



# Bryston BP-17<sup>3</sup> preamplifier & 3B<sup>3</sup> stereo power amplifier

SUPPLIED TO DRIVE THE PMC MB2<sub>SE</sub> SPEAKERS FOR REVIEW, THIS PRE/POWER COMBINATION FROM THE CANADIAN MANUFACTURER GAVE KEVIN FISKE CONSIDERABLE CAUSE FOR THOUGHT

**Blindsided.** There is no other word that better describes how I felt on hearing Bryston's BP-17<sup>3</sup> and 3B<sup>3</sup> pre-power pairing for the first time. This Canadian built combination was loaned by Bryston's UK distributor, the speaker manufacturer PMC, as a fall-back lest my own 211 tube amplifier failed to drive adequately the review pair of PMC MB2<sub>se</sub> speakers (the review of which you have probably just read).

In the event this solid-state current *was* required. My tubes sounded lovely as always, but simply ran out of grunt when asked to make the MB2s go loud. I decided enough was enough, disconnected the tube amp and put the Bryston solid state combination in its place. The change took all of five minutes, but it overturned 20 years of Fiske world view.

Readers smarter than me will be thinking to themselves: "Huh. Twenty years? He really should have got out more." I must bow my head in humility, but I tender some mitigation. In 1999 I bought a pair of Bryston 7B monoblocks based a strong published review. However, while they had been intended as

my forever amplifiers, the 7Bs were supplanted in short order in my system by Class A single-ended tubes. Many buyers and reviewers loved that generation of the 7B for its 600 Watts into eight Ohms, but I found them to sound grainy, hard, and bright. In fairness, many other manufacturers' Class B' amplifiers of the time were guilty of the same sins.

And so, for me, it was Class A from then on. I have lived with the side 'benefit' of predominantly second order harmonic distortion, and the relative lack of room-filling power, because, done well, and to my ears, Class A has a sweet sonic rightness that seems to get closer to a natural sound. Perhaps