

HECO

Music Style 5.1A

audiovision
Price tip

Music Style 500

- + lively sound, dynamic and stable levels
- + powerful and musical floorstanding speaker
- + good workmanship, appealing design

Music Style Center 2



Music Style 200



Music Style Sub 25A



Very reasonably priced: The 5.1 set from Heco's "Music Style" series offers an excellent sound from impressive floorstanding speakers at an extremely good price.

Technology

Heco's recipe for success is to return to classic materials such as paper and textiles. The developers have reverted to lightweight, long-fibre paper cones which cover a broad frequency range. Silk domes with an acoustic lens and highly resilient ferrofluid magnetic systems are used for the tweeters. A large volume is available for both 17 cm drivers inside the floorstanding speakers. This enables the two reflex tubes, which are firmly anchored to the rear wall, to provide powerful support for deep bass levels up to 36 hertz. Heco's front speakers also work without a subwoofer, which is handy if the AV receiver does not produce any subwoofer signals for stereo music. The two-and-a-half-way crossover caters for a wide-ranging and open midrange: It directs frequencies above 350 hertz to the upper cone only. The configuration with the underlying tweeter ensures the sound elements of both drivers are directed towards the seated listener on time and in-phase. The investment that has been made in this price range, from the high quality crossover components, to the bi-wiring terminal and additional internal bracing, is impressive. What's more, Heco's floorstanding speakers also look extremely chic both with and without their fabric covers - they are real gems in relation to the reasonable price. Not quite as powerful as the floorstanding speakers are the compact surround speakers, whose small 15 cm cone does not reproduce any deep bass levels. They do operate freely, however, right up to the ideal subwoofer crossover frequency of 80 hertz. The centre speaker, which is equipped with two bass-midrange cones, generates a similarly deep reproduction and it also features a slight bass boost. Unfortunately, Heco has omitted a two-and-a-half-way crossover here, meaning both cone drivers operate up to 3,200 hertz. Sound elements in this range therefore appear slightly weakened for listeners seated to the side. A long-throw woofer radiates downwards in the virtually 50 cm tall active subwoofer. Its 26 cm driver is provided with a lightweight hardened paper cone, which enables a high degree of efficiency. The tuning frequency of the bass reflex system, however, doesn't lie in the deep bass range as expected, but at a significantly higher level than the floorstanding speakers of 47 hertz. If the upper bass is capped via a high pass filter as compensation, the sub operates at a deeper level but is also quieter. The 125 watt active electronics element has a limiter that provides protection against overload. In addition to controls for level and high-pass frequency, there is only one phase switch and two RCA inputs.

Surround sound quality

After phase optimisation the ensemble develops around six decibels more sound pressure in the bass range,

which is taken into account when setting the level. The front speakers now sound spectacular, delve smoothly into the deep bass range and appear open and balanced. In comparison, the centre and surround speakers deliver a directional sound that is slightly stressed in the treble range. They benefit from an installation that is close to the wall, which enables them to deliver a fuller and rounder sound. The narrator in the "Arctic Northeast" DVD documentary still sounds a little light from the centre speaker however. The lightweight paper cones reproduce the vocals expressively and Heco's fine textile domes generate the constantly howling wind without any unnatural intrinsic sound. The front speakers and the amazing, dynamic subwoofer ensure an excellent ambience and powerful emotions. Deep synthesizer chords are reproduced with gusto and alternate with crisp bass salvos when the icebreaker, Taimir, crushes the thick ice floes in the Arctic. Heco's set generates more pressure than expected in the deep bass range, as the rearward bass reflex tubes stimulate the room more emphatically via the dipole effect. We also find ourselves listening with delight to the loud and meaty engine sounds, the delicate clatter of the valves and the lifelike voices of the protagonists in "Werner 3". Even more dynamics are aroused with the track "The Panther" on the Blu-ray "Legends of Jazz: Showcase". The spectacular performance by bassist Marcus Miller and his drummer, a live recording in uncompressed Dolby TrueHD sound, simply proves too much for many hifi speakers. Heco's ensemble, however, masters the peak pulses from the deep bass line to the highest trebles, even if there is slightly too much high frequency energy buzzing around the room on occasion.

Stereo sound quality

Only a few sets deliver a better stereo sound without a subwoofer. Heco's front speakers generate a rich bass line from 28 hertz, thereby ensuring large kettledrums don't fizzle, but build pressure powerfully. Rich timbres and a high resolution are present in all frequency ranges. Diana Krall's voice in "I'm an Errand Girl For Rhythm" sounds supple and open, while the drums and percussion appear concise but stress-free. The sounding board of a piano, however, could sound a bit fuller and a little more depth could be produced on the track "Silver and Gold" by the Gospel Messengers. The subwoofer makes the extremely rich and deep bass drum on the track seem more substantial, while the size of the room appears to increase.

Conclusion

Heco's set creates many highlights in this price range. Besides its exquisite visual appearance and impressive build quality, the floorstanding speaker stands out with an excellent degree of musicality and mature sound. The other components do not quite live up to this premium performance, however, they only exhibit minor weaknesses. The overall package is compelling and earns our 'price tip' award.