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Hawkwind - Out of the Shadows DVD Review

by Kevin Wierzbicki

As the psychedelic '60s came to a close, musicians around the world had taken enough acid to realize that there was little music being made that was a suitable companion for the inward journey. Lo and behold progressive music, or prog-rock if you will, was born as guitars and keyboards took off to the center of the mind with cryptic lyrics in tow. Bands like Yes, Pink Floyd and Genesis got so good at making this trippy music that listening to their work was mind altering enough that drug taking became optional. While the aforementioned bands got fat and happy with massive sales, many similar bands like Gentle Giant and Camel never gained much commercial success. Perhaps the most tragically overlooked of the English "B-list" of prog-rockers is Hawkwind. A viewing of *Out of the Shadows* will have you wondering just why the band never clicked like its more famous peers did, because everything was there---stellar musicianship, futuristic themes ("Aero Space Age Inferno") and sci-fi scenarios ("The Song of the Gremlins")---all dished out in large enough portions to give the ol' thinking cap quite a work-out. But at this point, why they never became a super-group doesn't really matter. They still (at least as of this filming in 2002) have the wherewithal to put on a

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fine show. It's cool enough to have this well-made concert film as a keepsake of an era but besides an unexpectedly awesome show, Hawkwind surprises with guest vocalist Arthur Brown. Completely unbilled on the DVD packaging, Brown, he of the Crazy World of Arthur Brown "Fire" fame sings lead for about half of the show, his deep intonations adding an ominous overtone to songs like "Master of the Universe" and "Time & Confusion." Otherwise original member Dave Brock and bassist Alan Davey handle the vocals while the band zips from galaxy to galaxy. And even though this is arty, spacey stuff, you can still hear the blues bleed through once in awhile, like on "Angels of Death." Hawkwind is, after all, the band that Lemmy Kilmister left to form the gritty Motorhead. Another surprising moment comes when keyboard player Timothy Blake throws in a sly nod to Lennon and McCartney by playing a few bars of "Eleanor Rigby" during "Assassins of Allah." Since these guys are not exactly spring chickens they're not much for stage antics but Brown provides some theatricality by appearing as the Invisible Man for the encore, "Sonic Space Attack." Long time fans will be stunned at how good this show is, as will the young'uns looking over the shoulder.

CD Info and Links

Hawkwind - Out of the Shadows DVD

Label: Secret Films/MVD

Rating: 😊😊😊😊

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