



DIGITAL SERVER OF THE YEAR Taiko Audio SGM Extreme



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Taiko Audio is the product of a Dutch high-end audio laboratory in Oldenzaal. It is the brainchild of engineer and audio enthusiast Emile Bok. Emile – who has been building loudspeakers since he was twelve years old – began building audio components back in 2008, starting with grounding blocks. Studying grounding – and later isolation – stood Emile in good stead for making a high-end server. Emile’s custom ‘Sound Galleries Music’ platform from 2015 set the standard for high-end music server replay, and the new SGM Extreme takes that to new levels!

The dual Intel Xeon CPU design (useful for running Roon alongside the modified Windows 10) is matched with 12 carefully selected 4GB DIMM memory modules. Every part of this server is built with individually chambered subsystems to prevent RFI leakage, a very high-performance linear power supply with 700,000µF of reservoir capacitance, and a passively cooled CNC milled chassis that features a hybrid of copper, aluminium and panzerholz wood. Recently, Emile realised the USB controller circuit is a sonic limitation in what is otherwise the best way to send audio files from server to DAC, taking the SGM Extreme several steps further in performance.

“The SGM Extreme changes the game.” said Alan Sircom in his review. “It’s the point where high-end streaming takes on the same degree of subtlety and rootedness that you might get from an absolute pinnacle CD or SACD player.” In fact, he was convinced this server made some of the best sounds you can hear at home; “The order and structure of the music is as you expect it should be, rather than ‘almost’ how it should be. This is something more than accurate tonality, wide dynamic range, precision, vocal articulation, detail, rhythm or any of those regular characteristics.” He concluded by saying that the Taiko Audio SGM Extreme is “the server that could finally silence the ‘yeah... but I still prefer CD’ stick-in-the-muds, but more important still, it pushes far past the limits of what digital audio can do.” +

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