



# HECO<sup>®</sup>

## Metas XT 301

- + Outstanding workmanship for the money
- + Harmonious sound pattern
- + Good spatiality
- + Very reasonable price



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"If these speakers continue in the positive footsteps of their big brother, the Heco Metas XT 501 floorstanding speakers which combine a powerful sound and elegant visual appearance at a very fair price, then we are in for a treat. Whether the XT 301 is the hot tip for quality-conscious bargain hunters is addressed in the following report.

The workmanship of these reasonably priced shelf speakers is of the highest level in relation to their price class. A solid MDF housing with an excellent fit all round is anything but a matter of course in this price range. The biggest criticism that can be made here is that the material transition to the front panel is not quite perfect. The corners at the rear of the housing are somewhat too pointed. Otherwise, the very good surface quality and the surprisingly elegant overall appearance score highly. The speaker grilles can be removed completely and they complement the front panel exquisitely. We particularly like the speaker connections with gold-plated screw terminals on the rear, which also allow bi-amping with the Heco units. But is this all show and no substance? Not with the Metas 301. The interior of the speaker is of a quality which would stand up to speakers costing twice as much. Large magnets on the sturdy chassis back up our excellent impression. Overall rating in relation to the price class: Outstanding.

### Sound

... - based on the price for the pair of speakers you cannot really expect a peak audio performance. Such was our thinking when we started to scrutinise the Metas in detail. To really put the speakers to the test from the very outset we opted for the "Vivere - Live in Tuscany" soundtrack by Andrea Bocelli on Blu-ray and selected the track "Melodramma". As this is the first track in the concert, there's a short introduction by Andrea regarding his home of Tuscany. We found the way that the Metas speakers portrayed Bocelli's voice in a homogeneous and pleasant manner was really compelling. The body of his voice is credible and not too weak; the noises in the background (birds singing and bells ringing) are incorporated really well for such reasonably priced speakers. Then the concert starts. The dynamic jump at the beginning, however, is not quite as succinct as it really should be - the speakers seem to reflect their reasonable price tag here. When the famous singer raises his voice we are pleasantly surprised (we thought the vocal presentation was very good, as was the case when Andrea spoke in the introduc-

tion), and when the Italian started to vocally celebrate "Melodramma" with his charismatic voice, we were all ears: The vocal colour is amazing, the separation of his voice from the instruments is exquisite and the degree of spatiality in the smaller listening room, which measures around 20 square metres, leaves nothing to complain about. The shelf speakers claim a relatively high performance, however, despite the bass reflex principle, the degree of efficiency does not appear to be very high. This means anyone using a low powered amplifier will hardly get a compelling listening experience. The speaker's level stability, however, ensures an excellent performance in connection with a powerful amplifier. As the reproduction of the high frequency range is rather restrained as opposed to brilliantly succinct, the speakers remain poised and do not become aggressive. This character is also evident in the instrumental tracks used in various James Bond 007 movies. The Metas 301 scores points in "Goldfinger" with a harmonious, coherent rendition, however, excessive dynamics and an overly emphatic bass level should not be expected. For all intents and purposes the bass itself is very good, but it is compelling through its decent volume and good integrability rather than through its spontaneous release of large amounts of low frequency energy. The transitions between the individual frequency ranges are handled excellently and everything flows neatly together. The Metas 301 therefore appears to be the ideal speaker that can run all day in the background without creating any edgy and annoying disharmonies. This is also reflected by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Sonata for 2 Pianos (soundtrack selected on BD Audio 2L - the Nordic Sound: LPCM 192 kHz/24-Bit). The pianos lack somewhat in detail (the key notes are not optimally emphasised), however, the overall sound pattern is maintained in a harmonious and pleasing manner and the degree of spatiality that is created is good.

### Conclusion

For anyone who wants to purchase mature and great-sounding shelf speakers but has limited financial resources, the Heco Metas 301 speakers are a highly recommended purchase. The clean finish, smart visual appearance and harmonious sound mean the buyer is getting an optimum package for the money invested - only the rather average efficiency level doesn't quite fit into the picture and it means the amplifier used has to have plenty of power in reserve."