

# AGUILAR FILTER TWIN

The envelope filter is a crucial element for Bringing The Funk (a task so important it should always be capitalised). Loosely defined as “kinda like a wah wah, but not quite, and also it’s automatic,” your typical envelope filter might consist of two controls – one to select the range of the effect and one to set the point at which your picking will trigger it. Now, Aguilar knows bass players, and they know bass effects – just witness the incredible Octamizer octave divider to see what I mean. So when they turn their attention to an envelope filter with special emphasis on bass players, you’d better listen.

## WHICH ONE’S THE EVIL TWIN?

Structurally, the Filter Twin shares a few traits in common with the Octamizer, as well as the Agro Bass Overdrive and the TLC Compressor. All four are housed in a heavy, solid rectangular case, with a handy slide-out battery door accessible via the back, four rubberised knobs at the top, a bright blue status LED and a heartily stompable footswitch. The input, output and 9V adaptor jacks are at the top of each unit, making them very pedalboard-friendly.

The Filter Twin’s finish is aqua with a solid black outline, giving it an almost “1950s appliance” kind of vibe, which I absolutely love. The Filter Twin actually includes two envelope filters in one – one which cycles up and one which cycles down – and semiotics buffs will nod knowingly at the layout and labelling of the controls. These controls are blend (flanked by an up arrow on the left of the knob and a down arrow on the right), threshold, velocity down (actually just labelled velocity, followed by a down arrow) and velocity up (ditto). The knobs feel very set-and-forget, meaning you need to expend a decent amount of energy to get them to turn. I really like this because it means you can be confident that your settings will remain in place even if a crowd surfer crashes onto your pedalboard. That’s very important with a pedal like this, which is dependent on the output of the signal coming from the instrument. Once you nail the sweet spot on the threshold control, it’s best that you stick to it.

## HOLY FUNK!

The sounds have a real depth and life to them, a rubbery slinkiness that works perfectly with slap and pop techniques and is also good for other picking options. Use the threshold to dial in the point at which the effect engages, then the velocity pots to select how quickly each filter moves. Blend obviously varies the ratio between each, from 100 per cent of one and zero of the other to a nice 50:50 balance and any point in between. I’m a sucker for “down” envelope filter sounds, and



unfortunately my main envelope filter doesn’t have this feature (though it is included in a multi effects unit I use sometimes), so I relished the opportunity to set up a nice 75:25 blend of down and up filters with long down velocity and quick up velocity, for a big, syrupy, bassy sound with just the right amount of top end. The ability to tweak the length of the effect means you can get some pretty interesting sounds as the two filters move against each other, from a snappy quack to a slow, sonorous roar.

The Filter Twin also sounds great through distortion and on guitar. I ran my bass into the Filter Twin then a fuzz unit, and was blown away by the wah-like harmonic richness of the down filter.

## TWO FILTERS ARE BETTER THAN ONE

The Filter Twin is a great addition to the arsenal of any funk player, but it also sounds great for a variety of other styles, such as rock and dance (and could also be a very ear-catching effect for metal bass players, in a similar way to how Cliff Burton used wah wah in *For Whom The Bell Tolls*). It’s also extremely roadworthy and feels like it will give you decades of unwavering service.

By Peter Hodgson

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