

BRYSTON



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REVIEW

JANUARY 2024

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Bryston BHA-1 Headphone Amplifier: Editor's Choice 2023



Because of the nature of headphone testing and listening, there is no one size fits all amplifier for planars, electrostatic, dynamic and AMT headphones. It doesn't exist and that's perfectly fine.

The Bryston BHA-1 Headphone Amplifier has been around for awhile and it took some time for us to secure a review sample. It was most certainly worth the wait.

For those unfamiliar with Bryston, the Canadian manufacturer has been one of the premier brands out of the Great White North for over four decades with a sterling reputa-

tion for reliability and customer service.

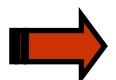
Their extensive range of components and loudspeakers have never been that affordable, but most dedicated Bryston customers point to decades of use and high-end sound quality as evidence of their long-term value. It's a fair point to make at a time when brands keep recycling their product lineups every few years with minor adjustments.

Bryston also goes the extra mile with their packaging that is designed to keep your purchase well protected whilst typically be-

ing shipped by those with clumsy hands and poor handling skills.

The amplifier is available in either black or silver finishes and offers the trademark Bryston tank-like build quality.

The BHA-1 is extremely capable with a wide range of headphones, but fans of the award winning Sennheiser HD800 and the rest of the series need to take a hard look at the Bryston: **because it may be one of the best amplifiers we have ever tried with these award-winning headphones.**





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ONE OF THE BEST HEADPHONE AMPLIFIERS

The Sennheiser HD800 can be a tough pair of headphones to drive with solid state amplification; too much infusion of light and neutrality is not always a great thing with these headphones.

Right out of the gate, the BHA-1 made it clear that it has an abundance of power; we were able to achieve normal listening levels with the volume in the 35 to 40% range and on the low gain setting.

The cavernous soundstage that is the trademark of the HD800s extended well beyond the ear cups and those who love listening to binaural recordings will be enthralled by what this combination can achieve in that regard.

The Bryston will never be confused with a tube amplifier, but texture and tone through the HD800?

Hell hath frozen over.



The Bryston BHA-1 blurs that line rather significantly offering up a cleaner sounding and more detailed presentation than any of the tube amplifiers in my collection, but with a warmer tonal balance than I would have expected.

The Sennheiser HD700 and Drop HD6xx also performed extremely well with the BHA-1; the Bryston has a tremendous degree of control in the low end and the infusion of color added an enhanced sense of presence in the midrange with both headphones.

The BHA-1 also took on the highly acclaimed Pass Labs HPA-1 and in many cases bested it with some of the best headphones in my collection.

Consider this a must listen if you are looking for a final train stop on the personal audio express.