

Vinnie Moore

Breaking out of his Shell



Vinnie Moore was part of the "(Mike) Varney Army": that fiery collection of fretburning prodigies that, in the mid and late '80's, caused magazine writers and other observant creatures to coin the term "Bach Rock".

Relying heavily on lightning fast riffing, myriad guitar harmonies and deliberate minor progressions, Vinnie was at the forefront of that infamous crowd. His albums also featured some notable jazz-rock backup musicians, like ex-Dixie Dregs bassist **Andy West**, Whitesnake stickman **Tommy Aldridge**, and fellow classical-style fretman **Tony MacAlpine** (on keyboards). Critics classified Moore as a "Bach 'n Roller", and left it at that.

But, times change. Luckily, so has Vinnie.

His upcoming release, *Meltdown*, takes a 90 degree turn from anything he's done in the past, and, in the process, showcases a whole new facet of Vinnie's playing and writing skill. The new album demonstrates his depth as an artist, and throws him into the company of some of his '80's compatriots who also escaped the guitar hero burnout syndrome: players like **Paul Gilbert (Mr. Big)**, **Jason Becker (David Lee Roth)**, and **Bruce Bouillet** and **John Alderete (Scream)**.

Although the change in style may come as a surprise to listeners familiar with Vinnie's first two albums (*Mind's Eye*, and *Time Odyssey*), it is not actually new to him. "This is the album I would have made when I was 18," he relates, "In a way, I have come full circle, kind of gone back to my roots."

The new record does have something in common with the first two, though, and that is it was originally slated to be a vocal album. "Mind's Eye and Time Odyssey were supposed to have vocals, but the instrumental stuff was so much stronger, I kept going with that," says Vinnie. "After Time Odyssey, I finally did find a vocalist I

liked, and we worked together for almost a year, writing over a dozen songs."

With a major record company behind them



and a production date scheduled, the long awaited vocal album seemed inevitable—but, alas, was once again not to be. Vinnie was disappointed, but still felt he had gotten some valuable experience. "Working with a singer makes you concentrate on writing songs that are melodic, as opposed to just complex. When I was on my own again, I found that songs flowed out of me much more easily than they had in the past."

Another important factor in Vinnie's development was his increasing interest in older material. "When I started playing guitar, **Van Halen** was it!" he explains. "But lately I've been listening to older stuff, like **Led Zeppelin** and **UFO**." The coup de gras occurred about a year and a half ago.

"I don't exactly know why, but I was never into **Jimi Hendrix**," recalls Vinnie. "But one night I saw a documentary on him, and it changed my life, really. He had so much soul, and was such an incredible rhythm player. I guess it rekindled the blues elements of my playing."

You can certainly hear the change in the new album (due out in the fall on Epic/Relativity). Running the gamut from haunting, legato melodies, to nasty growling solo passages, *Meltdown* is a collection of songs that does Vinnie's talent justice. The transformation is also evidenced by Vinnie's increased stress on rhythm guitar. "On the title cut, *Meltdown*, the rhythm riff was so cool, I didn't want to ruin it by laying down a melody on top! So I compromised, and the lead guitar is mixed lower than usual."

The band, featuring drummer **Joe Franco** and bass player **Greg Smith**, plans to tour soon after the record is released. "In concert, the music will be much more alive," Vinnie enthuses. "The guys in the band convinced me to go out with just the three of us. I had thought of bringing along another player to do the rhythm guitar tracks on the album, but they talked me out of that. We tried the power trio format at the January NAMM show, and it worked!"

It was at that same January NAMM show

Vinnie prefers the Talon IV with a Floyd Rose Pro and 2 DiMarzio humbucker pickups.

(Continued on page 31)