



FILTER ROUND-UP

Okay, we know, a filter pedal sounds about as exciting as a tuner, but bear with us. While it's certainly a luxury pedal to have on a board, a filter or auto-wah isn't a one-trick pony for cheesy wah waka-waka sounds, although those are naturally at your disposal. Rather, it can create exciting dynamic effects and add a unique timbre to solos and lead lines by responding articulately to your picking dynamics. Depending on the pedal, it may even have a blend so that you can make the effect more subtle. It could even also give you space, depending on how you use a wah pedal, by replacing that larger unit on your board. Let's dive in...

MAXON AF-9 AUTO FILTER

£145

FIL(TER) YER BOOTS

Although it has a number of slightly intimidating-looking controls, the Maxon AF-9 comes to life as soon as it's plugged in. The sliders for sensitivity and peak are wonderfully intuitive and the frequency range is controlled not by a pot, but by a two-way switch. While at first this may seem a limitation, it frees up brain power to focus on the other controls. The two range options are high, 200Hz-4kHz and low, 100Hz-2kHz allowing for both guitar and bass (or drop-tunings) to be used. There's also a selector for high-pass, low-pass or tasty wah-style bandpass filtering.

SUMMARY	FEATURES	★	★	★	★
	SOUND QUALITY	★	★	★	★
	VALUE FOR MONEY	★	★	★	★
	BUILD QUALITY	★	★	★	★
	USABILITY	★	★	★	★
	OVERALL RATING	★	★	★	★

HOTONE Q-BOX

£79

Q HERE

Deceptively simple, the shockingly small Hotone filter nevertheless comes packed with features. Sensitivity is controlled by the combination LED indicator and knob on top of the pedal, while range and Q (or the sharpness of the audible filter) are on the front. Via a three-way toggle, the modes are a playing-sensitive wah with high-pass or low-pass filter; or an auto-wah with low-pass filter that can almost pass muster as a phaser or uni-vibe style effect. Its smooth filters and diminutive size mean that for subtle envelope filter sounds this could be squeezed onto most boards and then used sparingly when needed.

SUMMARY	FEATURES	★	★	★	★
	SOUND QUALITY	★	★	★	★
	VALUE FOR MONEY	★	★	★	★
	BUILD QUALITY	★	★	★	★
	USABILITY	★	★	★	★
	OVERALL RATING	★	★	★	★



Don't have enough space for a wah pedal but need some filter goodness? Step this way!

ELECTRO-HARMONIX BLURST

£130

THE BEST OF TIMES...

The Blurst boasts a dizzying array of options, including a welcome tap tempo. It really comes into its own though when used with an expression pedal, and range, rate or filter can be controlled externally. This means that barring the distinction that a wah is a bandpass filter and this is a low pass, you get a wah-like expression-based pedal with a number of unique features. Altering the parameters combined with backing off the blend control means subtle sounds can be harnessed for gentle strumming or arpeggiated picking, while maxing the blend allows for wacky, dynamic solo sounds.

SUMMARY	FEATURES	☆☆☆☆☆
	SOUND QUALITY	☆☆☆☆☆
	VALUE FOR MONEY	☆☆☆☆☆
	BUILD QUALITY	☆☆☆☆☆
	USABILITY	☆☆☆☆☆
	OVERALL RATING	☆☆☆☆☆

EMMA DISCUMBOBULATOR

£159

DISCUMBOBULATE YOURSELF

Despite the large size and higher price, the DiscumBOBulator is one of the simpler offerings here. A boutique auto-wah with plenty of headroom, there's a toggle button for helping players dial in a tone that suits them, then pots for sensitivity, envelope attack and filter bandwidth. The second footswitch offers a boost of up to 10dB, controlled via the marked pot, though the auto-wah is more than punchy enough, especially with the attack up and the width pulled back. Instead of a boost control it might have been nice to have had an expression input, but the core sounds are solid.

SUMMARY	FEATURES	☆☆☆☆☆
	SOUND QUALITY	☆☆☆☆☆
	VALUE FOR MONEY	☆☆☆☆☆
	BUILD QUALITY	☆☆☆☆☆
	USABILITY	☆☆☆☆☆
	OVERALL RATING	☆☆☆☆☆

AT A GLANCE

BYPASS: Hotone, EHX, Emma: true bypass; Maxon: buffered

POWER REQUIREMENTS: 9V power supply

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EHX: Electro Harmonix www.ehx.com