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## Tribute To Ron Asheton – Featuring Iggy & The Stooges (Wienerworld /MVD)

by PETE WOODS on Jul 10, 2013 • 8:28 am

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Those Cemetery Gates just keep yawning open and since I reviewed "that book" about those that passed through them and those who survived against the odds I seem to keep having more artists who would be entirely relevant turning up on my review pile. Iggy Pop is most definitely a survivor. James Newell Osterberg, Jr has seen it all; drugs, mental institutions and a body that is a road map of scars but this is only partly his story. This DVD is a celebration and get together in memory of guitarist and bassist of The Stooges Ron Asheton who died of a suspected heart attack in the closing days of 2008, discovered in his bed a couple of days later on New Year's Day 2009. Unless you are particularly au fait with The Stooges themselves you may not know the name and that is somewhat understandable despite the fact that he was ranked as number 29 greatest guitarists of all time in Rolling Stone. The simple fact is that everyone knows of Iggy Pop, hell even people's aging grannies would probably have a light bulb go off in their noggins if he was mentioned and remember that nice young man

throwing himself around the stage and selling car insurance but The Stooges themselves always shrunk back a bit, unable or unwilling to try and compete with the Popster.

This is one point addressed by the show's compere, Henry Rollins another person who should certainly need no introduction. Invited to host the event at Ann Arbor's Michigan Theatre (April 19 2011) by relatives such as Asheton's sister Kathleen and drummer brother Scott he reckons he is really nervous, not that you would notice it. Rollins is professional as ever and has the audience in his grip as he talks about the impact of the band and their seminal albums The Stooges (1969), Fun House (1970) & Raw Power (1973) after being turned onto them by Black Flag members. He never looked back and there is no disagreeing how damn important these were and how the contribution made by Ron Asheton helped to define them. Typically Hank has many anecdotes to share and it is a wonder he restrains himself to just 25 minutes, having seen him chat away for over 3 hours it is natural to him and one gets the feeling that he could have carried on for ever.

But there are songs to sing and he sticks around and bombs into first of these 'I Got a Right' as lead vocalists himself. The concert runs for around 90 minutes and delivers in all the ways you would expect and then some. As Rollins departs and Iggy enters you wait for him to launch himself off the stage but no, not yet. He simply has to be a bit more sensible nowadays. After all at the time of this show in 2011 he was 64! Not that this stops him twisting and contorting himself into an array of tortured shapes and cavorting around with more energy than most bands half his age have in them. It's difficult for him and the audience to not get enthused either with songs like 'Search And Destroy.' As the set went by it made me think just how many bands have covered songs off this set list, obviously that one was paid homage too by the Red Hot Chili Peppers as well as Rollins entire back tattoo! What about 1970? Well I have to admit I still prefer The Damned doing it as 'I Feel Alright' and well there's a veritable stack of bands that could be mentioned here. Complete with saxophonist Steve Mackay and Deniz Tek on guitar the band blaze through things and as animated as they get (bassist Mike Watt really giving it some) all eyes are on Iggy. He gets in the crowd and also apologises as he promised not to do such things at such a venue and for such an occasion BUT (and you know he planned it all along) he invites the audience to the stage during 'Shake Appeal' and many cram on. He is as the song goes 'Above The Law,' as far as giving abuse to microphone stands is concerned, very much so!

There are many classic numbers taking in blues jams through to the avant-skronk weirdness of Fun House but a surprise really does occur as they play one of the band's most famous numbers 'I Wanna Be Your Dog' along with an orchestra made up of

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string and brass sections with added percussion. It sits oddly at first and then makes perfect sense even as it continues with classically trained musicians playing to vocals decrying "I'll stick it deep inside Cause I'm loose!" Iggy gives a speech and sings a song to Ron acoustically, you could have heard a pin drop but it ends as it should do in chaos with 'No Fun' wrapping up a show that no doubt was an unforgettable one for anyone attending.

There are some extras and first up is the set from support band The Space Age Toasters who play an instantly familiar 1969. Apparently they formed for the sole purpose of opening for The Stooges. I'll be polite and just say did they really have to? Then there are four interviews. Naturally Henry has more to say and all of it interesting. A short chat with Ken Haas who is the general manager of Reverend Guitars, played by Ron, remembers him fondly and pays tribute to his style. Film director Jim Jarmusch looks like your average Stooges fan and like he has escaped from The Melvins too and he talks how The band affected him with a spaced out and deranged look on his face. In all seriousness though he has plenty to say about how he identified with them and what they mean to him. I like the way that he mentions the raw and primitive side of the band compared to the intellect of say The Velvet Underground. Lots of groups are mentioned and he is very insightful of the time The Stooges came to prominence. Finally it is left to Deniz Tek to talk about meeting Ron Asheton and his life-long friendship with him.

Personally I'm no authority on The Stooges and learned a lot from this and it gave me a big insight into the band. I fondly remember catching Iggy Pop headline Reading Festival in 1988 and although he played many of these numbers it was no Stooges show from what I recall. This DVD does what it sets out to do and remembers Ron Asheton fondly and if you are a big fan of The Stooges it's pretty much an essential moment in time that you will want to own and relive.

**(Pete Woods)**

http://www.wienerworld.com/ron-asheton-tribute-concert-with-iggy-the-stooges-and-friends.html

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