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Foghat drummer Roger Earl talks new album, tour

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Foghat hitting the road, releasing new album this month
Steve Renis

When Foghat's 17th album is released on June 24, fans will appreciate the fusion of the band's musical roots with a modern rock sound. That's the theme of the album — from the title **“Under The Influence”** to the remake of their 1975 hit single **“Slow Ride.”**

“My wife Linda came up with the title, because a couple of years ago, we were talking about what sort of attitude we want on this album,” drummer Roger Earl told the Examiner.com. “It was all about what our musical influences were growing up.”

Earl, a co-founder of Foghat, also discussed his vision for the album with Grammy-winning producer and songwriter Tom Hambridge, who wrote most of the lyrics for the title track: “Tom and I were sitting on the deck out in back and we were drinking some bourbon. I was talking with him about our influences, growing up in London and listening to Jerry Lee Lewis, which my father actually brought

home one lunchtime. It was actually ‘Great Balls of Fire’ and the old household was never the same after that.”

Like most classic rock aficionados who go to concerts, Foghat fans prefer to hear the band’s early hits, which can make it challenging to introduce new material on tour. “There’s a little trepidation with the band about doing new songs,” Earl said while talking about the setlist for the 35-date tour Foghat recently began. “But we started playing two right off the bat — ‘**Under the Influence**’ and ‘**Knock It Off**’ — and the songs go down great live, so I guess we’re getting it right.”

This tour, which covers much of the U.S., lands in **New York on September 21**, at the B.B. King Blues Club — a venue the legendary drummer enjoys, both from the stage and in the audience. He recalled that Foghat played there about a decade ago, and that over the years he’s gone to see Buddy Guy, Y&T, and Jerry Lee Lewis perform.

“Normally we wouldn’t play there because we ask too much money, mercenary bastards that we are,” he said, laughing. “It seemed like an ideal place [for this tour] — it’s warm and close, and you could see everybody’s faces.” The main room at B.B. King’s has horseshoe seating right around a 30-foot stage, fostering an intimate environment for the artists and fans.

Although born and raised in London, Earl made New York his home in 1973. His love of fishing is what drew him to settle on Long Island, but his love for the city remains strong.

“New York City is probably the greatest city in the world,” he said. “There’s always something going on, something to do, something to see. And I think they’ve done a really great job cleaning it up.”

Earl recounted one of his favorite New York stories, recalling his respect and appreciation for the city’s police: “When we did the ‘**Fool for the City**’ album cover [in 1975], we went down to the Village [E. 11th Street, between 2nd and 3rd Avenues] early one Sunday morning. We pulled up a manhole cover and started setting up. And as we’re sitting there taking pictures, along came a couple of New York’s Finest in their cruiser. They rolled their windows down, looking at us — and I’m fishing in this manhole. One of them said ‘Hey, you got a license? You got a fishing license?’ They came out of the car and said ‘What are you doing?’ We told them we were doing an album cover. They were great — they took some pictures with me being carried away in handcuffs.”

“Slow Ride,” which was the 3rd track on that album makes a return appearance as the final song on “**Under The Influence**,” as a tribute to late bandmates Rod Price and Dave Peverett, who both played on “Fool for the City.” “On our albums, I always put [their names] on the bottom [of the liner notes] because even though they’re not on this record, they were a huge part of this band and they were our good friends.”

Fans can click [here](#) to see when the tour is coming to their towns.

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