



## Roon: a short story

MARTIN COLLOMS HAS BECOME A ROON CONVERT – HERE HE CHARTS HIS PATH TO ‘ROONIFICATION’, USING THE COMPANY’S NUCLEUS+ CORE UNIT

**I’d encountered Roon music playing and cataloguing software on a few occasions, as well as its predecessor, the Sooloos music storage and handling system, with its attractive graphical presentations of tracks, artwork and music cataloguing. Acquired by Meridian some years ago as the heart of its streaming solution, Sooloos was later spun off as a separate company, eventually becoming Roon in 2015. But the heart of the system has remained: an informative, easy to use music management system, based on extended metadata and intelligent cataloguing of content. It has seen several iterations bringing it to the present level of refinement – in fact to a level where I felt that I just had to try it out.**

At the heart of any Roon implementation is what the company calls the ‘Core’: either an existing computer on the network running Roon Core software, or a dedicated device running Roon OS, the company’s operating system. As has been pointed out in these pages, it’s possible to build a Roon Core with very little computer knowledge, for example using one of Intel’s NUC compact computers: one need only add memory and a solid state drive to run the software, which is downloadable and easily installed onto a NUC.

How much internal storage you add is really a matter of personal choice: the Roon Core computer doesn’t need to act as a music server, but instead can access other music stores on the user’s network. AE, for example, runs Roon on a NUC whose only purpose is to run the software, which accesses music libraries on a number of NAS devices on his network. Control is then via computers or phones/tablets

running Roon, and playback via a range of Roon-ready audio hardware.

If all that sounds like a lot of complication, you can do as I have, going for the official factory-built unit, a Roon Nucleus+, the more expensive of two ‘turnkey’ solution the company offers. Both offer a similar configuration, which is essentially an Intel NUC plus SSD storage in a custom-made fanless case, with Roon OS preinstalled and configured for more or less plug and play operation. It comes with a good quality, electronic switching plug-top power supply which will satisfy most applications, while for the more particular, accessory linear supplies may be obtained such as the Longdog Audio unit that has also come in for trial. (see review)

The two versions of the unit – the Nucleus and the Nucleus+ – are based around the Intel i-series CPUs: the less expensive model, at £1550, uses an