

EBS WahOne

Published in: MM nr 2 2006

Author: Ulf Widlund

For more than ten years EBS has regularly introduced new effect pedals for bass. Now it's time again. This time a wah-wah, and as usual with some extra goodies included.

How many bass players can you name, who use a wah-wah? The reason for the lack of numbers is that most bass players consider existing wah-wah pedals not good enough for bass. The wah effect is obtained by amplifying a narrow frequency band where the foot-pedal sweep through the frequencies. A normal wah-wah pedal for guitar often sounds thin with a nasal character. Some manufacturers build variations for bass with an adjusted frequency range more suitable for bass. Certainly these sound a little bit better but most bassists think they still don't have enough low end. That's one of the factors EBS had in mind when designing WahOne.

CONSTRUCTION

The bottom plate and the pedal part of the WahOne are die cast with a considerable thickness. The pedal has a really robust feel. You rarely discuss a pedal's weight, but weighing in at almost two kilos the WahOne definitely stays put on stage. The pedal is chromed with a sturdy rubber "sole" and is equipped with a screw so you can adjust the "pedal feel". So far it's in many ways similar to classic wah-wah pedals like the Cry Baby - the big difference is in the electronics.

An ordinary wah-wah is similar to the sweepable middle frequency control found on many amplifiers where the gain is set to full and the frequency is controlled by the pedal. That direct connection is not present on EBS WahOne where the pedal



controls a potentiometer, which in turn controls a VCF (Voltage Controlled Filter). So in addition to wah-wah you can also use it as a volume pedal or a "manual" envelope filter.

The in and output connections are found on opposite sides and the input features a switch used for choosing between passive or active basses. The pedal can be powered in three different ways. You can use a 9-Volt battery, situated under a plastic hatch with a plug catch. If you'd like to be environmentally friendly and save on expenses you can use a power supply, or if you have an EBS amplifier you should, of course, use their practical phantom power option using a stereo cable.

The control panel has three sections: Mode, Settings and Wah-Wah Control. The Mode section has one switch for wah-wah or volume pedal use. An LED indicates when the effect is active, which is achieved by pressing down on the pedal fairly hard. The LED color shows which function is active; green for Volume and red for Wah-Wah.

The Settings section has two switches: Tube Simulator and Rev. The Tube Simulator emulates the sound of a tube by adding overtones and a preset limiter. The circuitry is a variation of the one used in EBS' MultiComp pedal. The Rev switch actually reverses the pedal function. Normally the frequency sweep goes up when pressing the pedal forwards, but here you can choose to do it the other way around.

Wah-Wah Control Mode has one control knob, Range, and two switches, Low Pass and Hi-Q. The Range control knob allows you to set the frequency range where the pedal will work. The Range control sets both the low and the high-end frequencies, and the minimum range sweep is between 75 and 400 Hz while the maximum is between 600 and 3500 Hz.

The Low Pass switch changes the filter's wah sound into a low pass filter of the type found in an envelope filter. The difference being that a low pass filter always retains the low end and sweeps the upper frequency limit. Finally, the Hi-Q switch sets a narrower filter setting resulting in a more prominent effect.

IN USE

In general, using wah-wah pedals does not pose any problems and this is certainly also the case for WahOne, even with all the extra features. The volume pedal sweep is soft and flexible and I have to confess that I immediately gave in to the temptation of simulating string section swells.

When used as a wah-wah all you have to do is to dial in the Range control until you have the range you think sounds best. The sound has way more

low end than any other wah-wah pedal that I've tried. EBS has successfully achieved a balance between keeping the low end without sacrificing the effect. In most cases I preferred the Low Pass setting for classic bass grooves. You keep most of the low-end frequencies and you can use a real funky filter setting recalling memories of platform boots and afro haircuts. The Hi-Q setting is a simple and convenient way of getting an alternative version of the same basic sound. I found the Tube Simulator rather vague. It is most audible with the filter/pedal peaked and gives a slightly warmer and more compressed tone.

It took me a while to get the idea of reversing the pedal's sweep. Of course, it is an advantage to be able to choose the starting point for the frequency sweep when you activate the pedal. Another option is to use the pedal in a fixed position and by combining the Range and Rev controls it is easy to set the frequency range in order to get to the required spot without having to sweep the pedal.

CONCLUSION

EBS impresses again and I can't say I'm surprised. They have managed their trademark well. Good quality in both hardware and sound plus a well balanced mix of user friendliness and flexibility. The possibility to switch between volume, wah-wah and lowpass/envelope filter with an adjustable sweepable range makes WahOne hard to beat - especially if you are a bass player.

In a nutshell: At last, a wah-wah that sounds great with bass.



Sturdy construction

Good sound adjusted for bass

Adjustable sweep range

Low Pass filter



None

Facts

EBS WahOne

PRODUCT TYPE: Wah-wah/volume pedal for bass
CONTROLS: Switches for passive/active basses, volume/wah-wah, Tube Simulator, Rev (reverse pedal), Low Pass and Hi-Q; Range control for sweep range
FILTER: 75–3500 Hz; Q: 4,5/16
POWER: 9V DC 25 mA from battery
EBS AD-9 Power supply
EBS Phantom Power
PRICE: SEK 1 995:–
MANUFACTURER: EBS Sweden, www.ebs.bass.se

