

Arts & Entertainment

Iggy delivers powerful SUB Theatre concert

Iggy Pop; Seduce
SUB Theatre
Friday, September 30

review by Mike Spindloe

Raw power, indeed. Iggy Pop's sold-out show at SUB on Friday was a blast of pure rock and roll energy the likes of which Edmonton has not seen for quite some time. Backed by a tight four-piece band, the Ig writhed and mugged his way through an almost unbelievably intense 80 minute set of virtually non-stop music.

Clad in skin-tight jeans and black leather vest. Iggy looked the consummate rock survivor and performed with the abandon of a man 20 years younger. In fact, it is difficult to imagine Iggy being any more intense as frontman for the Stooges back in 1969; if anything, he was probably just more bizarre.

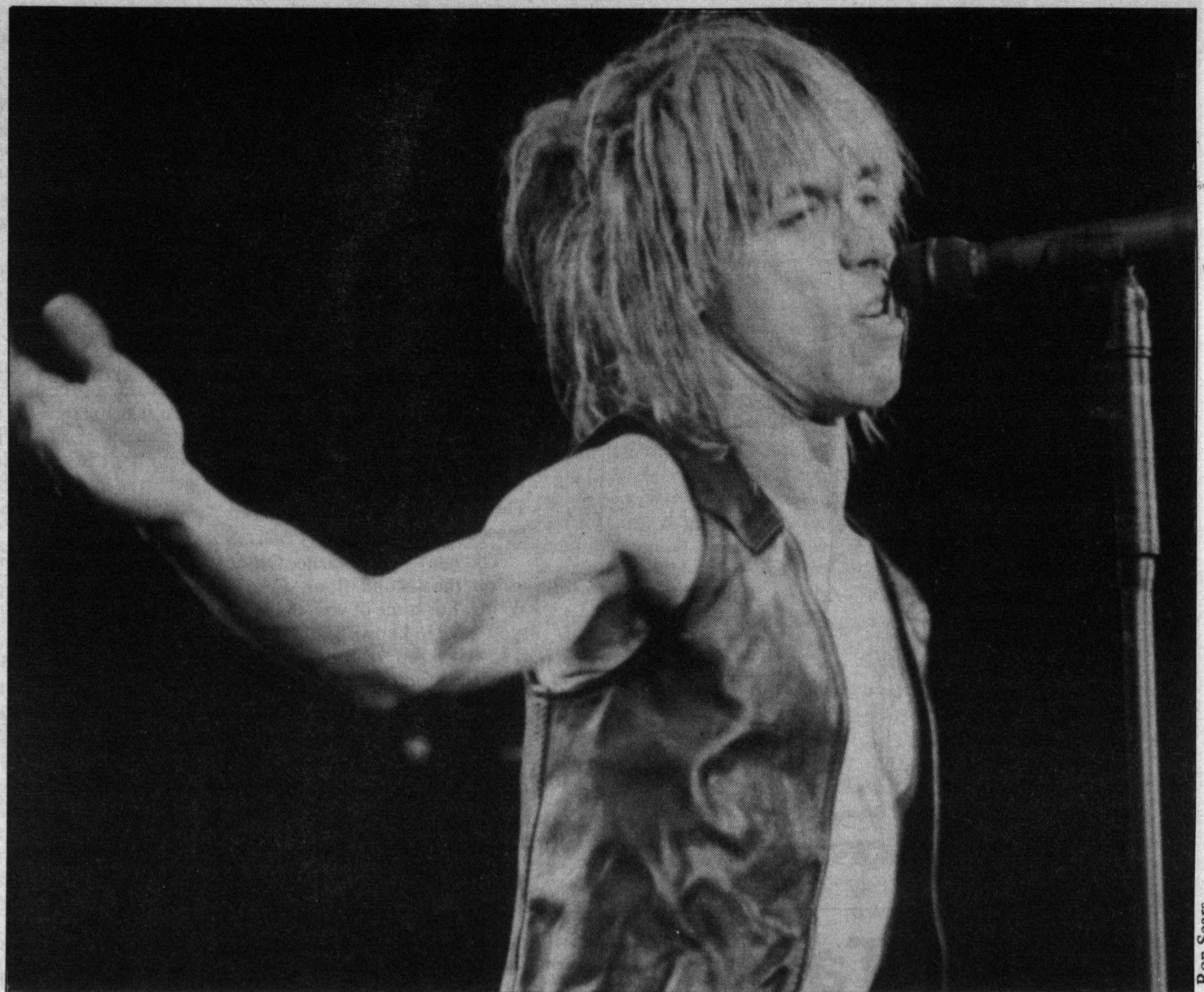
All the commercialism of Iggy's last few albums was quickly forgotten as newer hits like "Real Wild Child" blended perfectly with Stooges' classics like "No Fun" and early solo songs like "The Passenger." There was just one speed — fast — and one volume — LOUD — this time but it couldn't really have been any other way.

Perhaps the best way to explain how great Iggy's show was is to put the whole thing in perspective with the performance of Seduce, who had the unenviable task of opening for a whirling dervish. The Detroit-based trio, who have just one album under their belts, wasted an enthusiastic performance before a near-empty theatre. Ironically, however, their musical territory is not that far from Iggy's; with a bit more polish on their raunch they could well be his backing band.

The difference, of course, is personality. Iggy owned the stage, while Seduce merely rented it. This is usually the case in the opening act headliner dichotomy, but the gap has rarely been more apparent (although Nick Gilder opening for Peter Gabriel in Toronto about 10 years ago springs to mind).



Skinny Puppy's Kevin Ogilvie: Sprays himself with "blood," but what's it all for?



Rock and roll survivor: Iggy Pop's face tells the story of his life as he mesmerizes a packed SUB Theatre audience Friday night.

Iggy doesn't expect us to take him seriously, though; he just wants us to have fun. But, "it's just about impossible to have any fun anymore," he sneers, in one of the few between song remarks. Then, with a lopsided grin that gave away the fact that it was fun after all: "Thanks a lot for coming to the show. We really appreciate it."

Deep down inside his incredibly skinny chest, Iggy knows what a real rock and roll show should be: dangerous and fun. He's canny enough to make the danger more apparent than real these days, and there was no question about the fun.

In a final swipe at all the poseurs on all the stages everywhere, he left us with a final message: "There is life on earth."

Raw power, indeed.

Skinny Puppy leaves their audience in a sensory fog

Skinny Puppy
SUB Theatre
Thursday, September 29

review by Marg Ackerman

Understanding objectivity is to discover the doorknobs of possibility wiped clean of the usual grease keeping us just outside the ballroom of experience. The only criterion for gaining entry is that you are willing to endure the consequences unconditionally. Sounds simple and even reasonable.

Skinny Puppy prepares the audience carefully before the show. There is no doubt in anyone's mind that something is about to happen. Central to this pre-performance beckoning are some of the most deafeningly forboding synth rhythms programmable. The primary purpose might be to provide anyone with a weak stomach the opportunity to exit while there's still time. But it's too late — "Fog Em!" — someone commands as auditory assault is joined by visual obliteration.

The music of the Vancouver-based trio shakes all the dirt out of your fingernails even if you're sucking on your hands during the show. While Kevin Crompton and Dwayne Goettel hammer their terrorizing rhythms out of two synthesizer stacks positioned equidistant from centre stage, vocalist Kevin Ogilvie howls his guts out as he performs a bloody vivisection on a black dog puppet. The backdrop to all this is some very nasty film footage. Graphically obscene clips of animal bludgeony for the sake of important causes like lipstick-making are punctuated by an array of other mean, dirty, slimy stuff all relating to life on planet earth.

The Skinny Puppy display is designed to grip your attention. In fact, it's not unlike having someone grab you by the epiglottis and pull *hard*.

Skinny Puppy means whatever it is

that's being said; it's evident in the intense presentation of the theatrics of their frenetic dirge. That the point of the concert is to shock is not hard to grasp, but what else? There's a feeling that there's more. Yet the audience is left with only the sensory memory and the echo of an ominous, unintelligible voice.

Perhaps forcing people to look at atrocities is effective, if only to increase awareness. Is the intention of Skinny Puppy to shake us out of the stupor of compliance and into actually *doing* something?

You need a lyric sheet to know what it is Skinny Puppy is actually advocating, since no verbal cues are given by the band in concert. And if you can stomach the whole concert, it's doubtful you'll be over-

Central to this pre-performance beckoning are some of the most deafeningly forboding synth rhythms programmable.

whelmed with positive thoughts about how you can change your world. It seems more probable that the darkness imparted from Skinny Puppy to the audience may only serve to nurture more of the same.

The audience welcomed the opening act, Shadow Project, with the same disregard most hometown bands enjoy. While it's true that these guys need to figure out in which direction they're headed, to begin, you must first begin. Their vocal harmonies and the use of a string duo were strong points this band might consider honing if it has an interest in digging a path of its own in the big ditch that is the music business.