

# Sbooster BOTW ECO MKII

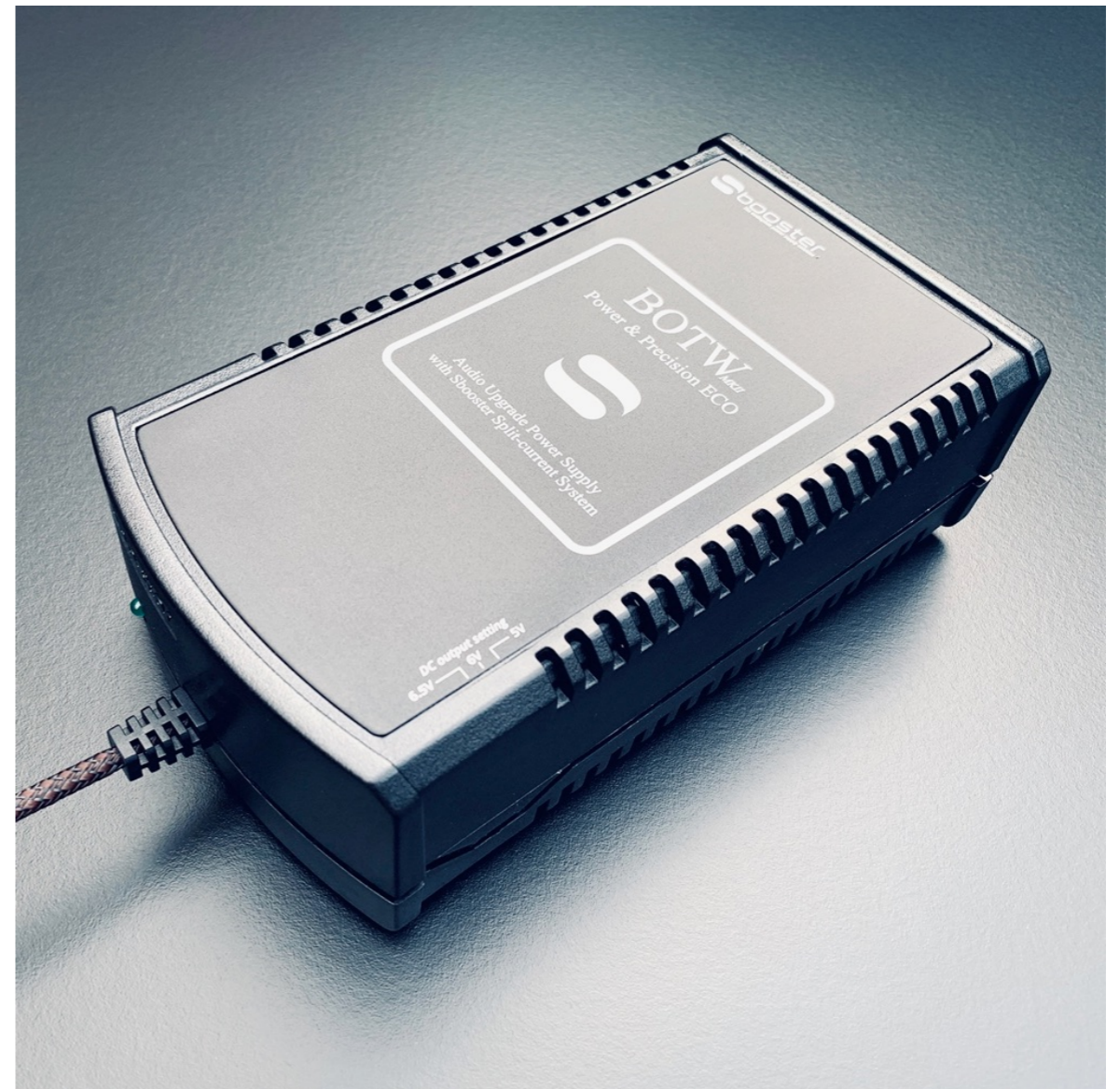
*A clear step forward*





# Sbooster BOTW ECO MKII

It was 2015 when we wrote a [review](#) (Dutch only) about the sonic benefits of the original Sbooster BOTW ECO power supply. Even when 'power' is not the sexiest subject in hifi, we are fully convinced of the importance of 'proper nourishment' for our hifi gear. Earlier this year, Sbooster announced the MKII version of their linear BOTW ECO power supply, and we didn't hesitate to order a review sample. Quite some time went by before it arrived, but once we got started, it proved to be well worth the wait.



# Technology

Sbooster designer Wiebren Draaijer had plenty of progressive insights to improve the new BOTW ECO MKII model on several points, compared to the first - very successful - model. Some of the more important improvements are double-sided PCB's with thicker copper conductors, better internal wiring made from Teflon insulated silver plated copper, an additional HF magnetic insulation for the toroidal transformer, a new and better shielded OFC cable from the Sbooster to the audio-device, better components in the power-splitter, better bulk-capacitors, a heavier heatsink and an even better stabilising circuit. The additional (sold separately) Ultra filter, that you put between the DC cable and the audio-device, got upgraded as well. This filter lowers the output ripple significantly and now has better OFC cabling, better - tuned by ear - components, impedance correction in the output circuit, a star-ground design, and a smart circuit called 'Sbooster Decoy' that somehow 'lures' unwanted noise out of the attached audio-device. That noise is generated by the internal circuit, but it is unable to get out because of the metal casing.





# Test-Setup

To test the new Sbooster BOTW ECO MKII we used the familiar Linn/Wilson Benesch set. The Sbooster powered a Chord Qutest da-converter, that received its signal from an Auralic Aries mini. An iFi micro iUSB3.0 was inserted in the USB connection between the Auralic and the Chord. The Auralic was hooked up to a Mac mini running Roon, over an AudioQuest Vodka and Carbon Cat 7 wired network. For the utmost accuracy we first listened to the original SMPS that came with the Chord Qutest, than we progressed to the old Sbooster BOTW ECO with the old Ultra filter and the new Ultra MKII filter, after that we did an Sbooster BOTW ECO vs Sbooster BOTW ECO MKII

comparison, and finally we listened to the new Sbooster BOTW ECO MKII with the new Ultra MKII filter. Like before, we only used two tracks so we could focus on the sound quality rather than the music. We chose Dream In by Tunng, from their album Songs You Make At Night, and VI (feat. Keith Kenniff) from the album Le Fumeur De Ciel bij Julien Neto. So let's get on with it, plenty of listening ahead...



# Compare

## Chord Qutest standard power supply

Tunng sounded quite pleasant, to be honest. Full bodied and powerful, warm and very spacious, with lots of dynamics. Even on closer examination, this would be perfectly acceptable sound for everyday use. Once again we heard why we like the [Chord Qutest](#) so much. The track by Julien Neto sounded dreamy, but not detached. We were right in the middle of it, and we heard a nice contrast between the rather dry-sounding glitchy percussion and the warm and diffuse background.

## Sbooster BOTW ECO

When we replaced the Chord SMPS for the original Sbooster BOTW ECO, the voice of Tunng's singer Sam Genders was brought more to the front, and he was more clearly addressing us as listeners. The entire performance became more involving and vivacious, and the imaging became more focussed and precise. There was more 'pressure' too, especially in the bass, and we heard more spatial information. When listening to Julien Neto, the image contained more detail and texture, like looking at the sounds through a magnifying glass. The separate elements of the mix did not bleed into each

other anymore, which brought better contrast to the performance, along with a sense of ease. The loudspeakers took a step back from the sound image, and the piano sounded better, more colourful.

## Sbooster BOTW ECO with Ultra filter

With the old Sbooster Ultra filter in the power line, the performance of Julien Neto became a bit cooler, though some may say it became more neutral. That is not a bad trait in itself, but the music became a little restrained and less fluid as well. The piano was less colourful. When listening to Tunng, we found that the music became more 'matter of fact'. All very nice and neat, but again some 'flow' was missing.

## Sbooster BOTW ECO with Sbooster Ultra MKII filter

Since the Sbooster Ultra MKII filter is sold separately (and 100% compatible with the old BOTW ECO power supply) we were curious to find out if the upgrades in the circuitry would also result in better sound quality. We weren't



disappointed. When listening to Tunng, we heard a lot more texture and the warmth was back. There was more drive too. Nevertheless, we thought that, when it came to naturalness, 'no filter' sounded just a tad more fluid. The Julien Neto track became more involving, closer to the listener, and a lot less austere. We were able to listen a lot deeper into the recording. But here too,





the final bit of fluidity was missing. Nonetheless, we feel perfectly comfortable in stating that the new Sbooster Ultra MKII filter is a clear upgrade for the old BOTW ECO power supply, so owners of one of those - who do not want to replace the entire power supply - can take advantage of that.

### Sbooster BOTW ECO versus Sbooster BOTW ECO MKII

Now this is where things get more exciting. While the new Ultra MKII filter turned out to be an interesting upgrade for Ye Olde Sbooster BOTW ECO power supply, the Sbooster BOTW ECO itself only proved what we already knew. But in the name of accuracy of this review we wanted to reconfirm that, because last time was quite a while ago and we used a different d-a-converter and a different interconnect. The track of Julien Neto clearly benefited from the new Sbooster BOTW ECO MKII. More detail, more subtlety and cleanliness, more 'pressure' and a greater sense of ease. The spatial image became much bigger and the piano had a more natural, more vivid tone. Not bloated, but not dull either, just right. Imaging and timing both became more coherent, which made for a more intense listening experience. All of a sudden, some edginess that we had not noticed before was missing from the Tunng track, and 'without' was clearly better. There was an increase in precision of imaging and timing, and it all sounded a little bit more neutral, as in 'more realistic'. The music became more transparent and more correct. The music became more striking and it became easier to hear the voices in the backing choir separately.

### Sbooster Eco MKII with Ultra MKII filter

The Sbooster Ultra MKII filter made the effect of the Sbooster BOTW ECO MKII power supply a bit less pronounced, but in that trade-off we got a more spatial soundstage. However, the image was also placed slightly further back, and the music sounded ever so slightly restrained. The latter was con-

firmed when we listened to the Julien Neto track. It all sounded a bit more detached, but at the same time more spacious, like an additional layer of reverb had been added. That must have been the beneficial effect of the 'Sbooster Decoy' technology that removes parasitic noise from the audio-device it is attached to. Even so, we thought that the piano had lost just a bit of warmth. A smidge of openness was gone and the overall sound became less fluid. All VERY minimal, by the way, we could easily imagine that some listeners may actually prefer a less confronting presentation.



# Concluding

With the BOTW ECO MKII, Sbooster has taken a significant step forward, compared to the previous version. On all relevant points - as far as we are concerned - there was an improvement in sound quality. The Sbooster Ultra MKII filter also offers an improvement, even though we thought that the old Sbooster BOTW ECO power supply benefitted more from it. When combined with the new BOTW ECO MKII power supply, the Ultra MKII filter gave a more spacious presentation, but when push came to shove, we preferred a more involving reproduction of music. Nevertheless, that is more of an opinion than an assessment, and we actually think that buyers of the BOTW ECO MKII power supply should give the Ultra MKII filter a try. Because there is no doubt in our minds that the audible effect of the filter may be a lot bigger - and more positive - when you combine it with a different audio device.





# Music and Information

More information and prices about the described Sbooster BOTW ECO MKII and Ultra MKII filter, can be found in our webshop:

[Sbooster BOTW ECO MKII](#)  
[Sbooster Ultra MKII filter](#)

Spotify

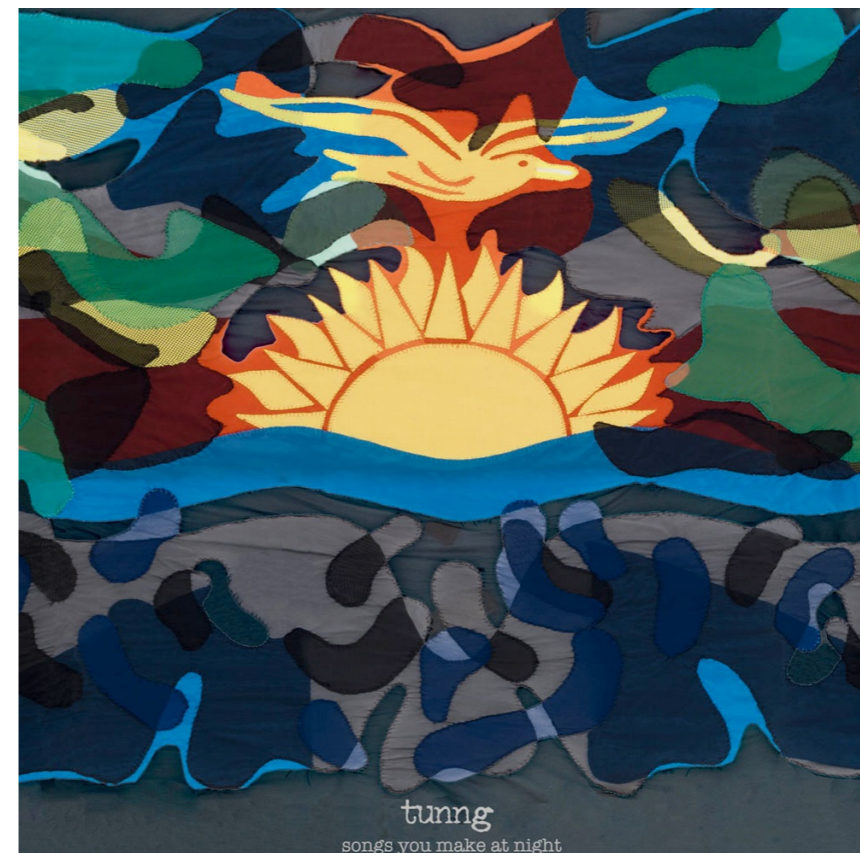


[Julien Neto - Le Fumeur de Ciel](#)  
[Tunng - Songs You Make At Night](#)

Tidal



[Julien Neto - Le Fumeur de Ciel](#)  
[Tunng - Songs You Make At Night](#)





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