

Mini Morley Wah & Volume £95 & £84

Two new compact versions of the classic American effects units, but does size still matter? *by Simon Bradley*

When putting together a pedalboard, space is a significant consideration – and shoe-horning a big Morley pedal into the layout can be difficult. The introduction of these two new mini pedals is a solution to this exact problem and both are significantly smaller than their traditional counterparts: the Mini Wah measures 171mm in length, while the Classic Wah comes in at just over 231mm.

Both use Morley's innovative electro-optical operation, rather than a potentiometer, and the wah provides a hefty on/off switch while the volume remains active for as long as it's plugged in – more on this in the Sounds section.

Morley pedals are always built like tanks and so it is here. The chassis are made from 1mm-thick rolled steel and the treads are topped with two types of non-slip material: ridged rubber for the volume, grip tape on the wah.

Power comes from an optional 300mA supply or a nine-volt battery, the somewhat fiddly compartment for which resides on the baseplate.

Sounds

The wah's level pot gives a significant hike to the overall signal, not just to that of the wah effect, so we found it best to begin with the pot set to minimum as this produces a wet signal that's at the same level as the dry. As we'd expected, it sounds great and is applicable to any style that requires a wah. Ultra clean, Fender-driven funk rhythms benefit from the effect's rounded high-mids, while amp tones with a subtle overdrive are given a pleasantly smooth edge, especially when using the wah to heighten solo passages. For blues styles, intelligent use of the level pot in regard to how



you set your amp can add the required additional drive to allow solos to stand out. For example, the authenticity of recreating classic Hendrix lead lines benefits hugely from the spiky character of the wah when the level is set to around halfway, and keeping the treadle in the half-cocked position is simplicity itself.

The Volume works well with a noiseless and smooth gradient. The only niggle is that there's no automatic bypass so you must, after using it, remember to push the treadle back to its maximum setting to obtain the full signal. It's difficult to see whether you've actually achieved this in the heat of a gig, so maybe an additional green LED could have been included to indicate that the action has been successfully undertaken.

Verdict

As far as the practical use of both pedals is concerned there's no getting away from the fact their bijou design does make them a little trickier to operate than regular Morley pedals. If you use the ball of your foot to work the treadle, the non-tapered design can compromise your control over how much pressure you apply, sometimes calling for a readjustment of your body position.

Of course, there's also little debate that squeezing a full-sized Morley pedal onto an already congested pedalboard

can be a chore and, such is the quality of the firm's catalogue, these Mini designs could well prove to be a godsend in this particular scenario.

We do find it a little strange that both Minis are more expensive than their traditional counterparts – a factor that's likely to further narrow their appeal. On the upside, though, the prices of both are below those of many of the major brands that you might also consider when looking of for a new wah or volume pedal, and this may just swing it for you. **G**

The Bottom Line

Mini Wah

We like: Compact and sturdy design; level pot

We disliked: The unobtrusive signal hike; price

Guitarist says: This is an acceptable wah pedal, but one that's difficult to wholeheartedly recommend

Mini Volume

We like: Compact, sturdy design; smooth audio taper

We disliked: Doesn't turn off; no minimum level pot

Guitarist says: A nice volume pedal, but there's little to elevate it from the crowd short of its potential for space saving

The Rivals

Check out either **Ernie Ball's Volume Jr** (£124.95) or the **Fender Volume** (£52), while the **Dunlop Original Crybaby** (£142) remains the benchmark for any wah pedal to measure up to.

Mini Morley Wah

PRICE: £95.99

ORIGIN: USA

CONTROLS: Effect level pot, on/off switch

CONNECTIONS: Mono input and out standard jacks, PSU input

POWER: 9V battery or optional Morley 9VDC 300mA PSU

DIMENSIONS: 171.45 (l) x 114.3 (w) x 69.9mm (h)

WEIGHT (kg/lb): 0.92/2

RANGE OPTIONS: The conventionally sized Classic Wah goes for £79.99

Westside Distribution

0141 248 4812

www.morleypedals.com

Test results

Build quality	★★★★★
Features	★★★★☆
Sound	★★★★☆
Value for money	★★★★☆

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

Mini Morley Volume

PRICE: £84.99

ORIGIN: USA

CONTROLS: None

CONNECTIONS: Mono input and out standard jacks, PSU input

POWER: 9V battery or optional Morley 9VDC 300mA PSU

DIMENSIONS: 171.45 (l) x 114.3 (w) x 69.9mm (h)

WEIGHT (kg/lbs): 0.92/2

RANGE OPTIONS: The conventionally sized Optical Volume goes for £76.99

Test results

Build quality	★★★★★
Features	★★★★☆
Sound	★★★★☆
Value for money	★★★★☆

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★