

DVDreview

By Pete Roche

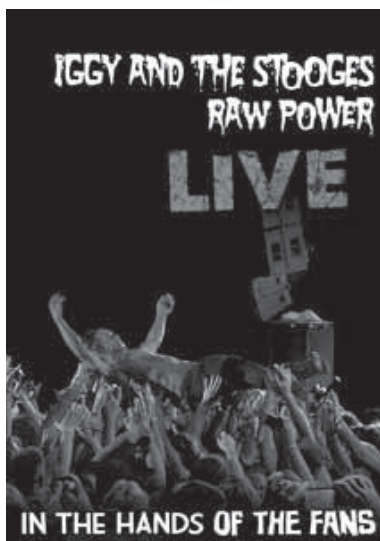
It was a big deal when The Stooges reformed in 2003.

The Ann Arbor, Michigan quartet was alternative before alternative became a catch-all musical quantifier. Their first four albums were puzzling platters for many flower children still sporting tan lines from the Summer of Love. Iggy & The Stooges were subversive and soulful, bluesy and boisterous, psychedelic and somber all at once—and only a select few “got it” the first time around.

So when it came time to capture the reincarnated band live in concert on the occasion of its fortieth anniversary, Iggy Pop quite literally left the documentation of said event in the hands of archivists he knew he could trust: His own fans.

Filmed live in Monticello, New York in September 2010, Iggy & The Stooges—Raw Power Live: In The Hands of the Fans is a spastic audio-visual souvenir of the iconic

group kicking it on stage decades after its formation. The show was recorded for posterity by six contest winners who submitted sample vids attesting their fandom and knowledge of the group. But don't let the air of amateurism fool you; the combined footage was meticulously arranged into a single, eye-popping film that accurately reflects the band's inexhaustible energy. Drawing from the various audience member points-of-view, the editors turned potential weakness into



the product's greatest strength.

Captained by its hyperkinetic, shirtless, whirling dervish front man, The Stooges rip through the seminal 1973 album *Raw Power* in its entirety, and in sequence (notwithstanding placement of the title cut as the show's opening number). Bouncing and twirling like a chimpanzee on crack, 64-year old Iggy presides over “Search and Destroy,” “Gimme Danger,” “Penetration,” and “Death Trip” with the sincerity and passion of a man half

his age, working the crowd at the All Tomorrow's Parties Festival into a frenzy. Ig's pants eventually start riding down his bony hips, no longer able to resist the inertia generated by their owner's perpetual motion. Security guards shadow the vocalist throughout the gig, preventing enthusiastic fans from pulling Iggy into the throng—and fishing him back by his belt whenever he launches himself into the fray. His protectors aren't too obtrusive on-screen, however, and go about their business of keeping everyone safe with minimal fuss.

Tragically, Stooges cofounder and longtime bassist Ron Asheton succumbed to an apparent heart attack months before the group's induction to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. But his band rages forward, delivering their before-its-time psycho-rock to a new generation (many of who probably weren't even alive when Iggy went solo for *The Idiot* and *Lust for Life* in '77). Joining drummer Ron Asheton and guitarist James Williamson onstage in his stead is legendary alterna-rock four-stringer Mike Watt (Minutemen, Dos, FIREHOSE)—who flawlessly pins the low end, thumping and grooving without missing a note, despite the immobilizer brace on his left leg. Watt assumed bass duties for the band some time ago, having appeared on the 2007 Stooges disc *The Weirdness*, and is now the

band's competent rudder and resident scribe of liner-notes. Saxophonist Steve MacKay (who played on 1970's *Fun House*) also graces the Kutsher stage, preferring to add his soulful sonic ornamentation from near the wings—out of harm's way. MacKay toots variations on the “Tequila” theme after Iggy summons a couple dozen spectators up to dance with him.

“Nice and easy,” Pop cautions. “I'm in no hurry.”

Watt, Asheton, and Williamson are soon lost in veritable ocean of flailing limbs—but at least two of the six filmmakers are up there with the guys, their cameras allowing viewers at home to appreciate the performer's sightlines.

The concert's second half boasts favorites from the balance of The Stooges' catalog, including its 1969 self-titled debut—which means the DVD contains at least six tracks more than the live CD culled from the same show. “I Wanna Be Your Dog” and “I Got a Right” are as joyously abrasive as ever, and it's never gets old watching Iggy writhe and snake along with the music. Williamson doesn't move around much, but damn if the guy doesn't contribute killer leads and bluesy solos (and the occasional wah-drenched fills). Besides, when you're a Stooge, you've got to leave room for Pop to prowl.

This is mandatory viewing for Stooges newbies and Red Hot Chili Peppers fans who wondered what Anthony Kiedis meant fifteen years ago when he sang “Meet me at the coffee shop—we can dance like Iggy Pop!” It's also a testament to the timelessness of the music.

Bonus content includes an hour's worth of interviews with Iggy, Scott, and James—as conducted by the six lucky contest winners who filmed the show. Here, we're given insight to the band's creative process, reflections on their misunderstood early years, and thoughts about the considerable influence their work had on bands arriving decades later. Iggy fields most of the questions, slumping comfortably (and barefoot) in his chair in—his relaxed posture and thoughtful statements seeming at odds with his madman onstage demeanor.

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