

# HiFi Magazine for Digital HiFi

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## BRYSTON BDP-3 DIGITAL PLAYER



In the HiFi field the question often arises how one wants to hear his or her's music or their system.

Bryston obviously defines its preferences.

For quite some time there has been a Bryston BDA-3 DAC in our listening room, and readers may remember that we tested the DAC quite a while ago. However, it is still there, or perhaps we should say it is there again. It was not forgotten because the BDA-3 serves us with tests of streamers and music servers as a standard DAC with which the digital sources are played. It is enormously well equipped, especially with terrific technology which were aimed by their developers at a single goal, the most precise conversion of all signals, exactly that is what the Bryston DAC delivers. The spotlight on its appearance is for others who want it to look good.

It is not an entertainer, but rather the leader of the band who makes certain that every appearance proceeds perfectly, and that the sound is appropriate for every occasion.



These values are important for the Canadian developers because before Bryston concentrated on the HiFi market, the company manufactured equipment for the professional recording arena. Here results are more important than shenanigans and visual appearances. A philosophy which the company has maintained until the present day, and which is also noticeable with our editorial DAC.

Our present test component from Bryston, the **BDP-3**, emanated from the same line of models as the BDA-3. A swift breakdown of the acronym quickly divulges the function: Bryston Digital Player.

Hence a source component that takes over the purely digital side of the audio reproduction, and at the same time exhibits the same consistency as the DAC. How seriously Bryston takes the accurate reproduction of bits one can see everywhere with the BDP-3 because here the topic digital audio has become almost an obsession.



One can notice this especially with the different USB inputs of the player. Altogether Bryston's digital flagship offers a total of eight A-Ports for attaching different components. In the first place these serve for access for external hard drives and USB-sticks, which contain stored music. For listening now and then there are, besides the inputs on the backside of the BDP-3, an additional two inputs on the front which are readily accessible. But Bryston's aspirations really become clear with a look at the rear of the player. Three 2.0 Inputs are supplemented by three Ports according to Standard 3.0 which make possible a clearly raised data rate when suitable components are connected. These interfaces are especially suitable for connecting bulk storage units and selective reading of music. In contrast the USB Inputs with lesser standard are there to move the data streams to a DAC.

Besides the distinction of the blue labeled 3.0 and white labeled 2.0 Inputs one quickly notices that two of the High-Speed Inputs are separately inserted into the cabinet. These two inputs are connected to a different bus internally, which regulates the data transmission separately from the other six. This was done in view of other DAC manufacturers, because certain models require to be the single connected system on the bus. Those who use a DAC like our BDA-3 can simply use any input because the Bryston DAC is as flexible as the BDP-3 player.

This is also true for ethernet connections which can be alternatively accomplished by cable or by WLAN. However, the wireless connection of the BDP-3 into a network requires a USB-Dongle and a one-time connection of the player by means of a cable. Alternatively, the player can be fitted with an internal wireless module which replaces the Dongle. Basically, with such a component a cable is the first choice, however those who don't want to deal with long cable connections will certainly appreciate the WLAN capabilities.



The network is then also a further means to convey music to the BDP-3. Network storage can make its music available in the library of the BDP-3 player, and thanks to SharePort-Integration the use of streaming services through Air-Play are also possible. Thanks to complete integration the catalog of Tidal can even be directly used through the BDP-3. Finally, there is another method to supply the Bryston player with the necessary data. A hard drive can be installed in the player, with which it can be upgraded to a music server. Even ripping, playing, or burning of CDs is then possible, however it requires ownership of a BOT-1-Disc transport of the manufacturer.

Besides SATA and USB interfaces the BDP-3 offers three additional connection schemes. DACS with PCM signals can be provided via BNC or AES/EBU, while the HDMI connection is able to transfer a DSD bitstream. In contrast to this, and to both S/PDIF versions, the USB connection is the only one which can work with more than 192 kHz sampling rates. DACs like our BDA-3 receive signals up to 384 kHz with 32 bits, and also the DSD compatibility is raised to 5.6 MHz.

So, the BDP-3 is well equipped to work together with practically any DAC, and at the same time exploit the HiRes possibilities.

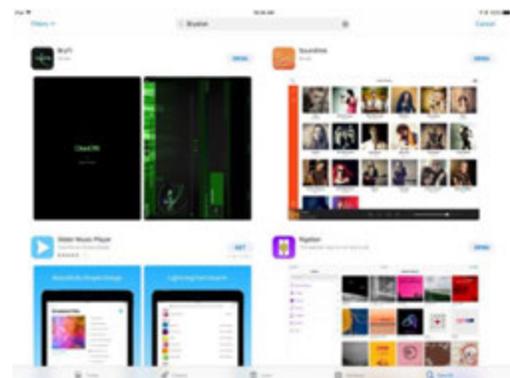


For the optimal organization of the many data streams the central data processor of the Bryston player was equipped with appropriate hardware. A swift Intel-Celeron located on a specially built motherboard for the BDP-3 is supported by enormous eight gigabyte main storage units. Many other high-end source components already boast when they have a quarter of these available. But for the Canadians it's more a matter of reaction speed and precision in the reproduction and not about boasting. The same thing holds true for the other parts of the player including the power supply. For a digital source component, the power supply is almost

over designed, and supplies thanks to its linear buildup energy without any breakdowns. No matter what kind of playback one uses with the BDP-3, the performance should just be correct.

Likewise, flexible just like the choice of sources, is the operation of the digital player. Basically, the BDP-3 is operated with a web menu which calls up smart phones or computers via the browser of a tablet. While playback functions always remain at the upper edge of the screen, all menus are displayed below, and can be chosen from the list located at the lower edge of the screen. Here however the downside of the uncompromising focus of the music reproduction becomes evident, because the configuration options could indeed overwhelm inexperienced users.

In combination with the English language some things here are simply not intuitive, and even for normal users partly irrelevant. People with a passion for the intricacies of computer-audio will certainly find a great sphere of activity here. Those who simply want to hear music just need to click on the Mediaplayer-button, and choose the desired title there. Here the web menu is then comparable with classical apps, and offers an oversee able library selection. Since Bryston is aware that some users would like a simpler operation the BDP-3 offers still other operating modes. Thanks, due to Room-Ready-Certification the player can also be selected via a favored music program and inserted into a multiroom system. Alternatively, the streaming capabilities of the component can be used by means of the appropriate apps for iOS and Android. These must support the Music Player Demon, MDP, which is used by the BDP-3 for playback. Different free and premium apps are recommended by the manufacturer (Bryston). Apple users are well served by means of a nicely configured interface with Glider, while Android users are well taken care of by M.A.L.P.



Those who configured their house with a smart control system like Crestron or AMX, can likewise use this for control of their BDP-3. So, there are sufficient options to get to music. However, a specific app for the BDP-3 by the manufacturer would also not be a bad idea. There however

one has more of an eye on the tonal values of the system which in consideration of the performance of the player is absolutely understandable.

Bryston can certainly be proud of the result which the BDP-3 delivers. Exactly like our Byston BDA-3 it simply manages to pull everything out of the signal, no bit is left out. Let's not make a gift of any information, rather reveal everything and create the best preconditions for the work of DAC, amplifier, and loudspeakers. That is its mantra. This strategy leads to an enormously detailed sound, with tremendous dynamics. The Bryston combination replicates large orchestras like being in a philharmonic hall. Intimate jazz numbers seem to be on a small stage in dark taverns.



No matter what one presents to the player, it reveals the necessary characteristics, but at the same time the playing despite the exceptional detail never sounds strained or muffled. At all times the player keeps its openness and plays light-footed while the appropriate neutrality for a source device is always maintained so that the Bryston BDP-3 player always upholds its studio virtues. Exactly like the DAC it rather stays in the background and puts others into the limelight, in this case the music itself.

The BDP-3 does almost everything correctly, whether bulk storage, NAS, streaming service, or Internet radio, it considers the source irrelevant. It masters all formats and delivers HiRes in almost all resolutions. Its connection capabilities are well thought out, the used technology equally high-class as the workmanship, and thanks to different options in matters Apps and player programs the partially somewhat involved operation hardly worth talking about. Whoever is looking for an absolutely dependable digital source in order to hear her or his music instead of the equipment will hit pay dirt at Bryston.

*Philipp Schneckeburger*

## HiFi Evaluation

**“Only a few source components like the Bryston BDP-3 are as logically designed for accurate music reproduction. All digital options are offered, and the player on an ongoing basis makes certain that optimum results are retrieved from the digital bits. A flexible source component with character but without star allures.”**

*Translated from the German by Peter Ullman*