



NAD 3020 Integrated Amplifier

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The legendary NAD 3020 is one of the most successful integrated amplifiers ever marketed. The timing of its release played a key role in its success. When the NAD 3020 intro'd in London in 1978 for all of 80 pounds (about \$135), it entered a market dominated by Japanese-made receivers—puffed-up beasts with eye-catching knobs and optimistic power ratings but generally disappointing sonics. The unpretentious NAD 3020 espoused a no-frills aesthetic and offered modest power ratings, with an emphasis on meaningful features and real-world performance rather than on bells and whistles and lab-test measurements. It also marked the debut of the 3020's creator, engineer Bjorn Erik Edvardsen, currently NAD's Director of Advanced Development.

At 20 watts, the 3020 was no heavyweight but each watt was honest. A high-voltage design, it used the powerful output transistors typically found in larger amps. Coupled with a "dual-mode power supply," in which the output stage was only loosely regulated, the 3020 was able to supply the high voltages needed for good transient behavior and large current swings at lower voltages for driving low-impedance loads—down to 2 ohms.

The NAD 3020 had four inputs including a solid-performing phono stage capable of handling moving-magnet or high-output moving-coil cartridges. The preamp

and amp sections could be split from each other. Tone controls and loudness contour could both be bypassed—a capability that enhanced street cred among purist audiophiles. And thanks to Edvardsen's innovative technology, terms like "Soft Clipping" and "Full Disclosure" power ratings soon became mainstays in the high-end lexicon, as did his unintentionally humorous "BEE" initials, which bedeck NAD products to this day.

The 3020 amassed an amazing sales record, topping well over a million units sold, and became the model for budget performance emulated countless times over the years. TAS labeled the 3020 as one of the ten most significant amps of all time. In 2013, the 40th year of the company, NAD launched a range of digital products, including the 3020's spiritual descendant, a digital integrated amplifier proudly bearing the name NAD D 3020. **tas**