

# JIM DUNLOP SW-95 CRY BABY SLASH WAH

GUNS N' ROSES LEGEND SLASH HAS PUT HIS NAME TO A PEDAL THAT'S BEEN A LONG TIME COMING. DUST OFF YOUR TOP HAT, AND JOIN **ROB SANDALL** IN FALLING FEET-FIRST INTO THE SNAKEPIT

**...** Few pedals can be argued to be a piece of musical history in their own right. The Cry Baby Wah-Wah, however, commands a sound that defined a whole era of guitarists, and continues to be favoured by the six-string elite.

From the psychedelic wah wig-outs of Hendrix through the smooth groove of Santana and onto the metal maestros Zakk Wylde and Dimebag Darrell, its applications are manifold and masterful. Finally, in a move that seems so obvious it's a wonder it hasn't been done before, rock legend Slash has been bestowed his own signature model. For a man who usually has three Cry Babies on stage – giving him the freedom to rock out anywhere and everywhere – this one has to be something a little special.

## HAVING A SLASH

Rock chic ahoy – finished in a striking metallic red, the SW-95 Cry Baby Slash Wah looks every bit as cool as its namesake. It's little heavier than the standard models, which is to say reassuringly weighty, and the finish is thick enough to take a beating.

**GBINFO**

**SW-95 SLASH WAH**  
**PRICE:** £209  
**BUILT IN:** USA  
**TYPE:** Wah/distortion pedal

**FEATURES:** Distortion on/off switch, gain and volume control knobs, top-mounted battery access, on/off LEDs

**POWER:** 2 x 9v batteries, 18v DC mains adaptor (not supplied)

**DIMENSIONS:** 75(h) x 100(w) x 250(d)mm

**CONTACT:**  
 John Hornby Skewes & Co Ltd  
**PHONE:** 01132 865361  
**WEB:** www.jimdunlop.com

**GBOPINION**

**SW-95 SLASH WAH**  
**GOLD STARS**  
 ★ Slash tones  
 ★ Slash cool

**BLACK MARKS**  
 ● A little pricey – way more than a standard Cry Baby

**GBRATING**  
 ●●●●●



A switch on the lower-right of the unit activates a high-gain distortion, and thankfully both the on/off of this switch and the status of the wah itself are indicated by a couple of LEDs – no more guessing games. Two sturdy, smooth-working knobs control the pedal's volume and gain settings.

Standing sturdy on four rubber feet, the baseplate carries the usual signature spiel, but in a significant twist: changing the battery will no longer involve a screwdriver, or indeed any sort of effort. The rubber on top of the rocker has a handy flap which, when lifted, reveals the battery compartment. It does slightly mar the aesthetics, the process of removing the batteries involves a fair bit of shaking and prizing, and at one point the flap caught on my foot as I pulled away from the unit, but these minor niggles are more than compensated by tool-free changes. Of course, these days most serious players will have this baby hooked up to a (not-included) 18-volt power supply. It's a power demand that necessitates more than the usual voltage, but the extra juice is well worth the extra frequency response that 18-volts bring to the party.

The infamous re-issued Fasel inductor is present on this model, and whether or not you believe the hype, it's generally believed that the original 'flawed' versions of this inductor gave the Cry Baby a more levelled-out tone than its competitors. Whatever, it's a welcome feature and makes for a nicely braggable nugget of info.

## WAH THIS WAY

Plugged in, it's hard not to immediately kick in the distortion, but do try to restrain yourself long enough to try the wah effect clean. Unsurprisingly, the SW-95 immediately feels like a Cry Baby. Slash has chosen to arm his pedal with a Classic circuit, totally unmodified, but that's hardly a bad thing. It's a smooth tone with a firm and gradual sweep to it: this non-mucked-about configuration increases the pedal's worth as a do-it-all wah. But, if we're going to be honest,

you won't be buying this sucker for the clean setting.

Off the bat, the distortion is utterly, none-more-Guns brilliant. With a cranked valve amp, there's enough thick top end to cut through concrete, and it practically sizzles under your feet. The distortion circuit could quite happily be a pedal in its own right, and though the inclusion of an on/off LED is thoughtful, there'll be very little doubt as to its status.

Combined, then, the classic wah and high-gain distortion make for more rock tone than you could hope for. The latter can be quite overpowering, and may need a little adjustment with the gain control to prevent it from masking the lovely wah tone on offer. When your optimal balance is achieved, it's hard not to imagine yourself head-back and wailing, just like Mr Slash himself. There's no problem clicking the unit on and off, and if you're careful, a little nudge should turn the distortion on, although I managed to flip it over several times in all the excitement. You'll also need to remember to look after the wah mechanism and pot – it's a mechanical, analogue wah and thus has proper moving parts.

## CONCLUSION

Wah pedals are par for the course these days; no rocker's pedalboard should be without one. Each model out there, from the classic Cry Baby to the Bespeco Weeper, sounds different, so it can be a nightmare choosing one.

If you're a rock player, though, Dunlop's latest offering is a top-drawer contender. The excellent combination of old-school wah tones and meaty distortion brings a cutting tone to any amplifier. Certainly, a pedal like this begs for a set-to-11 Marshall valve amp and a Les Paul, but even if you were to invoke such a holy trinity, the tones on offer still enable you to find your own individual sound.

At just over £209, it's serious money, but then it's a very serious, pro-quality pedal. You'll be rocking with the best of them, Sweet Children O' Yours and all. **GB**