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## [Robedoor / The Moon Upstairs / Ya Ho Wa 13 / Billy Corgan @ Spaceland; Los Angeles, CA](#)

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By Evan ~ December 20th, 2008. Filed under: [concerts](#), [photography](#).

Yeah, you read that right. The Great Pumpkin himself made a surprise guest appearance at last night's Ya Ho Wa 13 concert in Silverlake. It was the most nauseating spectacle I've seen since that time he had a speaking part in an SNL sketch with Cameron Diaz. No, wait, since his appearance on Bill Mahr's show. No, wait, since I saw Zwan at the Hammerstein Ballroom. Actually, pretty much every spectacle involving Billy Corgan is nauseating. Oh God, he totally ruined what should have been a cool night.



Robedoor, my how you have changed. No longer are you content to just moan into microphones and totally grind shit up over the course of twenty minutes. There's a third guy, now! It's the guy from Antique Brothers, I think. Unless Robedoor were consciously trying to change directions last night, or trying to pull one over on the ten people who were in attendance, they actually compose songs now. You know, with a bass and a guitar and two guys banging on floor toms. It was very hard for me to enjoy to because, well, I really liked what they used to do with their live shows! Now they just wear black hoodies and play mediocre space noise. Whoopie.

[Listen To Robedoor: "Wasted Estate"](#)



The Moon Upstairs was described to me as Pink Floyd with a large George Harrison influence. They were mellower than I expected, at times sounding like The Black Heart Procession with higher-pitched, pretty vocals. The first several songs had minimal arrangements and relied heavily on organ/synth parts. The rocking numbers they played in the latter part of their set owed a nod to Guided By Voices. They also stood in stark contrast to the first several songs they played, which was nice.

Midway through their set, a bunch of people barged through the door of the club like a flash mob. In the middle of the group was a tall, pale guy wearing a dark jacket, Nike sneakers and one of those stupid snow hats with the floppy ears. He situated himself at the bar and started playing with his cell phone. I thought he looked kind of like Billy Corgan. Then he took his stupid hat off and of course he was bald. "Fuck," I thought. "Uncle Fester is gonna stand there sending text messages for the next two hours and pretend he's here to take in Ya Ho Wa 13? What an asshole!"



### [Listen To The Moon Upstairs: “People In The Trees”](#)

The Moon Upstairs finished their set with a very cool Floyd-ian tune. Just as quickly as they broke down their gear, the three members of Ya Ho Wa 13 had set up theirs. [Billy Boy](#) wandered away from the bar and stood flush against the left side of the stage, [watching intently as a guy with short black hair tuned-up a guitar](#). Then Billy crawled on stage and the guy with the short black hair handed him the guitar. Corgan began noodling. I thought, “Oh my fucking God, please tell me that Billy Corgan is not going to get on stage with — wait a minute — did he actually bring a guitar tech to a show with an audience of 20 people?!” Oh, Billy. You’re such a rock star.





Sunflower, Octavius and Djin took the stage (alone, which made me wonder if maybe Billy was planning on taking the stage *after* Ya Ho Wa 13, in an attempt to upstage them with a silly navel-gazing solo set). Sunflower introduced the other two members of the group, spoke about their past with the Source Family and Los Angeles, and then invited the crowd to participate in a pre-show breathing exercise. He asked us to extend our arms with our left hand facing up and our right hand facing down, spread our legs — so our bodies were shaped like stars — and then breathe in-and-out deeply. I wanted to yell out, “I can’t breathe! The bald guy over there is sucking all the air out of the room!”



[Listen To Ya Ho Wa 13: "One" \(\*I'm Gonna Take You Home\*\)](#)

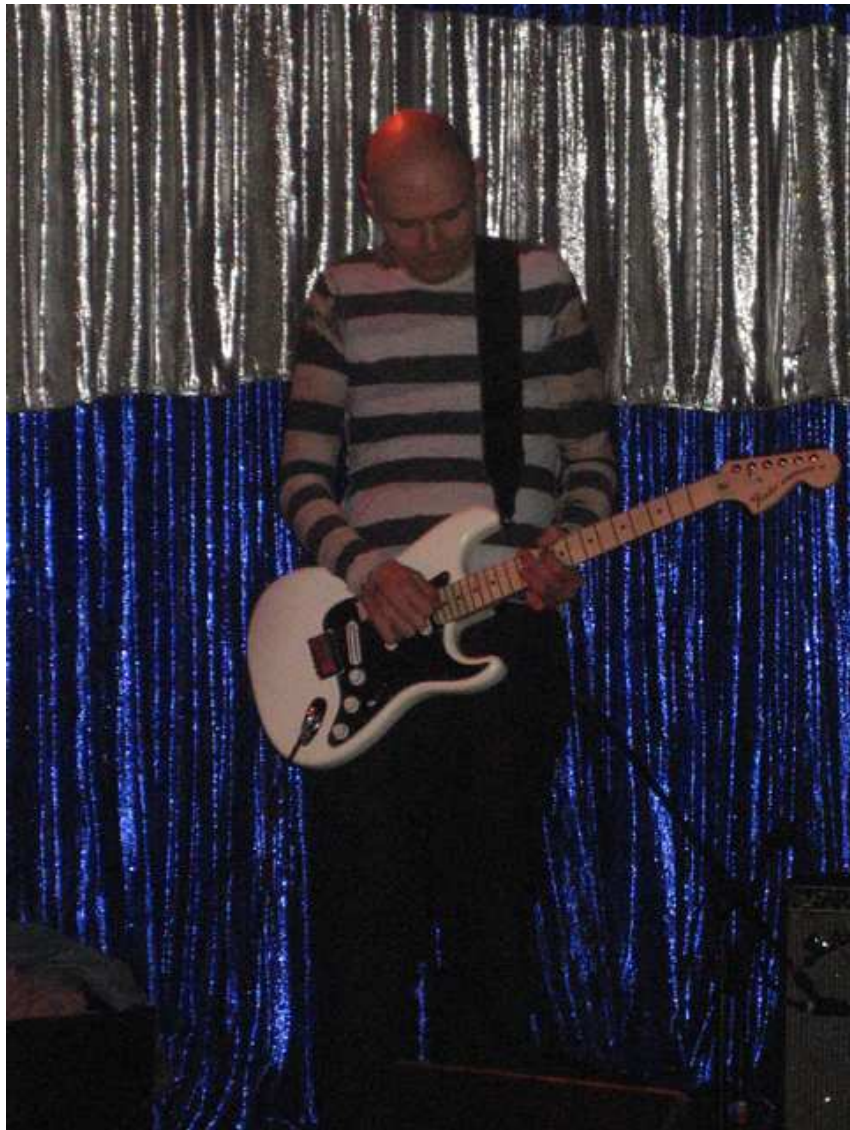
Ya Ho Wa 13 played for about an hour, spoke about fire water and air, and generally sounded like they were making things up on the spot. They weren't *too* far out; neither of the three members looked or sounded like an acid case. Well, the guy who looked like a cross between Willie Nelson and "Blue" from *Old School* wasn't making much sense. He strummed his guitar with a feather! The music was heavily improvised, and obviously so. I've seen tons of shows like that, but this one appeared to be the most realistic. Why? Because long passages sounded really bad, like they had no idea what they were doing, and then a few minutes later they clicked and it sounded awesome. There was a sense of realism that one does not see often at concerts. Lots of bands claim to be improvising but can be seen talking things over with each other before they take the stage. Ya Ho Wa 13 appear and sound legit.





[Watch Billy Corgan Play Alongside Ya Ho Wa 13](#) (MP4 format)

So, yeah. Then the shit show started. Sunflower approached the microphone and stated that the band was going to be joined on stage by a good friend. “Oh fuck, no, no no!” I screamed to myself. “Stargate?” he asked, apparently addressing somebody in the audience. Then Billy Corgan and his large frame lumbered over to the stage from the back of the room and slung his guitar around his neck. The next eight or ten minutes were kind of a blur, but so many angry, violent thoughts passed through my head in rapid succession I barely had time to listen to him playing the solo from “For Martha” (or one of those horribly overwritten “epics” of his from his more-recent musical history) over the Ya Ho Wa jam. It sounded atrocious. He was lurching, moving slow and heavy like a special child. I felt like the late, great John Mayer when he sang, “I want to run through the halls of my high school / I want to scream at the top of my lungs / I just found out there’s no such thing as “the real world” / There’s just a metaphorical playground where Billy Corgan is an oafish retarded child slamming into you on his way to riding the horse that you were hoping to ride.”





I left before they finished their first song. I wanted my memories of Ya Ho Wa 13 to be *good* memories. Unfortunately, King Pumpkin soured what could have been a really special evening.

[Listen To Smashing Pumpkins: "Drown"](#)

I'll post video footage and edit my rant after work. I'll be more composed then.

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## **17 Responses to *Robedoor / The Moon Upstairs / Ya Ho Wa 13 / Billy Corgan @ Spaceland; Los Angeles, CA***



1. [ilya](#)

[December 20th, 2008 at 3:43 pm](#)

didnt you used to have that exact sweater and guitar combo?



2. [Evan](#)

[December 20th, 2008 at 3:57 pm](#)

while the guitar does bear a slight resemblance to my old big apple strat, i'm pretty sure his is from the '60s or '70s. look at the fat "stratocaster" logo on the headstock.

as for the sweater....no. but i did own 35 smashing pumpkins concert shirts at one time in my life!



3. [Hipsters United // a blog about the Smashing Pumpkins » Corgan guest appearance calmly reported by blogger](#)  
[December 20th, 2008 at 7:22 pm](#)

[...] open-hearted music blogger Evan LeVine writes that Billy Corgan played last night with psychedelic rockers Ya Ho Wa 13 in Los Angeles: The Great [...]



4. [rex](#)  
[December 21st, 2008 at 8:00 am](#)

that strat is the fender billy corgan sig strat. do your homework! for someone who says they owned 35 sp t-shirts at one time, and disses 'for martha', that sounds like a hypocrite to me. this negativity about sp and bc is doing well for you. it has caused more people to visit your blog. (including me). next time you should stop ripping off of pitchfork, and step out of your "blogger" persona and actually write something meaningful.



5. [Booman22](#)  
[December 21st, 2008 at 9:23 am](#)

Dude, you are a moron. I don't get the complete hate-spew for Billy Corgan. Cut the guy a break, he has always and continues to make music that clarifies emotions, pushes buttons, and tests new boundaries. I think it is great that he is willing to perform in front of such a small audience. Who cares if he brought a guitar tech? If you were performing, you would want your equipment to sound great, wouldn't you? For his appearance to completely ruin your time is ridiculous. You speak of overwritten "epics", but songs like "Superchrist" and the live version of "Heavy Metal Machine" are not overwritten, they are brilliant. Technical skill, speed, and the heart to back it up, make those songs a perfect addition to the SP catalog. Stop hatin.



6. [neill](#)  
[December 21st, 2008 at 11:16 am](#)

a sp website called hipsters united? that beats 1+1=fish tacos.



7. [strawberry](#)  
[December 21st, 2008 at 3:36 pm](#)

i was there. i enjoyed it. it was so random. i really think you should pull that pretentious indie stick out of your ass.



8. [Evan](#)  
[December 21st, 2008 at 6:55 pm](#)

linda,

your defense of billy is understandable, and i respect it (and, by the transitive property of mathematics, respect you too!). unfortunately, i will be unable to pull the "pretentious indie stick" out of my ass because i don't have even an affinity for what is (in this modern era) considered "indie" music. i was at a ya ho wa 13 show. they're not exactly the shins. maybe in and of itself that is pretentious, but i'm not about to get into an argument about why i listen to what i listen to.

as someone who started their own label in the spirit of DIY / "indie" culture after being dropped by a major, isn't it a



bit hypocritical of you to tell someone they have a “pretentious indie stick” lodged in their anus?

i've never once lambasted anyone who has expressed enjoyment of billy corgan's music. i simply do not listen to his music with the fervency or adoration as i did when i was in high school, and quite frankly i don't care for the guy's public persona. since you don't care for my online-blogging persona, i guess that makes us squarezees.



9. *Chambers*

[December 22nd, 2008 at 2:05 am](#)

I was there, thank god a good friend called and told me the good news. I showed up in my pj's!! I ran outta my house as fast as i could. Billy's music has had a tremendous impact on my life. I always hoped to have an opportunity to tell him how grateful I was and this was the night. I walked over to thank him and let him know how helpful/strengthening his music was for me as far back as high school and how even to this day he will always have a special place in my heart. Believe it or not he was very sweet and friendly. He even smiled for a pic with me. I will always remember this night. I haven't stopped smiling since... ;) Let's see 1. Meet Billy Corgan/express my gratitude. Check!



10. *nick*

[December 22nd, 2008 at 10:14 am](#)

hey evan man, I'm totally fucking with you on this one. just knowing that egotistical bastard played with ya ho wa & that they've actually gone so far as to give him an aquarian name...uh, stargate? really?! as long as this was a one time thing where they were just like “ah, fuck it we might as well let him play” I should be fine but otherwise I may have to go & pull the plug out of sheer and abject horror

& speaking of, what's with fucking corgan trying to 'associate' himself with the 60's psych underground? for example, the completely pointless appearance of sky saxon in that music video for the awful overly long metal song the 'pumpkins' put out a while back? can someone say horribly out of place?



11. *Kenny Bloggins*

[December 22nd, 2008 at 10:42 am](#)

Evan,

I, too, have been in the crosshairs of Hipsters United for a piece I wrote for Tiny Mix Tapes. I don't know why they didn't like my Flowers For Algernon joke. It was a lolocaust.

<http://hipstersunited.com/blog/archives/2008/10/in-which-kenny-bloggins-schools-us-in-targeted-marketing.html>



12. *nicepooperzine*

[December 22nd, 2008 at 12:07 pm](#)

God Bless Yahowa 13



13. *Chuck B.*

[December 22nd, 2008 at 6:32 pm](#)

I knew when I saw “12 comments” I was in for some funny shit

This did not disappoint





14. *Mablak*

[December 23rd, 2008 at 1:17 am](#)

Wow, way to have an original opinion about Corgan, totally not following the generic music critic hatred. Honestly, there doesn't seem to be anything genuine in your critique of Billy when you talk about not liking the way he looks and being nauseated from previous experiences.

He has a whiny personality and there are enough things to dislike about him as a person, but as a guest musician it's hard not to see him as an asset. I wasn't there, I don't know how horribly he might have played for the few minutes you watched, but leaving the show due to him kind of illustrates a ridiculous bias when the band in general had long passages that sucked. I'm guessing you mainly soured the show for yourself, by focusing on things you've heard repeated ad nauseam about Billy's ego in Pitchfork reviews, rather than focusing on the music.



15. *octavius*

[December 23rd, 2008 at 12:34 pm](#)

Octavius here and  
I was there as well.

I want to thank everyone who has an opinion  
about the what and the who and the how.

The mission statement of our band is to scrub your  
brain of thoughts in general.

Rust removal. To be thinking while  
listening to us is to deny what we have for you.

We cause consternation in the grey area  
on purpose. It must be working.

Next time we are around,  
seize the moment, let go of your mind  
and be washed.

Come in and get clean or stay away dirty!  
ps

Kerry Brown's Aquarian name is Stargate  
and we appreciate Billy for pushing his comfort zone  
and jumping into the unknown with us. How about you?  
Be kind be harmless, peace



16. *Rikki Nadir*

[December 23rd, 2008 at 2:49 pm](#)

I love a parade.



17. *Stargate Aquarian*

[December 24th, 2008 at 11:57 am](#)

peace and enjoy the ride.

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