



April 2011

Magnat

Music System 400

A sure-fire hit from Magnat -

The Music System 400 series is an excellent choice for the price-conscious and discerning stereo enthusiast in which no compromises have to be made

- + Very comfortable, clear sound
- + Excellent spatiality
- + Exceeds the price class in terms of coarse and fine dynamics
- + Good level stability
- + Excellent workmanship
- + Highly receptive tuner
- + CD player with shielded drive



**“Price/Performance:
excellent - outstanding”**

Magnat Music System 400



Introduction

In a time of virtually limitless technology with 3D rendering, network streaming and 11.2 speaker configurations, Magnat's Music System 400 enables you to "beam back" to the 80s for just 999 EUR, and a time when a hifi system consisted of an amplifier, tuner and CD player - with everything naturally consisting of high quality, individual components. Everything was "2.0", which, in addition to audio purity (taking into account the systemic framework of the CD), naturally also meant simple operation. There was no speaker calibration system to produce error messages, no manual adaptation procedures requiring level adjustment and measurements to be entered, and no network or video functionality: In Magnat's Music System 400, which consists of the MA 400 amplifier equipped with tube preamp, the MCD 450 CD player and the MT 420 analogue FW/MW tuner, other values are rendered more significant. Basic values that were previously exchanged with gusto around the hifi table among audio enthusiasts: All three components exhibit very solid workmanship and are compelling through their 5 mm thick, milled aluminium front panels with rounded corners, which further enhance the system's visual appearance and also minimise the risk of injury. All control elements are also manufactured from aluminium and are fitted with precision. An identical remote control accompanies the three components and enables control of the entire system.

The technical details allude to a solid hifi architecture and carefully selected components. The preamplifier used is equipped with selected and burned-in tubes. The interior also houses a powerful toroidal transformer. The Music System 400 also exhibits contemporary features like the separate power supply for standby operation, which significantly reduces the power consumption of all 3 components - a particularly important factor today. Also located on the front of the MA 400 amplifier is a 3.5 mm mini-jack input for connecting portable devices. The CD player utilises a modern, high precision Burr Brown 24 bit D/A converter and a high-quality, shielded CD drive with Sanyo pickup. The superheterodyne FM/AM tuner features RDS functionality and 40 freely programmable storage locations. The single-board solution used enables the shortest paths for a high-quality signal.

Workmanship and operation

All components are very well made. The front panels on all components are manufactured from solid aluminium and are slightly wider than the underlying housing. The rear sides of the units are also very well made. The speaker cable screw terminals on the MA 400 are of an extremely high quality and can easily accommodate banana plugs. The RCA jacks are solid, but otherwise exhibit no other special features. The feet are impeccable and guarantee a secure purchase on all surfaces. The displays are neat, but not outstanding. The tube in the amplifier stage has its own small, round window. The CD player compartment is embedded nicely; the buzzing emitted when it exits the unit is unmistakable but not annoying. CDs are read quickly and the shielded drive assembly can only be heard during the reading process. The level of operating noise generated while the CD is running is very low. Fault tolerance is good, meaning that even slightly scratched discs can also be read. The level of wear exhibited by the discs, however, should not be too pronounced. The playback of CD-Rs is also supported. The devices themselves are simple to operate and the well-made buttons with solid pressure points are easy to use. However, running any processes via the remote control is not quite so carefree. The small working angle and the adequate range mean commands are not always implemented immediately. Added to this is the unclearly defined and overly soft pressure point of the rubber buttons. The inner workings of all components scored excellent marks. The wiring is of a high quality and clearly arranged, which can also be said of the circuit board layout. A high performance toroidal transformer is responsible for supplying the discrete amplifier with power.

Menu

The settings for bass, treble, balance, input gain and loudness can all be adjusted via the MA 400's display. This is effected by pressing the Menu button on the remote control in conjunction with the buttons positioned nearby, which are otherwise used for volume control.

Sound

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Clarinet Concerto in A Major K 622: The first Allegro is accentuated "molto bene" by the Magnat Music System. The lively, yet cultivated sound delights even the most discerning music lover. The slight warmth generated in the sound pattern is accompanied by a fine resolution, which does not forgo nuances in rear musical levels. The clarinet, an instrument which dominates the solo section, is reproduced in a beautifully clear and rich manner and is not artificially exaggerated - such an accurate and balanced sound from such a delicate instrument is rarely heard in this price range. The extremely high-quality Oehlbach wiring previously mentioned certainly contributes to the excellent performance. The 2 x 1 metre XXL Series 2 cable, which establishes the stereo RCA connection between the CD player and the amplifier, is a direct hit with regard to tonal precision and acoustic finesse (these nuances can only be distinguished by a connoisseur). The high quality, four-star Silver Express set is outstanding for normal use. The 2 x 0.5 metre configuration is ideal, particularly when the CDP and amplifier are set up in close proximity, as this simultaneously improves signal quality (a general rule for analogue connections is: the shorter the better) and also saves money.

Andrea Bocelli, Andrea, L'attesa: The Music System 400 performs superbly here as well. Andrea's voice is reproduced accurately and exhibits a wonderful charisma. The deep bass, which emerges shortly after the start of the piece, is portrayed with outstanding depth and also highlights the outstanding level of cooperation with Nubert's nuVero 10 set. An excellent, very detailed resolution is possible when connected with Oehlbach's Twin Mix One LS cable with a 2 x 3 mm² cross section.

The transitions between the frequency ranges are very clean and fluid. The reserves are more than sufficient for a forced pace. The level of spatial distribution as well as the separation of instruments and the voice of the blind singer scored very highly.

The Best of Bond - James Bond: License to Kill, Gladys Knight: With impeccable resolution and a powerful bass line the start of the track is a real pleasure. For the money invested the Music System 400 also provides a clean performance here, which makes this solution highly recommended for a designated music room or living area. The Magnat package always performs in a stylish and pleasant manner; unpleasant peaks or shrill intermediate tones never cloud the sound pattern. The sound emanates flawlessly from the speaker and is transmitted with an astonishingly intense effect.

So80s (so eighties) - presented by Blank&Jones, Volume 4, CD 2, Alphaville: Sounds like a Melody: Lively but uniform at the same is the way in which the Alphaville classic is reproduced. The bass is generated precisely and the pulse fidelity is really good. Vocals are integrated excellently and the spatial effect is also high. The basic rhythm is always presented with a clear outline.

Pearls of the 80s - Volume 2, CD1, Dead or Alive - You spin me round: The Music System 400 once again generates a successful mixture of spatiality and verve. The powerful bass develops really good pressure and is never indifferent or applied too thickly. The overall rendition and the various sound effects are separated fluidly and support an impression of spatial depth and breadth. Bass salvos are rendered with precise timing and the nuVero 10 set proves to be a very good partner.

Sunshine Live Classics, Volume 4, CD 2: Ikarus - Flutlicht: This track demands a lot from an amplifier - the bass segments are powerful, there are numerous sound effects and there is a high tempo. We were very anxious about the unit's performance against this background. And lo and behold - the Music System 400 is even able to deliver an excellent performance with this style of music and it serves up extremely coarse dynamics with a hard, non-reverberating bass line. The slightly raspy, less aggressive vocals are reproduced accurately by the Magnat set and it creates a dynamic rendition of sound effects, which, when combined with the excellent bass range, creates a real disco feel in the living room.

Sunshine Live Classics, Volume 4, CD 2: Celebrate - Zhi-Vago: This track is somewhat softer and more "chilled", however caution is advised here, as the extremely deep, room-filling bass is reproduced with some difficulty. It lacks a bit in punch at the very lowest levels, otherwise there is very little to criticise about the unit. The quick beat is reproduced faithfully and the track is able to unfold perfectly in terms of spatially. The Music System 400 series is ideal for use in rooms measuring between 15 and 30 square metres, as this is where the most convincing levels of depth and breadth are expressed.

Tuner (BR Klassik, Antenne Bayern, Antenne Thüringen): The tuner is also appealing - it offers a high degree of sensitivity and is able to locate a wide range of stations that are received in a clear and noise-free manner. RDS functionality is naturally also included. Stations that exhibit strong reception in the region sound so good that they can be described as being near CD quality. There is no trace of tinny trebles or harsh compression, voices sound clear and all genres of music seem lively and rousing. Even classical music can be enjoyed in excellent quality without a great deal of compromise.

Rendition via headphones (AKG Q701), Johann Strauss, Viennese Spirit + The Blue Danube Waltzes: Anyone with high-quality headphones can hook up to the Magnat amplifier with confidence: Very respectable performances are rendered with high resolution, finely metered spatiality and impeccable dynamics. The powerful dynamic sections in the two Waltzes are reproduced in an unfiltered manner and are accentuated beautifully. The strings sound incredibly lively and the overall acoustics of the orchestra score highly thanks to virtually seamless transitions.

Rendition via headphones (AKG Q701), The Best of Bond - James Bond: Duran Duran, A View to a Kill: The Music System 400 deserves special mention here too: The bass is crisp and precise and the degree of spatiality produced via the headphones is also commendable. The sound is rousing and spatially broad, yet never intrusive. The superior overall acoustics remain present even when listening at higher levels.

Conclusion

Magnat's Music System 400 offers excellent acoustic characteristics at a low purchase price. Reproduction is lively, fine and clear regardless of whether the signal is generated by the CD player or the tuner. The amplifier with tube preamp produces a very harmonious and sophisticated sound pattern and the tube itself imparts a warm feeling. This is very pleasant for the listener, as it enables hour-long, stress-free listening sessions. Despite this warm feeling, the treble range remains transparent and imparts some brilliance, which is cleanly divided in the listening room in terms of breadth and depth. The outstanding level of workmanship both inside and out round off our excellent impressions of this system nicely."