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Giampino Family Benefit

Vigorous Benefit Rocks LA

On August 6, 2004 the Giampino family in Seattle, WA lost everything in a fire that was started by a serial arsonist. Fortunately, the family escaped the fire, but their pets and all of their belongings were destroyed.

On November 16, 2004 four

bands got together for a benefit concert in Los Angeles, CA to aid the Giampinos. This concert was one of the best shows I've been to in a long while. Oh, and it wasn't a typical benefit concert either, as each band picked one of their favorite albums, and then performed it in its entirety. The bands were: Kennedy (performing the Ramone's debut album); The 88 (performing Bob Dylan's *Highway 61 Revisited*); All Hours (performing Lou Reed's *Transformer*) and The Bedroom Walls' Adam Goldman (performing Belle & Sebastian's *If You're Feeling Sinister*).

The event took place at the Echo (in Echo Park), which is a terrific venue for *any* show. At first, people didn't really know what to expect from the show, yet everyone was milling about and in a good mood since the atmosphere created a feeling of well being, and even if the show might not be very good, at least everyone knew their money was well spent (100% of the money was given to the family).

Adam Goldman, The Bedroom Walls frontman, took the stage in a brown suit and tie with only an acoustic guitar. He announced that he was going to play Belle and Sebastian's *If You're Feeling Sinister*, and then he began. The first song, "The Stars Of Track And Field," was so quiet and delicate for an opening song, that the entire club hushed to hear him. Then the song broke into some strumming and brief accompaniment by an unidentified female who later disappeared and refused to come back onstage. The rest of the performance was a nice rendition of the album that faithfully captured its spirit, with just enough of Goldman's own touch. Midway through the set, Goldman broke into the funniest version of Led Zeppelin's "Black Dog" you have ever heard. Then he stopped, apologized that he didn't know anymore of the song, and continued on with the Belle and Sebastian album.

After a brief break where some raffle prizes were given away (including some panties from Suicide Girls), All Hours took the stage. They started playing Lou Reed's *Transformer* and the house really pricked up its ears. While Belle and Sebastian are a great band, Lou Reed's 1972 album is just way more of a classic. You can't help but know the songs and want to sing along. When it

Rumor Mill

After the conclusion of the Smashing Pumpkins, the collapse of Zwan, and the publication of a volume of poetry, Billy Corgan will attempt to emerge once again into the world of music with the release of his first true solo album (6/21). Titled *THEFUTUREEMBRACE*, the work will be a test to Corgan's future prospects after busting up one of indie rock's most influential bands. When asked in 1995 if he would ever go it alone, just after the release of one of the Pumpkins' turning point albums, *Mellon Collie and the Infinite Sadness*, the lead singer replied, "I've tried and it just doesn't work without the others." A decade later, Corgan's 11-song solo collection will include former Pumpkin drummer Jimmy Chamberlain on "DIA" (Corgan recently appeared on the track "Life Begins Again" on Chamberlain's solo CD). However, the most intriguing track of Corgan's new work is a collaboration and cover sure to raise eyebrows. It's a version of the Bee Gees classic "To Love Somebody" featuring Robert Smith on guest vocals. Read that again: The Cure and Smashing Pumpkins doing the Bee Gees, that alone is worth the price of admission. The first single from the album will be "Walking Shade." Corgan is also planning a solo tour of intimate venues starting in July. Stay tuned...

More gossip

came time for "Walk On The Wild Side," the band brought up some guest musicians, including Kestrin Pantera on cello, Sarah Kramer on trumpet and another unidentified woman singing back up vocals. The song was simply brilliant! It's really hard to take a classic song and make it your own, but it's even harder to take a classic song, make it your own, then kick ass performing it live. But that's exactly what All Hours did as Sarah Kramer's trumpet became the melancholic, standout part of the song with its mute and reverb (that made it sound like it was being played in a back alley).

All the guests came back on stage to perform "Satellite Of Love," and turned in another unforgettable moment. The sexiest moment of the night was when Kestrin Pantera came back onstage for "New York Telephone Conversation." She put a sexy kimono over her black satin dress, then took off the dress underneath as the band started playing the song while she sang it and did a seductive dance with a telephone cord. Throughout the song she began to disrobe and reveal a shiny silver bikini underneath the kimono. Everyone loved that!

Next up (again, after more prizes) were The 88. I've seen The 88 live before, and knew they would put on an outstanding live show. Also, since they already sound like The-Kinks-meet-Bob-Dylan, performing a version of Dylan's *Highway 61 Revisited* wasn't much of a stretch. What I wasn't prepared for was how incredible it would be. *Highway 61...* is one of the most critically-acclaimed Dylan albums of all time (if you don't own it, stop reading this, click on "Shop Now" on the front page of Virginmega.com and buy it, listen to it a bunch, and then come back and finish this article – you will be a better person for it). Seriously, during this set, Keith Slettedahl (the lead singer) was channeling Bob Dylan. His voice was spot-on in timbre, but was stronger than Dylan's. The entire band played with so much energy that it was obvious they were all loving every minute of it. The vibe was infectious too. Everyone in the crowd joined in to sing and dance along. At one point a friend of the band jumped onstage and sang a decent version of "Queen Jane Approximately." The set ended with a beautiful rendition of "Desolation Row" – no easy feat that.

To end the evening, Kennedy came on (more prizes were given away including coffin guitar cases, subscriptions to Suicide Girls and signed CDs) and in true Ramone's fashion, they jammed through the set. If you've ever seen the Ramones, or even read about them live, one thing that stands out is the pure energy from their live sets. And the fact that the only thing separating the songs is a quick "1, 2, 3, 4!" Kennedy did this perfectly, and the entire Ramones' album was performed in about 30 minutes. It's hard to pick a standout song from the set, because every song was so good, and over by the time you started thinking about it. In retrospect, "Beat On The Brat," "Let's Dance" and "Today Your Love, Tomorrow the World" were the best songs of the show. Even so, it was the classic call "Hey Ho, Let's Go!" of "Blitzkrieg Bop" that set the immediate tone for the set and got everyone bouncing around. There were some people who left before Kennedy took to the stage, so the Echo was a bit thinned out, but they missed an amazing set and perfect ending to the night.

This benefit show turned out to be a wonderful idea, and was so

well executed that it left you wanting more. All of the bands were to be commended and the crowd was really fun. It made you feel good about your neighbor and want to help out others in need. It was truly a once in a lifetime show.

Photo: The 88

- [Spencer Robinson](#)
November 23, 2004

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