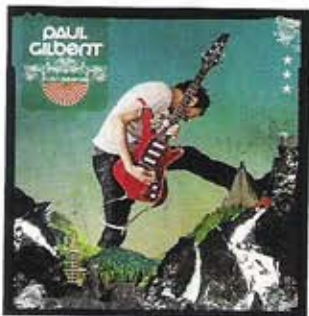


Mr. Shred-Jangles

and sending small-minded players scurrying for cover before his mind-boggling might. At least that's what one listens to the famous shredmeister's new instrumental album, *Fuzz Universe*, reveals. Maybe that's why Gilbert chose such larger-than-life artwork for the new album's cover.



We recently spoke to Gilbert as he toured the US doing clinics and workshops before heading off to tour Japan. As always, he was funny and articulate as we discussed everything from his favorite Beatles chords to how his tones have changed over the years and how his hearing loss affects his performing and recording.

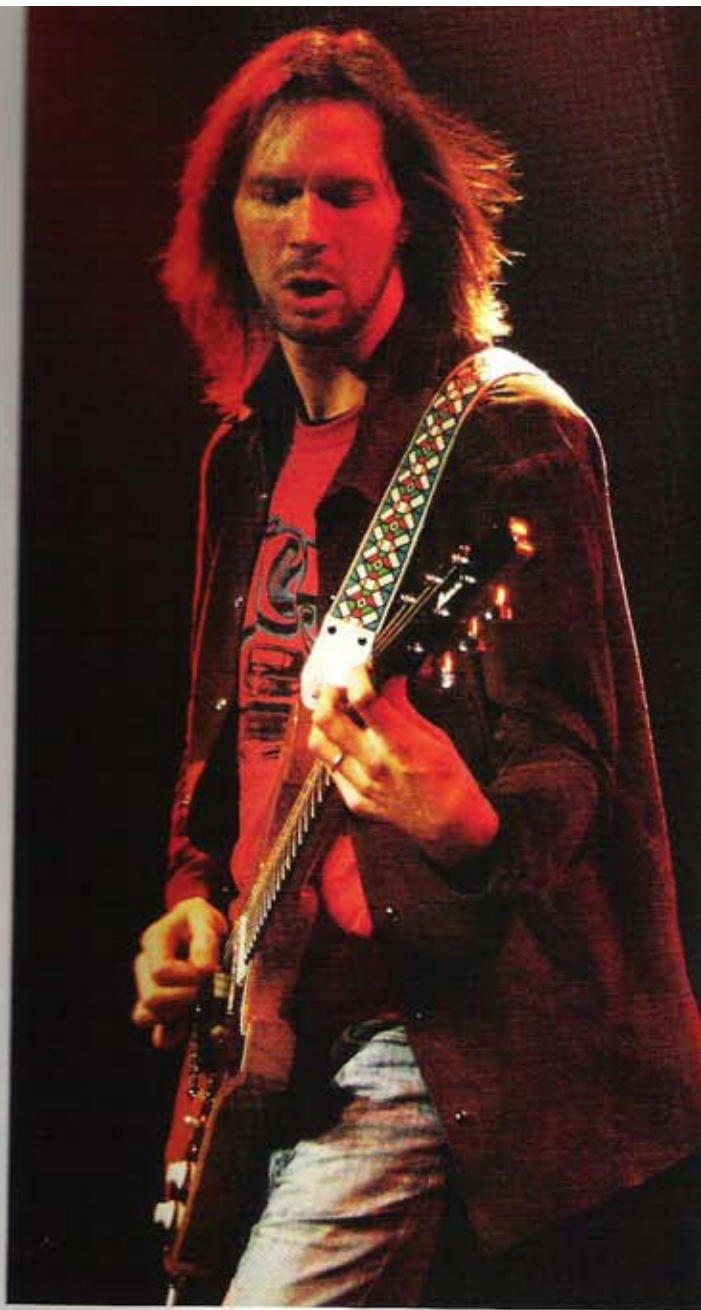
You're a huge fan of the Beatles and all sorts of jangle pop. How does that affect your writing and performing for an all-instrumental album like *Fuzz Universe*? Is the instrumental format liberating or constraining—or both?

The Beatles are kind of my musical DNA. If I could sing like them, write like them, and make girls jump up and down and scream like they did, then I would never have to play instrumental music at all. But for some reason, playing athletic things on the guitar always came easier to me. So I try to do that in a musical way that even a Beatles fan like me could listen to. More specifically, I try to learn lots of chords from '60s and '70s pop songs and use them as the foundation for my melodies. On this album, I used a lot of min7^b5 and 7sus4 chords. I love the sound of those chords, and I feel they are terribly underused in heavy rock. I felt it was my mission to bring up the average.

Also, it's funny you mention the Beatles, because when I was working on the chorus for the opening track, "Fuzz Universe," I was suddenly inspired with a chord progression and melody. I ran into my studio to record it while it was still in my head. First I recorded the chords, then I started overdubbing the melody, and—damn—I realized I had just written the bridge to a very famous Beatles song. I ended up changing it with a couple of chord substitutions and a totally different melody of my own, but you can still sing the Beatles melody over the top and it fits perfectly. I'll let you guess which song it is.

That song begins with this cyclical, sinewy lead that reminds me of the licks you were teaching at clinics back in the '80s. There's also a prominent flanger sound. Is that your signature Ibanez AF2 Airplane Flanger engaged on most of the song?

The intro was actually inspired by the Doobie Brothers. I was learning the chords to the song "What a Fool Believes," and the first chord is a 7sus4—possibly my favorite chord in the world. It's also the "Hard Day's Night" chord, and it's very similar to the opening chord of "Hemispheres" by Rush. I thought, "If this is really my favorite chord, why not learn an arpeggio version of it?" So I started working out fingerings that would let me play the chord tones in a quicker, more



Gilbert onstage with a Korina Ibanez PGMFRM1 Fireman.

solo-y style. I ended up adding a ninth at the top, and that became the intro. The second half of the intro is the same pattern but using a min7^b5 chord, like I was talking about before. The flanger is actually an MXR Phase 90, the script-logo one with the LED. I used that on the intro and for the big strummed chords. I use the Ibanez Airplane Flanger for the crazy Whammy-type sound later in the song.

If I'm not mistaken, the Airplane Flanger was based on the old ADA units, right? What tweaks to that design did you request?

The old ADA flangers were cool because you could turn one of the knobs all the way up and it would take over your whole guitar sound with this ferocious, electronic dive bomb. I asked Ibanez to make a pedal that would give me something like that, but with a second flange channel that I could adjust for more normal flange sounds. The normal side will also go crazy if you crank it up, so sometimes I can't resist and I just toggle between the two crazy sides.

You get a ton of tones on "Olympic" alone—ringing, semi-clean intro licks, crunchy Vox-style rhythms, modulated arpeggios,