

The power of the heart from the late Tai Chi Master Lou Reed

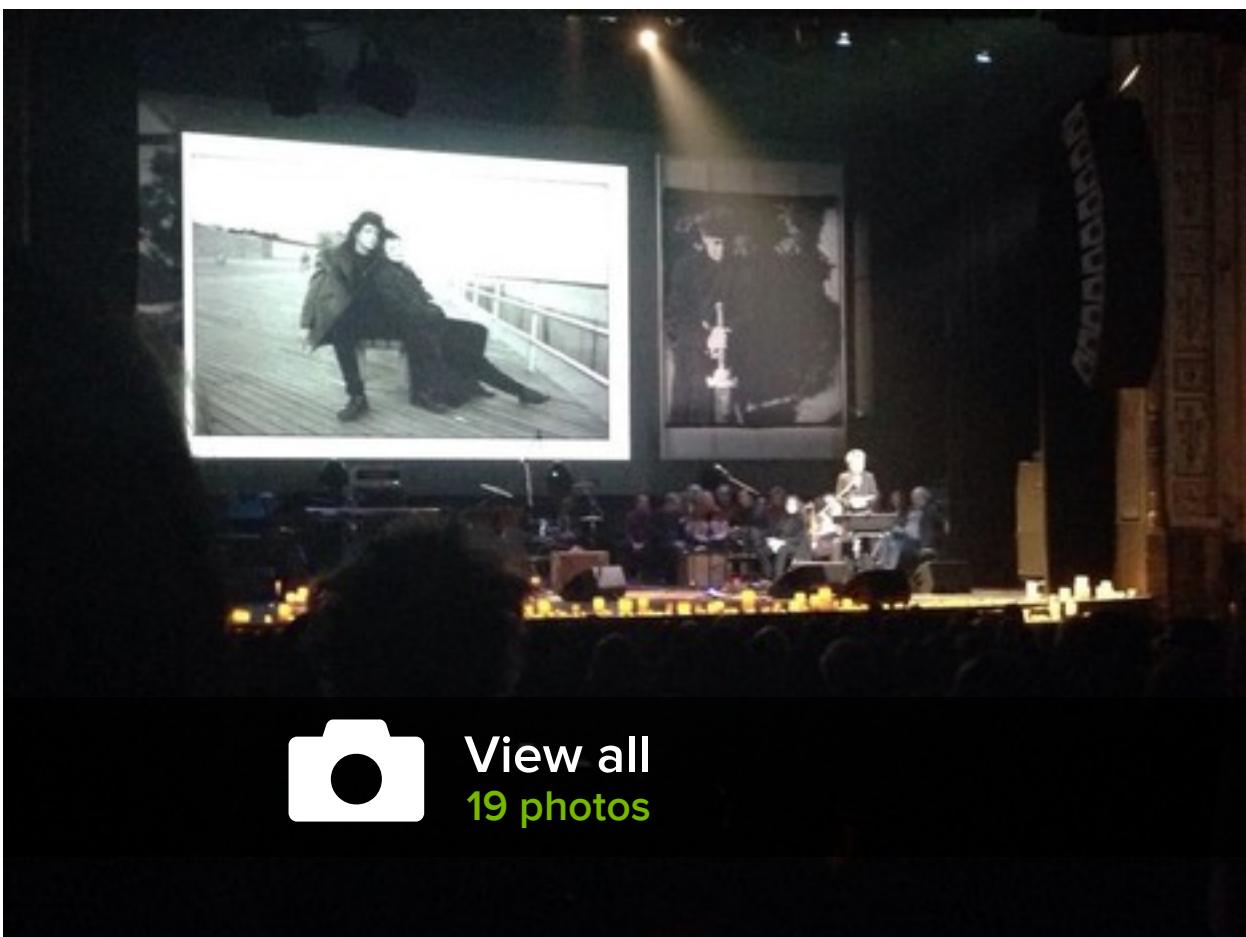
December 26, 2013

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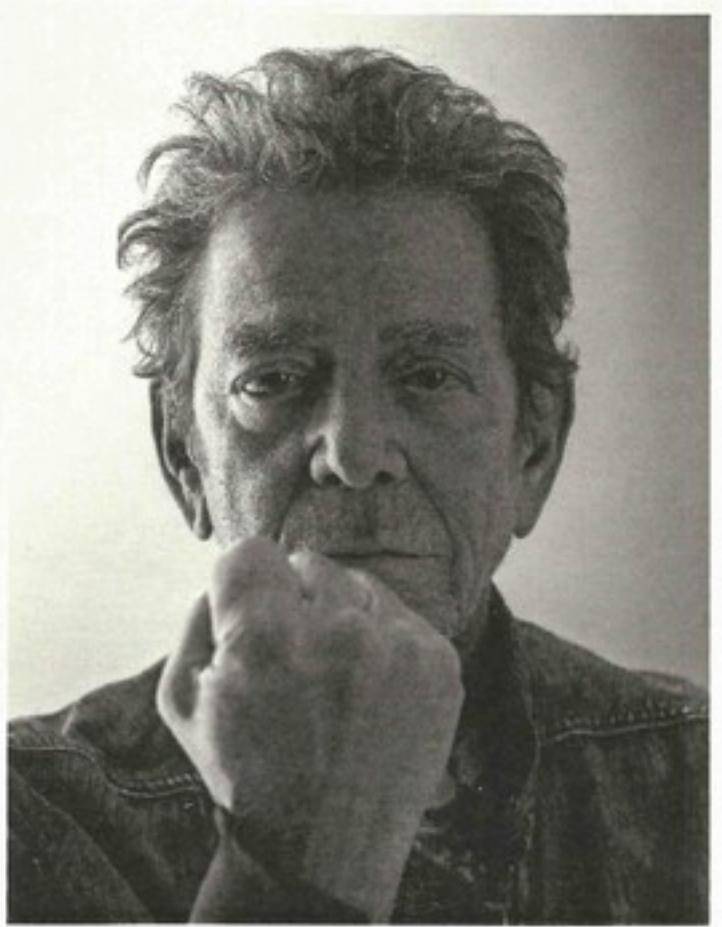
Fifteen hundred invited family members and friends of Rock'n'Roll Hall of Famer [Lou Reed](#) waited on a cold winter night to enter the [Apollo Theatre](#) in Harlem, New York, on Monday Dec. 16. They went to pay a final tribute to a man who transformed the music industry and fought for social justice. Beautiful eulogies, memorable songs, and powerful [Tai Chi](#) performances were presented to celebrate the life, creation, integrity, and love of Lou.



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Laurie Anderson delivered an Eulogy with Lou and her photo in the background.
Allison Helm



Jean Baptiste Mondino

It was the 50th day since legendary musician Lou passed away on Sunday Oct 27. Besides being a guitarist, songwriter, and vocalist, Lou demonstrated his multi-talents via poems, photography, acting, filming, and Tai Chi. Each Sunday there was a different themed memorial designated to one of his interests hosted by his loving wife Laurie Anderson, an avant-garde performing artist whose "[O Superman](#)" was displayed at Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York. The Monday night event was a closure. His friends from all circles came from near and far to say goodbye. Inside the dimmed theater, I noticed that [Bill and Allison Helm](#) of San Diego (California), Master [Jose Figueiro](#) of St. Paul (Minnesota), Master [Stephan Berwick](#) of Washington D.C., and some others from the Tai Chi community were present.

Famous musicians [Debbie Harry](#), [Emily Heins](#), [Paul Simon](#), [Patti Smith](#), [Anthony Hegarty](#), [Lenny Kaye](#), [The Persuasions](#), and [John Zorn](#) sang and played Lou's famous songs like "White Light, White Heat", "Perfect Day", "Pale Blue Eyes", "All Tomorrow's Parties", and "Candy Says". Lou's sister, Merrill Reed, Velvet Underground drummer [Maureen Tucker](#), producer [Hal Wilner](#), and artist-film director [Julian Schnabel](#) offered eulogies revealing the unwavering courage and strength of the deceased artist.

Emmy Award winning producer [Scott Richman](#) knew Lou through the music industry and Tai Chi practice. On stage, Scott talked about Lou's passion for Tai Chi. Lou was a long-time Chinese martial art aficionado and practiced hard style martial arts and a few Tai Chi styles. When Lou met Grandmaster [Ren Guangyi](#) in 2002, he dedicated himself to the Chen Style Tai Chi practice. Not only he learned more than a dozen of Chen Style barehanded and weapon forms, he also wanted to share the benefits of Tai Chi practice with the world. He invited Grandmaster Ren to his worldwide concert tours. Ren

performed on stage over 150 times in 55 countries. Lou brought Ren and Tai Chi to Carnegie Hall, Sydney Opera House, the Presidential Palace in Czech Republic, the Torino (Italy) Winter Olympic Games Closing Ceremony, and other prominent world stages. At Lou's suggestion, Ren created *Tai Chi 21* to practice in a small space for urban living. Lou thought this compact routine could be a good gateway for the general public to comprehend the beauty of the art and to experience the [health](#) benefits it offers. Not too long prior to his death, Lou called Scott and urged him and others to promote this form again. He jokingly recommended changing the name from *Tai Chi 21* to a catchy "Blackjack Tai Chi" for marketing purposes.

Off stage, Stephan and Ren called Lou a Warrior Prince of Tai Chi for his tireless effort to promote the art including participating in an award-winning short movie [Final Weapon](#). During Monday night, there were two large photos of Lou on each side of a screen holding a Tai Chi sword. [Gene Ching](#), Associate Publisher of *Kung Fu Tai Chi Magazine*, wrote an obituary praising Lou's generosity to lend his name and to donate his time to bring the awareness of the art to the world and you can read his article via a link <http://martial.securesites.net/ezine/article.php?article=1129> here.

Monday night, Ren did a thunderous performance of the *21 Form* in silence with powerful punches, kicks, jumps, and foot stomping that shook the stage. You can hear the stomping sounds from the attached video clip filmed from the distant second floor of the theater. Later, Ren and two of his senior students [Greg Pinney](#) and Stephan Berwick performed the same form in a slow mode on stage while other students doing it in the orchestra pit and aisles to show the form's fluidity. Ren also did a solo broadsword form and won a loud applause.

Lou was complicated. Yet he was transparent. What you see was what you got. His deadpan voice was unpretentious and reflected raw truth, which could be too dark for some people. After the memorial, 27-year-old Eric, listening to Lou's music while growing up in the Midwest, lamented that music is less relevant today since lyricism is no longer important.

Lou never cared about fame or criticism. Laurie mentioned that Lou could take the "Lou Reed" label off just like a jacket, which is reminiscent how a true Tai Chi master lets go of ego. What drove him to work hard on music and social causes was his love for humanity and the power of the heart. In Chen Style Tai Chi, there is one movement called "Guarding the Heart" with the right fist punched outward in front of the chest. A heart is about the size of a fist. The fist in "Guarding the Heart", in essence, is an expression of the power of the heart. The invitation of the Dec. 16 memorial was a photo of Lou posting "Guarding the Heart", which was taken not too long ago. To quote the lyrics from [Set the Twilight Reeling](#):

"Take me for what I am

“ A star newly emerging

Long-simmering explodes

Inside the self is reeling

In the pocket of the heart

In the rushing of the blood

In the muscle of my sex

In the mindful mindless love

I accept the new-found man

And I set the twilight reeling”

Extra:

- Read More about Final Weapon
<http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/683409754/final-weapon-an-action-film-driven-by-the-music-of>.
- To watch Paul Simon and other celebrities performance at the Monday memorial, click the link here <http://www.daysofthecrazy-wild.com/?tag=apollo-theater>.
- To read New York Times report on Monday night memorial, click here
http://mobile.nytimes.com/2013/12/18/arts/music/lou-reeds-complex-spirit-is-invoked-at-a-reunion-of-his-inner-circle.html?emc=eta1&_r=0.
- To read Lou Reed's other social activism, read the link here
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/28/lou-reed_n_4171241.html.

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SUGGESTED LINKS

- [Final Weapon](#)
- [Lou Reed: A highly celebrated Tai Chi practitioner and promoter](#)
- [An illuminating evening with “Lou Reed”](#)
- [IKF’s Instructor of the Year: Tai Chi Master Ren Guangyi](#)



Violet Li

Tai Chi Examiner