

Review: Yba Genesis Cd4 Cd Player

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The death of the CD player has been greatly exaggerated, especially when you see new ones hitting the market at regular intervals still. The YBA Genesis CD4 might not be new, but with its clean lines and top-loading mechanism, we took one into review.

YBA

Genesis CD4

CD Player

£2,750

We fell in love with the unassuming battery-powered [Genesis PH1](#) phono preamplifier not so long ago. Will it be the same story with the CD player from the same range?

CDs seem to have managed to hold on longer than the much-lauded vinyl (or LPs and Singles as we used to call it) did before falling out of favour due to a challenging format; that is, before its return. But even the silver discs were no match for MP3s - seemingly even at fairly low res. I can recall ripping CDs to MP3s so compressed that the sibilance on cymbals was atrocious just so that I could load my Nomad Jukebox Zen Nx with as many tracks as possible.



But, is there still room for CD players in this apparent age of streaming? I look around, and it seems physical media does have its job cut out - we are now in a land of “Alexa, play me...” or binging a box set on Netflix. The Oppo UDP-205 sat in the corner earns its keep by being able to stream as well as spin discs with movies and music on them in a range of formats - even 4K and SACDs!



The YBA CD4 is a specialist. It plays CDs, and its top-loading draw is a statement of intent. This Gallic disc spinner expects to be sat at the top of your rack (sorry, but I’m not moving my turntable).

YBA Genesis CD4 Design

The Genesis CD player follows its siblings in that it only has three feet. No need for sympathy, though, this is all part of YBA’s design. Additionally, it shares its black acrylic

and brushed aluminium styling with the rest of its Genesis brethren. Also present are the YBA favourites - toggle switches. One switch for on/off, another for Stop/Play/Pause, one to take care of Forward/Back duties and, finally, one to select Source should you be using the optical input - more on that later. If you need any more than that, the bundled remote adds random playback, track/disc repeat, display dim/off and the option to change the readout from 'time elapsed' to 'time remaining'.



Around the rear, you will find balanced and single-ended analogue outputs, plus a coaxial digital output with a switch to turn it off when not in use.

The Genesis CD4 makes use of a Sanyo HD850 mechanism. The player sports a trio of transformers: the first feeds the digital section, the function management, and the playback mechanism. The other two, one per channel, ensure optimal operation of the analogue stage.

The DAC is the CS4398 from Cirrus Logic which is now old enough to drink, although it has been updated somewhat since its first outing. You can make additional use of the DAC via the optical input but, as it appears to top out at 96kHz/24-bit, I think it will only be needed in an emergency. However, for the 44.1 kHz/16-bit CDs, it is plenty enough.



Playing a CD has a similar ceremony to playing an LP. You slide open the top drawer, remove a magnetic puck, drop in the silver disc, clamp the disc down and glide the door

shut an inch or so for the transport to start spinning and reading the contents. “Surely you need to completely close the door?” I hear you exclaim. Well, according to the learned folks at YBA - the door should remain partially open during playback to minimise vibration due to the movement of the air rotation of the disc. I will admit, I tried it at all levels of open/closed and could not honestly discern any difference through the system (Genesis IA3A integrated going to Marten Duke 2 speakers plumbed with Jorma cables). That said, I did notice that the digital out was switched on when I was playing a CD. Upon switching that off, there did seem to be an increased enthusiasm from playback.

YBA Genesis CD4 Sound Quality

Starting my listening session, I reached out for my trusty SACD copy of *Getz/Gilberto*. Dropping it into the CD4 and... nothing. I tried closing the door completely; the disc span but couldn't be read. It turns out that this YBA player doesn't do SACD. This is not a blocker for me as I only have a handful of this medium, but if you have a more extensive SACD collection, then you might want to bow out now.



So, making another selection, *New Beginning* by **Tracy Chapman**. Hitting play on *Give Me One Reason* and I was rewarded with a slightly warm and friendly presentation. I do not mean that the treble has had any attack removed or the sound was overtly smoothed. Just that, it appeared that the Genesis CD4 might be a more sympathetic player than some of the more analytical spinners out there.

Turning to **Lorde's** *Royals* and there is no loss of attitude, vulnerability or depth from the CD4 on this track.

Granted, my selection hasn't really been that taxing for the YBA player, so I grabbed **Sonic Youth's** *Sonic Nurse* and set *Kim Gordon and The Arthur Doyle Hand Cream* going. Straightforward, this track is not. Between **Ranaldo** and **Moore's** clashing guitars punctuated by **Shelley's** drums, the only thing holding it all together is **Gordon's** vocals and bass line. However, the CD4 does a top job of unravelling the disjointed layers almost to the point of taming the chaos which, in this case, is unwanted.

Feeding it some **REM** and *Automatic for the People* the guitars shimmered, snare snapped, and **Stipe** and co's vocals shone. *The Sidewinder Sleeps Tonight*, a personal favourite, had everything I wanted. Voice had character and clarity, and the string backing added width. You can hear the plectrum sweep across the acoustic guitar. Gorgeous.



After watching the latest offerings from **Charlie Brooker's** *Black Mirror*, I've been back on a **Nine Inch Nails** kick. Thrusting on *The Fragile* and dialling in *No, You Don't*. Huge! The scale and power are certainly still there, and the CD4 is not smoothing any edges here, either.

I let the CD play, and *La Mer* washed over me. I love **Trent** for transitional moments like this. From the anger and aggression of the previous track to this beautiful repetitive piano refrain. When the drums suddenly kick in swiftly followed by bass, the key theme now has bounce and groove. The Genesis CD4 deals with each new layer, sorting it to where it should sit without disturbing those already playing. The little vocal samples are perhaps the clearest I have heard them yet. I am assuming that **Yves-Bernard André** isn't a huge Industrial music fan, but his player did well with this short expedition.

Finally, some **Yo-Yo Ma** and *Classic Yo-Yo. Appalachia Waltz* is generally my go-to, but this 'best of' has something for every mood. This is perhaps where the YBA Genesis CD4 shows its true colours as the disc spinner presents a purity, a tonal truth that I would expect both from the brand and of a CD player at this price point.

YBA Genesis CD4 review conclusion

If you have a library of CDs then spending both time and money on a good player makes great sense. The YBA Genesis CD4 is indeed such a beast. It may not be the final word in forensic detail, but its presentation is truthful and captivating.

It does miss a trick by not offering SACD playback but what it can read it does so enthusiastically and with fluid precision.

If you are on the lookout for a great CD player in this price bracket then you should really have the CD4 on your list.

For more information, go to [YBA](#).

Jay Garrett
