



**Memo: To All Bryston Customers,
Subject: B100 SST Review – English Translation.**

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Powerful Impression

BRYSTON B100-SST INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER

Bryston only shows up with new products during jubilee years, but when it does, they're the right ones. For example the B100-SST integrated amplifier, only the second one in the 25 year history of the product.



While the first Bryston integrated power amplifier made its appearance rather inconspicuously, the new one now appears clearly more self-confident: The Canadians endowed the 3500 Euro B100-SST amplifier with a cabinet three times as high, and relocated the heat sinks on the outside as visible evidence of its power handling capacity. However no reason for nostalgia for friends of the little 60 BRI (AUDIO 2/97, 2400 Euro): Bryston pledges continuity, and leaves the “oldie” in its line-up.

The B100 is not only the more powerful unit, but clearly also the more modern amplifier. Mechanical switches and controls gave way to electronic controls and encapsulated relays, and the remote control can now control all functions and not just the volume. That's progress! A "phono" input is available for an up-charge (400 Euro), and likewise a Digital-to-Analog module (700 Euro) *[DAC is now standard - editor]*. The latter acts like a relic from a time when mechanically up-to-date, but in their digital technology outdated, CD players still required such an add-on. In the meantime one is better off to look around for a new CD player, rather than to possibly affect the sound with outside D to A converters. But in order to connect to a digital Sat-Receiver this option is truly topical. The analog outputs of such receivers are generally kept quite simple, while the digital connection provides the listener with tonally convincing access to overwhelming DVB-Radio Programs.

Continuity is also assured by the almost complete absence of surprises in the Bryston technology. Two large transformers, supported by numerous voltage regulators, separately supply the right and left stereo halves *[editor – there are in fact 3- transformers – 2 for the analog section and 1 for the digital stage]*. According to old custom Bryston constructs the individual amplifier circuits out of many individual discrete transistors, compared to today's prevalent usage of amplifier (IC) chips, and thereby assures less distortion and better sound quality. The fact is that the distortion of less than 0.004 percent of the output voltage at 10 volts (which represents a very high room sound level) is exceptionally low, and in its character it is soft rather than hard. The Bryston B100 amp reaches its limit at 133 watts into eight ohms, 176 watts into four ohms, and with an AUDIO recognition number of 68 it is capable of driving all current loudspeakers. Apropos continuity: Bryston is confident in its own work and provides a 20 year warranty. That is very reassuring, and justifies the elevated price for a long-term investment.

The sound quality of the B100 amp in some ways also represents a confidence inspiring gauge, because it does not try to deliver polished glossy tonal brightness or comforting soft basic sounds as quick "Aha adventures", rather to the contrary, it attracts attention by not providing anything spectacular at first.

FIRST OPPONENT: MARANTZ

With this strategy it makes the opulently equipped Marantz PM-11 amp (AUDIO 12/04) appear astonishingly pale. With the Japanese component the voice of Madonna came across comparatively lightly, while with the Bryston amp her song "Frozen" ("Ray of Light", Warner) was presented with more drive and spirit. The B100 amp though remained more two dimensional and more down-to-earth, while the supply forceful Marantz amp supplied the sound with more depth and opulence. Despite this the Bryston amp was able to gain minute advantages with its more realistic deadpan approach compared to the doughty and nonchalantly acting 110 point Marantz amp.

IN THE LINE OF FIRE: ACCUPHASE

Whether this hair-thin head start justifies the obligatory 5Point-Step in the "Best List", was supposed to be resolved by the classic MA 6900 amplifier from McIntosh (AUDIO 12/01). First of all the American amp substantiated its status with gluttonous opulence, it let Paolo Conte creak and growl with larger chest volume ("Elegia", Atlantic), and finally it conjured the more natural image between the speakers. However in precarious passages the sumptuous amplifier, twice the price of the Bryston amp, also demonstrated weaknesses, and let the singing advocate smack somewhat and also lisp. Here the Bryston amp scored with very clean articulation.

By itself the Mac could only have contested the newcomer's 115 points with the greatest of effort, but it was somewhat easier for the 4500 Euro Accuphase E-308 amp (AUDIO 12/04). The latter made the Bryston representation seem a bit small scale and pale, for instance with the powerful grand piano on track 2 of the new AUDIO test CD. The B100 amp must yield to the suppleness and authority of the firmly implanted 115 point rival.

STAND-OFF: SYMPHONIC LINE

Finally for an accurate comparison another classic was at hand, the Symphonic Line RG 9 amp in its fourth incarnation (Test in AUDIO 12/04, 110 points). This lovingly fine-tuned small series amplifier is always popular because of its refreshingly immediate reproduction. Here Mark Knopfler appeared to almost intone as if for a broadcast ("Sailing to Philadelphia", Mercury; SACD), while the Bryston amp maintained its somewhat reticent conversational quality. On the other hand, the B100 amp sounded more pleasant in the middle frequencies, compared to the at times somewhat "wiry sounding" Symphonic Line. In their main features both components count

among the most business-like and honest amplifiers, which after countless comparative listening tests, lost nothing to each other.

Therefore it's definite: The Bryston B100 amp is extremely well positioned among the 110-Point amplifiers. It doesn't assume this rank lightly, as the Marantz PM-11 did at one time, rather its strong performance makes the tonal margin of the far more expensive 115-Point group razor thin.

CONCLUSION

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As a typical Bryston component the B100 integrated amplifier exhibits the charisma of a first-rate instrument: Highly functional, solid quality workmanship, and anticipated long life. Especially because of these qualities Bryston power amplifiers like the Model 9B-ST are in constant use as "working tools" at AUDIO. The B100 integrated amplifier awaits the same "fate" - that says everything!

Verdict Reference Class

CAPTIONS:

- **Secure is secure:** a volume control adjustment, free from tear and wear, operates Behind the massive rotary knob.
- **Accomplished:** The row of transistors in the rear has been reinforced, the ICs in front control and regulate.
- **Tamed:** The circuitry for "Soft-Start" and the prevention of transformer hum is located on the transformers.
- **The joy in switching:** The outside link separates the preamp section from the amp section. The B100 can be remotely controlled via an RS-232 connector (arrow). The trigger output below it can be activated with one of the inputs.

Translated from the German by Peter Ullman