

EBS BASSIQ

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The numerous components on this firmly mounted circuitboard are well protected by the heavy steel casing. Swedish manufacturer EBS has consistently won the bass world's admiration with its impressive line of high-end amps and effects. The company's latest effect pedal is the BassIQ, which puts a new spin on the popular '70s envelope filter with modern components, compactness, and simplicity.

Construction: 5

Like EBS's other pedals (see below) the BassIQ has a brawny steel chassis, a sturdy footswitch, and rugged rubber knobs that protect the slightly more delicate three-position mode switch between them.

Construction-wise, this pedal seems ready for military use as well as musical performance. The extra-thick bottom plate, which must be removed to access the battery, is covered with floor-gripping rubber.

The unit can be powered with an adapter, a 9-volt battery, or with phantom power using a TRS connector in the output jack.

An LED indicates when it's on. With its compact casing, it's much easier to tote than the classic envelope filter, the considerably larger Mu-Tron.

Electronics: 5

Inside, EBS has packed lots of components onto the solidly attached circuitboard.



Removing the bottom plate also allows access to a tiny trim pot, which fine-tunes the amount of high frequencies mixed in from the original signal. The unit is very quiet, and the THRESHOLD and ATTACK knobs have a smooth, consistent taper.

Ease of use: 4

Envelope filters aren't necessarily easy to use; it takes time to get used to their different modes and sounds and to know how to adjust your playing attack for different effects.

Still, the BassIQ has far fewer knobs and switches than the Mu-Tron III, while achieving many of its most useful sounds.

THRESHOLD controls the level at which the filter kicks in—which is where your attack pressure becomes part of the effect control.

Since signal level decreases as a note decays, THRESHOLD also effectively controls the length of

the envelope warble. ATTACK adjusts the speed at which the filter opens, so lower settings might give a little burp, while higher settings make for a long bwaah sound.

The MODE switch changes the direction the filter opens and closes once the threshold signal level has been reached—opening at the beginning of a note for an upward effect or closing at the end for a downward effect.

Sound: 5

Between the BassIQ's three modes and two knobs, you can get a lot of deliciously juicy envelope flavors.

The mode switch provides the real variety. Two positions provide the upward bwaah or downward dyoop effect that have become standard fare for funky filter freaks. In the HI-Q position, the upward filter affects only an upper frequency band for an especially watery, Bootsy-like effect.

This setting preserves the fundamental nicely, but it can make it hard to hear the notes you're articulating depending upon your amp and your band.

A staffer who took the pedal to several funk gigs settled on three settings: a short upward cry with a quick attack, a slower opening warble for a tune with longer notes, and a downward "raygun blast." He only wished he'd had one BassIQ for each setting.

Value: 4.5

The BassIQ is not cheap, but it is priced similarly to other envelope floor effects such as the HAZ Labs' Mu-tron III+ reissue, Big Briar's Moogerfooger LowPass Filter, and the Electro-Harmonix Q-Tron.

Those units all have more knobs for tweaking variety, but we found the BassIQ's simpler interface does the job with a much smaller footprint.

If you're serious about your watery funk warble, consider the BassIQ.

Construction: 5 of 5

Electronics: 5 of 5

Sound: 5 of 5

Ease of use: 4 of 5

Value: 4,5 of 5

Bottom Line: Trippy effects in a compact, hi-end package.

Made in: Sweden

List price: \$250

Warranty: One year

Dimensions: 4 15/16" x 1 7/8" x 2 3/4"

Weight: 1 lb (with battery)

Electronics: Solid state

Case: 1/16" steel

Controls: MODE switch

LED indicator

THRESHOLD

ATTACK

AC adapter

footswitch

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