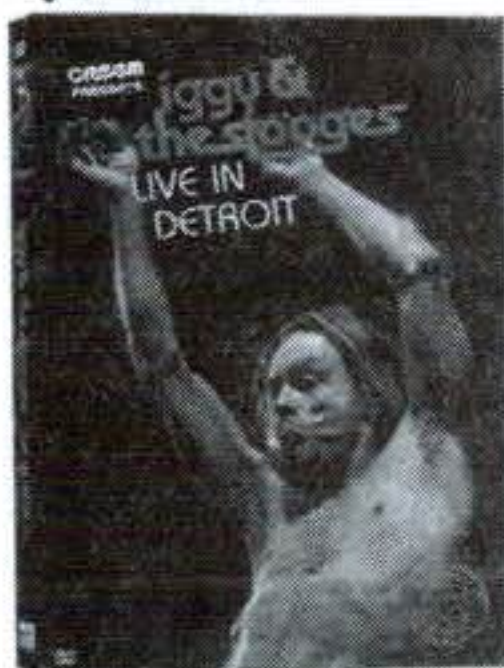


## IGGY & THE STOOGES: LIVE IN DETROIT (Music Video Distributors)



It's impossible that Detroit survived. No one went to Detroit in the Summer of Love; people fled downtown, taking what they could, as the city burned around them. And during the summer of 1969, the Stooges took the stage for the first time; they weren't singing about peace and love, or going to San Francisco. Even then, the Stooges, with frenetic frontman Iggy Pop, sounded weary of the '60s, as if they could feel the oncoming malaise in the distance. They weren't ten minutes into their first album before announcing that the urban life was no fun.

And it's impossible that Iggy survived. Iggy, once beaten and stabbed on stage. Iggy, taunting the bikers with his fists up and lips in a pout. Iggy, daring the audience to throw dog food. Iggy, disappearing for weeks at a time. But he's not only survived, he's doing some of the most forceful and innovative work of his career. He's tan, blondish, living in Miami Beach now, but don't think Iggy Pop is content to be another snowbird enjoying a peaceful retirement. He's still in top form, and he's still an absolute anomaly, a contortionist, one of those impossibly thin and limber frontmen who prowl the stage with palpable force. And now, with the release of *Iggy & the Stooges: Live in Detroit*, there is finally a living document of the legendary Stooges at their high-watt, high-intensity peak.

REM's Peter Buck once remarked that every kid who purchased a copy of the first Velvet Underground record went out and started a band; after watching the 14-song Stooges live set, recorded last September in Detroit, it's likely that every kid who bought a Stooges record might have gone out and started their own street gang. The Stooges have always been synonymous with Detroit, both its ethos and its violence.

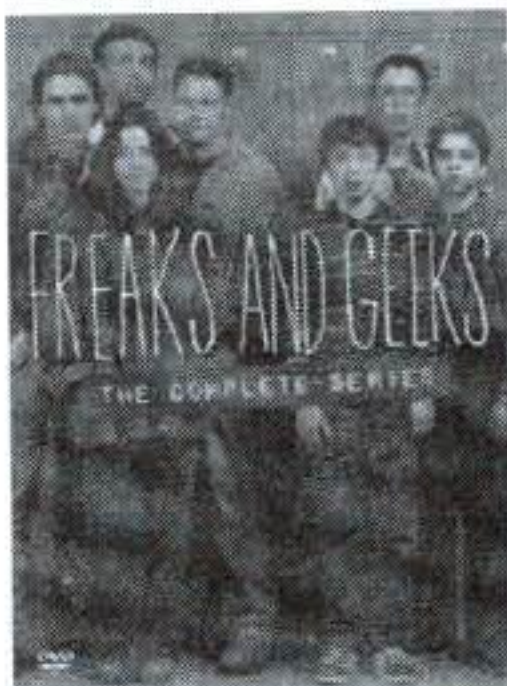
This hometown reunion looks more like a weekend throwdown than an overproduced concert event. The backdrop and the lighting are minimal, with the focus clearly on the wall of Ron Asheton's Marshall amplifiers at stage right; the volume goes all the way to 11 as the surviving original Stooges, augmented by ex-Minutemen and Firehose bass legend Mike Watt and saxophonist Steve Mackey, rip through a 65-minute performance. Only four

songs into the set, a shirtless Iggy goes sailing into the crowd; three songs later, Iggy begs fans to join him onstage and berates the security guards who try to stop the mayhem when dozens heed the call, crowding the stage to dance their way through "Real Cool Time" and "No Fun" as the band kicks in the afterburners.

Only songs from 1973's *Raw Power* are noticeably absent. The performance instead focuses on 13 songs from the band's first two albums, plus the title track "Skull Ring," one of four Stooges contributions to Iggy's 2003 studio album. Even nearly 30 years after the Stooges' last full album, *Live in Detroit* gives a glimpse of the way things might have been in the Motor City in 1969 and a suggestion that, this time around, Iggy Pop and the Asheton brothers are actually enjoying themselves.

—Steve Kistulentz

## FREAKS & GEEKS: THE COMPLETE SERIES LIMITED EDITION DVD BOX SET (Sony)



Medically proven as the best-known cure for *My So-Called Life* withdrawal, the 1999–2000 NBC program *Freaks & Geeks* has finally made its way to DVD. *Freaks & Geeks* is set in 1980s Michigan and centers on Sam and Lindsay Weir; Sam is a freshman in high school, and Lindsay is a sophomore. Sam hangs out with the "geek" crowd, while Lindsay is trying to transition from the geeks to the "freaks," or burnouts, as they are otherwise known. Much of the show's success is due to the fact that it is unapologetically realistic in depicting the constant humiliation that is high school and also in its genius casting of kids who—get this—actually look like the kids you went to high school with. The geeks really look like geeks, the burnouts' eyes are red and hair is unkempt, and minor players are often unfortunately fat, have bad, prepubescent mustaches, or are so stupid-looking you wish you could punch them (despite what it sounds like, this is a good thing).

Interestingly enough, the show and its casting also proved that you don't have to be pretty to be talented, as is best witnessed in Martin Starr, whose Bill Haverchuck is the funniest network comic creation since the *Seinfeld* gang. On top of this, there are roles that last only for an episode or two by such fine actors as Jason Schwartzman (in his first post-*Rushmore* role),

Webster Groves' Jessica Campbell (best known as the lesbian presidential candidate in the 1999 Alexander Payne film *Election*), and Ben Stiller.

The DVD is released in two different formats, a regular, six-disc edition (*Shout!*, MSRP \$69.99) and a limited, eight-disc edition (\$120), available only from [www.freaksandgeeks.com](http://www.freaksandgeeks.com). The "regular" edition is really pretty unbelievable—it has all 18 episodes, plus several deleted scenes from each episode, original cast auditions, behind-the-scenes footage, and 29 (!) commentaries.

Then there's the limited edition; I cannot stress just how incredible this package is. First, I adore the set as an object; the eight discs are housed in a completely realistic recreation of a high-school yearbook, complete with awful mug shots of the cast and crew, badly laid-out photographs, and inscriptions (directed at Sam and Lindsay) on the inside cover. Second, there is so much more crap crammed into the two bonus discs that it might make your head explode. There are more deleted scenes and more auditions, but there is also raw footage from the shooting (the best of which is Eric Segel's Nick singing Styx's "Lady"), a script that was written but never shot, table readings of three scripts, and a 75-minute Q&A with the cast and crew at the Museum of Television and Radio, which shows that not only are all of the actors on the show funny in real life, but also they all get along. All told, the eight discs in the limited edition contain roughly 45 hours' worth of material. And while that's enough to keep anyone busy for a long time, it will eventually leave us all with the same question—what's the best cure for *Freaks & Geeks* withdrawal?

—Pete Timmermann

