About the AW-2 Auto Wah

by **Pepe** » 08 Jul 2015, 16:05

After several years of playing and purchasing BOSS pedals I finally received an AW-2. Somehow I have never had an earlier chance to get my hands on this model. I'd like to know what you think about it!

Here are my observations:

- Two of the knobs have a bad range:

  - *Manual* doesn't get low enough for my taste and everything above the noon position sounds more or less the same (harsh!).
  - The same goes for the *Sens* control - it is a very fiddly task to set a proper sensitivity value for the envelope mode and the settings above the noon position are totally useless - in my opinion everything above 11:00h is already too sensitive (and I only use single coil pickups!).

- The speed range is quite good, but I think that the AW-2 was more fun if the maximum speed was even higher.

- The overall wah (band-pass filter) sound is good, although I definitely prefer the FT-2's low-pass filter sound.

- But what's really off-putting: it is a very noisy unit, isn't it? Especially with dirt after it, the AW-2 produces a bad amount of hum. I don't think that my exemplar is faulty ... or is it?

Pepe

Re: About the AW-2 Auto Wah

by **charmonder** » 08 Jul 2015, 16:11

i found all those things are true, it tends to get nasally very quick. i do enjoy the effect but the difference between bypassed and engaged is very dramatic, a huge loss in bass frequencies

charmonder

Re: About the AW-2 Auto Wah

by **Pepe** » 08 Jul 2015, 16:15

Okay, that's good to know. I mean: good to know that I don't have a faulty model. I really wish it was quieter. I think I won't keep this model. Demo - and bye!

Pepe

Re: About the AW-2 Auto Wah

by **Boogieman** » 09 Jul 2015, 06:06

> *charmonder wrote:*
> *i found all those things are true, it tends to get nasally very quick. i do enjoy the effect but the difference between bypassed and engaged is very dramatic, a huge loss in bass frequencies*

Same here. When I got the AW-2, I spent about 2 months trying to like it. In the end, the tone difference between on and bypassed sealed the deal. It has been living in its box ever since. It was my fault that I bought it without trying it, thinking I can't go wrong with a Boss XX-2 pedal. Well, I made sure I try them out before buying since then.

I have a Tru-Tron 3X now and I am very happy with it. It is miles better than the AW-2.

Boogieman

Re: About the AW-2 Auto Wah

by **Jnorm** » 10 Jul 2015, 14:21

AW-2 is a staple on my board. I really like it for clean and mellow Reggae,Dub, Free Jam stuff, Alternative, etc. It doesn't do dirt very well at all (imo) but my FT-2 "owns" for that so I use the FT-2 to cover dirt (FT-2 is a killer pedal clean/dirt). I own two AW-2's and I haven't noticed anything out of the ordinary as far as noise and hum go from either units but I have had a few boss pedals in the past that would hum if I had a power adapter/transformer to close to them.

Jnorm

Re: About the AW-2 Auto Wah

by **Dirk** » 10 Jul 2015, 16:14

> *charmonder wrote:*
> *i found all those things are true, it tends to get nasally very quick. i do enjoy the effect but the difference between bypassed and engaged is very dramatic, a huge loss in bass frequencies*

I had the same problem with the AW-3, the Dynamic wah. Even when using the dedicated bass input, I had a huge low end loss when used with a bass guitar.
The difference between the guitar and bass inputs seemed to be a shift in the centre frequency of the Q.

Dirk

Re: About the AW-2 Auto Wah

by **visserman** » 14 Jul 2015, 14:02

This low end loss is typical of older Wah's (I my experience) so the Boss pedals follow that tradition.

About the AW-2, yep it is a sensative pedal, takes time to find its sweet spots, also noticed it works better with clean amps and single coil pick-ups. You can use whatever set-up but think about what you are doing.

I will check later on for the hum thing, not noticed anything with regards that stands out but will check later on.

I do like auto wah's, its like a wah but then under your fingers. I also use my tonecontrols on the guitar for wah effects.

I think the AW-2 can get you some sounds which the FT-2 and TW-1 cannot do.

Maybe this pedal gets bad rap because it may take a little longer to get the better sounds out of it.

visserman

Re: About the AW-2 Auto Wah

by **Pepe** » 14 Jul 2015, 14:12

> *visserman wrote:*
> *Maybe this pedal gets bad rap because it may take a little longer to get the better sounds out of it.*

Well ... low-end loss and hum are really strong arguments against the use of an AW-2, I think. It's fiddly to use and it is capable of creating some nice sounds, but especially the hum noise is driving me nuts.

Pepe

Re: About the AW-2 Auto Wah

by **zombiwoof** » 14 Jul 2015, 15:16

When I got an AW-2, it was the first pedal I've ever had for which the manual came in handy figuring out the settings that sounded best. For some sounds, you turn some knobs all the way down. I tried the suggested settings in the manual and found that you can get several great sounds from it, including a "fixed cocked-wah" that is tunable, which is pretty cool. Never had any complaints about hum/tone loss with mine.

Al

zombiwoof

Re: About the AW-2 Auto Wah

by **DarrinPA** » 15 Jul 2015, 07:39

> *Dirk wrote:*
> *I had the same problem with the AW-3, the Dynamic wah. Even when using the dedicated bass input, I had a huge low end loss when used with a bass guitar.*

I find that the Bass input works better will guitar. But without some sort of "sub bass" input, bass guitar doesn't fair so well with the AW-3.

DarrinPA

Re: About the AW-2 Auto Wah

by **Dirk** » 15 Jul 2015, 15:55

Yeah, that was my problem with it. I guess one could use it in one of the loops of the LS-2 and use the 2nd loop to blend the clean signal around it.
I since replaced it with the MXR bass envelope, which has 2 volume controls (clean and effect) which solves this problem.

I also never used any of the crazy modes, like wah down and humanizer.
Let alone that I let a tap tempo dictate my wah sound, I'd rather use my playing dynamics to open the filter at will.

Dirk

Re: About the AW-2 Auto Wah

by **Pepe** » 15 Jul 2015, 16:27

Wah down can result in very nice sounds in combination with sustained chords. That's something that I totally miss in the AW-2!

Pepe

Re: About the AW-2 Auto Wah

by **Dirk** » 15 Jul 2015, 19:09

It's comments like this that really show your synth background.. All of a sudden I understand the use for it..

Dirk

Re: About the AW-2 Auto Wah

by **visserman** » 28 Jul 2015, 13:13

Pepe,

First time I had a change to look into some of your questions:

Hum: Check without playing while pedal is on ------change the manual and sens control while you listen to the hum. The hum will change as you change the controls.

The hum on the AW-2 is not any different from the Hum on the TW-1 and FT-2, again, changing the controls will open and close the tone pot and will make hum more noticeable, or less, depending on setting of the controls.

When the hum does not change and is even noticeable during playing I suspect your pedal may have a fault.

Quickly looking at the possibilities tonewise of the AW-2: Have all controls close apart from Sens, and you have a auto wah, simple and easy and sounding very good.

Rate, Depth and Manual controls open will give you auto-wah with a rotating sound, depending on the Rate control.

Just Manual and Sens, will also give you Auto Wah, and the Sens will add more wetness to your sound.

Comparing the AW-2 to the TW-1 and FT-2, The A-2 gives better Auto Wah sounds.

About the name of the controls: Some of them may be misleading, or act a bit different from what you normally get: The Sens. control almost acts as a treble control.

The pedal will give you rotating Phase sounds, Dynamic Wah and Treble Boost with a hint of compression.

The weak part of the pedal is the treble:, open up the Manual and Sens control past 12.00 o'clock and you get a lot of treble which will not work well with your dynamics.

Pedal works wonders with a Strat: Try various pick-up settings to get the best resuls.

Let us hear how you are getting on.

Oh do you know the TW-1 and FT-2? Not checked you youtube channel to see if you do have any vidoes of TW-1?

visserman

Re: About the AW-2 Auto Wah

by **Pepe** » 28 Jul 2015, 13:30

I didn't have a TW-1 so far. I once played it at Arpeggiator's home and the AW-2 comes close to that sound.

My AW-2's hum changes when turning the knobs, so it's no grounding issue or whatsoever. Nonetheless my FT-2 is quiet as a fish in comparison to the AW-2.

Pepe

Re: About the AW-2 Auto Wah

by **visserman** » 28 Jul 2015, 13:41

Okay Pepe, so not a real problem which is good to hear.
Noise? Well if you step on a Dist. pedal and do not play you will hear a bit of hiss eh? Pretty normal I would say, same with any of the Dynamic Filter Pedals.
Anyway,
Oh you can get Up and Down Wah sounds from the AW-2, I also love the less traditional Wah sounds, strike your strings from underneath and you are almost there.

The AW-2 is a step up from the FT-2: When you listen closely to the FT-2 and how the filter reacts you can hear a warble, they have taken that idea further into the AW-2 by giving you a control to add as much warble as you want and that is where you get your rate control. When you play lightly you will get the warble all the time, if you play hard the warble will kick in when you pause on your chords.

Okay enough, I really like the AW-2, glad I did take some notes in the past as those controls can be a bit awkward to set at first.

Have a play and tell us about some of the unusual sounds you have found.

Oh FT-2 is also great, especially when used with an Expression pedal, you have some many options where you want your Wah to kick in and what freq. you want to emphasise.

Enjoy!!

visserman

Re: About the AW-2 Auto Wah

by **Jnorm** » 28 Jul 2015, 15:43

Mmm.... The manual/exp option on the FT-2 is pretty cool. I haven't really dived into using it with a expression pedal but i've had a lot of fun using it as a notch/cocked wah filter for shaping dirt tones.

Jnorm

Re: About the AW-2 Auto Wah

by **dogload** » 24 Aug 2015, 09:40

I got an AW-2 after having used a virtual version within Cubase (!). I have to say that the modelled version seems to have addressed some of the short-comings, and I have to agree with some of the comments about the usable range of the controls.
I wanted it for the swept filter sounds as a pseudo-phaser, rather than the 'wakka-wakka' auto-wah (although I do like to use a bit on solos from time to time) and I think it does a pretty credible job. I also run it in a loop on an LS-2. I find the AW-2 is superb for the music I play - and noise issues are non-existent in the live situation. However, I do find the fact that it requires almost precision set-ups to change the sounds a bit of a pain, so on my pedalboard it is a case of 'set and forget'.

dogload

Re: About the AW-2 Auto Wah

by **Pepe** » 27 Jan 2016, 09:03

Okay, the AW-2 leaves my home this day. I managed to sell it for what I paid for it. So my next demo video won't be an AW-2 demo as I intended. C'est la vie. I'm not too sad.

Pepe

Re: About the AW-2 Auto Wah

by **dogload** » 12 Feb 2016, 09:44

I have upgraded my pedalboard and moved the AW-2 out of the LS-2 loop to put it at the front of the chain (after a germanium fuzz). And the noise from it is unbelievable!

I don't know if it's only just happened because of it's place in the chain - perhaps the fuzz isn't buffered if that would make a difference... i will have to try putting it after the CS-1. But it is really useless as it stands. I've also noticed the incredible, previously mentioned, bottom-end theft, which was probably masked by being in a parallel loop.

All-in-all, a big disappointment. I suspect it may be going the way of @Pepe's!

dogload