

It's time to review a new album! This time, Rising Force by Yngwie Malmsteen. For better or for worse, it was (and amazingly STILL is) the first shred metal album of all time. Pretty impressive right? So how come the album only got 4 stars on Allmusic.com? Well, I wouldn't worry about them too much. If you read my Black Sabbath review, you'll know the website is extremely hard to please, to say the least. Anyway, interestingly RF doesn't contain the first shred metal solo of all time. 'Mother Mary' by UFO featured an unusually crazed, isolated wigout passage in Malmsteen style, years before the legend was famous. However, it seems to have been largely ignored. If only guitarist Michael Schenker stuck with playing like that, he would have created a whole new genre. Clearly, it wasn't to be, so YM gets all the glory.

In contrast to Sabbath, I mostly understand why RF didn't get 5 stars: The instrumental parts are SO over-the-top. The record starts off so well with the melodic 'Black Star', and in fact the guitar solo of it was once voted one of the best ever in metal. 'Ahhhh, I could get into this', the listener would be thinking, only to get the endless note abuse of 'Far Beyond the Sun' a few minutes later. What's worrying is FBtS also features some of Yngwie's more tasteful playing, relatively speaking. Things get a whole lot worse, not only throughout the album, but throughout the guitarist's whole career. However, if you like to hear what it sounds like going up and down a scale super fast on guitar, this artist is most definitely for you. My word, there are some good runs to be heard.

But that's not all; ultra fast keyboard breaks are heard, too. Sometimes guitar scales get traded with similar synth parts, mere seconds later. If only drum kits could play scales, that would be Heaven, right? Maybe the musician needs to get hold of some timpani, or something. He may not have been able to at the time, but nowadays he could also get his singer to sing ridiculously speedy scales, with the help of computer technology. Imagine all members shredding together. Epic. Well epic to Malmsteen, anyway, the tasteless weirdo. So, what do the debut album's vocals sound like without the 'help' of modern technology? They sound melodic? That can't be right... No wait, they do! It's a shame there are only two tracks with singing on this album though, but hey, it's something.

To sum up, I get it, the guy can really play up and down the neck note by note and sometimes he can even play arpeggios just as fast. How about just stating that fact on an album cover or something, and leaving it there? And it's not just the guitar playing that needs more thought, consider the album names he comes up with: 'Rising Force' whilst not bad is inaccurate, and things got a whole lot worse later on. Take for example the more recent 'Unleash the Fury'. That silly title, believe it or not, was inspired by his own now infamous ranting on a plane. Yngwie once screamed at a granny the same phrase over and over again. How about getting a title inspired by nature, or something? Furthermore, that cheesy though still frightening abuse was concocted before the saying became popular through Tom Green's use of it. More positively, it seems Yngwie is an innovator in more ways than one, it could be argued. Anyway, what do I give the album, despite it's flaws? An admirable 9/10. Good solos would make this release get a Spinal Tap 11 out of 10. What talent gone to waste! :S