

**T**hey say it's a long hard slog to the top. So they say. For some, fame comes quickly, easily and in huge amounts (*don't litter misses!*) and more importantly at a young and impressionable age. Such a person is YNGWIE MALMSTEEN. At the age of 19 he was discovered by MIKE VARNEY of Shrapnel Records, flown over from his native Sweden and immediately sent to work on the debut album by US Heavy Metal band STEALER. Following his departure from that band he joined ex-RAINBOW singer GRAHAM BONNET and formed ALCATRAZ. Their first album, *No Parole From Rock and Roll*, caused shock waves in the guitar playing community due to Malmsteen's aggressive style, phenomenal speed, technique and, more importantly, his use of Classical themes and ideas in his solos.



Following his departure from Alcatraz he released his first solo album, *Rising Force*, and his face was soon on the covers of almost every guitar magazine you'd care to mention. The rest, as the boringly say because they can't be bothered to think of anything else, is history.

The road has not been totally without bumps however. Numerous personnel problems have meant new band members for practically every album, and worse still, a serious car crash almost put paid to his career. Recuperation entailed heavy practice: "I had to work harder to play the same way than I have ever done before," he says, "but then as my injuries healed, all that hard work I'd put in put me up to an even higher plateau than before, so I believe that on this new record I'm definitely playing the best I've ever done." So six solo albums and one car crash later the man who's responsible for more BACH and ROLLERS than NIGEL TUFFNEL is in town to rehearse for an upcoming tour and to talk about his new album (entitled *Eclipse*), and more importantly, his playing.

### Classical Gas

Yngwie: "I got a guitar on my 5th birthday from my dear old mum, God bless her, but I didn't really start playing until 18 September 1970, the same day that Jimi Hendrix died. There was a TV special with Jimi Hendrix and I just flipped out completely, and said 'now this is what I want to do', so I took the guitar off the wall and haven't stopped since then. That's how I started and

then I got into DEEP PURPLE and then heavily into Classical music when I was 12 or 13."

GM: What turned you onto Classical music?

Yngwie: "It was my sister. She used to always listen to *Selling England By The Pound* by GENESIS and *Trespass*, like old Genesis records, and there was something about these records I just really liked. I didn't even know what it was and then I found out that it's all Bach really. You know, the Bach harmonies and stuff. Then eventually I got into listening to that, then I got into PAGANNINI heavily."

GM: You taught yourself during this period?

Yngwie: "Yeah, I'm total-