

BRIDGE SCHOOL BENEFIT

SHORELINE

OCTOBER 25, 2008

We attended an event that appears quite on the other end of the spectrum, at first glance. A closer look reveals some of the same commitment to change and doing well in the world, as opposed to adding to the damage via indifference as we felt in Patti Smith, who notably chose a Neal Young song to remember her husband.

This weekend saw the 22nd Annual Bridge School Benefit take place out at the Shoreline. For the Saturday portion of the two day event, we took in opener Neal, Cat Power, Band of Horses, Death Cab for Cutie and Wilco, leaving before the traditional jam at the end.



Well, that's the consequence of working ER doubles and swing shifts.

The Bridge School has been providing programs for children who have communication and/or physical impairments since 1987 and has grown into an international school with guest teachers coming from all continents to learn new techniques to bring back to their home countries.

Neal and Pegi Young (current director) have two children enrolled.

Neal kept his opener short and sweet, doing Sugar Mountain and I am a Child from his early catalog.



Band of Horses led off as unscheduled replacements for ZZ Top, with the lead singer saying, "this is the first time we have performed acoustic. How are we doing?"

The deep south-based band demonstrated real a cappella virtuosity in synchronized vocals that evoke shades of CSNY. BoH has been earning some underground buzz for a while as the latest up 'n coming so it was nice to see the boys come out for what is probably their first high-profile gig.



A cleaned-up Cat Power, also out of the South by way of Georgia, came out and rolled through several bluesy torch songs until her high point with a definitive rocking blues "It aint Me" that featured Neal joining in on guitar and vocals. The song lifted itself up to another level as an almost gospel fervor infected the performers.

Cat Power, nee Charlyn Marie Marshall, is known for jazz-inflected minimalist performances, which up to 2008 were known for quirky and incomplete presentations, which Marshall has stated were a consequence of

drugs and alcohol. She has said that she originally performed largely as an opportunity for her and her friends to drink and take drugs, but now appears to have put the poisons aside in favor of tight and well orchestrated performance and the benefits of going clean were obvious Saturday. Although she can play the guitar and piano, she limited herself to vocals for the Bridge School. We would expect that if she can keep it clean, she will be someone to watch for a while.



Death Cab for Cutie performed largely from their new CD, although they did do the hits "I will Follow You into the Dark" and "Soul Meets Body", both of which worked well in the acoustic setting of the Benefit.

Reports have it that their "Sarah said" went over very well during Sunday's second set, which sort of ties in to our coverage of the Mexican *Dias de los*

Muertos by way of its repeated end refrain, "Love is watching someone you love die. Who will watch over you when you die?".



Jeff Tweedy was as usual at top form fronting Wilco as we regretfully made our way out.

