



"Elegant, premium quality active speakers with a superb acoustic performance"



HECO

Ascada 600 Tower



- + Excellent bass performance
- + Huge level stability
- + Sophisticated, superior overall sound
- + High quality workmanship and a chic visual appearance
- + Elegant remote control
- + Display on both speakers



HECO

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

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The full test can be found here:
<http://www.areadvd.de>



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Being active can be expensive – after all it's about looking good and being effective: We're not talking about a private sports and fitness program here, but the extremely good-looking Heco Ascada 600 Tower active speaker, which is filled to the brim with high quality technology: it not only features a Bluetooth module, but also a USB-DAC for direct connection to a PC/notebook. You will need to part with €1,990 to get your hands on the speakers, which is a rather considerable sum, however, our impression when seeing them for the first time was also rather considerable. Both speakers are equipped with a 110 watt power amplifier, while three 125 mm bass chassis in each unit cater for an impressive reproduction of the lower frequencies. In addition, there is also a 125 mm midrange driver and a 25 mm tweeter. Standing at 930 mm tall, 300 mm deep and 185 mm wide, the Ascada 600 Tower, which is either available in a black or white high gloss finish, proves it is definitely in the "living room friendly" category. Thanks to its gently sloping housing, the solid aluminum rings surrounding the chassis and its solid base, the speaker, which features rear bass reflex ports, looks very elegant indeed. The high gloss finish is extremely impressive, even upon closer inspection. The volume can be controlled or the input changed on the speaker itself, and there are also knobs for adjusting the bass and treble range. Both speakers are either connected together wirelessly via Bluetooth (using the aptX standard) or by means of the supplied XLR cable to ensure perfect, lip-synchronized stereo audio. Furthermore, both sound transducers also feature a display in a pleasant color scheme, which is very practical. In terms of connectivity, there's nothing missing. Besides the previously mentioned USB-DAC feature, which can natively process signals up to 96 kHz/24bit, there is also a customary analog stereo RCA input for connecting a conventional DVD/CD player, an optical digital input, a coaxial digital input and a USB charging port (5V/2.1 A) for a smartphone, which can be used, for example, while playing music via Bluetooth. Even this is very well thought-out. Moreover, there is also a pre-out for connecting a wired active subwoofer. Given the enormous bass power generated by the Ascada 600 Tower, however, there is no need to add an additional bass speaker in the majority of cases. The only reason this could change is if the speakers are used to produce even higher levels in large listening rooms measuring over 30 square meters in size. Then it would make sense to think about a dedicated bass speaker. The Heco Celan GT SUB 322A would make a very elegant partner in this case. An elegant aluminum remote control is also supplied with the speakers. This feels very good to hold, and its range and operating angle are satisfactory. The Ascada 600 Tower active speaker definitely looks the part and is lavishly equipped. We are now curious to see whether the elaborate technology is discernible in terms of its audio performance.

Sound

We connected the Ascada 600 Tower to our 2015 MacBook Pro via its USB port. We used the Audirvana Plus software player on our MacBook, which recognized the two Ascada Tower speakers as audio devices straight away. We start in Flac 96 kHz/24bit, with Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 4 in D major.

We select the first Allegro from the Violin Concerto, sit back and listen. What quickly becomes clear is that the Heco speakers are "real classics". No, it wasn't meant like that. We know they are still relatively new on the market. They are really good for classical music. The levels of radiance and brilliance in the treble range are astonishingly pronounced. The 25 mm silk-compound fabric dome does its job extremely well. Spatial illumination, differentiation and dynamics are outstanding. An aluminum wave control sound guide is also integrated. The tweeter, therefore, does a good job and continues smoothly to the midrange driver, which is designed for full-range reproduction. 'Full-range' is the key phrase here; everything integrates superbly well and gives the listener the impression of a complete and cultured sound pattern. The midrange driver features a particularly lightweight, long fiber paper cone, a flat dust cap, a longthrow surround and a heavy-duty voice coil. Yes, there is some truth in it: The midrange driver handles powerful levels exquisitely. And it's not only here that it excels: When not fully challenged by Mozart's Allegro, the "triple bass alignment" with its three woofer chassis, caters for a deep-reaching, powerful and accurate bass range in a wonderfully compelling manner. The woofer and bass-midrange driver are equipped with a sturdy steel basket. Just how well the violin solos are reproduced by Heco's active speaker deserves enormous respect. The level of detail is also very good; you can hear nuances here which some €1,500 floorstanding speakers are simply unable to reproduce with an authentic stereo amplifier.

We then listen to the trance classic "Outside World" by Sunbeam in CD quality (44.1 kHz/16 bit). The "triple bass alignment" can now come into its own. And it does just that: The bass response is hard, precise and practically perfect! The Heco lays everything on the table and generates a rich and lavish performance where other active speakers have long since "waved the white flag" – we are not only impressed, but exalted. What exactly is in these speakers? Something we very much welcome is the so-called "Dual Powered Concept", which also justifies the relatively high price tag. Many active speakers simply come in "deceptive packaging". This is where just one of the speakers, namely the master speaker (on which the connections are also located), is equipped with the amplifier unit for both speakers. The second passive speaker is then integrated by using a standard speaker cable. This isn't the case for the Ascada 600 Tower speakers. You just need two free power sockets; there's no need to connect any cables between the speakers and disrupt the overall appearance (if you select PTP Bluetooth with aptX as your connection – alternatively there's also lip-synchronized playback via the supplied XLR cable).

That's all well and good, but there are much more important advantages in terms of performance: 110 watts RMS is generated by each of the built-in amplifier modules. And the fact that this isn't "just pure theory" is proven emphatically by the Pulheim speakers: The overall reproduction is so powerful, comprehensive and dynamic that you're left wanting to shout "Fire on board". The performance generated by the powerful amplifiers is more than sufficient for rooms up to 30 square meters in size. The internal configuration of the amplifier units illustrates the speakers' capabilities:

Even a toroidal transformer is integrated in each speaker. This means an optimum supply of power is guaranteed at all times. The impeccable layout of the entire electronic system fits in well with our overall impression.

Believe it or not, but the Ascada 600 Tower ups the ante yet again with the Westbam remix of Moby's classic "Feeling So Real". The bass is reproduced with a hardness and quality that we have rarely heard to date. We have listened to this song on lots of different systems, but what the Ascada 600 makes of it is simply terrific. The electronic effects are incorporated in a spatially genuine and faithful manner, while the transitions between the individual frequency ranges are extremely fluid. The extremely sturdy housing doesn't produce any inherent noise, even when subjected to high loads. It has been manufactured from thick MDF panels, which have been reinforced on both sides, and additional internal struts to ensure optimum rigidity. The sturdy base plate, which, like the housing, is optionally available in a black or white high gloss finish, ensures a solid foundation for the slim speaker. Anyway, we are absolutely dumbfounded; the Ascada 600, which proved itself earlier as a classically cultivated speaker, is now presenting itself as a real "party machine".

Let's party a bit more, but this time let's do it wirelessly via Bluetooth. Our Apple iPhone 6s Plus and the two slender Heco speakers connect straight away, leaving us to play the Svenson & Gielen remix of the Brooklyn Bounce track "Bring It Back". A stable Bluetooth connection, solid bass line and broad dynamic range – the two active speakers are also thoroughly compelling with this connection method. The precision of the powerful bass range can be described as superb without any exaggeration. Incidentally, the same can also be said of the spatial electronic effects.

The Heco speakers, however, can also go in a different direction – Andrea Bocelli's "Love in Portofino", for example, is reproduced via Bluetooth with a sound that is emotional, deep, finely nuanced and spatially balanced. As we already know from the previous sound tests, the vocals of the blind Italian tenor are reproduced expertly by the speaker chassis. This example once again demonstrates how well the instruments and vocals are separated from each other. The Ascada 600 Tower scores highly in terms of fine dynamics and arouses enthusiasm with Andrea Bocelli's love song.

Conclusion

Granted, the Heco Ascada 600 Tower active speakers are not exactly a bargain – €2,000 is a considerable sum. However, what you get for the money you invest is superb. The two technically elaborate Tower speakers look chic, exhibit impeccable workmanship and integrate exquisitely in any modern living environment. Due to their rather conservative dimensions, we would never have thought the two speakers were capable of generating such an acoustic performance with their powerful 110 watt amplifiers: A powerful, precise bass range, finely detailed mids and a brilliant, lively treble range demonstrate the true class of the active speakers from Pulheim.