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## Late Stooges Guitarist Ron Asheton Remembered Fondly, and LOUDLY

By [Bob Ruggiero](#) Wed., Jun. 5 2013 at 11:00 AM [Write Comment](#)

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Photo by Marc Brubaker

The Stooges' James Williamson (left) and Iggy Pop at Free Press Summer Fest 2013

**Tribute to Ron Asheton**  
MVD Video, \$16.95, 114 mins.

While at the time not a whole lot of people "got" the first two Stooges records - *The Stooges* and *Fun House* - and only slightly more come on board for *Raw Power* - the appreciation for and influence of Iggy Pop and the Stooges on bands and listeners has grown tremendously in the ensuing decades.

And while Iggy went on to as successful solo career, surviving members of the original lineup/ brothers Ron (guitar) and Scott (drums) Asheton had a much more hardscrabble existence both in music and in life. It was Ron in particular who always held out for a reunion.

**Rewind:**

**Iggy & the Stooges at Free Press Summer Fest, 6/1/2013**

So when Iggy fired up the Stoogemobile again about a decade ago, adding bassist Mike Watt in for the deceased Dave Alexander and frequent collaborator Steve MacKay on sax, the band finally got to see how much they meant to fans, playing to hundreds of thousands across the world and releasing new material.

Ron's death in 2009 was a huge blow to the party, but Iggy wisely brought in his *Raw Power*-era replacement in guitar, James Williamson, and the machine has kept going, including this past weekend at Houston's Free Press Music Festival.

Filmed in 2011 on their home turf of Ann Arbor, Michigan, *Tribute to Ron Asheton* begins with some remarks from Scott and then a lengthy (but well-meaning and informative) history lesson intro from punk icon Henry Rollins, before descending into one of the most primal and powerful concert videos I've ever seen.

Iggy and the Stooges blaze through 17 numbers -- most from those three records -- as if it were the last show they would give. "Raw Power," "Search and

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Destroy," "Fun House," "1970," "Your Pretty Face is Going to Hell," "I Wanna Be Your Dog," "TV Eye," "Dirt" and "No Fun" are all here, played with a passion and a fury by men who put those half their age to shame.

And "Loose?" Is there any more a direct and leaving-no-room-for-misinterpretation lyric in any rock music than the refrain of "I'll stick it deep inside"?

A seated Pop and acoustic-playing Williamson provide the (only) quiet moment in the show with the touching "Ron's Tune," written for the occasion.

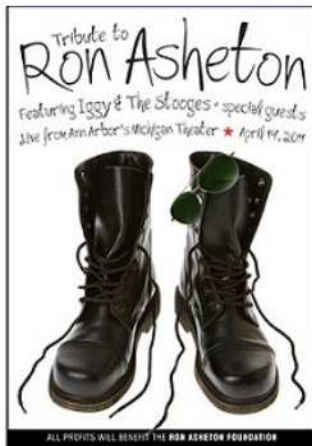
But make no mistake. Though very well shot, this is not a pretty video. There is wrinkly skin. And gray hair. And post-middle-age hair. And limping and knee bandages. And sweat stains.

This is a document of a working punk band that is really working, and the frenetic audience is with them every step. Sure, the occasion amped up the group on all levels, but this is a band that plays like it is auditioning for a record contract and not one resting on its legendary laurels.

In fact, it begs for a companion soundtrack CD release. A surprisingly effective string and horn section join the band on a few numbers, as does Radio Birdman guitarist Deniz Tek.

Non-Stooges fans have always wondered why Iggy doesn't wear a shirt in concert. Sure, part of it has been to show off his sculpted and muscular body; it's very lined and leathery these days, but at age 66 he can still kick your ass.

But seeing this whole concert video, I think I've found the answer: Iggy Pop doesn't want to be restrained, at all. Even by a thin cotton T-shirt. Lou Reed may have put out a record called *Rock N Roll Animal*, but it's Iggy Pop who is the real onstage beast.



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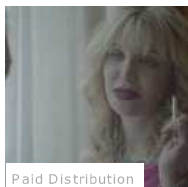
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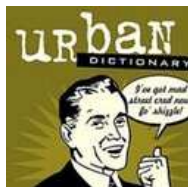
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