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"...Anyone wanting to try out how emotionally charged music can be enjoyed in a "genuine" manner and with all one's senses should listen to this loudspeaker."



HECO

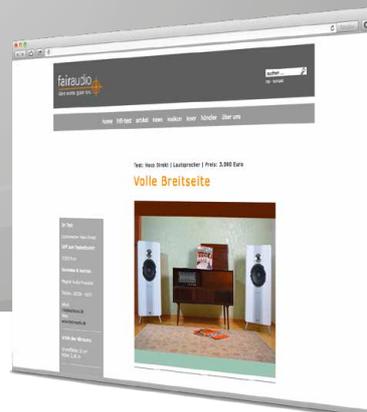
Direkt

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klare worte. guter ton.



Heco Direkt
Test 01/2016



HECO

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"Direkt ins Blut": At this juncture, nothing really needs to be added to this title, which the Cologne-based singer-songwriter and rock poet, Wolf Maahn, committed to vinyl and CD in the 80's as part of his "Roses in Asphalt" tour. The Heco "Direkt" test (www.heco-audio.de) would be summarised in an appropriate way. Surely making it the shortest in the history of this online magazine ...

But we're not going to make it that easy here. However, it remains to be said beforehand: Rarely has a loudspeaker made it so easy for me to pass judgement on it. I really have fallen for Heco's new "Direkt". Maybe also because it is polarising in a way that is rare not only in its price category but also on the overall hi-fi market. Either you love it ... or you don't. There's no in between. Something I was able to gauge in an amazing way during the test period from the reactions of my wife and various visitors. "It looks like an oversized smartphone!" or alternatively, "What's that then??" - with at least two question marks - and: "What's that!!" The latter with at least two exclamation marks. There was only agreement among the changing auditorium after it had heard the "Direkt". It left nobody untouched. (...)

There is the – by all means verifiable – theory that the narrowest possible baffles are beneficial particularly with regard to reflections on their surface. The sunken chassis are then frequently chosen with regard to diameter in such a way that there is hardly any baffle left at their sides. Narrow bars at best. And where there's nothing, nothing can be reflected. Quite apart from the fact that narrow, tall loudspeakers also fit more easily into existing living surroundings, the approach of the Pulheim-based company is difficult to understand at first glance: After all, the front of the Heco "Direkt" is almost 45 cm wide. With an overall height of almost a metre for the loudspeaker, it really cannot be said that it fits into the living room "inconspicuously". And certainly not in white with silver "rally stripes". The design, intended to evoke the idea of legendary guitars, conjures up for me, as a vintage car enthusiast, more the memory of powerful US classic cars. Whatever, the Heco certainly is a good looker. An eye-catcher. The furnishing and fittings of the listening or living room will have to be geared to this loudspeaker. The other way round will be difficult.

And what about the reflections on the broad "chest"? Well, the 28 cm diameter of the low mid-range chassis in combination with the rather high crossover frequency of 2.3 kHz ensures that dispersion is not particularly broad – which is why angling the "Direkt" slightly towards the listening location is also recommended. In addition, the edges of the enclosure are not rounded for purely optical reasons.

The Heco Direkt team evidently knew exactly what it had in mind. And fell back on what was already tried and tested. E.g. the "kraft paper" material (DIN 6730: kraft pulp), which is now regarded almost as the company's speciality. Heco has the membrane material, which was very widespread well into the 1970's and predestined for high efficiency with its great strength and low weight, made from long-fibre paper pressed with woolen threads. On account of its material properties, the large chassis is designed to be able to deal with a very broad transmission range - and is easy to drive as well as slow down. It exhales through two generously dimensioned bass reflex openings located in the bottom of the remarkably flat enclosure. Three stable and stylish feet ensure stability and a slight inclination of the speaker. Make sure you get someone to help you fit the feet by holding the loudspeaker firm and watching out that the little plastic bag of accessories (screws, spikes, etc.) does not disappear into the hungry bass reflex abyss lying in wait for absentminded users! Which is what happened to me! And that's no joke. Especially because the strong magnet of the subwoofer holds onto the plastic bag and its contents so firmly that the only way out of the jam is to dismantle the chassis ...

Responsible for the treble range is a 28 mm diameter silk dome that is countersunk into an aluminium front panel shaped like a horn attachment. This means that the tweeter keeps pace with the subwoofer in terms of efficiency without any difficulty. The two chassis are fitted very close together, which is intended to ensure acoustically seamless frequency transition. In addition to precise allocation of reproduction areas, the separating filter fitted with selected components also ensures linearised frequency response. This means that no amplifier gets into a sweat with the "Direkt". It's enough when that happens to the listeners. But more about that in a minute ...

(...)

Test result: Heco Direkt

You can love or hate the Heco "Direkt". Both arguments are justifiable. For me, however, this loudspeaker is a personal highlight of recent times. Not only because it is different to a lot of others. But because it is so different, though without making any compromises whatsoever in terms of sound. It plays as its name describes: "Direkt". Nothing else. Extremely explosive from the start even in the bass range and fluid across the entire transmission range as well as emotionally gripping, it injects music into its audience intravenously, as it were. It doesn't need all the gimmicks.

Quite the opposite: Its tonal balance and absolute precision, especially in the hearing-sensitive mid-ranges, are reminiscent of professional "listening devices". It reproduces in an amazingly complete manner and with an astonishing fundamental tone strength, even at very quiet levels. If you turn the volume control to the right, there are then practically no limits for the Heco; its dynamic abilities can be aptly described by the attribute "explosive" with the appropriate taste in music. But: It can also be quiet, fine and very detailed. Such that a singer/songwriter could be sitting with his guitar in the listening room - not in the system - with the reproduction technology disappearing almost completely behind the illusion. The Heco draws attention to what is important when listening to music: the music.

The setup and positioning of the "Direkt" is not a critical factor despite its unusual format. But there's no harm in angling it slightly towards the listening location because, although the bass-mid.range speaker is large, the dispersion is not that broad.

Let's get one thing straight: The "Direkt" is an optically - let's say - "fetching" loudspeaker, but it is definitely not inconspicuous. But: Does it have to be? This acoustic transducer is a statement: "Music is important to me and I want to show it!" That is as unconventional as it is self-assertive. And let's be honest: There's enough mainstream around.



Summary of the Heco Direkt:

- There are competitors that get down deeper into the low bass ranges. Heco does not exploit the "last octave" downwards. In return, it reproduces the bass range with a speed, onslaught and precision unparalleled in this class.
- The reproduction precision in the mid-ranges is not only outstanding in terms of a comparison of categories. The vivid, natural, richly detailed reproduction of voices and natural instruments with no discoloration whatsoever leaves nothing more to be desired.
- The harmonic spectrum is presented in a very finely fanned-out manner, delivering all the detail and spatial information needed for a realistic sound experience. Nevertheless, when comparing categories, there are loudspeakers that light up even more brightly in all "corners" at the upper end of the frequency range. The tweeter avoids any kind of acrimony or severity.
- The "Direkt" delivers rather large-scale reproduction in overall terms, with an airy-casual impression also emerging in the depth and breadth of the virtual stage to provide the soundscape with a very relaxed and confident impression. The locatability of individual sound events is good, and the proportions are very harmonious. There are competitors, however, who possibly get closer to reality with a more compact representation.
- Provided that the recordings are of appropriate high quality, it allows a profound insight into the structure of musical arrangements. But it never loses its sense of the big picture and a smooth flow.
- The Heco has hardly any limits with regard to macro and micro-dynamics. It reproduces in an amazingly complete manner and with an astonishing fundamental tone strength, even at low volume; and when it needs to push on, it can also play the screaming rocker. This also make it a tip for various genres: It reproduces a diaphoretic metal concert just as "lifelike" as a large symphony orchestra.
- When operating, the Heco should be angled slightly towards the listening point - otherwise the reproduction comes across as slightly overcast – and, on account of its high efficiency, it works with amplifiers from as little as 10 watts output per channel.
- Get someone to help you when fitting the feet and positioning the speaker – the Heco "Direkt" is not that heavy, but is rather cumbersome on account of its unusual format.

The complete test can be found at

<http://www.fairaudio.de/test/lautsprecher/2016/heco-direkt-lautsprecher-test-1.html>

