

Bryston BDA-1



FIVE STARS - * * * * *

The BDA-1 is an excellent DAC and will produce great results provided your source (and source material) is good enough

- For: A neutral, dynamic and insightful performer; plenty of inputs; sturdy build quality
- Against: Plain appearance may not impress

Stand alone digital-to-analogue converters are big news again. After a decade or so pushed to hi-fi's sidelines, these number-crunching boxes are regaining relevance thanks to the use of computers as source components.

If you have an uncompressed music file on your laptop or PC, send it to a high-quality DAC and the sound coming out of your speakers will be proper hi-fi rather than something only suitable for background listening.

Let's not forget a DAC remains a good way of upgrading an older CD player, too.

No-nonsense, quality build

Ordinary: that's the first word that comes to mind when taking the Bryston BDA-1 out of its box.

There's no hint of glamour here, but get past the plain appearance and lack of luxury touches, and things get better. Much better.



Build is as solid as you'd expect from a company like Bryston. Its products are born of the Pro-world where ruggedness and long life carry infinitely more weight than fancy looks.

As far as DACs go, this is no stripped-down unit. It has eight inputs, a digital bypass, should you want to do any extra signal processing, and both balanced and unbalanced stereo outputs.

Let the music play

Regardless of source, the BDA-1 simply doesn't add much of itself to the sound, so what you get is a tonally neutral presentation of considerable insight and strong dynamics.

Listen to the likes of Kanye West's *808s & Heartbreak* set and the rhythms are delivered with unflustered crispness, but it's the Bryston's stability and overall balance that grabs the attention.

This is an unassuming DAC that leaves the recording to take the glory. It's perfectly at home with all types music, sounding as comfortable with Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* as it does with Britney's latest.

Almost too grand for a plain metal box may not sound like a sensible exchange, but if you love music, have a tired-sounding CD player or a large music collection on a hard drive, the BDA-1 is a great buy.

What-Hi-Fi?

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<http://whathifi.com/Review/Bryston-BDA-1/>