



## Stoll Vaughan “**Love Like A Mule**” Shadowdog Records

Confused? You will be after a couple of trips through Vaughan’s sophomore effort “**Love Like A Mule**,” which was produced by his uncle and John Mellencamp alumni, Mike Wanchic. The impression created by “Alright” the, raucous and rocking, electric opening track is that Vaughan is a stadium rock act – for two months he toured Europe with reformed alternative rock band Urge Overkill, and is currently on the road opening for Def Leppard and Journey. The second track, “No Stopping,” settles into an acoustic shuffle replete with country guitar licks. Retaining that gentler acoustic approach, in terms of vocal phrasing “Savior” confirms that Vaughan has listened closely to The Bobster.....old Zimmerframe. Indulging in more country licks, on this occasion Stoll & Co. put their foot to the floor and crank up the pace for “Man That Cares.” Employing the foregoing fast/slow template, from that point on, in terms of content, “**Love Like A Mule**” drifts aimlessly track-to-track. I guess an analogy would be James McMurtry sans the lyrical piss and vinegar [\*].

While there are no real jaw-dropping musical peaks there are a few dips. “Fade Away” hints at the sound and style of Mark Knopfler/Dire Straits. For me, this travelogue/love ballad – the narrator has gone in search of an old, [doused] flame – is best summed up by the lines “*I’m going to find her and tell her I miss her, yes I do, Even if she is somebody else’s wife.*” Buddy, get over it! Third from last, “Seen Moments,” is introduced with “*I’ll play you this song,*” and Stoll strips things right down to one man, his voice and acoustic guitar. Nevertheless it’s still lyrically mundane, hinging on the repeated “*I’ve seen moments that would blow any man away.*” Wow! Picture this - Stoll brought his late night, arena set to a climax with the anthem like album closer “Head Above The Wheel,” and I stood and swayed with the rest of mankind, one arm erect, fist clenched. NOT.

Vaughan’s lyrics consistently trade in generalities and banalities. Hell, the opening lines of the first cut run to “*There’s a midget with a pitchfork, With a sign saying he’s well hung.*” Does it get any better? No. There’s absolutely zilch here that’s contrary to ordinary. Next.....

### **Note.**

[\*] – Wanchic produced McMurtry’s sophomore effort “**Candyland**” [1992], and is credited with co-producing his rather fine debut “**Too Long In The Wasteland**” [1989].

Folkwax Score 5 out of 10

### **Arthur Wood.**

Kerrville Kronikles 09/06.