

EBS BASSIQ

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For quite some years ago, EBS released their first effects pedal for bass players. Since then, three more pedals have seen the light of day. Completely new is the envelope filter BassIQ. We'll also take a look on what's new in the other pedals.

The three pedals that were reviewed in Fuzz # 10 1999 (OctaBass, UniChorus and MultiComp) has received a facelift, and the innards has been updated as well.

Do you like Bootsy Collins? You may think what you want about his freaked-out clothing and basses, but the man surely knows how to play funky bass. He often takes a Mu-Tron, the classic envelope pedal, to enhance his sound. The sound bubbles and sways. Welcome to the promised effect of funk, the envelope filter.

Can you say mwaaah?! Then you know how the BassIQ sounds. Risking being annoying, I'll try to make justice to the pedal's sonic character.

BassIQ is, as I mentioned earlier, an envelope filter. The level of the input signal controls this kind of filter. This means that you can control the effect with the attack of your playing.

The effect sounds something like the sweep of a wah-wah pedal, but there are a lot of other sounds available. Now for the controls: the Threshold-knob controls at which level the effect will kick in.



Attack controls the length of the sweep, anything from a fast meow to long sweeping mwaaoooo, if you know what I mean.

The triple mode switch lets you choose between Down, if the effect are going from high to low frequencies, or the opposite in Up.

The third mode, Hi-Q gives a sharper sound that sweeps from low to high.

A DC adapter can provide the pedal with the power needed, or alternatively EBS Phantom Power System. This gets the power from an EBS amplifier, and you'll need a stereo cable for this.

SOUND AND HANDLING

I'd have a hard time imagining a pedal with higher entertainment value. The smallest adjustment makes great changes. This also makes it harder to find the most awesome sound, but

BassIQ is extremely easy to dial in compared to other similar pedals. The BassIQ has many different uses, it's excellent as auto-wah, but can handle bubbly Mu-Tronesque sounds.

Compared to one of those, BassIQ is cheaper, smaller, easier to use and has many more useable sounds. Almost all settings are useable.

An extremely cool setting is Down mode with the Threshold set so that lightly played notes are untouched and harder playing trigs the effect.

This sensitivity makes it possible to really talk with your bass. A flanger or phaser is fun at times, but an envelope filter like this gives so much more expression.

The Down mode gives a meow-sound. This is the setting you should use if you want to be able to hear your normal bass sound before the effect kicks in.

The Up setting has a closed-in muted starting sound, from where higher frequencies open up with a bwah-like effect.

Hi-Q is also more muted and gives a bubbly character. It sounds a bit claustrophobic, the sweep doesn't open up quite as much. It's here that the most wah-wah sounds are found.

Small adjustments with the Attack knob make big changes in the character of the sound. The character of the whole sweep changes, it's not just the length that is affected.

Slap also sounds awesome, actually any kind of percussive playing is great fun. Ghost notes trigger the effect and give the playing more life.

All kinds of bass playing have its own level where Threshold and attack fits, anything from freaky spacey sounds to a careful wao-effect.

As an extra bonus, there is a small trim pot that can mix in treble from the clean, unaffected signal. This pot is turned using a small Philips screwdriver and is situated under the back plate.

This tweaking maybe isn't made every day, but it could be at least a little bit easier to get to.

Standard setting is zero, but I think that most settings sound a bit better with some treble added on top.

It gives more presence, even if it takes away some of the kick of the coolest sounds. Especially the Hi-Q and Up settings needed some brilliance.

ACCESSORIES

EBS has created some candy for pedal heads. The DC adapter AD-9 gives astonishing 650 mA, enough to power even the largest pedal forests on the stage.

To this adapter, there are two split cables available, for two and four pedals respectively. There are also phono plugs for connecting pedals in a row, a straight and an asymmetric for pedals with differing height.

FINAL JUDGMENT

Just accept the fact: EBS is definitively in the Effect Pedal Elite. Good effects have become great effects. BassIQ is simply a shitload of fun that has a big sound despite the small package.

It's easier to use than other envelope filters I've tried.

In the summer, there will also be a distortion pedal available, and if it keeps the same high standard as the rest of the series, us bass players will rush to the stores.

Bring your guitar player as well, as all EBS pedals work great for guitar too.

UUPDATES ON THE OCTABASS; MULTICOMP AND UNICHORUS

The octave pedal OctaBass has the biggest visual change. A switch has been added, to enable you to choose between standard setting, a thinner octave and a bass-richer octave (and now all EBS pedals look alike). The Low setting now is rumbling seriously with a lot of low end, while the Hi mode gives a more defined octave with less bass. These three settings are very usable, and works as a tone control for the low octave. I personally think that the Hi mode is a hit, the lower octave becomes more of a spice without too much rumbling. Works in most situations, as the bass sound doesn't become so massive, and is also great for guitar.

The MultiComp compressor has gotten more gain and a more powerful compression. Now, there is some serious action in the Gain knob. MultiComp is actually a great distortion pedal with a rough, cocky distortion. High Gain setting gives a huge output signal, so some kind of muting is needed most of the time to not put you in trouble when the effect is disconnected and you have to return from the growling nirvana you lost yourself in.

The update of the UniChorus gives greater differences between the chorus effects and a lower noise level. I wasn't able to compare with an older pedal, but it sure sounded good. See my earlier test for reference.

Common to all the pedals is that the in- and outputs have changed places. Thanks! Finally has EBS adjusted to the majority of pedals.

