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by Mark Teehan

FOGHAT - "Rock And Roll Outlaws" (Bearsville). As long as bands like Foghat keep on keepin' on, r'n'r will stay healthy and exciting. On their new 4th LP here the Fog come across as solid as ever and offer further conclusive proof that they're one of the hottest groups to emerge in the last few years. Strangely enough, while Foghat tour their asses off on this side of the ocean and build up a sizeable reputation/following, over in England they're virtually ignored and regularly slagged by the critics. Well, their loss and our gain. This is not to admit that after repeated plays, "Energized" (Fog's last LP) did not become too much of a good thing with its unvaried, non-stop rocker assault. A few change-ups would have improved the overall flow, but as constituted the LP was still a fine effort. Miles ahead of the lame junk that dummies like Status Quo pass off as "music"-boogie my ass.

"Outlaws" marks a partial return for Foghat to the more open-ended sound/approach of their great 2nd album (the one with the rock and roll on the cover). It also showcases a more innovative writing style for the group, as evidenced on "Dreamer", a complex track that opens with a marchin' beat and sombre riffs and then stretches out to a gallop complete with flesh chords. After the tone mellows down an acoustic rig accompanies the singer's tales of nightmares, which then give way to a pounding escape. "Hate To See You Go" laments the hassles of carrying on a relationship when on the road constantly and has a well-played circular loop structure bolstered by some smooth bridging; Rod Price finishes off with some upward licks executed in his superb style.

The rest of the album holds up well in a more straightforward rocker mold in true Foghat fashion. While "Eight Days On The Road" drags on a little too long for its own good (perhaps in keeping with the title) and "Shirley Jean" is too full of cliché riffs to be more than a weak cut, "Chateau Lafitte '59 Boogie" gets down and does it for 6 mins. Two non-group songs, "Blue Spruce Woman" and the title tune are equally effective; "Outlaws" was written by Felix Cavaliere (or Rascals fame) and is pure raunch, its slashing guitars intro developing into a full-throttle power chord attack that's well-supported by the rhythm section of Roger Earl (drums and Tony Stevens (bass)). Like the best r'n'r, it's explosive energy channeled into a simple but engaging structure.

We even get a rare treat from the Fog, an acoustic tune called "Trouble on My Mind" that's passable but gets relegated to the end of Side 1 - it would have done more good on the freight-train flip. Still unfortunately missing is some of the incredible guitar pyrotechnics that made the band's 2nd LP such a goodie; producer Nick Jameson has Lonesome Dave Peverett's rhythm guitar so down in the mix that it's barely audible except on only a few cuts. The group could also do with some more blues-based material (as appeared on the 2nd LP also) - it would give 'em more flexibility and set up the more direct material better. But that's minor stuff. All things considered, "Outlaws" is another dependable album from the hard-working Fog. Watch out for a Live LP on the group's next outing.

METERS - "Rejuvenation" (Reprise). Pure earthly r&b dynamite from end to end. Ah, gimme some more it feels SO good. Words like funky and tight don't begin to describe how together this ass-kickin' New Orleans, Allen Toussaint house band is. They've got a legendary background - leaders in the progressive soul field; session band extraordinaire,

played on Dr. John's last 2 LPs as well as King Biscuit Boy's devastating delight of a few months back. This here is something like their own 5th album. No gimmicks or slick flash - just a true orgy of rhythmic infection with the bass sounding like it'll punch right thru your bulging speakers. Material well arranged with some fine Toussaint horn sections included, all cuts uniformly excellent. Already told ya how el supremo the Meters were on the Biscuit's gem, so the coast is clear. Let stuff like "People Say", "Jungle Man," "Hey Pocky A-Way," and "Africa" get under your skin and shake your ass man. So get it while you can and blow out the cobwebs from your over-worked mind.

THE ISLEY BROTHERS - "Live It Up" (T-Neck). Don't go away yet, 'cause here's another winner in the electric funk, disco-fused sweepstakes. These guys need no intro, having been around since '58 and "Twist and Shout"; they've also made it in and out of the Motown machine intact, which is quite a feat. This is a worthy successor to "3 plus 3" (more good stuff) and includes 2 extended tracks (title and "Midnight Sky") on which all the stops are pulled out: well-paced dynamics, pounding rhythm, nasty synthesizer, and howling guitar from Ernie Isley. This cat can sling those riffs where you can feel 'em, with amazing control and a style reminiscent of Hendrix. Unbelievable. Nearly ko'ed me on first hearing. Check out "Sky" where it all peaks; "Ain't I Been Good To You" also quite burning, though in different sense. Here the boys present a study in anguished contrasts, with main-soul arrangements, impassioned guitar work from Ernie that slowly stings, and intensely brooding vocals. Several more direct ballads included, and band does a fine job on Todd Rundgren's "Hello It's Me". Live it up.

NOTES: Bob Dylan recently finished his 18th LP, now titled "Blood On The Tracks" with 12 cuts, 10 new; release date should be right about now or early Dec...Both Crowbar and Lighthouse packed it in a few months ago-too bad for the latter 'cause they seemed headed back in the right direction; expect flood of solo efforts...King Crimson also no more...Mick Ronson of Bowie fame replaced Ariel Bender as guitarist in Mott the Hoople - Bender will put his own band together and Ronson will record the occasional solo LP...Mott's next Lp will be a Live one, due out in a few months...Spooky Tooth disbanded - probably a good idea after that last album...Carmine Appice has been trying to re-form Vanilla Fudge, one of the original sludge masters of the late sixties, but Tim Bogert won't bite...the Beck, Bogert, and Appice trip has pretty well bitten the dust...Ringo Starr and George Harrison play on Paul McCartney's newest/next LP...Roxy Music goin' down well on their latest British tour and have latest album "Country Life" out over there; good reports on LP-let's hope they hurry up and release it over here...Title of next Shark's LP "Music Breakout"... It's about time Led Zep's latest double was released and hit the stores - maybe this month...Uriah Heep bassist Gary Thain suffered electric shock on stage awhile back on Heep's U.S. tour; Thain under Doc's orders and group's UK tour slightly delayed but Uriah will blast 'em eventually (RS can buzz off)...New LPs in the works for Ray Manzarek ("Wake Up The Dead"), Bad Co. (eagerly awaited, look for early Jan. release), Bruce Springsteen (another to watch for), Michael Murphy, Robin Trower, Charlie Watts, Kiss, Humble Pie (better be good), Cat Stevens Live, Queen (oh no)...Catch ya next week.