

# lite



"...top-class sound from a complete setup!"



# HECO

## Ascada 600 Tower



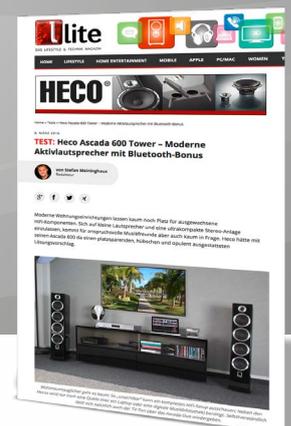
TOP CLASS

SOUND: 1.1

PRACTICE: 1.0

CONFIGURATION: 1.0

PRICE/PERFORMANCE: **VERY GOOD**



# HECO

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

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## First impressions count! Can the Ascada 600 score here?

Finish, selection of materials, design and variety of use - these are probably the four aspects that are first assessed automatically as soon as you get your hands on a new hi-fi test object. In the case of our Heco active loudspeakers, it is immediately noticeable from the cardboard box, without even opening it, that we are dealing with a real heavyweight here. Anyone intending to transport the speakers must prepare themselves for a total weight of 37 kg. Although an appreciable mass can certainly be reckoned with based on the 185 x 930 x 300 mm dimensions, this weight is nevertheless a bit of a surprise. These really are solid speakers and this mass can definitely be regarded as a quality feature. The same is true for the very carefully finished surface. Heco offers a white and - as provided for this test - a black version. With a high-gloss lacquer finish, the loudspeakers look extremely elegant and visually enhance any living room through their clear, straightforward design. The "hardware" of the Ascada 600 loudspeaker comprises a 25 mm tweeter, 3 x 125 mm subwoofers and a mid-range driver of the same size - for each speaker, of course. These can be concealed behind the front covers or completely exposed, as you wish. To do this, it is sufficient to remove the lightweight fabric covers by pulling them gently forwards. We prefer the latter because the metal-framed domes really are an eye-catcher and a sight that will most likely even please the lady of the house. All of these valuable individual components are accommodated in an enclosure made of mutually stabilising and cross-braced MDF boards. The first test phase can therefore be summarised as follows: With its Ascada 600 Towers, Heco provides a set of elegant, high-quality finished loudspeakers. They appear solid while, at the same time, enhancing the look of the living room, and combine modern technologies with tried-and-tested "Heco components" - such as kraft paper diaphragms.

## Bluetooth, USB, DAC, etc.

Now let's take a look at the connectivity features and other controls. At the front, both speakers have small LED indicators (red for 'Standby', white for 'In operation'). The right speaker (master speaker) even has a fully-fledged display. This shows the current operating mode (Bluetooth, optical digital input, coaxial digital input, USB audio input, analogue input) as well as the volume setting. These source inputs are located at the rear. Located here, in addition to a power switch, a power supply voltage selector switch and the on-off switch are a USB charger port, a USB port, an optical and a coaxial digital input, a stereo input (RCA), a subwoofer output, an XLR connection and, last but not least, the pairing button for Bluetooth use. This wireless use is very user-friendly, with the connection quickly established by carrying out the following steps.

1. Press the pairing button via the remote control or on the unit ("BT" flashes in the display)
2. Activate Bluetooth on the source device (e.g. smartphone)
3. Select "Ascada 600 Tower" from the list of available BT receivers

When these steps are followed, the two devices connect with each other automatically, with the successful establishment of the connection also indicated by an acoustic signal. It should be said here that we did not notice any difference in quality whatsoever between the Bluetooth signal transmission and operation via an analogue audio cable (cinch). Normal distances that can be expected between a smartphone and the loudspeaker in an apartment are no problem at all for a stable Bluetooth connection (aptX standard)!

## Remote control

And while we're on the subject of remote control: Rarely have we seen such a high-quality remote control device that is also this easy to use. Simply and stylishly designed in classy solid metal, the clearly structured infrared transmitter fits well in your hand and can also be operated in an absolutely intuitive way with its 13 clearly marked buttons.

## Heco Ascada 600 – top-class sound from a complete setup

The solid-looking high-quality speakers simply promise so much power that we go for it straightaway this time by starting our listening test with a real bang in terms of bass and dynamics. We kick off with the Beastie Boys and their 30-year-old classic "(You Gotta) Fight for Your Right (to Party!)" – played back in CD resolution from a laptop via USB. The acoustic leap from 0 to 100 is immediately impressive: The wild "party screams", the driving drums, the distinctive guitar riffs and, of course, the rich bass immediately flood the room. Although this is already very good, it can still be tweaked a bit more. After a bit of fine-tuning via the tone control on the back of the master speaker, the living room then rocks to such an extent that you can't help but think of the band's iconic music video. The Ascada 600's roll out an intentionally loud and, at the same time, impressively dense carpet of sound. And all of this without being abrasive and with no distortions, but with seemingly endless power reserves. An impressively intense start, to be followed by the next challenge for any speaker: In stark contrast to the Beastie Boys, we now put on "Mr. Slowhand" Eric Clapton with his sad ballad "Tears In Heaven". A song that gives you goose bumps but can only develop its full impact if the hardware permits. And that's exactly what the 600's do.

Clapton's fragile voice and his typically emotional guitar playing could now definitely bring tears to your eyes - but we're working. Here, too, with these quieter tones, there is not the slightest trace of any noise to disturb the pleasure of listening. There's nothing else to match the Hecos in this respect because, where you can hear a slight peeping sound or background noise from most active loudspeakers, the 600's simply remain silent. Very good! After loud rock/hip-hop and a quiet ballad, we then finish off the test with a third genre. We opt for Robbie Williams' first swing album "Swing When You're Winning" and play the fabulous duet with Frank Sinatra, alive only on tape unfortunately. Two great voices, soft tones and an orchestra that sometimes performs in the background so as to take the initiative in other places. Nor can something like this be reproduced adequately by every hi-fi system or active loudspeaker. But the Hecos can, and once again we are more than just satisfied. Stage, presence, graduation - it's all there. Cleanly elucidated and with virtually perfect timbre. In brief: the perfectly balanced treble and bass ranges together with the fine differentiation of vocals and instruments simply ensure a great musical experience. After a cross-section of very contrasting genres, we have to pay Heco a very big compliment. The Ascada 600 Towers are a totally safe option in every field of music, providing a strong performance and more than meeting expectations. They are just the thing for those who want to experience music rather than just listen to it!

## Conclusion

If we had to summarise things briefly, we would probably describe the Heco Ascada 600 Towers as "hi-fi powerhouses with style and Bluetooth". That says it all, in principle. The look is convincing with clear lines and a simple design, the materials and finish are high-quality, and the technology used provides for plenty of dynamism and power. The sound check convinced us completely that this power is not achieved at the expense of sound quality. The range of features provided, the balanced reproduction and the possibility to emphasise the bass and treble tones individually and in a distinctly audible way simply leave nothing more to be desired. Although the price per pair is not really cheap at just under €2000 - if you want to be in the Champions League in terms of sound and resolution, you just have to invest. And if, besides the performance of the active loudspeakers reported here, we also take account of the fact that the 600's basically replace a complete hi-fi system, the price-performance ratio is then definitely right. In our view: This is a worthwhile purchase that will also make demanding and sophisticated hi-fi experts happy!