



BBE Wah

THIS PEDAL WAS SHIPPED IN A BOX THAT LOOKS LIKE A CARDBOARD RENDITION of a Chinese tea crate, and carried no model name other than “Wah” and an elegant Chinese character for a word that is pronounced “ben.” Designed by BBE’s Paul Gagon and Dayv Chavez, the Wah is based on the classic 1967 Vox circuit and contains a re-engineered Halo-style inductor, one of the main components credited with contributing to the original’s rich, vocalized tones. Housed in a casing that’s similar to the old Vox type, the Wah sports a black crinkle-finish base and a chrome rocker. Modifications in the BBE design include true-bypass switching, a status LED, and a rotary Harmony control on the side of the pedal for fine-tuning the Q.

With the Harmony control at its center detent position, the Wah instantly revealed itself as the most sweetly tuned of the group, with a chunky, vocal “ow” sound around half way up the sweep that provides a talking-wah effect, and a peak at the toe-down position that is cutting and bright without being harsh or spiky. The Wah is fairly vintage sounding, but perhaps clearer than many originals of the late ’60s and early ’70s that I have played. It excels at everything from funk rhythms to rock lead playing, and it holds up well with fuzz, too. The Harmony control is subtle, but it does let you dial in some potentially desirable tonal variations. An impressive and very likeable pedal, the BBE Wah is also one of the most affordable in this group.

SPECS

BBE Sound, (714) 897-6766; BBEsound.com

MODEL BBE Wah

PRICE \$209 retail/\$149 street

ACTIVATION Traditional spindle and gear-driven potentiometer.

INDUCTOR Re-engineered halo-style inductor.

FEATURES Harmony control to fine-tune Q (frequency).

KUDOS A great all-around wah with an expressive, vocal, vintage-leaning tone.

CONCERNS None.

THE FINAL ROUND

This has been a battle between a wide range of worthy but varied contenders, and each of these wahs has a place in the market, and will no doubt win its own fans. The Carl Martin 2Wah and Ernie Ball Wah are good all-around pedals, and the CryBaby Buddy

Guy certainly addresses the blues-rock tones with aplomb. The other four stand out a little more tonally, though. For classic arena rock riffing, the EVH gets my nod, while for heavier contemporary metal and thrash, I'd lean more toward the Morley Kiko Loureiro

(or the George Lynch Dragon 2 if you prefer its static wah function). Overall, though, I think the BBE Wah has the sweetest, most musical voice of the bunch. Its potential to be a first-pick wah for any kind of music earns it an Editors' Pick Award. 🏆