

SVS 4000 Series Subwoofers
 One Subwoofer
 Reference Quality Bass
SVS Makes History.

PC-4000 PB-4000 SB-4000

SOUND & VISION

Copper Cliff Meets Lightspeed
www.fbbrtech.com
 Ultra Pro HD

[HOME](#)
[REVIEWS](#)
[TOP PICKS](#)
[HOW TO](#)
[BLOGS](#)
[NEWS](#)
[INSTALLS](#)
[SUBSCRIBE](#)
[SHOP](#)

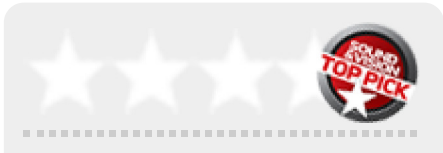
MEDIA SERVER REVIEWS

Elac Discovery DS-S101-G Music Server Review

Al Griffin | Feb 15, 2018



PRICE \$1,100



NE
 MAKING

visual

Plus

Free app from Roon Labs
Wired and wireless multiroom playback options
Impressive sound from built-in DAC

Minus

Track count limited to 30,000
Requires wired LAN connection

THE VERDICT

Elac's Discovery provides a simple, elegant option for adding a networked music server with Roon to an existing audio system.

Before diving into a review of Elac's Discovery DS-S101-G music server, it seems apt to ask: What is a music server? In the past, it was a standalone audio component with a built-in hard disk that stored and played a ripped CD collection while connecting to the internet to fetch metadata. While products that fit this description still exist, a music server can also be something as basic as a software application running on a computer or on a network-attached storage (NAS) appliance. The server application, wherever it may reside, acts as a librarian for your digital audio files, sorting and retrieving them, and then routing the data to a USB DAC or a networked audio component that translates the ones and zeros into music.

With no built-in storage, Elac's Discovery is a compact component that links to either external USB storage or a NAS device, provides analog and digital outputs to connect to your audio system, and is controlled by an app. In this case, however, the software that runs the show is from Roon Labs, a music library and discovery platform that has earned acclaim for its advanced user interface and sophisticated handling of metadata. Regular users of Roon pay \$119 per year (or \$499 lifetime) for a subscription. With the Elac Discovery, you get a scaled-down version called Roon Essentials— included at no extra charge. The main difference is that, with Essentials, your music library is limited to a still substantial 30,000 tracks.

Besides maintaining a music library ripped from discs, Roon Essentials provides software integration with the CD- or better-quality Tidal streaming

Ergonomics
Value

Copper
+ F
Ultra Pro



Discovery, albums, tracks, and playlists in your Tidal library will show up as part of your larger music collection, alongside the ripped CDs and standard- and high-resolution downloads. The Discovery's built-in DAC supports uncompressed WAV, AIFF, FLAC, and ALAC files with up to 192-kilohertz/24-bit resolution, along with the compressed MP3, AAC, and OGG formats.

An unassuming piece of hardware that measures about 8 x 5 inches (WxD), the Discovery has a case that's crafted from solid aluminum, and there's a rubber pad on the bottom that keeps it snugly set on top of a receiver, an integrated amp, or any other component you use it with. (Just don't block any cooling vents! (An LED indicator on the front panel glows white when the server is in use. Audio connections on the back include two pair of stereo analog RCA outputs and both coaxial and optical digital outs. Data connections include a gigabit Ethernet port for linking to a wired network (a requirement for using the Discovery) and a USB port to plug in USB storage.



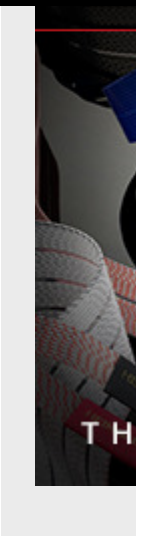
Along with single-zone operation, the Discovery can be configured for synchronized multiroom playback via its dual analog outputs. Wireless multiroom streaming is also possible when using AirPlay speakers, Roonready Wi-Fi speakers from Bluesound and Elac (specifically, the company's forthcoming Discovery Z3), and Sonos products. However, wireless speakers that use different protocols (e.g., AirPlay and Sonos) can't be grouped together for synchronized multiroom playback.

Setup

Setting up the Discovery in my system involved first running an Ethernet cable from a powerline adapter to link it to my home network. I next made analog and coaxial digital connections to an Outlaw Audio RR2160 stereo receiver (Sound & Vision, November 2017) powering a pair of GoldenEar Technology Triton Five tower speakers (Sound & Vision, May 2015). After I

windows 10 versions are also available), the Discovery was detected as the “Roon Core” on my network. The final steps were to enter my Tidal login credentials and to configure a USB drive loaded with ripped and downloaded music files and plugged into the Discovery’s back panel as the main music “folder.”

Since I was using both the digital and analog outputs, I could set these up as separate zones in the Audio Settings panel of the Roon Essentials app. This allowed me to compare the performance of the Discovery’s built-in DAC with that of the Outlaw receiver. I also configured a Naim Mu-so Qb speaker in my bedroom as a wireless AirPlay zone, though I wasn’t able to group it for synchronized playback with the Discovery in the main system.





FLAC 44.1kHz 16bit 2ch 1 hour, 15 minutes

Pieces in a Modern Style

William Orbit

▶ Play Album

⚙ Focus On Similar

+



Originally Released
22 Feb 2000

Released
1 Jan 2005

Added
1 Jan 1970

★★★★★

After years of making his own esoteric ambient albums and paying for them by doing dance remixes for pop acts, [William Orbit](#) hit the big time in 1998 by co-writing and producing [Madonna's Ray of Light](#) album. With his own debut solo album on Madonna's label, he returned to his esoteric pursuits, programming a variety of calm classical pieces into his computer and rearranging them to one extent or another. [Samuel Barber's](#)

TRANCE ELECTRONIC CLASSICAL CROSSOVER CLASSICAL AMBIENT TECHNO AMBIENT TECHNO

▶ Disc 1 | Disc 2

Credits

Tracks

1	Barber's Adagio for Strings Composed by Samuel Barber 3 PERFORMANCES	9:34
2	In a Landscape Composed by John Cage	2:57
3	Ogive No. 1 Composed by Erik Satie	6:44
4	Cavalleria Rusticana Composed by Pietro Mascagni 3 PERFORMANCES	3:19
5	Pavane Pour une Infante Defunte Composed by Maurice Ravel 3 PERFORMANCES	6:11
6	L' Inverno Composed by Antonio Vivaldi	3:57
7	Triple Concerto Composed by Ludwig van Beethoven 2 PERFORMANCES	5:32
8	Xerxes Composed by George Frederick Handel 2 PERFORMANCES	4:42
9	Piece in the Old Style I Composed by Henryk Mikolaj Gorecki 2 PERFORMANCES	5:06
10	Piece in the Old Style III Composed by Henryk Mikolaj Gorecki 2 PERFORMANCES	5:49
11	Op. 132 Composed by Ludwig van Beethoven 2 PERFORMANCES	6:14

By This Artist

- 27 JUL 1987 *****
Orbit
- 1990 *****
Strange Cargo 2
- 1993 *****
Strange Cargo 3
- 20 FEB 1996 *****
The Best of Strange Cargos
- This Album
22 FEB 2000 *****
Pieces in a Modern Style
- 7 FEB 2006 *****
Hello Waveforms
- 8 JUN 2009
My Oracle Lives Uptown
- 16 AUG 2010 *****
Pieces in a Modern Style, Vol. 2

Performance

I started my listening session with the Discovery connected to the Outlaw receiver's analog input. When I played "My Valentine," a 96/24 HDtracks download from the Brad Mehldau Trio's Blues and Ballads, the piano tone was smooth and cool, with just the right touch of crispness to the high notes. The drums had a full presentation that easily conveyed the rich overtones of the brushed cymbals, and a double bass solo midway through displayed a level of detail and focus that conjured up the precise location of the instrument in the soundstage. As I listened, the metadata in the

My Valentine" was composed by Paul McCartney, and the embedded links in other tracks led me to learn more about the composers of those songs. And that's just one small example of the magic of Roon, which really does merit its own full review outside the context of Elac's server.

Next, I played a Tidal stream of Van Morrison's "Into the Mystic" from Moondance. The acoustic guitar, piano, and electric bass in the background had a warm, liquid quality that contrasted nicely with the sharper tone of Van's vocals. The soundstage on this track came across as especially wide, with a tambourine pushed forward in the mix serving to create a realistic sense of depth. Switching over to classical music, I played a Max Richter composition, "War Anthem," from his Three Worlds: Music from Woolf Works. The Elac and Outlaw combination conveyed a strong sense of spaciousness and clear layering between the solo instruments and the orchestra. Massed strings sounded full and textured, and the steady, low rumble of percussion instruments created a powerful foundation.

The screenshot shows a music application interface for Miles Davis. At the top is a large hero image of Miles Davis playing the trumpet, with the text "Miles Davis" overlaid. Below the image is a "Play Artist" button and a heart icon. A short biography follows: "Throughout a professional career lasting 50 years, Miles Davis played the trumpet in a lyrical, introspective, and melodic style, often employing a stemless Harmon mute to make his sound more personal and intimate. But if his approach to his instrument was constant, his approach to jazz was dazzlingly protean. To examine". Below this is a horizontal scroll bar of genre tags: TRUMPET JAZZ, HARD BOP, POST-BOP, JAZZ-FUNK, COOL, FUSION, JAZZ, JAZZ-ROCK, BOP, MODAL MUSIC, JAZZ INSTRUMENT, POP/ROCK, and a plus icon. The interface is divided into sections: "From United States of America", "Born 26 May 1926 Alton, Illinois", "Died 28 Sep 1991 Santa Monica, California", "Member Of Miles Davis Quintet, Vince Wilburn, Jr., Betty Davis", and "Around the Web" with social media icons for YouTube, Facebook, and Wikipedia. The "Top Tracks" section lists "Miles Ahead" (Composed by Gil Evans, Miles Davis), "Oleo" (with Miles Davis Quintet, Composed by Sonny Rollins), "Flamenco Sketches" (Composed by Miles Davis), and "Will O' the Wisp" (Composed by Manuel de Falla). The "Main Albums" section shows a row of album covers including "Miles Ahead", "Miles Davis Quintet Live at the Black and White", "Miles Davis Sketches of Spain", "Miles Davis Seven Steps to Heaven", "Miles Davis Miles Davis", and "SOLOALIZ".

Miles Ahead

Kind of Blue

Sketches of Spain

Seven Steps to Heaven

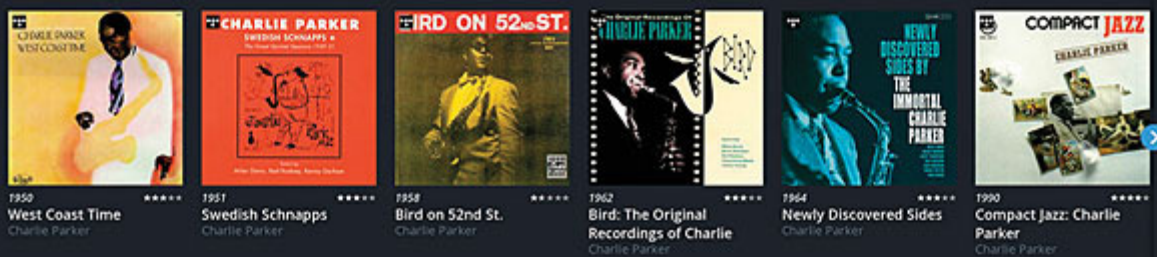
My Funny Valentine 15

Sorcerer

Main Albums



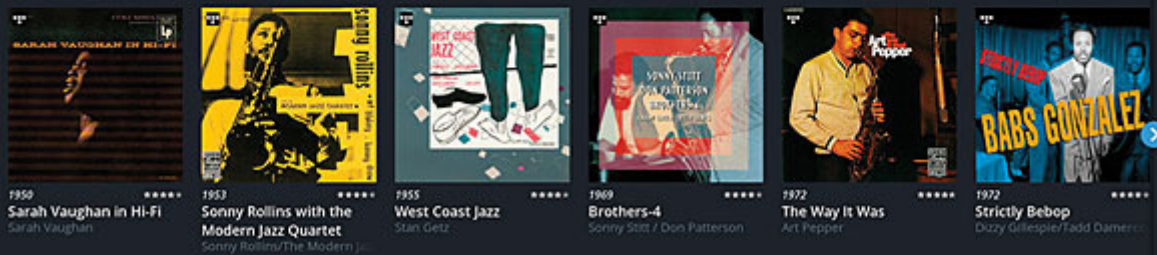
With Charlie Parker



With John Coltrane, Archie Shepp



Appearances



When I compared the same tracks using a digital input on the Outlaw receiver, the sound remained impressive, but there were instances when the Discovery's DAC showed a clear advantage. One example: The piano on "My Valentine" had a warmer overall tone via the Discovery, and the cymbals displayed better air and detail. Also, on the Moondance track, Morrison's vocals were better integrated in the mix, which resulted in a more seamless presentation. And when I listened to the Richter piece, the strings were conveyed with a finer sense of bloom and decay. When

DAC was more dynamic and lively.

Conclusion

Wrapping up my take on Elac's Discovery, I'm hard-pressed to find a good reason why someone seeking to add a networked music server to their system wouldn't want one. The Discovery eliminates any need to use a dedicated computer to store music or operate your system (beyond your mobile device to run the app), and it works with both inexpensive USB and NAS storage options. Its compact form and minimalist design allow it to be integrated unobtrusively with an existing hi-fi rig. Also, you'll get great sound quality from its built-in DAC, along with wired and wireless multiroom audio support, including installations that use AirPlay or Sonos speakers.



Ultimately, the Discovery's strongest selling point is the bundled Roon Essentials app, which gives you a free pass to the world of Roon, a platform that's widely regarded as a superior solution for the browsing and playback of digital music. The Discovery might not fit everyone's conception of a music server, but I'm confident it will fit many listeners' needs as they evolve their systems for networked audio playback.

NEXT: [Specs](#) »

COMPANY INFO

Elac
elac.com

ARTICLE CONTENTS

- [Page 1](#)
- [Specs](#)