

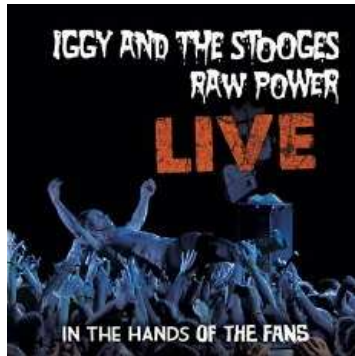
Album Review: Iggy and the Stooges, *Raw Power Live: In the Hands of the Fans*

Ben Corbett published on April 8, 2011

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Iggy and the Stooges

Raw Power Live: In the Hands of the Fans
(MVD, 2011)

If Iggy and the Stooges understand one thing, it's patience. After racking up seven consecutive nominations, the Dionysian proto-punk glam rockers finally scored their long-overdue induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in March 2010. And then right on cue, a month later, Sony/Legacy kicked out two fat reissues of the 1973's *Raw Power*, while Iggy and the original Stooges saddled up for a world tour, performing the iconic album in its entirety.

Despite its belated mainstream appreciation, *Raw Power* is one of the most storied albums in American rock lore. When recording in London in late 1972, even though he had a 24-track console at his disposal, Iggy Pop utilized only three tracks—one for his vocal, one for the whole band, and one for guitar—resulting in a wall of noise that could blister paint and frighten small children. Unsatisfied with Pop's in-your-face sonic vision, and aiming to lend some big-name credentials to the fledgling band's third album, Columbia brought in David Bowie to handle the mix and hopefully add some dimension. Of the record's eight tracks, Iggy's imprint was retained on "Search and Destroy", leaving Bowie with seven remaining songs to attach his signature. Despite having little to work with, by tweaking the volumes and pushing the levels around, Bowie was able to give it some finesse.

Thus began the big flap among Stoooge freaks as to whose mix is superior, Bowie's epicurean salmagundi on the official release, or Pop's unreleased high-decibel anvil of sound? To satisfy underground audiophiles, in 1995 Bomp released Pop's mix on an album titled *Rough Power*. Then a year later, Columbia Records asked Iggy if he'd be keen on remixing the masters for a new CD reissue. Released in April 1997, this new mix amounted to Pop throwing the levels back through the roof, returning *Raw Power* to its original (some say proper) tinnitus-inducing range. Then finally, coinciding with the 2010 Hall of Fame induction, Columbia reversed course, restoring the Thin White Duke's mix (slightly modified) for the double disc Legacy Edition and the four-disc deluxe box set.

As newly reunited guitarist [James Williamson](#) wrote about the album, "*Raw Power* was the confluence of the Stooges' ages, hormones, creativity, ability, experience, tastes, lack of supervision, contempt for authority, and ambition to achieve our rock dreams however unrealistic they might be. The songs from *Raw Power* were written from deep within our souls and were played with a meaningfulness and authenticity which is rarely captured on record."

Taking it on the road, the "Raw Power Live" tour kicked off in France on April 9th, 2010, ending at the All Tomorrow's Parties soiree in Monticello, New York on September 3. Joining Pop onstage with original Stooges [Scott Asheton](#) and Williamson were saxophonist Steve Mackay (who played on 1970's *Funhouse*) and former Minuteman [Mike Watt](#) on bass. In a nod to Iggy's longtime antics of stage-diving into the sea of hands, the final concert was part of MVD Entertainment's *In the Hands of the Fans* project, where six contest winners were selected to interview Iggy after the show. Their interviews will soon become part of Stooges history, as director Joey Carey splices their footage into the live concert film being released later this year.

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For those that don't want to wait for the film, MVD just rush-produced *Raw Power Live: In the Hands of the Fans*, a limited edition 180 Gram vinyl LP of the September 3rd performance. Touted as a Record Store Day release (but issued a week early on April 5th to beat the crowd), the show features all eight songs from *Raw Power* with an additional ninth track encore of "I Got a Right."

Here's what Pop said about the live release: "Getting this top-notch performance of the entire *Raw Power* album by the Stooges realized a lifelong dream. This shit really sizzles and we are obviously a crack band in a class of our own." The recording is impeccable, despite the slight loss of that live concert feel due to awkward fade-outs after each track. With cover photos shot by Bob Gruen, in the spirit of the Stooges, the dust jacket and wax look like an underground LP stamped out in one of those crumby half-lit warehouse operation by some mad bootlegger back in the '70s. And the \$16.95 price tag is unheard of for a limited-edition vinyl collectors item.

Sixty-three years old and a duly road worn at the time of the recording, Iggy may not have been the 20-something vocal animal he was in 1972-73 when he was belting out "Search and Destroy" and "Gimme Danger" to mobs of orgiastic fans, but this performance ranks among the best boots from that era. Patent Stooges, Iggy's classic song intros are laced throughout the album. For "I Need Somebody", he needles Asheton with "Hey! You on the drums! Hey! Are you ready to play some fuckin' blues?" And two tracks later he whips up the crowd with "Does anybody want to take a trip with me? All right! It's a 'Death Trip!'" And to illustrate just how hard the Stooges worked that night, at the end of the show Pop screams, "That was fuckin' *Raw Power*... Turn on the lights and gimme some fuckin' air."

Now performing for a new generation of Stooze fans and enjoying a wave of appreciation never before known, if nothing else, *Raw Power Live* is damning evidence that the Stooges can still deliver with that same raw intensity that put them in the vanguard of underground progressive rock when it mattered. While it's less of a "must-have" than a necessary companion piece for serious Stooze lovers, the release is a nice new twist in the ongoing *Raw Power* saga.

Watch Iggy and the Stooges perform "Search and Destroy" at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame

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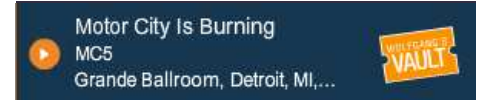
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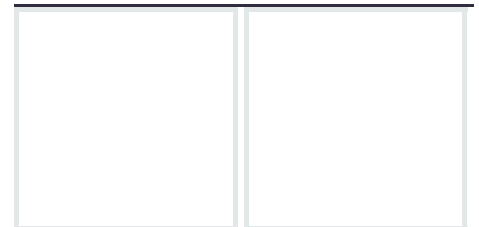
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