



**“ELEGANT AND FLEXIBLE ACTIVE MONITORS
WITH OUTSTANDING SOUND”**



HECO

Ascada 2.0



- + Appealing look
- + Dynamic pulse fidelity
- + Powerful bass range
- + Enjoyable sound
- + Flexible application



HECO

Lise-Meitner-Str. 9 · 50259 Pulheim · Germany · www.heco-audio.de

AREADVD.de
January | 2015

HECO Ascada 2.0

Lise-Meitner-Str. 9 · 50259 Pulheim · Germany · www.heco-audio.de



For EUR 599, Heco delivers in a high-gloss black or white finish the Ascada 2.0 Active Speakers with Bluetooth® plus aptX® and USB-DAC for customers with multimedia needs. The set of 2-way bass reflex speakers consists of an active master box and passive slave box, both transducers are connected to one another by a speaker cable that comes with the set. There is no external power supply unit, rather it is built into the Master box and comes with just a power cable with euro plug. The speakers measure 280 mm high, 184 mm wide and 284 mm in length, dimensions that make them highly versatile for many applications.

To begin the test, we first connected the active loudspeaker system to a PC using the corresponding USB cable and used the USB DAC built into the Ascada 2.0.

Thanks to the 2 x 35 watt peak output, the Ascada speakers can really crank it out – the only criticism is their over-cautious protective fuse which, during the test, was set off without need, thus terminating the level drive. It's a shame because the Ascada 2.0 speakers are impressive due to their solid level stability and flawless dynamics. It also only happened once, otherwise the stylish multifunctional speakers were fed with tracks from our playlist designed to test the limits of sound. "Feel me" by Paris Lover featuring A*M*F in a remix from KLARDUST is a true house blaster that makes you want to dance. Unfortunately, this track was not a good one to start with because the Ascada 2.0 had a few problems with the very hard bass, the sound was somewhat stiff and wooden, it lacked sovereignty. However, "The Biz" by Twoloud was a totally different story: The two smart active transducers were truly in their element with this track, producing a full, clear and powerful bass while offering strong resolution and outstanding acoustic sound in the room.

The speakers should be set up at a certain distance from one another to create the space they need for their sound to unfold – they then build up a clean, well-defined and wide-ranging stage effect which allows for an astoundingly completely, lively and voluminous sound. "We Love Trance" by René Ablaze & Jam da Bass is also a great track to demonstrate the strengths of the Ascada 2.0 speakers: To achieve course dynamics at a high level, the downright compact speakers also propel the sound from below – that's what makes listening fun. The active loudspeaker system is recommended as a complete sound solution even for living rooms – rooms measuring up to about 23 square meters are no problem – the Ascada 2.0 packs spaces of this size with a very high-quality sound. The very solidly designed MDF housing ensures stiffness so that it produces no annoying sounds. The high-gloss (also comes in high-gloss white) black surface finish of our test sample is nice, but nothing new and its minimal "orange-peel surface" can be seen in the right light.

"Freedom Every Day" by Torsten Goods (HiRes Audio, Flac, 96 kHz) demonstrated that the Ascada 2.0 speakers are also wonderfully well-suited for Jazz.

The separation of the voice and the instruments as well as the acoustic contours are flawless; moreover, the sound detaches nicely from both speakers. The Ascada 2.0 speakers create a perfect stage effect and sound good due to the clean, never uncomfortably shrill, truly transparent as well as comfortably high treble range – typical Heco. The speakers build up a fantastic volume with Diana Krall's "All Or Nothing At All" (HiRes Flac, 96 kHz). It's amazing how deep the sound delves into the bass range. Considering the size of the speakers, the depth is downright good and it actually astounded us. Diana's voice demonstrated many characteristics typical for the voice – without doubt, the Ascada 2.0 speakers can definitely handle complex music and are in no way a stop-gap solution.

With Joe Coltrane's version of "Summertime", the active transducers (HiRes Flac 96 kHz) prove that they have no fear of tackling brilliantly performed saxophone solos head on. In this case, however, a very sophisticated music listener may want to hear even finer dynamic nuances. However, this is a bit too much to expect from speakers in the EUR 600 price range, yet for the money you invest, the Ascada 2.0 definitely deliver. On the other hand, the track "Diamante" by Sandra & Tony Alessi are available in Flac 96 kHz HiRes. Here, too, the active loudspeakers produce a pleasant and clean acoustic nuances, only when the singer raises his or her voice to a high-pitch level do the speakers' capacity to differentiate drop a bit. Also, the female voice hisses slightly. Overall, you have to keep the price category in mind, and for only EUR 600, these speakers perform very well.

So, do the Bluetooth® connection and playback work smoothly? This is the question that we addressed next. Bluetooth® with aptX® is included in the standard package Using the "Pair" button on the compact remote control, which instead of finicky membrane keys, has comfortable rubber buttons, we were able quickly connect Bluetooth to our Apple iPhone 6 Plus. And the sound that the Ascada 2.0 has to offer is very pleasing indeed. With Andrea Bocelli's beautiful pieces "L'Attesa" and "Un Nuovo Giorno," the loudspeakers from the Pulheim-based company, are rightly impressive and ensure not only a comfortable overall acoustic sound, but also score well from a dynamics perspective and when it comes to separation with good vocal playback. As we have already heard from other examples, the Ascada 2.0 speakers have a markedly likable design, so that you can also enjoy long listening sessions without the sound ever becoming annoying. The 25 mm tweeter with silk compound fabric dome produces a brilliant sound, it is never sharp and moves through the room really well.

It can range from sincere and emotional to exciting and emphatic: "Who is afraid of a deep bass sound?" asks Lorenz Büffel and the party crowd answers: "No one!" That's just how the Ascada 2.0 speakers see it, they skillfully bring the excitement felt on the dance floors of tropical island discos right into your living room.

The Ascada 2.0 speakers are powerful, offering a deep bass sound and pulse fidelity. The bass mid-range speaker measuring 135 mm and equipped with a light long fiber paper cone and a highly resilient voice coil are also outstanding features that allow you to totally crank up the party music. The tough steel speaker basket is the perfect base.

In addition to the already-mentioned USB and Bluetooth® connection ports, the highly versatile Heco Ascada 2.0 speakers have more options to offer. Even the pre-out input for directly connecting a separate active subwoofer is included, very admirable – even though for most purposes the Ascada 2.0 is sufficiently powerful enough without the extra active bass. Optical and coaxial digital input, stereo cinch analog input, smart phone charging via the USB, etc, 5V, 2,1 A) show that – except for the symmetrical XLR terminal – simply nothing is missing. The loudspeaker connecting cables provided for connecting the active Master speaker to the passive Slave speaker are high quality. This basically makes no difference when listening to the track "Ping Pong" by Armin van Buuren unless the proud owner of the Ascada 2.0 gets worried that the USB terminal will fall out immediately due to the deep bass thrum produced by the Dutch start DJ. This worry not to be underestimated is completely unfounded, at least in test operation. Full and clear with pulse fidelity, these two speakers get down to work and also emphatically spin the electronic effects throughout the listening area. The fact that the very low bass does not massively deliver the way larger speakers/subwoofers/amplifier combinations would, should come as no surprise, after all this is a pair of active speakers in the EUR 600 (price for the pair) league.

Conclusion

The Heco Ascada 2.0 active loudspeaker system knows how to impress in the practice test, with its stylish look, pleasing sound and high level of flexibility. For just under EUR 600, you can get a high-quality pair of outstanding speakers that perform well for all music genres and consist of a Master box and a Slave box that can be connected using the loudspeaker cable that comes with the package. The angled front gives them an elegant look and is also responsible for a harmonious group delay. Except for the symmetrical XLR terminal, Heco has provided for all relevant connecting inputs. The speakers also come with a remote control that can be used to fully operate the Ascada 2.0 system.

"Elegant and flexible active monitors with an outstanding sound"

