



May 2011

HECO

Music Colors 100

"Lively, easily accommodated shelf speakers with high quality workmanship"

- + Very good dynamics
- + Good precision
- + Elegant appearance
- + Fair price



"EXCELLENT"

HECO Music Colors 100



Introduction

Costing around 280 EUR per pair, Heco's compact Music Colors 100 shelf speakers are particularly recommended for smaller living or music rooms. The two-way speakers, which feature elegantly rounded corners, are available in piano black, piano red, espresso/wenge and a piano white finish. The load values are excellent for such small speakers; the continuous power rating is 70, while the short-term rating is a full 120 watts. The frequency response is specified at 38 Hz to 35 kHz. The speakers are suitable for amplifiers rated between 4 and 8 ohms and they operate according to the bass reflex principle. Sleek and compact with an excellent surface quality, especially when you consider the reasonable purchase price: There really isn't anything to criticise with regard to the workmanship of the small speakers. The sturdy MDF cabinet with its clean, high-gloss finish cuts a "brilliant" figure in the truest sense of the word. The speakers are optimised for a shelf and sideboard setup, which also means they can be positioned near a wall without any problems. The 25 mm tweeter with fabric dome comes with a powerful neodymium magnet system. The bass-midrange, which has been specially designed for broadband reproduction, features a particularly lightweight long-fibre paper cone, a longthrow surround and a tremendously resilient 25 mm voice coil. The crossover has been lavishly configured and equipped with high quality components. The fabric-covered grilles impart a neat impression...

The speakers are supplied with four glued-on rubber feet to dampen resonances. The single wiring connecting terminals are of a high quality and permit the use of banana plugs without any problems. The chassis are embedded directly in the baffle. The front does not exhibit any sign of screws or other fixtures which are used for securing the chassis in place.

The small speakers reproduce Markus Schulz's mix of the trance hit "Power of American Natives" from Dance 2 Trance with an astonishing degree of clarity. The beginning of the track is structured with commendable accuracy. The bass, understandably, is not extremely deep, but what the compact speakers do generate sounds precise and direct. We have rarely heard such a small and reasonably priced shelf speaker come up trumps like this. The degree of spatiality created is also amazing: Heco's transducers project effects far into the room, especially in smaller listening areas. Ideally the listening room should measure between around 12 square metres and a little over 20 square metres. The small, elegant speakers really feel at home in these dimensions. Even if you prefer higher volumes, the Music Colors 100 series always seems to find just the right "Color of Music". We were impressed by the speed with which the Ferrari-red test speakers got to work - with pulse fidelity and without any delays. Not quite as good - but as is expected due to the construction-specific features - is the degree of efficiency produced. You needn't be miserly with amplifier power, however, and don't allow yourself to be deceived by the size. In "Like a Lady" by the Real Booty Babes, Heco's Music Colors 100 once again prove that they can perform in a clear, tonally neutral and very dynamic manner: the emphatic/groovy character of the track is produced excellently.

The small compact speakers demonstrate that they can also handle emotional pieces very competently with "Immortality" by the Bee Gees. The singer's voice is clearly defined and the degree of separation between the vocals and instruments is impeccable. Naturally, the rear stage is not as finely detailed as that produced by larger, more expensive speakers; various details simply flow together here and there is a lack of differentiation. Heco's speakers also reproduce the first movement of Ludwig van Beethoven's 9th Symphony "Ode to Joy" in a lively and energetic manner. The dynamic differences are reproduced well; it's

only during small, complex acoustic segments does it lack a little in terms of depth. When the entire orchestra comes into play, it does so with verve and astonishing force. During the solos the little speakers create a sensitive, almost delicate pace. We also found the speakers to be extremely pleasing with Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Clarinet Concerto in A Major KV622 - the style of play lacks any hint of gross motor skills and superficiality. The clarinet, which is usually difficult to reproduce, is rendered beautifully; the transitions are seamless and not jerky at all, which lends a very homogeneous and cultivated feel to the concert. After our positive experience we can therefore also recommend the Music Colors 100 series for smaller music rooms - in any case, the attractive Pulheim speakers are brilliant in terms of their price-performance ratio. When combined with a powerful little amplifier you can listen to really good quality classical music or jazz; the Music Colors 100 series masters a balancing act between a rousing and inconspicuous performance very nicely. Thanks to the tonal neutrality generated the listening experience is transported to the auditorium in a very authentic manner.

In "Around in Three" by John Horler, played by Acoustic Triangle (in which Horler is the pianist), the Music Colors 100 speakers are really compelling with a perfect rendition of the piano and the keyboard expression. A surprisingly rich degree of diversity is also offered with "Trois Poèmes de Stéphane Mallarmé" (played by Acoustic Triangle): The virtuoso piano performance comes into its own beautifully in "Soupir". Heco's speakers reproduce the various saxophones in a really cultured and charismatic manner. The often minor dynamic differences are distinguished exquisitely.

Conclusion

Heco's small Music Colors 100 series compelled us throughout the entire test. The easily accommodated bass reflex speakers won us over thanks to their very good dynamics, astonishing degree of sensitivity, excellent level stability and exquisite workmanship. As the bass reflex port faces the front, a setup close to the wall is open to debate. The universal application possibilities - from classical music to trance - also speak in favour of the chic sound transducers, which are not particularly expensive. The available colours are well chosen, contemporary and cater for an extremely attractive appearance.

Competitive comparison

Teufel Ultima 20: Larger, more stable and also very attractive, but not quite the same level of high quality workmanship. It is a bit more dynamic in the coarse sections, however, it is not as sensitive as the Music Colors 100 in terms of detail.

Magnat Quantum 553: It is significantly larger and compelling with a firm bass. However, the Quantum 553 does not appear quite as balanced as the Heco in the treble range: The Music Colors 100 is more harmonious, clearer and less pointed. Furthermore, the workmanship is also better. Audio Pro Addon One: The active solution was appealing with pleasant sound characteristics and excellent workmanship. However, anyone looking for higher levels is better served with the Music Colors 100 in combination with a powerful little stereo amplifier.

Test equipment

Yamaha music network player NP-S2000 + stereo amp A-S2000Magnat Music System 400 (amp MA 400, CDP MCD 450, tuner MT 420), wiring from Oehlbach"