Next Best American Record" (album: *Norman Fucking Roswell*, [listen to Amazon](#)). In the first 32 bars a soft acoustic guitar, a synthesizer surface and Lana del Rey's voice. It follows a bridge with restrained orchestral cast and quiet marching drums in the background. And in the chorus, it really starts: puking drums, all sorts of synthesizers, high-frequency synthetic drum sounds and a no louder / cheeky, but still abyss subbass that really takes off your shoes.

Everything is completely transparent about the Bryston power amp. Clear, bright, unruffled the heights of the electric drums, bulky-intense, but at the same time completely authentic, the acoustic guitar - and the Subbass drives with incredible power into the pit of the stomach, but not by means of tonal / vocal-like over-emphasis, but by sheer Depth down to the lowest octave. So the sound does not soak up in any lowlands, but it remains completely transparent up to the highest altitudes. That's important because the lead role in this track is, of course, the lascivious voice of Lana del Rey. A less well-tuned, but subbass-capable amp would now have brought this sub-bass "forward". This does not happen with the Bryston power amp: Lana del Rey may continue to play the Sun Queen and *Nevertheless*, the Subbass tingles pleasantly on the inner walls of the stomach.

Next talent: speed. I do not know when I last had such an extremely fast power amp in front of the gun. And that applies in every situation and at the lowest and highest volumes. I like to feel components with *Friedemann's* play "Sourdos" (Album: *Rendez-Vous / Best of Biber Records*). This instrumental track boasts a wonderfully clear, precise guitar playing in combination with a marimba and a rhythmic clapping of hands as well as a constant alternation of virtuoso sequences and silent, reverberating passages to rest.



When Friedemann's fingers rush over the strings and retrieve the entire sound palette of the acoustic guitar, from cat-soft-gentle to the extra sharp, metallic scribing, the Bryston 3B³ power amplifier achieves this with a fantastic, almost flamenco-like timing.



This works without compromising even with much rocker and rough produced music - for example, with "Fifteen Minutes" from the new album *This is not a safe place* the Shoegazer Ride ([listen to Amazon](#)). This track sounds so much like Sonic Youth that listeners do not really know if it's plagiarism or homage. Mulchy mixed drums, rage-crawled, distorted minor 7/9 chords, deep rumbling electric bass, and in the last third of the song a short massive rage with a fiery feedback and straining guitar tracks.



The simple but effective drumming gets over the Bryston 3B³ something tremendously Vorreibreib and compelling, the load change in the last third is not dragged a nanosecond and blows up with a vehemence, that one's hair upside down. Interestingly, this also works at low listening volume, which is basically much harder to realize than at high. Because in order to be able to reproduce these differences and load changes even at room volume,

How was that with the "first to last watt"? This is not an empty marketing promise. On his new album "Tumult" has *Herbert Grönemeyer* ([listen to Amazon](#)) in addition to the usual barking, mumble and jabber also hidden a textually and musically very exceptionally successful ballad, it is called "waiting room of the world". A very simple and all the more effective piano leitmotif, counteracted by heavily mixed in the background, dull e-piano chords, to a brutally close to the ear mixed, just-intimate voice of Grönemeyer with a long drawn low-pass reverb. Even at the 9 o'clock position of the volume control, this has an intensity that is difficult to grasp. And if you continue to rip: pure, clear, unruffled music, no amount of noise flag, no noise, no emphasis, but "the pure substance" against an abysmal black background.

And so one also notices here that "Herbie", who works in almost all his songs at the latest in the chorus with a doubled vocal track as a production-technical trick, exceptionally takes a guest singer as a double. About my amplifier For example, I did not notice [Hegel H90 when](#) I first [listened](#) to it. Since hearing about the Bryston 3B³ amp (in conjunction with my preamp [Abacus preamp 14](#)), I've heard it from Hegel as well - but I've been *struck* by the Bryston power amp. It's cool.

At the risk of being bored: the stereo stage also uncompromisingly continues the principle of the "reinforcing wire". What is available on the recording is passed through unmoved. If you have a first-class recording like *Pink Floyd's* "Time" (Album: *The Dark Side of the Moon*), then you sink completely into a psychedelic dream while ticking and purring the clocks, which fan out far into the stereo panorama. If you want to find your way back to reality, you have to go jogging outside, what is offered here (sorry!) Holography is spectacular.

However, if you have a recording in which the microphones and panorama settings on the mixer rather at random were set or adjusted (early stuff from *Dinosaur Jr.* For example), then that sounds just like that on the Bryston 3B³, so it is not an "interior decorator", if necessary, the interior design



straightens a bit far, but also here rather a real studio tool. Here, nothing is whitewashed by an artificial space around the actors or a "pulsation", as it is experienced at tube output stages, is raised: The presentation is rather unmistakable-precise than euphonic.

Bryston 3B³: Compare

Usually, we at fairaudio always look a bit to the left and right and compare with other components. For the Bryston 3B³ I find that quite difficult because it overrides in all relevant disciplines. In their clarity, broadband and transparency, they remind me most of all about the A4e power amplifiers from Valvet (around 6,900 euros); sonically, the Bryston and the Valvets can measure each other well - but the Bryston delivers three times as much sine wave and should therefore probably represent the superior investment in terms of the undistorted overall level and the compatibility with different speakers despite their lower price.



A bit reminds me of the Bryston 3B³ also to the Moon output stage 330 A (4,000 euros), especially in terms of their transparency and fine resolution, *at the same time* down to the lowest octave, even if it is only quietly in the source material. But also in terms of speed and timing, the Bryston 3B³ has the nose over the Moon amp - the latter is far from "slow-paced", yet not as involved fast as the Canadians.

Last but not least, a very exciting insight: Whether it's the high **damping** factor or the broadband - the Bryston power amp has perfectly harmonized with all my speakers and literally made the most of them. Even the good-natured Harbeth 30.1 in the treble was stimulated by her to sparkle and radiate - but not by a high-frequency boost: In the combination with the above rather alert playing Audes Maestro 116 showed a particularly tonal just as balanced sound. No idea how it works - but it works.



TEST: BRYSTON 3B³ | FINAL STAGE