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## Bowie & his BFFs

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In 1967, a recently renamed David Bowie (formerly Davy Jones) was still trying to find his voice breakthrough single was "The Laughing Gnome," which featured a bizarre mix of psychedelic voices.

That same year, New York's Velvet Underground unleashed its groundbreaking debut album, *Velvet Underground & the Noise Made by People*. And after watching an explosive performance by the Doors' Jim Morrison, a Michigan kid who was formulating all kinds of weird ideas about how he could make his band, the Stooges, even more

Bowie's struggle to define his musical identity, and the mutual admiration and influence between Velvet's Lou Reed, is the subject of "The Sacred Triangle: Bowie, Iggy & Lou, 1971-1973," a new DVD on Nov. 23.

As the film details, Bowie had already plowed through mod rock, folk and corny balladry when Velvet Underground's first record, *The Velvet Underground & the Noise Made by People*, was released. Bowie was enthralled, immediately having his band learn the "The Man."

"The Velvet Underground became very important to me," Bowie says in the film, "because I felt expressive about that sense of otherness."

He particularly liked the Velvet's S&M ode "Venus in Furs," in which Reed sang "Taste the white" and wrote his own tune about a toy soldier who flagellates a naked girl, commanding her to "taste

Despite his appropriation of Reed's imagery, he still didn't find immediate success. But during a tour, he brokered a meeting with two of his idols, Reed and Iggy Pop, at NYC hot spot Max's Kansas City.

A year earlier, Reed had bailed on the Velvets, moved back in with his parents on Long Island and started his own father's accounting firm. He issued a self-titled solo album, but it sold just 7,000 copies.

Iggy, meanwhile, was a drugged-out mess, suffering through tumultuous times with the Stooges. He had Bowie to tag along on the rest of his tour.

Under Reed's growing influence, Bowie finally scored an American hit with "Changes" from 1972's *Low*. Two of that record's tracks were open tributes to his new pals: "Andy Warhol" and "Queen Bees & the Warm Jets."

"Bowie hung out at the Factory, and was hugely interested in the decadence of it all," says Reed, executive producer. "The sex and the misfits were as fascinating to Bowie as they were to Reed."

Bowie also found inspiration in the Stooges' stage show, which featured Iggy cutting himself with a razor in front of the audience.

"Bowie admired what Iggy represented," says Dave Thompson, author of "Your Pretty Face Is the Danger: The Dangerous Glitter of David Bowie, Iggy Pop, and Lou Reed." "It was rock 'n' roll at its most primal. The lyrics that were thought-provoking."

In 1972, the trio's friendship would have a massive payoff for all three. Bowie, serving as Reed produced the broken rocker's second solo album, "Transformer," which spawned what would be his career, "Walk on the Wild Side."

Bowie's 1972 concept album, "The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars," film posits was partly inspired by Iggy. In the song "Moonage Daydream," Bowie sings, "Keep it babe," which clearly echoed the earlier Stooges lyrics, "She got a TV eye on me."

Well-received by critics and fans, "Ziggy" was the first step toward establishing Bowie as a major artist. And when Iggy botched the recording of his band's third album, Bowie was brought in to remix the result, 1973's "Raw Power," eventually became a punk landmark, and the final step in igniting the careers of these now long-worshipped rock 'n' roll icons.

"Each of them," says Thompson, "showed the other what was possible if you stick to your belief."

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