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The Sacred Triangle: Bowie, Iggy & Lou



My appreciation for **Iggy Pop** and his band **The Stooges** has been well-documented in this column. But two of Pop's contemporaries, **David Bowie** and **Lou Reed**, have had an even bigger impact on me with their music.

All three men are profiled in "The Sacred Triangle: Bowie, Iggy & Lou 1971-1973," a documentary that will be released on DVD through Sexy Intellectual/Chrome Dreams/MVD Visual on Nov. 23.

The film uses a few old interview clips with the artists, but is more reliant on recent contributions from people who were involved with the three men during the era or who've written about it since. These include folks who were heavily involved in artist/filmmaker Andy Warhol's "Factory" scene in New York City in the '60s, members of the MainMan management company that at one point guided the careers of all three men, Bowie's ex-wife Angie, drummer John Halsey, singer Jayne County and journalist/authors Dave Thompson, Paul Trynka and Victor Bockris.

Reed had a close association with Warhol in his first band, the groundbreaking Velvet Underground, which shocked people with songs about heroin, homosexuality and sadomasochism when the group's self-titled debut album with German chanteuse Nico came out in 1967. The band's membership changed and it released three more fine albums before Reed left in 1970 and briefly retired from music.

While the Velvet Underground never had any major hits despite producing such great songs as "There She Goes," "Sunday Morning," "Venus In Furs," "Heroin," "I'm Waiting For The Man" and "Sweet Jane" (all of which are heard in the film), those who knew the band's music were profoundly influenced by it. Bowie was one of those people.

Bowie had even less success with his music career in Britain with songs like "The Laughing Gnome," "Uncle Arthur," "Janine" and "Little Toy Soldier" (which took lyrics and part of the tune from "Venus In Furs") until he scored big with "Space Oddity" in 1969. He wasn't able to immediately follow it with an equally impactful song and became known as a one-hit wonder who performed by himself on stage.

But Bowie put together a band and gradually started changing his image through the release of "The Man Who Sold The World" and "Hunky Dory" before helping launch glam rock with the introduction of a character he called Ziggy Stardust that was based in some ways on Pop.

The Stooges had a cult following through the release of two largely unheralded albums — a 1968 self-titled effort produced by former Velvet Underground member John Cale and 1970's "Fun House" — but it was the Ann Arbor, Mich. band's outrageous performances that primarily caught people's attention. Pop had a major drug problem in addition to low sales, which didn't endear him to his label, and Elektra Records dropped The Stooges.

While the stories of Bowie, Pop and Reed are intriguing on their own, the three men finally came together at New York City nightclub Max's Kansas City in September 1971. They formed somewhat of a mutual admiration society, soon were all being managed by Tony DeFries and his MainMan Group of companies, and started playing important roles in each other's careers.

Reed's 1972 self-titled solo debut sold poorly and was largely trashed by critics, so he was open to the suggestion that Bowie and guitarist Mick Ronson produce the follow-up. That became "Transformer," which included the songs "Vicious," "Perfect Day," "Satellite Of Love" and what to this day remains Reed's best known song, "Walk on the Wild Side," which became a top 10 hit.

The Stooges, meanwhile, recorded what would become "**Raw Power**" on their own in a London, England studio. The band's loud and sludgy rock music (which was later championed by the punk movement) was deemed unreleasable, and Bowie was invited to remix it in an attempt to get it to at least some sort of commercial standard.

"Raw Power" came out in February 1973 and was quickly forgotten until years later. MainMan essentially prevented The Stooges from touring in support of the album by holing the group up in a Los Angeles house while it focused most of its attention on Bowie, since the June 1972 release of "The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars" had made him a star.

That was the end of The Stooges until the band reformed in 2003. It's influence was finally recognized when it was [inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame](#) this year. The Stooges still tour and the group's performance was one of the [highlights](#) of this year's North By Northeast Music Festival.

Bowie kept in touch with Pop and took him to West Berlin in an effort to try and kick their mutual drug addictions. They wrote songs together and Bowie produced two of Pop's most acclaimed solo albums, 1977's "The Idiot" and "Lust For Life." Bowie also played keyboards for Pop on tour and Pop contributed vocals to Bowie's first 1977 LP, "Low."

While Reed has never risen to the heights of "Walk On The Wild Side" from a commercial perspective, he's continued to make some great music in a somewhat up-and-down career since "Transformer." After a lengthy falling out with Bowie, Reed joined him on stage in 1987 and invited him to sing "Heroin" on his 2002 *Edgar Allan*

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