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## Ashton, Ron - Tribute Concert With Iggy & The Stooges And Friends

[MVD Entertainment Group](#) // Unrated // June 4, 2013

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Review by [Ryan Keefer](#) | posted June 7, 2013 | [E-mail the Author](#)

### The Movie:

Admittedly I came into musical appreciation of The Stooges later than I honestly should have, and now that I like them I feel like the band should be part of any educational instruction block in schools these days. Dave Alexander played bass and brothers Ron and Scott Asheton handled guitars and drums, respectively. They were fronted by Jim Osterberg, better known to many as Iggy Pop. Pop's wild antics combined with the tightness and efficiency of the supporting musicians led to three albums that continue to be revered more than four decades later. The music was curt, effective, yet stirred emotions that few other bands could. Songs like "T.V. Eye," "Shake Appeal" and other songs emoted a mix of violence and passion, where the listener felt like they wanted to fight and/or fuck, sometimes simultaneously. In my warped sense of thinking, perhaps that was the essence of punk rock for The Stooges.

However, Ron's role in The Stooges changed over the course of those three albums ("The Stooges," "Fun House" and "Raw Power") and he eventually left the band as both David Bowie's influence within the group and Iggy's heroin abuse increased. The Stooges morphed into Iggy and The Stooges, but the resulting product never quite felt the same. The band eventually managed to reunite and release an album (2007's "The Weirdness," with longtime bass playing legend Mike Watt replacing the late Alexander) and toured on top of it to boot.



Luckily Ashton was able to experience and see the hordes of fans that his work on those Stooges albums influenced, before a heart attack in 2009 at the age of 60 took away a key part of the group's sound. The surviving members of the band and some longtime admirers (aging alternative icon Henry Rollins and Radio Birdman guitarist Deniz Tek) came together to do a tribute with some surprises thrown in for good measure. Recorded at the Michigan Theater in Ann Arbor on April 19, 2011, the set list is as follows:

- "I Got A Right"
- "Raw Power"
- "Search And Destroy"
- "Gimme Danger"
- "Shake Appeal"
- "1970"
- "LA Blues"
- "Night Theme"
- "Beyond The Law"
- "Fun House"
- "Open Up And Bleed"
- "Your Pretty Face Is Going To Hell"
- "I Wanna Be Your Dog"
- "TV Eye"
- "Loose"
- "Dirt"
- "Real Cool Time"
- "Iggy's Speech"

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The concert starts with Rollins coming out and discussing the impact of the music on the landscape and to him personally, and examines the music from Ron's aspect. Rollins' delivery is straightforward, tight and workmanlike, similar to the contributions of the man he is paying respect to, and you laugh, you well up, and you look forward to the subsequent two hours that unfold in front of you as he (with Scott on drums, James Williamson on guitar (who handled the lead guitar on "Raw Power" and some of Iggy's solo albums in the '70s and '80s), Tek on rhythm guitar and Steve Mackay on saxophone) goes into the first song, keeping the spirit alive while giving the song his own tweak here and there.

Then Iggy comes out. And Iggy does whatever the hell Iggy wants to do on stage. He sings the songs almost as good as he did then, and doing those songs, shirtless, days before his 64th birthday? Balls of steel my friend. And Iggy was and still is an always-moving, buzzing ball of activity. Inviting people on stage to join him in a song? No big deal? Jumping into the audience and crowd surfing? Done it before, will do it again. In a sense, Iggy was the spokesman for a generally stoic band, also serving as a mood ring of sorts for them, and his antics feel like they have an extra 'oomph' for Ron because the band is doing their own respective duties with that in mind.



May there be a little bit of tarnish on the musicians that perform these songs from The Stooges? Sure, and seeing Mike Watt's knee brace may crystallize more about your aging alternative icons than anything else. But do they go all in and let the concertgoer and viewer go back and play 'Fun House' like Rollins wants you to do? Fuck yeah it does, and there is nothing wrong with that. The reason why we are all here is for Ashton's contribution to one of the greatest bands in American history, and the remaining members of The Stooges, with the participation of credible members that fill the gaps in for folks desiring such a final wave of thanks in a goodbye lap, do such a thing, and there is purely nothing wrong with that.

#### The Disc:

#### Video:

Presented in 1.78:1 anamorphic widescreen, the concert looks as good as one would expect. Most (if not all) if the show is shot with handheld cameras up front on other side of the stage, with a stationary one in back of the hall in your basic camera coverage for a concert. Honestly there was not anything to complain about, the image is natural and looks good without distortion or image processing in post, and colors are given as much justice as possible. It looks as good as I expected it to.

#### Audio:

Dolby Digital two-channel is the track of the day. Part of me at first had a qualm with that, but when you imagine the vibe the band is trying to convey, a stereo track was pretty much the baseline expectation. It is mildly conflicting because the nature of the music runs up against the subwoofer constantly, leaving the listener with a moral dilemma. Do I get the relief and ask for more help in auxiliary channels that do little justice to the work? Or do I deal with the bumping against the sonic ceiling because of the work? In this case, the latter works, and does well for the music.

#### Extras:

A series of interviews are the only thing to speak of. Rollins is the first one (10:18) and he talks about what the music means to him and his thoughts on Ron in general, and how he got involved with the gig. Next is an interview with Ken Haas (3:05), better known as the General Manager of Reverend Guitars, who produced guitars for Ron. He talks about Ron's influences on music. Next is an interview with director Jim Jarmusch (6:53), and he talks about why The Stooges were good, and clarifying the difference between them and the New York punk band The Velvet Underground, and how The Stooges "go for the soul." It is a good interview. The last is with Tek (3:42) as he talks about his thoughts on Ron and The Stooges, and the distance he travelled to be there. A short with the opening act, a group called the Space Age Toasters, rounds the set out (13:45).

#### Final Thoughts:

In the introductions, Rollins talks about meeting a youth from Sri Lanka who had been turned onto The Stooges from him and the look in his eyes. Frankly, not enough people go through their lives with enough Stooges in their lives, and this show is something that helps capture the feeling, without the calories as going to a show and losing your frigging mind, which is fun, liberating yet ironically not very helpful when it comes to buying the DVD. However, watching the show with hearty endorsement should help with this, as I hope that (and this DVD) would do.

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