



Five things you missed at the Patti Smith AGO show

BY: SIGNALS

Patti Smith, AGO's Walker Court, March 7, 9:45 pm



1. A performance of spectacular intimacy

Smith was right there, on a stage rising just a few feet off the ground in what is essentially a glorified hallway but with better architecture, surrounded on all sides by audience... and more audience lining walkways spiraling upwards. There were none of the usual concert-venue constructs, no barriers actual or otherwise; Smith—unfussy, smiling, and fully present—spoke to the crowd like she was hosting a dinner. We felt let in.



2. A set bookended by “Dancing Barefoot” and “Because the Night”

The latter dedicated to her late husband, Fred “Sonic” Smith. This (the songs, not the dedication)

was a greedy relief as early reports had suggested the performance—billed as *An Evening of Words and Song*—might be light on the classics and heavy on ephemera pointing to Smith’s “Camera Solo” photography exhibit at the Gallery. Sorry, but the lady’s an icon and I wanted to hear the iconic songs, “Gloria” notwithstanding. So phew. Bonus points for an encore of “People Have the Power” directed at the just-deceased Stompin’ Tom Connors.



3. A voice that hasn’t aged one damn day

She’s 66, but the Smith onstage at Walker Court sounded precisely like the Smith on *Horses* and *Easter*. Complementing it was daughter Jesse Smith on piano and bassist/guitarist Tony Shanahan, while Smith herself played acoustic guitar, all of which was plenty.



4. She covered Neil Young. Duh.

Smith recently supported Young in concert—and the two seem like kindred spirits—so perhaps it wasn’t much of a stretch. However, in a 55-minute set, songs must be chosen judiciously, especially when the baboons are hollering for “Rock ‘n’ Roll Nigger.” She played “It’s a Dream” from Young’s 2005 release *Prairie Wind*. Smith also referenced Amy Winehouse and the new My Bloody Valentine record, plus Chilean writer Roberto Bolaño, whose favourite chair is captured in her photo exhibit. Cultural relevance intact? Check.




5. (A tie between) bragging rights and the afterglow

Both of the shows Smith performed last night as part of the 1st Thursdays series at the AGO were instant sellouts, so just being there felt enormously special. But Smith's grace, her ease and exuberance really hit home, evident in the goofy ear-to-ear grins the masses wore as they dreamily queued at the gargantuan post-concert coat check. Sometimes, you just have to be there to get it. Occasionally, the planets align... and there you are.—**Kim Hughes**

Photos: Christie Vuong/The Grid

TAGS AGO, Patti Smith

post a comment 

Latest 

Hilary M.
I was with choir! choir! choir! standing behind Patti during the second concert. It was an amazing experience in many ways. Her voice. The rapt audience whose faces we had a great view of. Her

song selections. The intimacy. Her genuine passion. The poetry. And the surprise invitation from her for us to back her on two songs we had sung, as part of AGO First Thursdays, in the galleries for those with no tickets, during her first concert. So, for her second concert, we were drawn in, headed for a spin. The people have the power! Thanks, Patti.

 3  0

3:17 pm on March 8, 2013

 Reply  Report