

"SCARIFYING" OD

The Majik Box Paul Gilbert Fuzz Universe Custom

Since Dave Simpson and Rob Nishida joined forces to form Majik Box, they've been the go-to stompbox company for guitarists like Doug Aldrich, Dave Navarro, James "Munky" Shaffer, and Victor Johnson. Their most popular offering is the Paul Gilbert Fuzz

Universe. At Gilbert's request, Majik created the Fuzz Universe Custom to reduce the usual pop and click sound heard when engaging a true bypass pedal. The only difference between the pedals is the Quiet Click circuit added to the Custom.

The Fuzz Universe Custom is not a fuzz pedal, but a separate clean boost and an overdrive pedal in one box – Majik Box's Venom Boost combined with a modified Majik Box Body Blow. It's a handsome unit with black-on-white graphics, a purple planet Saturn, and Gilbert's autograph on the backside. The controls are laid out for ease of use.

On the lower left the Thrust 2 On/Off switch controls the clean boost; on the lower right, the On/Off switch for Thrust 1 controls the overdrive. And on the upper left, a chicken knob called Thrust 2 controls the volume for the clean boost,

while the knobs to the right of it control the overdrive. A Drive knob controls gain, a Tone knob controls the EQ, and the Thrust 1 knob controls the volume. Inputs and outputs reside on each side of the unit, and powering it up requires a center negative-tip adapter and

removal of the 9-volt battery when using an AC adapter.

Using a 120-watt Peavey JSX head, a 1966 Fender Pro Reverb, a Les Paul, and a superstrat, the Fuzz Universe Custom elicited smooth warmth. Using a slightly dirty amp, the lead tones match those found on Gilbert's *Fuzz Universe* album. Never harsh or heavy metal-sounding, it exudes a tight and organic

signal. With some tweaking it yielded everything from old-school breakup through a clean amp, to stellar rock tones from a dirty amp. It excels with a dirty amp, however, producing rugged sounds with singing clarity.

Power chords were fat and satisfying with no flub. Maxing the Drive knob resulted in pliable gain, hard-hitting sustain, and rich Santana overtones. The Boost channel is voiced louder than would be expected, but it's malleable; and turning on the unit is barely audible. Even for those with no interest in Gilbert's distorted tones, the Paul Gilbert Fuzz Universe Custom will yield exceptional rock tones with invaluable boost capabilities. – **Oscar Jordan**

Price: \$329.99 retail
Info: majikboxusa.com

