

# HECO

## Ascada 300 BTX

""... FOR REAL HI-FI SOUND IN THE SMALLEST SPACE""



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It's rare for mobile playback devices today not to feature Bluetooth functionality. The reasons for this are obvious, because in a time when we have powerful smartphones, tablets, and other mobile devices, music needs to be played back quickly and easily. Bluetooth is therefore a requirement. But why would an audio manufacturer come up with the idea of developing a stationary hi-fi component that is primarily supplied via Bluetooth signals? Heco's answer to this is as simple as it is obvious: listening wirelessly may be a trend of our time, but the advantage offered by wireless data transfer is often eliminated by an unsatisfactory sound quality. Heco has therefore worked extremely diligently to create a perfect combination of wireless freedom and acoustic performance - while ensuring everything fits in with the elegant form of the Ascada 300 BTX, which is optionally available in a piano white or piano black finish. The result is definitely one to marvel at.

#### Configuration

As briefly mentioned above, Heco's Ascada 300 BTX is a fully-fledged hi-fi system, and a state-of-the-art one at that. This is obvious at very first glance. The Ascada BTX is based on an extremely solid MDF cabinet, which has been provided with an extremely high-quality glossy finish. This high quality attribute is by no means exaggerated, because any search for inclusions, waves or dull areas will be in vain, even on closer inspection. Instead, the unit is utterly resplendent in bright, brilliant white (as is the case for our test model) or an optional high-gloss black finish. This ensures the perfect conditions for integrating the active wireless system in any elegantly decorated living room, where it will invariably be a real eye-catcher. The lady of the house won't have any objections either, because the soft curves, the high quality surface finish and the almost dainty housing offers optimum opportunities for integrating the unit. The icing on the cake in terms of its design is another elegant accent that Heco has placed on top of the housing in the shape of a metal insert. This bears the embossed brand name and an inscription with the model designation. If you remove the black fabric grille that covers the entire front of the unit, it reveals a view of the underlying chassis that is set flush in the baffle. This is impressive because Heco has remained true to its uncompromising philosophy here and has equipped its beautiful all-in-one device with a flawless three-way stereo configuration. The undisputed focal point of this design is undoubtedly the central long-throw driver, which reproduces all of the frequencies below 180 Hz, i.e. the hard-hitting and deep bass range. Next to this are the two mid-range drivers, which simply seem to be waiting for their cue. With each measuring 92 mm and equipped with a lightweight paper cone, they are responsible for reproducing all of the sound elements up to 3800 Hz; this ensures a high quality reproduction of vocal segments

and details, as well as powerful mids! All sound elements above this frequency are taken over by the two tweeters, which have been physically positioned directly above the aforementioned mid-range drivers. This certainly is impressive and is simply top notch for a Bluetooth speaker! In terms of its housing and configuration Heco's Ascada 300 BTX is in a league of its own. The amplifier unit hasn't been left by the wayside either, as Heco has equipped its wireless speaker with a three-channel digital amplifier, which is capable of producing a total output of as much as 160 watts. An integrated Bluetooth receiver and analogue mini-jack input (AUX In) mean signals can be supplied wirelessly or via a cable connection. And it doesn't stop there for this unit; thanks to its integrated digital signal processor, or DSP for short, four different sound modes can be selected to adjust the sound characteristics to the listener's preference.

#### In practice

First of all I need to address the dimensions again: these have been selected to allow the Ascada 300 BTX to be set up on any sideboard, shelf, rack or cabinet. Better still, as it exhibits a depth of just 25 cm, Heco's beautiful unit will also be suitable for lots of windowsills. This is an important point if the hi-fi system is to ensure a rich, full sound in small rooms where there is insufficient space for a full-blown system. As described, connections can be established within seconds. And this can be said of all media devices (in our test we used an iPhone, iPad and a computer)! In contrast to its rather diminutive figure, the Ascada 300 BTX is rather voluminous and is blessed with a rich fundamental tone and a profound bass range. Even though an imposing bass line is generated when required, there's never a sense of it being overwhelming or annoying. On the contrary, because Heco's chic all-in-one-unit only lets the bass truly unfold when it's actually required. In New Order's "Don't Do It" (transferred from an iPhone via Bluetooth in MP3 format) our test model demonstrated another special feature: speed! The rich drums of the English new-wave band are recreated impressively with a pulse purity that definitely wasn't expected from speakers of this size. This is really fun! So much fun in fact that it led to me browsing through my New Order collection and rediscovering a few treasures in an entirely new quality.

The second phase of the test came a day later with a cover version of Bill Withers' cult hit "Grandma's Hands" by Friend 'n' Fellow. And although there's less agility and punch demanded here, my level of euphoria quickly reached that of the previous day. The excellent configuration exhibited by the Ascada 300 BTX really knows how to whip up enthusiasm, especially in the upper mid range, which turns out to be extremely clean and precise with Constanze Friend's slightly scratchy vocals being provided with the perfect timbre. This excellent level continues right up to the

treble range and is truly impressive with an enormous amount of detail and fine dynamic qualities. There's also no trace of sharpness or annoying screeching at all! This is not just good, it's perfect! Thanks to this excellent feature, our test unit is suitable for playing virtually any kind of music genre. Immaterial whether it's rock, pop or electro, Heco's compact jack-of-all-trades reproduces every track as if it had been developed specifically for it. Our test model is even capable of reproducing classical music in stunning quality, as is the case with Ludwig van Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, which is impressively demonstrated in a performance by the Seattle Symphony Orchestra. In addition to a clean reproduction that is peppered with numerous details, the small Heco unit also seems to be full of energy, enthusiasm and passion, which is quickly electrifying (even though I definitely wouldn't consider myself a die-hard classical fan).

The Ascada 300 BTX is also suitable for other applications and can be used for your TV's speakers via a mini jack connection. The supplied remote control plays a significant role here: this enables direct access to all connected sources and (unlike almost all other Bluetooth speakers) also permits convenient volume adjustment without having to use your smartphone or tablet.

#### Conclusion

Heco's Ascada BTX is a stationary hi-fi system that exhibits excellent workmanship, an exquisite design and state-of-the-art components. Thanks to its enormous wealth of experience in speaker construction and its high investment in development, the Pulheim manufacturer has managed to create an active system that brings wireless transmission to the living room with a new high quality sound. In brief: Heco's Ascada BTX is the best Bluetooth speaker that I have come across to date.