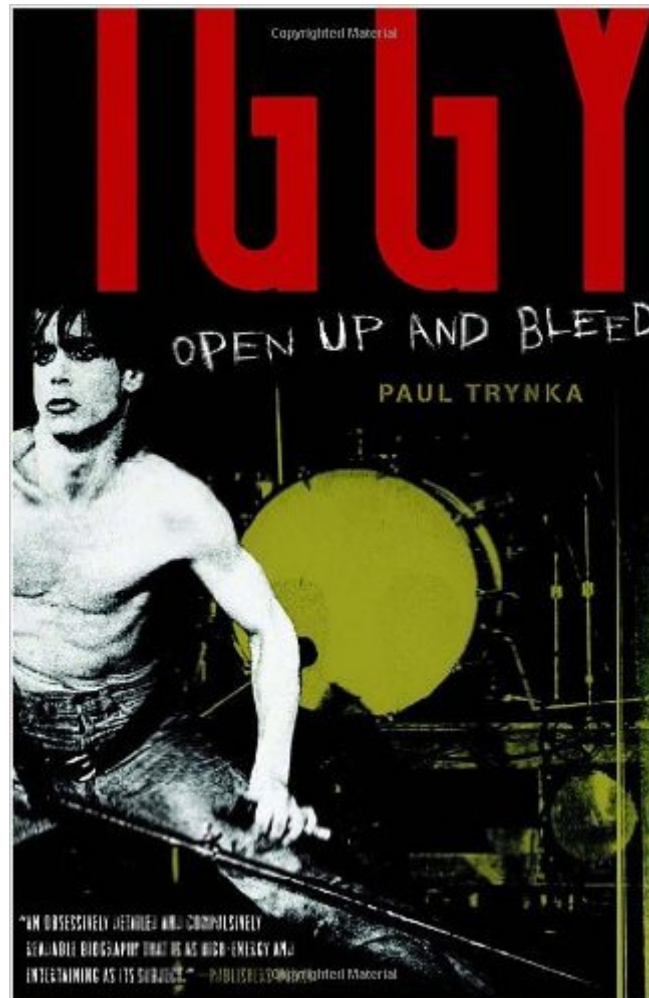


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Iggy Pop: Open Up And Bleed



Synopsis

œFellow rock stars, casual members of the public, lords and media magnates, countless thousands of people will talk of their encounters with this driven, talented, indomitable creature, a man who has plumbed the depths of depravity, yet emerged with an indisputable nobility. Each of them will share an admiration and appreciation of the contradictions and ironies of his incredible life. Even so, they are unlikely to fully comprehend both the heights and the depths of his experience, for the extremes are simply beyond the realms of most people's understanding.

from the Prologue

The first full biography of one of rock'n'roll's greatest pioneers and legendary wild men Born James Newell Osterberg Jr., Iggy Pop transcended life in Ypsilanti, Michigan, to become a member of the punk band the Stooges, thereby earning the nickname œthe Godfather of Punk. He is one of the most riveting and reckless performers in music history, with a commitment to his art that is perilously total. But his personal life was often a shambles, as he struggled with drug addiction, mental illness, and the ever-problematic question of commercial success in the music world. That he is even alive today, let alone performing with undiminished energy, is a wonder. The musical genres of punk, glam, and New Wave were all anticipated and profoundly influenced by his work. Paul Trynka, former editor of Mojo magazine, has spent much time with Iggy's childhood friends, lovers, and fellow musicians, gaining a profound understanding of the particular artistic culture of Ann Arbor, where Iggy and the Stooges were formed in the mid to late sixties. Trynka has conducted over 250 interviews, has traveled to Michigan, New York, California, London, and Berlin, and, in the course of the last decade or so at Mojo, has spoken to dozens of musicians who count Iggy as an influence. This has allowed him to depict, via real-life stories from members of bands like New Order and the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Iggy's huge influence on the music scene of the '70s, '80s, and '90s, as well as to portray in unprecedented detail Iggy's relationship with his enigmatic friend and mentor David Bowie. Trynka has also interviewed Iggy Pop himself at his home in Miami for this book. What emerges is a fascinating psychological study of a Jekyll/Hyde personality: the quietly charismatic, thoughtful, well-read Jim Osterberg hitched to the banshee creation and alter ego that is Iggy Pop. Iggy Pop: Open Up and Bleed is a truly definitive work not just about Iggy Pop's life and music but also about the death of the hippie dream, the influence of drugs on human creativity, the nature of comradeship, and the depredations of fame.

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Customer Reviews

Some rock stars fade away. Some self-destruct at a young age. Some kept on chugging away despite it all, and are still going today (see: David Bowie and Mick Jagger). But a few seem to be truly indestructible -- they bounce back from anything, whether it's drugs, madness, or their own genius. And in Paul Trynka's "Iggy Pop: Open Up and Bleed" is a pretty brilliant look into the chaotic life, influence, and constant ups and downs of one such rocker. Pop was born Jim Osterberg, to some slightly quirky parents in 1950s Michigan. And Ann Arbor turned out to be the perfect place for him to bloom into a musician -- he became part of the Stooges, a fledgling band that gained and lost contracts like underwear. And they soon developed a reputation for two things: raw, wild, powerful punk, and a tendency to have really wild'n'violent concerts. And Iggy's own life was just as volatile -- a cocktail of drugs, sex, creative eruptions, and extremely volatile personal life. But as the Stooges fragmented over time, Iggy's own life began seesawing between order and chaos, the bottom of the barrel with the rock'n'roll heights. And even now, as the godfather of punk rock, he spills over with wild energy and creativity. The core of "Open Up and Bleed" is that Jim Osterberg and Iggy Pop are almost like two different people, like a demon possessing someone's body and making him wreck his life. As Trynka -- and many people he interviewed -- put it, Osterberg is intellectual, polite, clever man, while Pop is a force of self-mutilating destructive chaos. It actually makes a lot of sense. And Trynka's detailed, intricate recountings get a lot of information from many people who knew Pop -- some fondly, some angrily, and thankfully there's no whitewashing of his personal flaws. But the author really makes you feel and see why Pop/Osterberg is such a powerful presence in rock'n'roll, since he poured his body and soul into his work. And Trynka strikes a nice balance between his work and personal life, outlining marriages, drug problems, possible mental issues (is he or is he not

bipolar?), and his repeated rises from the ashes. Despite all the chaos, he also focuses on the quieter parts of Pop's life, such as domestic bliss with Wife No. 2. And occasionally we even get a funny story, such as the "peanut butter sandwich on Iggy's chest anecdote. One of the best parts of the book is his ongoing friendship with David Bowie. The past bond between these two men is the sweetest part of the book, especially when Bowie and Pop joined forces musically. It's a bit sad when they drift apart. Trynka also paints a dark, gritty portrait the burgeoning punk scene of the time, as well as the proto-punk ferocity of the Stooges -- they were SO groundbreaking and raw that the record companies didn't know what to do with them. It took decades for them to be appreciated for what they truly were, and for Iggy Pop to be appreciated as a musical pioneer."Iggy Pop: Open Up and Bleed" is not just a biography of a brilliant musician, but a portrait of the rapidly-changing music scene that he first bloomed in. Definitely a must-read for rock'n'roll fans.

Rob Trynka has done a great job gathering the details of Iggy's life, including a few "lost" eras when Iggy dropped out of the public eye. The author presents a very readable account that rings true in a way that many rock biographies don't. Even though he interviewed Iggy extensively, he also interviewed seemingly every living musician who's worked with Iggy (with the notable exception of David Bowie, who would not participate). He also interviewed many of Iggy's childhood friends and acquaintances and other musicians from the late-60s Michigan scene. And in recounting a lot of Iggy's self-mythologizing, and a lot of the classic Stooges tales, Trynka will often conclude that the recollections of another witness are more plausible than Iggy's version. That's something you usually won't get in a rock biography whose writer has the access that Trynka had. There are behind-the-scenes recollections from the participants of just about all of Iggy's albums, Stooges and solo. And the author even makes a strong case for the origin of the term "punk" in describing music--citing Lenny Kaye's original review of the first Stooges album, which he called the music of punks cruising for burgers. I'd always wondered where the first reference to "punk rock" appeared. Beyond the 320-page biography, there's an appendix that lists Iggy's albums in chronological order, with original release and label information and info on the musicians. And as hard as it is to get excited about footnotes, they really stand out in this book. Each chapter's notes are like an add-on chapter, where the author provides supporting quotes, and often gives a longer version of a short quote from the narrative. Maybe best of all are the two sections of photos. You can flip through the photos and captions and get a good preview of the full narrative, with great photos from the Stooge and solo eras. But if you read in public (as I did, on the subway) you might want to watch out for the full-nude shot.

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