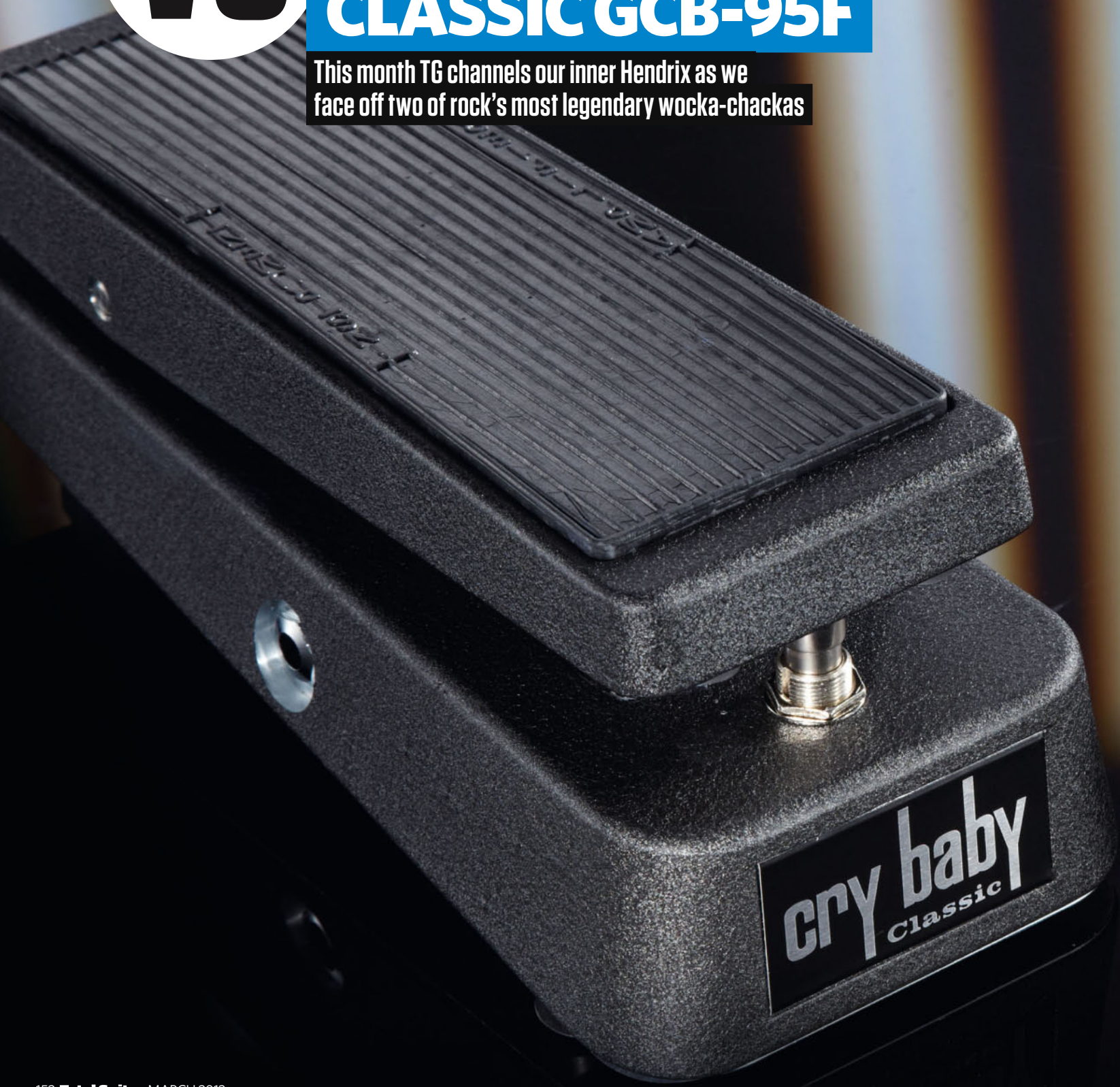


Words: Henry Yates

**VS**

**VOX V846-HW VS  
VS DUNLOP CRYBABY  
CLASSIC GCB-95F**

This month TG channels our inner Hendrix as we face off two of rock's most legendary wocka-chackas





## WHETHER

you realise it or not, you already know what a wah pedal sounds like. It's the wocka-chacka sound when a cop chases a pimp on a 70s TV show. It's the fruity quack in a porn film when a moustachioed plumber arrives "to fix the shower". It's the sound of Eric Clapton on Cream's *Tales Of Brave Ulysses*, of Kirk Hammett tearing it up on *Enter Sandman*, of Slash vamping in *Mr Brownstone*. When the sweep of wah is applied, it makes everything sound sexy, slinky and slightly seedy (in a good way).

After distortion, wah is surely the most famous effect on the market, but though there are

various firms flogging it either as a standalone pedal or multi-fx component, only two names are truly immortalised in rock 'n' roll history. Since you ask, that's the Dunlop Cry Baby and the Vox V846: the waha that tussled for supremacy during the first wave of rock 'n' roll and have been waggled by countless cowboy boots ever since.

Obviously, the first-generation pedals have long since been stomped into dust or retirement, but Vox and Jim Dunlop take pride in the faithful spec reproductions offered by the 2012 versions of the Cry Baby Classic (£169) and the V846-HW (£203), and have kept prices within reach of the fledgling effects junkie. Let's bring the funk.

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**VOX**  
**V846-HW** **£203**

**Witness the reboot of the wah that wocked the world**

**FOR** anyone too stoned to remember, we can confirm that the original Vox V846 was the wah used by Jimi Hendrix for *Voodoo Chile* at Woodstock in 1969. While that unit is probably languishing in the Hard Rock Cafe, Vox says it's faithfully recreated the innards of the design – including the critical vintage-spec Halo inductor – and to prove it the design bods have showcased all that hand-wired turret board goodness through a clear-bottomed base. If you're used to a cheap multi-fx autowah, this will blow your mind (and your overdraft).

The V846 is a curious mix of vintage and modern. Off the bat, we're delighted to note the canny addition of true bypass on this pedal, meaning no more sapping of your tone when the unit is off. Equally, we're frustrated by the old-school lack of AC adaptor socket: a forehead-slapping omission that forces you to bore your audience while you remove the four base screws every

**“The V846-HW pedal is a curious mix of vintage and modern”**

time the nine-volt battery goes flat. All the other wahs in the Vox range give you the choice... and they're cheaper.

There's no scope for tweaking on either pedal, so it's a case of plug in either side and get quacking. We find the action of the rocker pedal doesn't give the same physical satisfaction as the Cry Baby, but there's no faulting the sturdy chassis, and tonally, we're off to a flier. We made it a rule to test these wahs with both singlecoils and humbuckers, and we reckon the Vox has the edge with the former. Clean, there's a hot-buttered, clipped sweep that laps up funky chord hits when you pump the rocker in a steady rhythm, and it's similarly ace when you play single-note leads and jab to accent certain notes.

And to be fair, despite initially feeling a little shallow underfoot, the pedal responds to even subtle quivers and lets you perform really expressive 'foot wobbles'.

Switching channels and changing axes, there's certainly a funky skank to mildly overdriven tones, but we still feel the V846 is lacking just a little venom when it comes to hairy-chested Hammett-style lead. It's all relative: this pedal is a quality piece of gear and probably the closest you'll get to sounding like Hendrix. Still, we can't dole out the medals until we've rocked the Cry Baby...

**AT A GLANCE**

- TYPE:** Wah pedal
- CONTROLS:** N/A
- SOCKETS:** Input/output
- POWER:** 1x 9V battery (sold separately)
- TRUE BYPASS:** Yes
- DIMENSIONS:** [HxWxD] 80 x 102 x 253mm
- WEIGHT:** 1.3kg
- CONTACT:** Korg UK
- 01908 304600
- www.voxamps.com

<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>FEATURES</b>	■■■■■
	<b>SOUND QUALITY</b>	■■■■■
	<b>VALUE FOR MONEY</b>	■■■■■
	<b>BUILD QUALITY</b>	■■■■■
	<b>USABILITY</b>	■■■■■
	<b>OVERALL RATING</b>	★★★★★



The clear base of the pedal lets you spy on its guts

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Classic by name: this unit boasts the Fasel inductor

## DUNLOP CRY BABY CLASSIC GCB-95F £169

There'll be no tears before bedtime for Dunlop's famous wah

**CAST** an eye over the roster of Cry Baby signature pedals and you'll soon get the subtext. This is the wocka-chacka of choice for hairy maniacs (and Buddy Guy). Endless variants exist, and a couple are cheaper, but we've picked out the Classic GCB-95F for one factor: the Fasel inductor that everybody bangs on about. Produced in Italy in the 60s, then supposedly unavailable, the so-called "legendary" inductor is now back under the bonnet, and Dunlop is playing this innocuous red nubbin as its trump card, dangling the "vocal sweep and lush harmonics" that we'll get from it.

There's a slice off the Vox wah's price for this one, and features-wise, the Cry Baby is a little more user-friendly. This pedal is true hardware, so it shouldn't compromise your raw tone unless you've got a long daisy-chain of pedals, and it scores big-time by allowing either the

use of batteries or Dunlop's ECB03 AC adaptor. Physically, it's solid as a housebrick, and there's a real 'plunge' to the pedal action that bodes well for smooth tone curve.

When it comes to tone, though, this clash of the titans is tight as they come. We wouldn't say the Cry Baby is quite as good at the clean singlecoil funk stuff, although it does have a lovely

old-school quack that's arguably the 'textbook' wah sound. Where this unit really impresses is on the gain channel with humbuckers. It's hard to describe in scientific terms, but when you're riffing on powerchords, there's a real muscle and attitude to the sound that's arguably better-suited to metal, and when you're playing speedy legato solos, it's just a bit fruitier and more vocal, *Sandman*-style. It also

works a treat when you employ the wah technique much-loved by hard-rock punters like Michael Schenker, and set the rocker halfway for a really scything midrange boost.

They're both legends, of course, and the gap between these wah pedals is as thin as a plectrum, but for its lower price and marginally better performance at harder styles, we're going to stick our neck out and hand the trophy to the Dunlop Cry Baby. Now, if you'll excuse us, we're off to write a porn soundtrack.

### AT A GLANCE

**TYPE:** Wah pedal

**CONTROLS:** N/A

**SOCKETS:** Input/output, power

**POWER:** 9V battery or Dunlop ECB03 adaptor

**TRUE BYPASS:** Yes

**DIMENSIONS:** [HxWxD]

64 x 102 x 280 mm

**WEIGHT:** 1.7kg

**CONTACT:** John Hornby

Skewes 01132 865381

[www.jhs.co.uk](http://www.jhs.co.uk)

**“Where this unit really impresses is on the gain channel with humbuckers”**

FEATURES	
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★
BUILD QUALITY	★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★
<b>OVERALL RATING</b>	<b>★★★★★</b>