

Part II Case Study: A Guitarist's Dream—New Converse All Wah Sneaker Has a Built-In Wah Pedal

During Converse's Chuck Hack sessions in 2013, Critical Mass presented the first prototype for a Chuck Taylor designed specifically for guitarists. The All Wah: A Chuck Taylor All Star sneaker with a standard Wah pedal built right in. (The wah pedal is used for tonal control.) The original prototype featured cables plugging directly into the sole of the shoe.

Cute Circuit, a fashion technology brand that designs wearable technology, spent a few years working on development and design. Then, in 2016, they unveiled the completed product: The Chet Atkins All Wah. (Chet Atkins was the first guitarist to use the wah pedal.) The improved sneaker uses micro-sensor technology to give guitarists freedom from the pedal and the wires too.

The sole of the shoe features a flex-sensor that measures the amount of flex happening in the shoe; then the data is transmitted and interpreted to output the right amount of wah. The data is communicated via Bluetooth to the Wah Box. The sneakers can be used on a classic stage set-up with an Amp or even connect to a Mac or iPhone.

In February and March 2016, Cute Circuit gave the shoes a test run, selecting 13 guitarists to wear a pair of All Wahs on stage while performing.

J. Mascis from the band Dinosaur Jr. was given the opportunity to try out the sneakers. (He tested an earlier model that still required cables to be plugged into the sole to transmit the data.) After adjusting to the different motion, he noted that downward movements increased the treble sound and upward movements increased the bass. "It's definitely its own thing. I'll have to write some new songs with this," said Mascis.

These sneakers are a true fusion of music, technology, and fashion. No details about price or release date for the Chet Atkins All Wahs have been announced as of October 2016.

Sources: B. Kaye, "Converse made a sneaker with a Wah guitar pedal built right in," *Consequence of Sound*, June 22, 2016, accessed October 18, 2016, <http://consequenceofsound.net/2016/06/converse-made-a-sneaker-with-a-wah-pedal-built-right-in/>; C. Scapelliti, "New Converse All Wah Sneaker Has a Built-In Wah Pedal," *GuitarPlayer*, August 30, 2016, accessed October 18, 2016, <http://www.guitarplayer.com/effects/1018/new-converse-all-wah-sneaker-has-a-built-in-wah-pedal/58573>; Converse, "Chuck Hack: Introducing the Converse All Wah with J. Mascis," *YouTube*, June 22, 2016, accessed October 18, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BkF7Mq1ZUR0>; "The Converse All-Wah," *Cutecircuit*, accessed October 18, 2016, <https://cutecircuit.com/all-wah/>.