



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.



Morley Kiko Loureiro Distortion Wah Volume

BUILT FOR THE BRAZILIAN POWER-METAL SHREDDER, THE KIKO LOUREIRO DISTORTION Wah Volume is a brand new offering from Morley. Its structure follows the current Morley format, and outwardly it's identical to the George Lynch Dragon 2, other than its lizard-green color and the addition of a third knob. Bonus features here, however, are significantly different. One stomp switch kicks the wah effect in and out, while a second provides on/off for the built-in distortion effect that is available with or without wah. Drive, Tone, and Level controls govern the distortion, while the wah level is preset. With the wah off, the treadle becomes a handy volume pedal. And, like the George Lynch Dragon 2, the Kiko also uses Morley's photo-resistor action, and employs its TrueTone buffering circuit.

Though it's voiced similarly to the George Lynch Dragon 2, the Kiko is a little smoother sounding in the highs and a little less gritty in the lower mids. This is another clear, cutting wah with a great sound for contemporary rock. The distortion function produces a thudding, dissonant, asymmetrical breed of grind that's a little jarring at first, but it works great when you dive in head first and go for it. Voiced to work in conjunction with the wah, the distortion component yields instant shred-metal mayhem, and proves a lot of fun in the process.

SPECS

Morley, (800) 284-5172; morleypedals.com

MODEL	Kiko Loureiro Distortion Wah Volume
PRICE	\$199 retail/\$149 street
ACTIVATION	Fixed-band-activated photo-resistor.
INDUCTOR	None (inductorless filter network).
FEATURES	Wah, Volume and Distortion (with Drive, Tone, and Level controls).
KUDOS	Clear, cutting wah tones ideal for shred and metal. Aggressive overdrive sounds.
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. 📌