

# HECO

## Ascada 300 BTX

### "PARTY ON"



HIFIDIGITAL REVIEW	
HECO ASCADA 300 BTX	
SOUND:	2-3
HANDLING:	2
CONFIGURATION:	3
MATERIAL / WORKMANSHIP:	1-2
PRICE/PERFORMANCE	
★★★★★	
EXCELLENT	



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Lise-Meitner-Str. 9 · 50259 Pulheim · Germany · [www.heco-audio.de](http://www.heco-audio.de)

Hifi Digital  
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PRICE/PERFORMANCE



## Party on

**Ascada 300 BTX is the elegant name given to a new powered Bluetooth speaker from Heco. HiFi Digital subjected the compact powerhouse to an extensive practical test.**

Fully-fledged "hifi sound" from a powered stereo speaker! This is a boast used by more and more manufacturers when it comes to advertising their wireless systems. Heco, the speaker specialist from Pulheim, even goes so far as to state that its Ascada 300 BTX is capable of generating a sound that is suitable for a party. In terms of its visual appearance the mini system appears very elegant. Its high-gloss lacquered housing is available in a black or white finish and the level of workmanship exhibited is compelling even at second glance. When you remove the grille you can see the Ascada's five chassis. A midrange driver and a fabric dome tweeter are provided for both the left and the right stereo channel. The bass range is catered for by a single 13 cm mono woofer, which is supported by a bass reflex port. Heco's quintet is powered by an integrated Class-D amplifier which generates a considerable output of 160 watts. Signals are delivered to the system in two ways: via Bluetooth or via the analogue mini-jack input. A Y-adaptor cable is even included in the box for the latter option. In terms of Bluetooth connectivity the manufacturer uses "apt-X" – technology. This increasingly popular audio format promises transmission in near CD quality. The user doesn't need to worry about this though. The Bluetooth connection is established extremely easily and all of the music files saved on your phone - immaterial whether they are in a FLAC, WAV or MP3 format – are automatically converted to the apt-X standard during the transfer process. Spea-

king of sound quality: speakers normally need to be positioned a certain distance from the wall to prevent their bass frequencies from being excessively inflated. Walls and corners of the room are notorious for reinforcing the deep and fundamental range in an unnatural manner. The Ascada, however, utilises this effect to its benefit. In any case its design means it is suitable for positioning in a sideboard or on a shelf. The 300 BTX also features four DSP-controlled sound programmes for different genres and individual listening tastes. These provide you with the opportunity to gently adapt the sound to your own taste and preferred style of music. For our listening test we naturally opted for the neutral setting. This is also promoted by the manufacturer as being the most suitable for everyday use. The mini system is operated via the supplied remote control. This can be used to control the level, EQs, input selection and select the standby mode. After a brief look at the manual we connect a Samsung Galaxy S 4 and an Apple iPhone 4 S to the Ascada via Bluetooth. The coupling process is visually indicated by the power LED, which illuminates blue when Bluetooth is active, and by beeps for audible confirmation. We used the smartphone to stream tracks stored as FLAC files to Heco's powered speaker.

## Ready to party

The speaker sounds pleasantly present and surprisingly punchy. To our amazement a spatially tangible sound stage unfolds in front of us with an astonishing breadth and depth. We didn't expect this from such a compact "one box" system. Of course, the Ascada cannot compete with a fully-fledged hifi system and two stereo speakers. Even though the chassis are positioned closely together the stereo panorama generated by the 300

BTX is always impressive. The lower octaves are not forgotten either thanks to the integrated subwoofer. This small woofer reproduces frequencies that are astonishingly deep and marvelously dry for the size of the housing, without ever exaggerating the sound and forcing it into the foreground. If you still want that little bit more, however, you can tweak the sound via the EQ programmes. At this point we would like to give special mention to the extremely sturdy MDF housing. No rattling or rumbling is perceived, even when the speaker is cranked up to the full. This is remarkable, because according to the manufacturer it's capable of generating frequencies down to 32 Hz. The small unit is definitely fit for a party! This claim is reinforced by the USB charging jack at the rear. It means smartphones can be connected and prevented from running out of steam during prolonged parties. To ensure the electronics and speaker chassis have a long service life the amplifier is equipped with an overload protection system. When compared to a Marantz CD 6004 unit, which was connected to the Aux input, the Bluetooth stream was on par in terms of quality. Thanks to the apt-X format these types of powered speaker appear to be a suitable alternative to a hifi system. The Ascada 300 BTX leaves us with an extremely positive impression. It is visually elegant, exhibits solid workmanship, sounds appealing and is in keeping with the times thanks to the apt-X format. It is not only suitable for listening to music in the living room, but can also be cranked up for a party. If space is restricted, it serves as an excellent substitute for a small stereo system. The manufacturer definitely isn't talking nonsense when it promises a fully-fledged "hifi sound".