THE ENVELOPE FILTER is undoubtedly one of the most popular effects for bass players. Funkmeisters like Bootsy Collins, T.M. Stevens and Doug Wimbish have illustrated the device’s true expressive power. Responding to the nuances of touch and note texture, the envelope filter can make your bass sound almost human when playing melodic lines and like a percolating cauldron of funk when you play rhythmically. While there are already several popular envelope pedals on the market, most players will agree that there is always room for improvement. As each envelope pedal has its own unique feel and response, finding the right one often becomes a lengthy and sometime expensive search. MXR’s new M82 Bass Envelope Filter supplies classic tones.

THE M82 is a very performance-friendly pedal, and I found it to be less finicky than some envelope filters. Envelope filter veterans will attest to the speaker-damaging potential of these devices, but the M82 never got out of hand as I worked through the various knobs.

Having control over the FX and dry signals lets you blend the output for super-saturated tones or keep the clean sound present for percussive punch. I was able to quickly dial in a classic Seventies bubble-funk tone and fine-tune it to my attack with a few tweaks to the sensitivity control. It responded well to fingerstyle and slap techniques, picking up all the little nuances of dead notes and left-hand percussion.

When coupling the envelope with other pedals, it’s important to place it in the right position in the chain. For example, putting the Bass Envelope in front of a delay, reverb or modulation effect pedal allows the envelope to react to the original note attack, producing more accurate results than you would get otherwise. However, placing the envelope after a distortion device lets the distortion drive the envelope much better. Naturally, you will want to experiment with your own pedals, but this is what I’ve found to work best. The M82’s separate dry level control improves how the pedal blends with other effects.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The MXR M82 Bass Envelope is a great representative of its species. In spite of the relatively crowded control panel, it is very simple to use and highly responsive. The ability to control the dry signal separately gives it increased functionality for live use, and it all comes in a small, attractive package.

FEATURES

In recent years, MXR has shown a real commitment to bass-specific pedals with its excellent Bass Octave, El Grande Bass Fuzz, Bass Blowtorch, Bass DI, Bass Wah and Bass Auto Q pedals. The company’s recently discontinued M188 Bass Auto Q was also an envelope filter, but the new M82 distinguishes itself with true bypass, a much wider filter sweep range, a dedicated sensitivity control, and separate dry and FX controls. Since the filter circuit introduces a fair amount of gain on its own, the +6dB of boost available from the dry control can help the clean bass signal stay balanced with the effect. The decay knob sets the effective length of the sweep, which can range from 76Hz to 1.3kHz. The Q control adjusts the intensity of the effect.

While it lacks the M188’s modulating Shimmer feature, the M82 is housed in the standard small MXR box (the M188 was in an oversized case), making it easier to fit into your pedal board or throw into your gig bag. And the purple metal-flake paint job looks pretty sweet.

PERFORMANCE

The separate dry level control helps keep the bottom solid while you get your wah on.

**PRO**
- Separate dry level control - Easy to use - Great sound - Small footprint

**CON**
- No reverse sweep feature

SPECS

- **List Price:** $254.61
- **Manufacturer:** Dunlop, jimdunlop.com
- **Controls:** Dry, FX, decay, Q, sensitivity
- **Connections:** Input, output
- **Power:** Nine-volt battery, external power supply (not included)

The MXR M82 Bass Envelope Filter supplies classic tones.

The separate dry and FX controls help keep the bottom solid while you get your wah on.

The purple metal-flake finish on the Bass Envelope is retro cool.

The M82 packs a lot of controls and processing power in its compact case.

The MXR M82 Bass Envelope Filter is a great representative of its species. In spite of the relatively crowded control panel, it is very simple to use and highly responsive. The ability to control the dry signal separately gives it increased functionality for live use, and it all comes in a small, attractive package.