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HIFI TEST

Test: Bryston 7B³ | Power amplifier

Emotion instead of precision?

by JÖRG DAMES | JULY 14, 2017



IN THE TEST

Bryston 7B³ - mono power amplifier

EIA AT THE TIME OF TESTING

12,000 euros

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Power amplifiers are one of the devices that I particularly enjoy testing. On the one hand, I like the mostly quite reduced design. On the other hand, the usually "muscular" circuit design or the power to move a lot of energy if necessary. But not to be forgotten: Power amplifiers have the important task of controlling the most varied of highly complex loads in a controlled manner and at the same time showing themselves as unimpressed as possible by their electrical repercussions.

Loudspeakers are motor and generator at the same time and the demands they place on their energy suppliers are as little uniform as the loudspeaker market itself. At first glance, this is the simple mission of power amplifiers to amplify the input signal by a fixed dB value. It may seem that challenging is the task of building a good-sounding power pack that can be used as universally as possible, one that is also absolutely reliable (with inrush currents it starts off) and has a long service life. As an electrical engineer and developer friend of mine always says: "You have to be able to build large power amplifiers".

A competence that one can undoubtedly attribute to a manufacturer with a long guarantee period (20 years) and an even longer history (the first amplifier was created in 1973). And it is precisely the power amplifiers which, according to legend, are "indestructible" and are also used in large numbers in the studio area, which contributed significantly to Bryston's reputation (sales for Germany: www.avitech.at).



Speaking of history: It actually goes back even longer, because Tony Bower, Stan Rybb, and John Stoneborough are responsible for the founding of the company in 1962 and at the same time with their surname for the company name of Bryston, but had nothing to do with hi-fi, but with blood analyzers. The change to the audio manufacturer was only initiated six years later, when NASA engineer John Russell bought Bryston, moved with his family from the USA to Canada, and in the course of a company relaunch the first amp was developed by his son Chris, which saw the light of day in 1973 - initially as a prototype. A recording studio in Toronto was one of the first customers of the dual-mono 2 x 100 watt amplifier "Pro 3" - and if Bryston initially also developed an excellent reputation in the "professional market", the hi-fi market is nowadays even the more important mainstay of the Canadians.

The new generation of power amplifiers "Cube", which was just launched on the German market last year, is also available in studio or home design - technically

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equivalent except for additional input signal suppression for the pros; Even home users (optional) do not have to do without the distinctive front handles.



On the output side, there is a pair of speaker terminals (for spades or bananas), which can be accessed via RCA or XLR

The Bryston 7B³ to be tested are the company's second largest mono. The 7s are in the product hierarchy one level above the popular 4-way stereo power amplifier (currently: 4B³), which I was also able to "listen" briefly to and which would also have been worth a separate test - colleague Martin Mertens has recently become the proud owner of one 4-series amps, let's see, maybe we can add something to our dense planning.

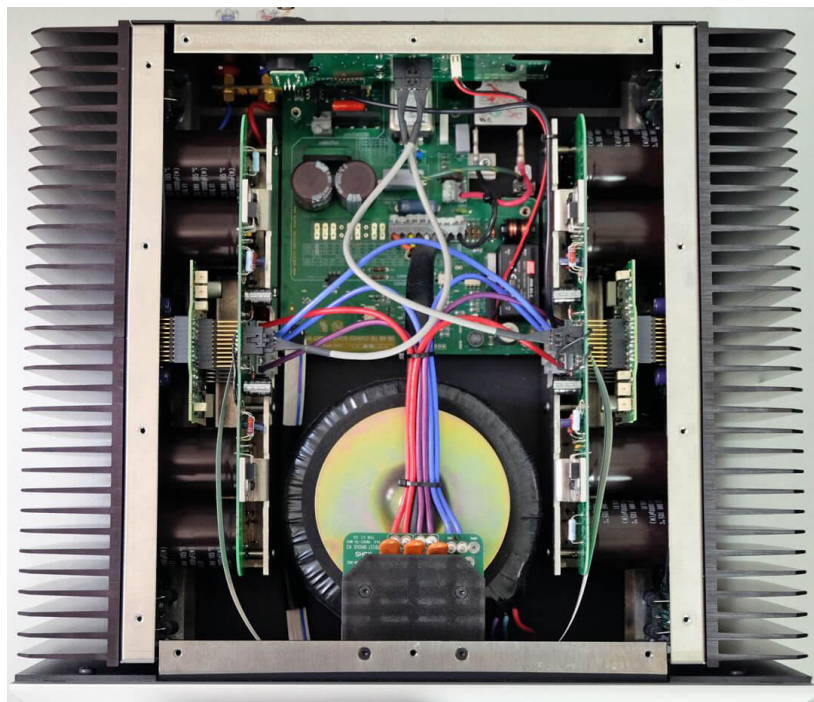
If the Bryston 4B³ already supplies 2 x 300 watts at 8 ohms, the Bryston 7B³ per mono are declared with a mere 600 watts / 8 ohms. An 850 VA toroidal core transformer serves as the substation inside, which, according to Bryston, can, however, serve "extremely high power peaks" if necessary. A particularly massive core and the associated ultra-strong magnetic field make it possible to withstand very high peak currents - last but not least, the filter capacitors, for example, can be refueled directly from the transformer, i.e. without renewed energy consumption from the socket in the respective phase curves, which results in more stable operation and thus more stable Sound image early.



But there was already no lack of juice and power in the previous models - the technical differences between the Squared and Cube models then mainly relate to more sensitive subject areas. The structure of the entrance step now follows a new patented design by Dr. Alexandru Salomie, a longtime Bryston developer. The input buffers shone through further increased linearity / stability as well as reduced THD and noise values. According to Bryston, they are also extremely resistant to contamination of the

input signals due to RF interference or emissions from other audio components. Another decisive evolutionary step is certainly the increased bandwidth of the entire - by the way fully symmetrical - amplification circuit, which at 100 kHz is still not necessarily extravagantly high: Bryston considers even higher bandwidths to be sound counterproductive, not least with regard to the susceptibility to RF interference.

To anticipate what awaits us in the listening course: In particular, the low **distortion of** the Bryston 7B³ is, in my opinion, significantly noticeable in terms of sound - subject "permeability, subtle matter" - when it comes to "airiness" I mean compared to older ones Bryston amps but also welcome differences to be heard.



The lid, which is solidly screwed with steel thread inlets, conceals, among other things, an 850 VA toroidal core transformer and 16 bipolar output transistors specified with 230 watts / 16 amps

The **class AB** output stages of the Bryston 7B³ have remained unchanged compared to the previous model: As before, 16 **bipolar output** transistors each push service, split in half into different polarities or called up for the respective half-waves. With a load capacity of 230 watts / 16 amps per semiconductor, there is also plenty of "displacement".

Before you can use this, for notorious operating instructions ignorants, last but not least, a few notes on the switch-on procedure: The rear rocker switch (Master Circuit Breaker) is by no means used for "hard" on / off, but is a magnet-based device fuse, opening the device and in an emergency, you can commendably avoid changing fuses. Therefore, the first thing to do is to "switch on" the Master Circuit Breaker and then to establish the connection to the socket - if you reverse the order, the Bryston 7B³ will remain completely in deep sleep even after pressing the front button (the actually "hard" on / off) what can evoke unnecessary worry lines on the forehead of ignorant new owners. Oh yes,



Not a power switch in the true sense of the word, the "Master Circuit Breaker" is rather a more advanced, convenient variant of the usual device fuses

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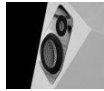
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