

„...Heco is setting a new benchmark with “Direkt” ...“



HECO
Direkt

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Heco »Direkt«

Test result: outstanding

Sound quality

Outstanding

Laboratory

Very good

Workmanship

Very good

Overall

Outstanding



HECO

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Against the flow

Loudspeakers have become increasingly delicate over the past decades. Logically, they should be easy to set up in as many households as possible. However, it was only a matter of time before a manufacturer would decide to go against this trend. And Heco has now managed to do this in an impressive way with the »Direkt« model.

It's still early in the morning on the second day of the trade air. The gates of the High End in Munich have not even opened yet. However, an earthy blues sound can already be heard from the second floor. We follow the sound and eventually spot the managing director of Voxx, Shandro Fischer, sitting in front of the new Heco »Direkt« with his eyes closed. The exceptional sound leaves us speechless. Compared with most standard loudspeakers, it looks as though the chassis is embedded into the side of the Heco »Direkt«. So it is not narrow and deep but, rather, wide and flat. It's great that a manufacturer has finally had the courage to go down this route.

However, the »Direkt« does not only score well for its external appearance. It also has a lot to offer in technical terms, as shown by the test in the i-fidelity.net measuring laboratory. It is one of the very few speakers to be awarded the grade "very good". But you have to come up with this in the first place! This consequently raises the question: »How did they do it?« Voxx is not only the owner of the Heco brand, Magnat belongs to it, too. So there is plenty of know-how available in the area of loudspeaker design. Furthermore, the development team includes a whole range of passionate music listeners, which certainly has anything but a negative impact on the structural elements of a loudspeaker.

The foot design also contributes to the spectacular exterior of the housing. After unpacking it, best done by two people together, the »Direkt« is first positioned upside down. Below the baffle, two small, outward-facing, metal support rods are then inserted into the body for a perfect fit and secured with Phillips-head screws. A considerably longer and flatter support must now be fitted to the back of the speaker in the middle. The speakers are then placed in the correct operating position, showing off the subtle rear inclination. As well as being visually outstanding, this is also done for technical reasons so that the sound components from the two speakers reach the listener simultaneously.

As soon as the speaker is in place, lockable spikes are fitted to the ends of the stands. This purpose of this is likewise to optimise sound quality. If Heco was merely concerned with design, such an elaborate step would not be necessary. You should then take a little time to have a good look at the speaker. The edges of the housing are rounded on the corners. A double stripe runs down the entire length of the front in the middle, which does a lot to limit the bulkiness of the MDF housing. The foot design, which makes the speaker float above the floor as it were, also provides for additional lightness. The Heco »Direkt« really is a feast for the eyes and the author thinks the name of this speaker probably harbours a specific reference with regard to the decision to buy.

It does not only score well in terms of aesthetics

The Heco »Direkt« is a two-way bass-reflex design. It has double ventilation at the bottom of the enclosure, meaning that it functions according to the downfire principle. An unusually large 27.5 cm diameter chassis is used to transmit the frequency range up to 2,350 hertz. The diaphragm is made of a paper mixture, ensuring it is light and has the required rigidity. This paper mixture comprises almost 100% cellulose fibres with small amounts of alum, glue and starch. The magnetic drive has been optimised using a Klippel measuring system. Something that - like all the other development stages - took place in the Pulheim-based development department.

The tweeter is fitted with a 20 mm diameter silk cone and a double magnet system as the drive. Located in front of the cone is a horn made of aluminium, which has a positive influence on the level as well as the dispersion characteristics. The fact that the two chassis are mounted close together will have a positive effect on the imaging properties. The crossover is equipped with high-quality components and optimised to linear phase; it is located directly behind the single-wiring terminal panel at the rear. The sturdy gold-plated screw terminal accommodate both cable lugs and banana plugs.

In the first hearing test, we were amazed at the low power needed to achieve substantial volume levels. The efficiency specification of 93 decibels determined in the laboratory then makes it clear why. The Heco »Direkt« can therefore also be recommended for tube amplifiers that are able to deliver 10 watts. Our tests showed, however, that increased dynamics can be reached with transistor amplifiers. The setup is not critical, but you should avoid placing the unit directly in front of or next to a wall. In the i-fidelity.net listening room, the speakers were angled slightly after a few acoustic tests and we chose a rather short listening distance of around 2.5 metres.

Set up in this way, the Heco plays music from the very first moment as its name suggests: direct. The listener is led to the musical action directly and without any restriction. For example, »This Way Before« by Al di Meola starts with gentle piano playing that sounds realistic: transparent and bright in the upper octaves and without any additional energy. The root area is bone dry and comes across with a fascinating depth. In the bass range, too, the loudspeaker dispenses with any form of tonal extras that would inflate the piece and destroy its appeal in this way. What is also really astonishing is the sound staging in terms of both depth and width. Hasn't it always been said that imaging capabilities like this can only be achieved with a narrow baffle? Well, that's definitely not the case!

The system really gets going with »Deepest Blue« by the band of the same name. The bass not only massages your ears in an almost brutal way, its effect also has physical qualities. Even at moderately high levels, there are no restrictions.

The »Direkt« plays with more controlled pressure than its size suggests. Running in the background is the sample of a choir extending across the entire stereo bass range. It is noticeable that the different parts of the title are combined together to form a harmonious whole. This makes listening enjoyable.

Full control despite the level

Porcupine Tree also benefits from this dry, neutral gait. Their title »Strip The Soul« begins with a powerful electric bass. You get the impression that the instruments are connected directly to the speaker. When the massive guitar sounds start, we momentarily hold our breath. However, this, something that would be a stumbling block for many other speakers, does not present a problem for the Hecos. The careful coordination of the two chassis also means that there are no breakaways from the soundscape. The proportions are correct and remain so depending on the level.

Thanks to its neutral harmonisation, the »Direkt« is best suited to music with mostly natural instruments. E.g. from Mark Knopfler, Paul Simon, Peter Gabriel or Johnny Cash, who renders »Highway Patrolman« in the listening room and dismisses any thoughts of canned music. Not least of all, the ability to also reproduce the rhythm in a constant and pointed manner secures the grade "excellent" for the sound assessment of the Heco. The question whether the combination of the large subwoofer and the cone can work can be answered with an emphatic yes. Together they produce a mature sound which, combined with the outward appearance, results in a highly interesting speaker that is best bought "direkt".

Conclusion

Heco is setting a new benchmark with "Direkt". Despite speakers becoming increasingly smaller and more compact, these are real acoustic transducers that can be seen and heard at a very high level. In addition to the appearance, which goes against the mainstream, the »Direkt« is also convincing with the finest technology, however. Instead of the superficial raising of a particular frequency range, it simply plays in a neutral way. As a manufacturer, your first need to have this courage to do this, especially nowadays, with speakers emphasising the bass and treble ranges being much easier to sell. The Heco »Direkt« produces outstanding sound, looks really classy and does not cost that much considering the performance it offers. In other words, top design in all respects.

TOP DESIGN

Sound quality:	Outstanding
Laboratory:	Very good
Workmanship:	Very good
Overall:	Outstanding