

EBS WahOne

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The past few years have seen EBS become a major force in the bass amp and effects markets. Having built a reputation for solidly built, professional quality equipment, it is no surprise to find that this new addition to their line-up of pedals follows the EBS ethos for no-nonsense, ruggedly constructed, road-worthy equipment. Wah-wah pedals are no longer the exclusive property of guitarists; bassists can join in as well.

Like most products emanating from Sweden, EBS gear is built to last. Having used EBS pedals for some time, I can vouch for their sturdiness and robust design. EBS has built a reputation for attention to detail and catering for the needs of bassists; this pedal is no exception. The pedal is quite large but it needs to be to accommodate the functions on offer; not only a wah-wah pedal it also functions as a volume pedal and an envelope filter. Despite its multifunctionality, the pedal is easy to use and understand. Basically, it has two modes: Volume Mode (LED lit green) and Wah-Wah Mode (LED light red). In volume mode, one is able to vary the volume from nothing to the overall volume set on the guitar, creating volume 'swells' and useful for muting during live performance. By pressing the foot control fully forward, this feature can be turned on and off using the selection button located under the foot-plate, so you either select a constant playing volume or the adjustable volume controlled by the foot control.

Two setting switches follow on the control panel. The Tube Sim switch allows the incorporation of tube simulator circuitry to increase the overall tone warmth and to add a further harmonic dimension to the sound. The Rev switch reverses the action of the foot control



such that, if the pedal is up and the volume is nil, this is now reversed so that the volume is full and nil when the pedal is pressed forward. This also works when in wah-wah mode.

The following controls are only functional when in wah-wah mode, allowing settings to be easily dialled in and adjusted with little fuss. The Range control allows the filter range to be set from 75-400 Hz in its lowest setting, 200-1000 Hz in mid-position and between 600-3,500 Hz in its fully clockwise position. A Low Pass selector gives the option of using the low pass (essentially an envelope filter) or the band pass (a standard wah-wah filter) both of which offer different sounds based on the frequencies being played at any given time. The foot control highlights the differences once in use. The Hi-Q control affects the amount of the effect by narrowing the filter whilst the Hi-Q option is selected.

On the side of the pedal is an Active/Passive switch to allow for the different input levels offered by an active or passive instruments or if another pedal is being used in the signal chain before the Wah one receives the signal.

Weighing in at a hefty 1.8 kgs, the design and materials used for the foot control inspire confidence. The embossed rubber on the foot plate guarantees a good grip on the pedal and it exhibits a smooth rocking motion so you can be sure of the pedal's operation in use. Plugged in, the Wah One instantly highlights what a substantial and versatile piece of kit it is. In volume mode, the graduation when increasing and decreasing the volume is smooth and clear; the foot control responsive and reassuring. Some neat effects can be obtained using the volume mode to create 'swells' of sound, particularly effective when used in conjunction with a fretless bass. You can create a similar effect by turning the volume control on your bass but it's so much easier and accurate using a pedal such as this.

The tube simulator circuitry certainly adds extra harmonic definition to the signal and I found the difference most noticeable when using this pedal with a solid-state amp. The sound really warmed up, adding an extra dimension when using a plectrum or really digging in when playing fingerstyle. Obviously, the level is preset so the amount of tonal change cannot be adjusted but this is a useful feature nonetheless.

In wah-wah mode, the setting of the range control makes all the difference to the different sounds on offer and requires experimentation to get the best sounds out of it. I found that the EQ on my bass clouded the issue here so I set my bass EQ flat. Which frequencies you want to be most affected will determine how you set the range control. For soloing, it's best to set the control in a middle or fully clockwise setting, thus accentuating the higher frequency range. If you want to provide some seriously funky backing in a general bass context, then set the range control further back; again, experimenting with this control will probably provide the best results, taking into account how you play and in what context you are using this pedal.

Following on from their excellent Bass IQ pedal, EBS have enhanced the Wah One by including the envelope filter. Although there are only two controls, it doesn't really matter, the quality of the sound and tone on offer is excellent, and highly useable. Incorporating the various tonal possibilities here, it is relatively simple to switch from a clean, unaffected bass tone to a snarling, sneering, 'in your face' funk tone with great warmth and depth. As with any envelope filter, some care in playing style and application would be advised but to be honest, the best settings are usually found by chance.

The pedal was relatively silent and exhibited no additional signal noise or hiss; however, if I could make one improvement, it would be to add additional LED's to the control panel as the selector switches are all black. Under poor stage lighting, it may not be obvious which switches are in use at any given point although this is a minor gripe; so much of what this pedal has to offer is excellent. The unit can be powered with a 9-volt battery, an EBS adaptor or the EBS phantom power system when used in conjunction with an EBS amplifier. This pedal has so many uses and applications. EBS have a real winner here, especially at this price. Most bassists will be able to find a use for this pedal in one context or another. Nice one EBS!

Specifications:

BUILD QUALITY 18

As you'd expect from EBS, reassuringly sturdy and rugged, well-designed and very effective to cope with the rigours of regular gigging use.

SOUND 18

Superb range of sounds available, functional and expressive, tone quality is excellent. As an all in one funk unit, it really covers a lot of sonic possibilities.

FEATURES 19

There's an excellent mix of features here, all adding up to create a very versatile unit. Some of the options could do with an extra control but there's only so much you can fit into this design.

VALUE 18

At this price, you can't go wrong. There's enough on offer to make anyone purchasing this pedal feel very smug indeed.

WOW FACTOR 18

The pedal looks professional and fits in well with the existing EBS range, it looks more than capable of delivering what it has been designed for.

TOTAL SCORE 91/100

An excellent score for an excellent effects unit. EBS have really addressed several areas of bass requirement in one well designed box. May the funk be with you!

