

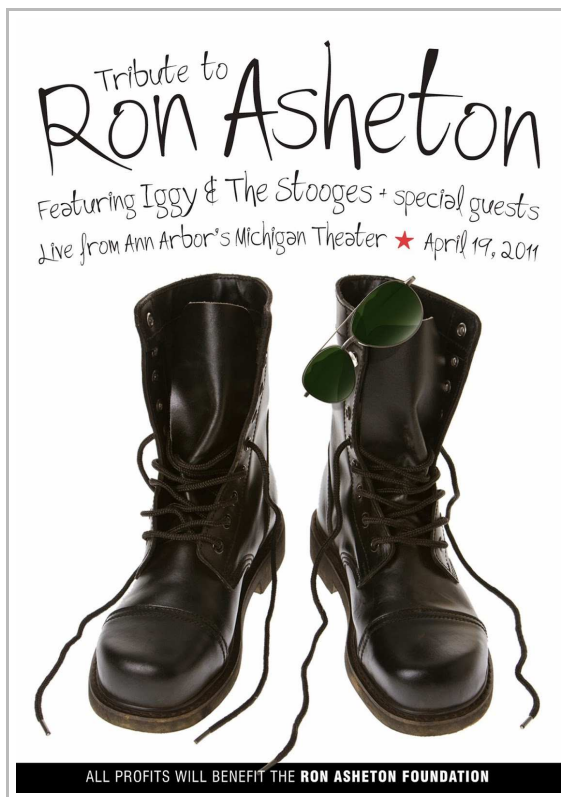
FFanzeen: Rock'n'Roll Attitude With Integrity

Through the writings and photography of Robert Barry Francos, a view of the arts and culture, including everyday life.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2013

DVD Review: Tribute to Ron Asheton, Featuring Iggy Pop & the Stooges + Special Guests

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Tribute to Ron Asheton, Featuring Iggy Pop & the Stooges + Special Guests

MVD Visual

114 minutes, 2011 / 2013

www.MVDvisual.com

I constructed a theory as I was watching this, which I believe is both true and false: please feel free to add your thoughts: The Stooges fall somewhere between the MC5 and the Velvet Underground. They were sloppier than the MC5, but were less noise than the VUs.

While Iggy Pop was and is the obvious front face of the Stooges, by voice and action on stage, Ron Asheton was the electricity that flowed through it, charging him up. Even after Ron moved to bass following the second Stooges album, with James Williamson taking over, he played the bass much like a second lead guitar. Soon he left the band, but

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rejoined it for a much later reunion tour. Sadly, he passed away in 2009.

Ron was a son of Ann Arbor, Michigan, where the band formed, and it only seemed fitting that a memorial concert would be held there at the Michigan Theater, on April 19, 2011, headlined by the Stooges, the band he helped form. And yet, all these years later with only two of the four original members (Iggy, and the other being the drummer, Ron's brother Scott Asheton), Iggy rightly states during the show, "We are still the Stooges."

Everyone in the band is gray now except Iggy, and they have all put on a bit of weight except Iggy. After all these years, Iggy has simply remained Iggy. With leather skin and more wrinkles than a Shar-Pei, Iggy's energy and enthusiasm can rival most bands out there today. All his signature moves are still present, like the sideways bend and twist, the mic stand one-arm lean, jumping around the stage like a manic marionette, the stage diving, and that wicked smile. His voice is as strong as ever, as well.

Produced in part by Ron and Scott's sister, Kathleen ("Kathy," who is mentioned often on this DVD, but never identified in person), this show is definitely a love letter to the city's son.

Introducing the Stooges and to remind everyone why they are there, is emcee Henry Rollins. He uses language like a spoken word artist (which he is, actually) and explains how, in a 30-minute verse that feels so much shorter, how members of his once band Black Flag turned him onto the Stooges, why Ron was so important to that, how the new Stooges respect Ron's legacy while bringing in something of their own, and then brings it back around to how he is introducing the Stooges to new fans around the world. Somewhere in there, the verbally uncomfortable Scott comes out and gives a quick nod to both Ron and Kathy. When Rollins finishes, the band (sans Iggy) comes out and he leads them, with his classic wide side stance and mic cord wrapped around his hand, in a solid version of "I Got a Right." Normally his shirt would be off, but in Michigan, that's Iggy's job.

When the Stooges reformed in recent decades, it was the second line-up, where Ron was bassist rather than guitarist, and when he passed, those shoes fell to ex-Minutemen Mike Watt. Surely, Watt is not only an elder statesman of the punk scene, but a rock solid and respected bassist. He's also an interesting character if you have ever seen an interview with him. But he is especially fun to watch on stage. He stands there in a hockey's goalie stance with legs spread and body bent forward. His eyes follow Iggy around the stage with fascination, and with a big smile that makes it obvious he is enjoying himself. In fact, it's almost like he's watching the show, and his body is playing independently; yet, he never misses a beat.

James Williamson is a force unto himself, but has a slightly different cutting edge to his sound. I went back and watched a 2003 show of the Stooges from Detroit, and Ron had a very distinctive chainsaw sound that is a bit different than James, though both deserve to be recognized. Listen to the opening of "Search and Destroy," probably my favorite Stooges tune, and you can feel the difference. Both great, just not the same feel. Speaking of which, after about an hour into the show, James disappears, and is replaced by fellow Michigan native and ex-frontman for the Aussie punk band Radio Birdman, Deniz Tek. Again, he is more

- ▶ 2009 (78)
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About Me

Robert Barry Francos
Currently living in Saskatoon
(email at RBF55@msn.com for address). From 1977-88, I used to publish a print version of a music magazine in New York called FFanzeen, which dealt with the wide-ranging independent music scene. I also photographed many bands from the period (and since). Now I write this blog, and have a column at jerseybeat (dot) com (slash) quietcorner (dot) html. And the beat goes on.

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clinical than either Ron or James, but he can sure wail.

For some reason, the camera does not rest much on Scott. He's always been a consistent element for the band, keeping everything moving along smoothly. It also made me very happy that they were united with Stooges saxman Steve Mackay, who seems to get the least attention when you hear about the band. His shrill bark is definitely part of the band's sound to me.

Along the way, at "I Wanna Be Your Dog," the band is joined by an orchestra, who I'm not sure helps the sound or gets a bit lost in it, but it is an interesting concept.

I mean, do I really have to tell *you* about the Stooges? If you don't know them, seek them out. There are so many of their classic hits here. Actually, if you wanted a greatest hits collection, you'd probably have to just create a box set of all their songs, but I digress...

While there are a couple of "special guests" on stage, I'm glad this didn't turn into a stream of musicians like so many of these things, showing a pseudo "look how cool I am." That being said, I must admit I was hoping Niagara would be there to perform "Bored," the song she did with Ron in their post-Stooges band, Destroy All Monsters.

Stooges shows are always worth seeing, and I have no problem watching this again, or recommending that someone else does likewise.

There are a few extras here, including a quarter-hour opening set by the Space Age Toasters, who mention twice that they were named by Asheton. They dress like a surf band, but are obviously punk. Lead singer moves really well, and the songs are actually quite decent.

There are also interview segments lasting 5-to-10 minutes apiece with Henry Rollins (who mostly says the same things as he does in his onstage band introduction – which I have no problem with), filmmaker and hipster god Jim Jarmusch (not sure why he's here, nor what has he done in the last few years that matters), Ken Haas of Reverend Guitars that has a signature Ron Asheton model, and with Deniz. Most of these are really interesting.

The fact that it's a live Stooges show alone makes this DVD worth getting, duh, but that it is increasingly so because of its purpose, and that all proceeds go to the Ron Asheton Foundation, a worldwide charity concerned with animal rescue (find information [HERE](#)).

Band:

Iggy Pop: vox
James Williamson: guitar
Mike Watt: bass
Scott Asheton: drum
Steve Mackay: sax
Deniz Tek: guitar

Song list:

I Got a Right (sung by Henry Rollins)
Raw Power
Search and Destroy
Shake Appeal

1970
L.A. Blues
Night Theme
Beyond the Line
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
Ron's time
No Fun

Posted by [Robert Barry Francos](#) at [12:01 AM](#)

Reactions: interesting (0) cool (0) informative (0)



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