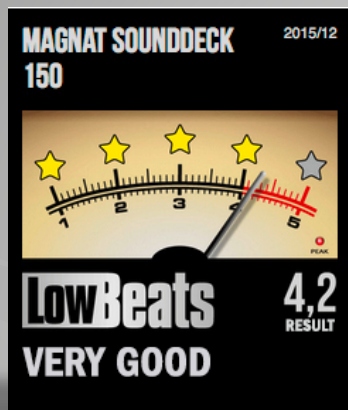


"UNIVERSAL SOLDIER"



Magnat SOUNDDECK 150



- + BALANCED SOUND
- + DOESN'T NEED A SUBWOOFER
- + VERY INEXPENSIVE
- + EASY TO OPERATE



Magnat

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lowbeats.de
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TOTAL	2015/12
SOUND	★★★★★
PRACTICE	★★★★★
WORKMANSHIP	★★★★★

The Magnat Sounddeck 150 is extremely flat and is equipped with a powerful 2.1 loudspeaker system, which also produces surround sound, as well as four digital inputs, including USB. On top of that, it is also Bluetooth capable. And all that for €400 ...

Universal Soldier

It's not possible to build a sound deck much flatter than this. Not, in any case, if the bass is still to come out at all. The Magnat Sounddeck 150 measures just 8 cm high (all the technical data can be found here) and is nevertheless the largest standalone loudspeaker of this type in the Magnat range. With this, the Rhineland-based company is targeting the strong competition from Samsung and Co., which is also trying to convince customers with extremely flat designs. It really is amazing just how flat some of these things are nowadays. But is it worthwhile? Common sense says: NO. Because, despite all the psychoacoustics and elaborate DSP technology, deep bass at enjoyable levels needs a large membrane area, a long throw and as large an enclosure as possible - that's simply physics.

Rich bass thanks to downfire driver and bass reflex support

The 8 centimetre height of the Sounddeck 150 is a good compromise and facilitates a minimum requirement for substantial bass. The enclosure is made of 6 mm thick, black laminated MDF boards. That might not be high end, but it is sufficient for the purpose. The flat enclosure is divided into 4 compartments: Two for the mid-range drivers and tweeters of the left and right channels, one for the electronics (see picture) and the biggest one for the 13 cm long-throw driver, which is accommodated at the bottom of the Sounddeck 150. This so-called "downfire driver" is a concept designed for the Sounddeck 150 to stand on a sideboard or the like, i.e. providing bass support via a solid surface. So fitting the sound deck to the wall with angle brackets is only the second-best solution.

Extremely easy to connect to HDMI, USB, Coax, optical and Bluetooth

Connecting to a TV or other components is very simple. Including unpacking, it took us less than 15 minutes to get the Sounddeck working. We're lucky that we don't have to make many corrections in the LowBeats listening room - it sounds great just the way it is. For those who need to make a bit of adjustment - because the room is overdamped (muffled sound) or there is not enough bass - the system allows treble and bass correction.

However, this is also quick to do via the simple and therefore intuitively operated remote control. I was also impressed by the Bluetooth connection with my mobile phone. I counted 12 seconds and then I was connected and it surprised me how good the sound of the Sounddeck 150 is even in wireless mode. Although the bass came across in a somewhat uncontrolled way via Bluetooth and the soundscape was less vivid, it was still very well-balanced and rich in detail. We can certainly live with that.

Measurements and listening test

Magnat gives the transmission range as 28 - 26,000 hertz. That is a very optimistic interpretation of the transmission curve. The LowBeats measurements show a - for a soundbar of this category - extremely well-balanced frequency response of 200 - 20,000 hertz. There is a substantial SPL boost between 100 and 200 hertz, which makes perfect sense given that a large part of the acoustic energy of films takes place in that range. The lower limit frequency of the system is 50 hertz - which is still a very good value for a 13 cm bass that also has to produce a high level.

And the sound deck generated powerful sound accordingly. We had chosen a number of hits as music and film examples, but started with music for which the sound deck was certainly not developed primarily. Classical. The recording of Dvorak's 9th Symphony (DG) is excellent and simply overwhelming in the Pure Audio version. The strings require power and substance - and the flat unit supplied both to an astonishing degree. But that's not all: We were able to gain an amazingly deep insight into the recording room, with the richness in detail of the large number of bowed strings, the reverberation of the timpani skins and the triangles played with great verve coming across really well. In any case, so much better that we would have expected from a €400 sound bar. Admittedly: The Magnat deck did not display the naturalness, bass power or attention to detail of the Nubert NuPro AS-250 or the fine resolution in the presence range of the - though somewhat artificial sounding - Bose Solo 5. The Sounddeck is located between these two not only in terms of price, but also with regard to the sound. A lot more mature than the Bose in the bass ranges and almost as well-balanced as the Nubert.

Not much can be expected of the surround sound mode in a 2.1 system. This is also true for the Sounddeck 150 with its two mid-range drivers, which are designed to give the impression of something like three-dimensionality with their DSP-modified phase response. The difference is nevertheless noticeable with the Sounddeck. The soundscape becomes substantially greater: broader and higher. Ok. But spatial depth?

No. The measurements show that the developers opted more for a good tone than a big effect. The blue curve (stereo) hardly differs from the red one (surround mode). That's ok.

For testing, we like to use the Tom Cruise movie "Days Of Thunder". Not because of Tom Cruise but, rather, because of the impressive sound with whirring engines and dialogues that are difficult to understand. The Sounddeck mastered all of this brilliantly. Only, as already mentioned: It is not three-dimensional reproduction.

Those who want to hear gunshots and cars whizzing past them will have to invest in more ambitious systems with more channels.

Conclusion: An all-round happy sound package for €400

It was enjoyable listening to all this with the Magnat. Under the conditions of the classic TV situation in the living room (i.e. only quiet to med-level) and for superior background music when talking to guests, the Magnat is virtually perfect. Those who do not have very high demands regarding appearance will be hard put to find a system that combines such easy handling, such substantial sound and such practical connectivity in such a clever and compact way (that means 'flat' in this case) as the Magnat Sounddeck 150.

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