



Heco Direkt

THIS DARINGLY DIFFERENT LOUDSPEAKER HAS EXCEPTIONAL SENSITIVITY AND AN EVENHANDED BALANCE, AS PAUL MESSENGER DISCOVERS

This loudspeaker looks and behaves quite unlike any current stereotype. Indeed, while searching for something broadly comparable I found myself going back to the Leak *Sandwich*. This was one of the key loudspeakers in the 1960s, but Martin Colloms recently reviewed an original sample in this journal (Vol8 No4). Although it does differ in a number of important respects, the *Direkt* is a bulky and unusually wide two-way with a large (280mm) main driver. There are similarities to the Audio Note models, though these have much smaller (200mm) bass/mid unit, and a 'Phase 3 Loft Style' *B15* prototype that Burmester showed at the Munich show in 2015 (which doesn't seem to have made it into the company's catalogue). I also understand that US brand De Vore's *Orangutan* has numerous similarities too; the 0/96 version certainly looks the business.

Although those comparisons are interesting enough, they're nowhere near as dramatic as the contrast between the *Direkt* and earlier Heco loudspeakers that came this reviewer's way. The brand actually first appeared way back in the late 1940s, which may go some way towards explaining the numerous subsequent changes, as the Heco models scrutinised in those earlier reviews seemed entirely conventional in layout, while the £2,500 *Direkt* is clearly anything but.

The first time I encountered Heco was roughly 25 years ago, back in 1991. Much more recently, in 2008, the current importer Puresound made another attempt to establish the brand in the UK, again without much success, but the introduction of the *Direkt* could well change the situation in Heco's favour, for several reasons. One factor might well be that it looks so very different from the norm, but a more cogent reason is that it has an unusually high sensitivity, and is therefore particularly well suited to partner the relatively low power valve amplifiers that lie at the core of the Puresound range.

While the wide and shallow shape, and the single central rear leg are themselves unusual, the most dramatic feature is surely the use of two-way configuration with an 11inch (280mm) bass/mid driver. Furthermore, it operates right up to a stated crossover frequency of 2.4kHz – not quite as high as the 3kHz norm, but a lot higher than usually encountered with a driver with a 200mm paper cone. Hopefully the cone will continue to behave well through and above the crossover zone, though one anticipates that a driver with such a large diameter will tend to focus the midband frequencies in a forward direction. The tweeter has a 28mm soft dome diaphragm that is somewhat recessed behind a shiny and stylish metal horn, which should extend its power range to a lower frequency than usual,