

LIVE 105 NOT SO SILENT NIGHT
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I'VE GOT A LUST FOR LIFE



Me and the Significant Other renewed what has become a sort of family Tradition of attending the annual Not So Silent Night concert, promoted by Live 105 this year. Thankfully, the venue has shifted from the execrable "Shark Tank" in San Jose, where poor booking, pitifully lousy sound and difficulty of access threatened to kill a series that has been running for well on fifteen years. It quickly became clear that the entire gang, including the performers and the audience was very glad to be back in the home area again. This time up the agents booked Black Eyed Peas (replaced by the Outcasts, Black Rebel

Motorcycle Club, Rancid, The Offspring, a reformulated Janes Addiction, and, special coup none other than the Godfather of Punk himself, Iggy Pop.

We came in late to catch the end of BRMC, which ended up with a scorching finale which made me wish that we had managed to catch this very talented trio earlier. Rancid surprised us with a very professional and very capable set, showing this ur-punk band has staying power, despite the accusations of sellout and the obvious disadvantage in punk -- they all have managed to learn to play their instruments. I was a little put off by the personalized white track suit on lead guitarist, Lars, but they have returned to more of the ska-based Clash-influenced material and indicate development, rather than concession. Rumors that the band sold to Warner Brothers after performing on MTV are wildly unfounded and a short visit to their Hellcat shows why, for these guys have setup their website in such a way as to send fear into the all the old guard of the RIAA. From singles to entire CD's can be paid for and downloaded together with loads of multimedia content the old guard has yet to respond to in any effective way beyond suing 10-year olds for piracy. We wish Rancid all the best and earnestly exhort old fossils defending the ethic of Punk, a movement that essentially died a decade or more ago, to kindly evolve for music must develop and change if it is to remain vital.



The Offspring took the stage for an all too brief 30 minutes in which they ripped through all their old favorites, doing only one promo song from their new CD. Of note was a dual drum-set arrangement with an additional backup percussionist. Clearly, these guys from Orange County have evolved also, and Dexter has stated in interviews that he never expected the band to continue as long as it has.

An announcer for Live 105 came out to announce, "I was going to lead the pit here in a round of Jingle Bells, with maybe the left side doing harmony with the right, but instead, I should just let Iggy Pop take the stage. Whaddya say?"

The answering roar left no question as to what the sold-out crowd wanted. Iggy Pop, born James Jewel Osterberg in 1952, started out playing R&B but sometime during the flower-power and poppy time of the Beatles, things went seriously awry. Collecting a couple of his high school buddies in Michigan, the group titled itself The Stooges and commenced to tear apart the fabric of music

itself to the extreme vitriol of music critics everywhere, who said the music was stupid, as were the musicians who did not appear to have the slightest idea how to play an instrument. Instead of layering on Phil Spector-styled orchestration and tossing in minutes-long solos of musical virtuosity, the Stooges stripped the third chord from three-chord rock and assaulted the ears of everyone within hearing with punishing guitar riffs and slamming backbeats as well as lyrics that ranged from the superbly inspired, calling for revolution of the heart and mind, to extraordinarily, well, stoopid. Their performances became legendary by the ferocious intensity that burned down the house with spontaneity to which the wildest stomper today still cannot hold a candle. For a time, Iggy became rather notorious for throwing his body on broken glass and scoring his torso with razorblades during performances.

In contradiction to all this manic activity, Iggy remained inwardly a highly literate, well-spoken and extremely intelligent individual with qualities usually associated with the term Renaissance Man, capable of quoted Kierkegaard and Sartre. David Bowie picked up the band on his own label when contracts fell through due to lack of volume sales with Electra, but by 1973, the band had fallen apart. Iggy did several solo projects before descending into the usual hell of heroin and alcohol through the 80's, even as the underground was picking up on his once-shunned music. They started calling this stuff by the name of "punk" and added trappings of their own, capturing the unruly and unrestrained music that Iggy Pop has often stated stemmed from the wild and discordant sounds of

the old bluesmen, such as R.L. Burnside, also a music that was derided for atonality and "primitivism" in its time.

By surviving, contrary to all expectations, Iggy Pop stands as a marvelously irritating link between two traditions that appear at first glance to be wildly at odds with one another, but which share essential aspects of spirit.

There is absolutely no doubt that Howling Wolf, who liked to climb the draperies in the middle of his sets would have understood what the Stooges were all about.



Into the 90's, believing his music career had no more chances, Iggy Pop embarked on a film career and has acted in well over 20 films, including works by respected directors such as Jim Jarmusch. But as the world in general appeared

to grow more and more "stupid", there has been a resurgence of interest in politically-charged music that avoids the misty-eyed romanticism of the 60's and Iggy Pop, at age 51, has come roaring back, having basically fathered Punk , heavy metal, garage rock and grunge with a 30 year background behind him.

Friday night the man hopped and skipped and danced about the stage with the energy of an 18-year old, pausing only to hurl his body from the stage into the sea of the pit, where loving fans caught him and passed him back over the barricade. He then shouted to the band, "Play louder, harder, faster!" In another "moment", during "It's Lonely", he suddenly shouted, "Everybody up here! Right now! I'm not finishing until all of you are up here with me!" and we then were treated to the spectacle of just about five thousand people in the pit rushing at and over the barricades while security struggled vainly to toss people back and Iggy had one fan by the waist hauling upwards while security had the fans legs hauling downwards. Fortunately nobody was killed and Iggy finished up several songs as the people on the stage began realizing that there was only one way off -- take a stage dive.

Notwithstanding the mayhem, the concert was remarkably pacific, with Rancid lead, Tim Armstrong halting the set mid-song to breakup a fight down in the pit. "Hey, any of you want to fight, you can just go out there up front, collect your money and go home in the rain."

For all their mohawks and tattoos, we personally, both I and the Significant Other, have always felt safe and comfortable with the punks, who usually have more real concerns on their minds than starting wars and picking fights. We had

the Girls with us, and M., the Onetime and No longer Teen, spotted Iggy walking around out on the concourse. "Oh I saw Iggy! I saw Iggy!" exclaimed her friend.

"Oh that's nothing," said M. "I saw Iggy when I was just a fetus."

Iggy finished up with a rollicking "Lust for Life", waved at the crowd and then the Godfather of Punk was gone.

Sorry to say we missed Dave Navarro with Janes Addiction, as the Present Teen, Shelly, had started to snag a touch of the flu, but the word has it the closers for the evening really rocked the house.

