

Mr. Shred-Jangles

Whenever I listen to what [students] are saying with their guitars . . . It becomes very obvious what they need to work on . . . And it's almost always the same thing that needs work: Timing and [solo] endings.

compressor as well as a Tube-Tech compressor after the mic preamp to get enough sustain to feel good.

"Will My Screen Door Stop Neptune" begins with a badass line that sounds a little like what Ralph Macchio's character played in the duel at the end of *Crossroads*. And then you rip out some jaw-dropping muted licks that sound like they *might* be hybrid picked. Are you using your picking-hand fingers there at all, or is it all pick?

I'm not so familiar with that movie, but I've heard great things about it. My inspiration for this one is kind of unusual. I wanted to write a song with my favorite tempo. What is my favorite tempo? "Neon Knights" by Black Sabbath, with Ronnie James Dio on vocals, of course! So I listened to that song and tapped away at my drum machine to get a number for the tempo. Then I played some drums at that tempo, recorded it, and switched to guitar. I jammed along and came up with that riff. Then I listened to it and realized that my riff would sound better if the drums were played in half time. So, in the end, I discarded my tempo—or at least cut it in half—but I got a good riff out of it. And hopefully the spirit of Ronnie James Dio resides in the music just a little bit.

I think the muted licks you're talking about are probably the augmented arpeggios—and I was hoping someone would notice those. Augmented is another great chord that the Beatles and ELO used to make pop songs. I never had a good fingering for playing them



Gilbert leans into it on his red Ibanez Fireman. Photo by James Chiang

quickly, but the Bach violin piece I did on this record ["Bach Partita in Dm"] inspired some new arpeggio techniques that opened a lot of doors for me, including this one. It's all picking, hammer-ons, and pull-offs, but the position shifts and stretches are an adventure.

The twangy rhythms on "Batter Up" sound a little like Bill Kirchen or another Tele master, while the lead sounds a bit Satriani-esque. What inspired that?

I was doing a clinic in Sicily and the audience demanded an encore. I had played all the songs I had prepared, so in a desperate attempt to entertain I went back onstage and did a drum solo. Someone ►►