

"Imposing, high-quality finished floor-standing speaker with top-class sound qualities"



## HECO

Concerto  
Grosso

stereoplay  
Highlight

Sound:

**ABSOLUTELY  
TOP CLASS**

Price/performance:

**VERY GOOD**

Overall rating:

**VERY GOOD**



Stereoplay  
Edition 1 | 2015

## HECO

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## Gentle Giant

The traditional Heco brand has presented itself with a fitting gift for its 65th anniversary in the form of a veritable floor-standing speaker: The Concerto Grosso truly lives up to its name.

In addition to Canton and Magnat, Heco is one of the most important producers of loudspeakers in Germany that embodied the heyday of hi-fi back in the 1970s. After a quite varied corporate history operating under the safe Audiovox marketing flag for many years, Heco can look back proudly on a very successful reorientation process: Although the speaker manufacturer does not have the audiophile image of world-famous producers, it certainly does have enough potential in terms of sound to keep right up there with the world elite.

These are good reasons for this because the in-house product philosophy at Heco begins where the sounds originate: on the cone. So it was a sensation when, a few years ago, the extremely successful, still current Celan range made the entire competition look rather out of date in terms of sound with its cones made of special kraft paper. This was preceded by empirical "fundamental research" undertaken by the Audiovox hearing expert, Shandro Fischer, which is why speakers from the old tube radio sound so unrivaled. The paper material for the cone has a key function in this regard, which is even confirmed without any ifs and buts by otherwise over-critical loudspeaker specialists like ME Geithain boss, Jochen Kiesler.

## Mass with class

The imposing, 130 cm high Concerto Grosso, weighing in at almost 64 kilograms, relies once again on the kraft paper produced according to a special mixture. And with special dimensions too, providing plenty of cone surface area: With a genuine 4-way design, it functions at the lowest frequencies in a laterally arranged 12-inch bass chassis. To prevent possible flow noise of normal bass reflex openings and also avoid cavity resonances, the woofer is supported on the opposite side by a passive radiator, also measuring 30 cm in diameter.

## Full mid-range power

Although laterally arranged bass chassis facilitate a narrow baffle and, therefore, a slim appearance, they are often characterized in terms of sound by a weaker mid-range. To prevent this, the large Heco uses a front-emitting 20 cm diameter subwoofer, which is responsible for the medium frequencies above 110 to 580 hertz: Just like the cone, its inverse dust cap is also made from kraft paper.

A real technical highlight is the 170 mm diameter mid-range unit, which is responsible for the frequency range from around 600 - 3100 hertz: It goes without saying that its cone also uses the exclusive Heco kraft paper with wool fiber, while an especially low-loss textile design is used for the bead instead of conventional rubber. The mid-range unit is particularly proud of its AlNiCo magnets: This alloy of aluminum, nickel and cobalt is said to have unequalled sound qualities. To ensure that enclosure resonances or compression effects that distort the mid-range cannot occur at all, the mid-range unit operates on the rear of the cone in a chamber open to the back of the speaker which is lavishly lined with aperiodic damping material. And only the best was good enough for Heco once again for the tweeter on the Concerto Grosso. The large text dome measuring 30 mm is made from a multi-layered synthetic fabric, known as polyfiber compound (PFC). This material mix essentially serves to suppress possible natural resonances.

This was also confirmed in the control laboratory because: Without selective peaks, the tweeter reached far above 40 kilohertz even in the very highest regions. The short wave guide turned from solid metal adapts the emission angle in the crossover location to that of the mid-range unit. For a speaker of such dimensions like the Concerto Grosso, a stable 'sound foundation' in the form of a particularly low-resonance enclosure is essential. It therefore relies on a multiple braced internal structure and thick-walled external surfaces that are reinforced again in the area of the bass chassis. The sophisticated high-gloss finish together with the perfect workmanship also lends the large Heco a representative optical appearance. The bad news: It is so far only available in high-gloss black finish.

Although the Concerto Grosso has an optically symmetrical design, there is a left and right speaker: Also recommended is setting up the system with inwardly pointing woofers - i.e. towards the opposite speaker. To make the work of the driving amplifier easier, the frequency crossover is impedance and phase-corrected. Only particularly high-quality components were selected.

## The large Heco in the listening test

Although the Concerto Grosso really is very efficient, stereoplay chose a fitting amplifier partner for the listening test: the excellent T+A PA 3000 HV. A good choice because it enabled the Heco to reveal its entire sound potential.

Its particular advantages were, first of all, its exceptionally clear and magnificent, excellently defined mid and high range reproduction - and without any annoying material noise with a metallic overtone and without drifting into being harsh.

With regard to sound volume - which you would also expect from a speaker of such size - it really lives up to its name. On appropriate tracks like the gigantic "Manzanilla" from the Swedish formation, Vibrasphere, it caused the listening room to really tremble during the extremely low-frequency passages from 3 minutes 58 seconds, but remained controlled at all times.

The great strengths of the Concerto Grosso also included the ability to differentiate in the bass range: It was even able, for example, to differentiate perfectly between complex tone spectrums and timbres of electronic synthesizer basses such as the introduction of the piece "When the Cold Winter Is Waiting" by Danish techno and house producer, Anders Trentemøller. The Heco presented itself as a fantastic loudspeaker, especially for lovers of direct, untainted, lively mid-range tones and a full, fresh sound pattern that remained very controlled and, in a gratifyingly unspectacular way, pin-sharp and highly detailed throughout despite all the playfulness.

With regard to spatial distribution, it initially produced a large but coherent sound pattern. The center of the acoustic projection (which always depends a little on the acoustics of the listening room in question) was located fairly precisely at the level of the loudspeakers. So it did not scale away very low behind the loudspeaker base. However, nor did it project exclusively from the baffles like a lot of other speakers, especially those with horn loudspeakers. Its stereo panorama was very pronounced, as was the degree of acoustic representation.

## Our conclusion:

**At € 8,000, the Heco is not a classic bargain. Considering the high sound quality offered, however, it is very reasonable.**

## STEREOPLAY Test verdict: HIGHLIGHT

**Sound: ABSOLUTELY TOP CLASS  
(62 POINTS)**

**Overall rating: VERY GOOD (86 points)**

**Price/performance: VERY GOOD**