

## Gear

## STOMPBOX FEVER



## Electro-Harmonix Crying Tone Wah and Superego Synth Engine

TESTED BY MICHAEL ROSS

### Superego Synth Engine

The accelerometers that let you change the iPhone's display orientation have entered music performance through circuit benders and Source Audio's Hot Hand controllers,

but have been missing from effects pedals until now. Electro-Harmonix's Crying Tone Wah (\$87 street) uses a version of this technology to replace potentiometers and gears, leaving no moving parts to wear out, get scratchy, or impede pedal travel.

Plugging a guitar into the Crying Tone lights up the EHX logo on top, indicating that the wah is engaged. Flat on the floor, the pedal is in full treble position, and rocking the whole unit back moves toward the bass frequencies. E-H recommends recalibration for each new floor surface—a simple button pressing operation.

I thought such a radical rethink of a classic effect might take some getting used to, but rocking the Crying Tone instantly felt comfortable. The shape allowed a high degree of sensitivity, while preventing accidental shutting off of the effect. I had to push the pedal well forward from flat to turn it on or off. The limits of the treble and bass range were musical and useful. Some might like

#### MORE ONLINE



- Check out this demo of the Crying Tone Wah.
- Discover Crying Tone's hidden sounds.
- See what the Superego Synth Engine can do

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more top end or boom on the bottom, but I liked that maximum treble retained some girth, yet the lows weren't overblown.

In case you're wondering, the Crying Tone can do "notched" wah sounds à la "Money for Nothing" via a "hidden sounds" mode that uses a Calibration button on the side to provide three wah flavors: notched, square wave, and treble boost. All considered, the Crying Tone Wah offers an expressive vocal sound, is easy to manipulate, and represents a serious technological breakthrough in the world of wah.

**KUDOS** Classic vocal wah sound. No moving parts. Easy to use.

**CONCERNS** Can't mount it on a pedalboard, although E-H is working on an attachment that will let you do so.

### Superego Synth Engine

Electro-Harmonix's Freeze pedal has been showing up the pedalboards of players

who need to grab and hold a quick note or chord, but don't want to use a full-on looper. The Superego Synth Engine builds on the Freeze's sample-and-hold technology in some interesting ways. With its mini-toggle centered in Momentary mode, I could hit a chord and hold it as long as my foot remained on the footswitch, while soloing on top. The Speed/Layer knob adjusted how fast the held chord faded in and out. In Auto mode, the pedal automatically detected each note as I played it, and held it until I triggered a new one. This required clean, authoritative picking to work properly, but the effects were worth it. The Gliss knob made the notes slide up or down to the next one at an adjustable rate, while lowering the Speed knob pinched off the attack, enabling koto-style effects.

Latch mode let me take my foot off the footswitch while the Superego kept my last entry going. As I added more layers by

pressing the footswitch again, the Speed control now determined the level of the previously layered sounds. Stacking notes and/or chords created close voicings beyond the reach of even the largest hands. Patching a Korg Kaoss pad into the Superego's effects loop let me generate all sorts of cool filter sweeps and/or stuttering sounds, affecting just the held layers.

These layered parts can sound a little metallic and static, however, and I found that putting a phaser, chorus, or flanger in the effects loop softened the tone and gave the short layers some movement. The Superego takes some experimentation to reveal its strengths, but that's part of the fun of this unique pedal.

**KUDOS** Easy to use Sample and Hold device with synth-style effects. Multiple inventive applications.

**CONCERNS** None.

**CONTACT** Electro-Harmonix [ehx.com](http://ehx.com) 