



By Bill Adams

The problem with requiems – especially requiems made in tribute to celebrities – is that everybody involved always feels compelled to make sure their voice is heard loud enough that theirs is the one associated with the event. That such a personal thing as a requiem and remembrance is ever co-opted by the vanity of others is a little remarkable (and tactless) at best and a little disgusting at worst; and there's no good reason it should happen – not really. For example, when [Ron Asheton](#)'s sister Kathleen organized the tribute concert for her brother which happened on April 19, 2011 at Ann Arbor's Michigan Theater, the cathartic sense was touching and genuine but, when a multitude of celebrities with little connection to the guitarist (if any at all) descended on the proceeding, the event began to look less like a memorial and more like a spectacle.

What purpose, for example, did director [Jim Jarmusch](#) think his being interviewed for this concert film would serve? Why does so much screen time get afforded to [Henry Rollins](#) – who was the emcee for the event – before even a note of music is heard? It's a little indulgent to see these men parade through the opening of this film and, conspicuously, it's worth noting that no member of [The Stooges](#) appears among those interviewed. That makes sense (the band wrote songs about it, but [The Stooges](#)' stance was always one of laughing in the face of it – not addressing it seriously), and giving it a lot of discussion seems a little contrary to that spirit now – so the end of Ron Asheton's life does not get much talking about here. The most discussion of death that does come out comes when drummer [Scott Asheton](#) addresses the crowd briefly right before The Stooges take the stage, but as soon as [Mike Watt](#), [James Williamson](#), Scott Asheton and Henry Rollins open the show with "I Got A Right" and sets off a firecracker-sized explosion in the minds of viewers, and absolutely when Iggy takes the mic from Rollins and issues the first in a series of megatonic explosions with "Raw Power," all the pomp that opened the DVD is summarily forgotten. This performance immediately becomes a celebration of life at that point.

The celebration of life that happened at Michigan Theater on April 19, 2011 never slows down for a second throughout The Stooges' show and Iggy really does feed off it in the finest imaginable fashion as he just seems to run through the crowd and the excitement of the moment at fast-forward. Within the time it takes the band to make it through "Search And Destroy," "Gimme Danger" and "Shake Appeal," [Iggy Pop](#) has danced across the stage multiple times, caused his mic stand to collapse a few times, gotten in the faces of those in the front row of the venue and invited them all up onstage to dance with him (which they take him up on). He doesn't really slow down after that either; not until he gets into the crowd during the extended jam that the band falls into during "Funhouse" and the singer takes a second to look around and observe the energy that he and his band have transferred over to the audience. Then, he appears perfectly impressed with the band's handiwork – but, as soon as The Stooges kick into "Open Up And Bleed," the singer spontaneously gets wound back up and shoots to thrill some more.

Iggy Pop never slows down again after that – not when a string section just seems to materialize from nowhere on a riser behind the band and not even when younger men would likely collapse from exhaustion – until he breaks to address the crowd, talk about his friend Ron and debut an acoustic blues number with James Williamson called "Ron's Tune." That moment – when Iggy sits down with Williamson onstage to deliver a slightly ragged ballad dedicated to Ron Asheton – is the one which really leaves the greatest impact and means the most; the rest of the show is great and is absolutely worth seeing, but that moment when Williamson picks up an acoustic guitar and Iggy croaks out a new song to immortalize his collaborator is special, touching and genuinely sweet. It is the immortal moment on this *Tribute to Ron Asheton* DVD, and is the truly great requiem the guitarist deserves.