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".... PLAYS IN AN IMMENSELY AGILE AND EXPLOSIVELY DYNAMIC MANNER"

HECO

Direkt



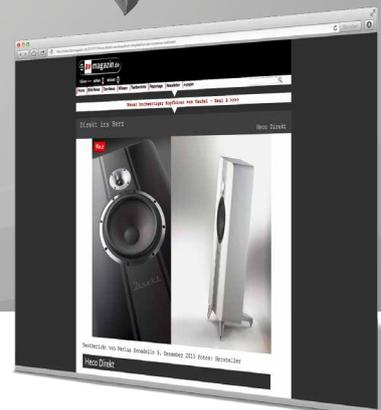
Heco Direkt
Outstanding



Highlight
Heco Direkt



Sound: Outstanding
Practice: Very good
Finish: Very good
Price/performance: Very good
Class: High End



HECO

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Heco provided a surprise at the HIGH END with a 2-way floor-standing loudspeaker: An unusual design and unconventional, promising technology make the Direkt, just now ready to go into production, particularly interesting.

.... Expecting the next stylish looking, slim-line column loudspeaker, I could hardly believe my tired eyes. There is stood - wide, unconventional and prominent. The name "Direkt" matches the entire concept because this loudspeaker does not really fit into the familiar Heco image which, although characterized by linear-purist looks, is also influenced by contemporary conventions. With the 'Direkt', the loudspeaker specialist from Pulheim is going in a direction that cares little for consensus and is nevertheless pioneering.

...

Best foot forward

On closer examination, the Direkt therefore turns out, in creative terms, to be much more than a plain, wide box - and that is definitely true with regard to its technology and engineering. The very attractive design actually also has functional reasons and not only because of the space required for a large chassis. A wide baffle allows more direct sound to get to the listener on account of directing wide-angled radiated sound energy forwards, resulting in fewer lateral reflections next to and behind the speakers. The flat enclosure of the Direkt is made of MSF, with several internal struts ensuring additional stability of the thick-walled body. The structure rests on extremely sturdy solid metal feet tapering downwards, with the front feet longer than those at the rear so as to create the optimum tilt for the Direkt at the recommended listening distances. The spikes provided, which are screwed into the feet, make it possible to compensate for slight unevenness of the floor.

The length of the feet ensures a defined distance between the bottom of the enclosure and the floor area because the Direkt needs this space to 'breathe out'. Its bass-reflex system comprises two flow-optimized outlets pointing downwards according to the downfire principle. This kind of ventilation towards the floor has several advantages. The loudspeaker can be positioned more easily and the bass sound energy distributed more evenly through the room, as a result of which it is possible to achieve particularly well-controlled bass reproduction. Thanks to its bass-reflex tuning, the Direkt can also get right down deep into the bass ranges and generate a good deal of power although it does not have a separate subwoofer.

After all, the mid-range driver diaphragm does measure a good 27.5 cm in diameter, but how can a chassis of this type reproduce both the mid-ranges and the basses cleanly? Partly responsible for this is the minimalistic design of the crossover, which is equipped exclusively with high-quality components with tight tolerances. On account of its phase optimization and linearized impedance characteristics, it helps the drivers to achieve impulse precision reproduction - and, incidentally, the electrical properties of the switch, among other things, ensure an exceptionally high degree of efficiency. Just ten tube watts are enough to get the Direkt up to speed. However, it is mainly the drivers that are responsible for the efficiency of the Direkt and the art of playing accurately with a macro subwoofer membrane. It is precisely this very generously dimensioned subwoofer that is the highlight of the Direkt concept for aficionados. Its membrane is made from kraft paper. This is a somewhat strange name for something Heco describes as a special cellulose fibre mixture that gives the membrane precisely the right blend of rigidity and elasticity. ...

Airy and earthy

The tweeter in the Direkt is also optimized for high efficiency, with its 28 mm diameter dome membrane driven by a double-magnet system. To further enhance the sound performance and optimize the dispersion characteristics at the same time, the aluminium front panel of the tweeter acts as a sound conductor. It displays highly efficient horn geometry around the membrane. With regard to the membrane material, Heco relies on a composite material for the tweeter, with silk being combined here with an unspecified additive to increase the rigidity of the dome. A large paper dome and a silk cone - you don't have to be a traditionalist to go into raptures with these keywords. After all, there is some element of truth when certain membrane materials are claimed to have certain sound characteristics and that means in this case: You can look forward to gloriously relaxed, airily light mid and treble tones. One thing is clear in view of all the conceptual details: The Direkt is a loudspeaker with character - that alone deserves recognition.

Just what form this takes is something I explored with the new E12 integrated amplifier from Audio Exclusiv, with the SAM G2 from Audionet and the TDAI-2180 from Lyngdork also serving as playing partners. On account of its efficiency, the Direkt can, in principle, be combined with just about any amplifier. Our choice illustrates how well the Direkt also harmonizes with different amplifier concepts and quality levels:

It shows the distance between the three amplifiers referred to without any difficulty, highlights their sound signatures and can exploit its strengths. At the same time, it is clear with all the amps that, although the Direkt has character, this is not in the form of tonal properties that would impose this sound on the chain.

On the contrary, the Direkt plays in an almost exemplary neutral way, practically holding itself right back - to tell the truth, I would not have expected such monitor-grade qualities from this concept. It is precisely these that make the Direkt stand out, thus living up to its name on account of its resolution capability being every bit the equal of sophisticated 3-way systems, with good playback over the entire spectrum. The reproduction of individual instruments and voices is always very well defined even in complex orchestral works, with spatial representation incredibly well spread out.

The Direkt does not hold back one bit in terms of its pace, preferring to work flat out though without coming across as strained and playing in an immensely agile and explosively dynamic manner. The Direkt also gives the soundscape a great deal of that physicality that characterizes real sound events - it is a two-way magnifier with presence and assertiveness. In terms of bass reproduction, the Direkt combines two contrasting tendencies in a masterly fashion: The bass comes across smoothly and seamlessly, sometimes tight and dry, sometimes lush because, for all its precision, it certainly is not lacking in organic punch - fantastic.

Clear text

With the Direkt, Heco has produced an extraordinarily appealing floor-standing loudspeaker. The independent, distinctive design has the sophistication to both polarize as well as create harmonious features in different interiors. In technical terms, the concept of the Direkt is ambitious and extremely promising, full of special treats for aficionados. A veritable feast for every music fan and audiophile gourmet. The playback is wonderfully crisp and absolutely masterful. The Direkt is an excellently coordinated synthesis of exemplary resolution and clarity - a highlight!

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Practice: Very good
Finish: Very good
Price/performance: Very good
Class: High End