

MIAMI BOOK FAIR INT'L NOVEMBER 15, 2015

# Patti Smith gives 32nd Miami Book Fair a colorful start

## HIGHLIGHTS

Rocker Smith discussed her new book, 'M Train'

She asked for an audience member to bring her a cherry pie, and one did

Smith sang her song 'Wing' in tribute to those killed by terrorists in Paris



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BY CONNIE OGLE

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Any given night at Miami Book Fair is filled with memorable moments. On Sunday night, at the opening of the 32nd annual fair at Miami Dade College's Wolfson Campus, National Book Award winner Patti Smith left a full house breathless after one of them.

Here to talk about her new book *M Train*, Smith, 68, told the sold-out crowd that she enjoyed her last time at the fair so much that she came to Miami a day early to "take in the beautiful weather." With not much of that to be found, she and a friend ended up going to see the new James Bond movie *Spectre*. It was, in a word, "awesome."

Smith read several passages from *M Train*, which follows her through cafes and other haunts and is by turns funny and touching. Smith herself was chatty and amusing if easily distracted, assuring the audience they'd have time to ask questions and joking that if anyone wanted to bring her a cherry pie, she'd happily partake.

The passages she read ranged in subject from her beloved cats to her late husband Fred Sonic Smith, who died in 1994, to seeing *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo* on Christmas Day by herself to enjoy "a sense of complete freedom."

Other things we learned: She appeared on episodes of *Criminal Intent* and *The Killing*. (Both TV shows were "closed down" after her appearances, she lamented jokingly.) She has kept many journals throughout her life, which helped her to write her last book, the National Book Award-winning *Just Kids*. Her seminal album *Horses* is 40 years old. (How is this possible? Many a middle aged audience member wondered.) As a New Jersey native, she possesses a vital superpower: "I can tell a drunken New Jersey person a mile away."

And if she had to be an animal? She'd be "a faithful dog to an 11-year-old girl."

As for that cherry pie? At the 11th hour, local man-about-town John Hood stepped up to the mic and offered one to her. That act would have sent the night off on a satisfying note, but Smith had a different — and more wonderful — idea. In closing, she sang a moving version of her song *Wing* — with its haunting chorus of "you'd be a wing in heaven blue" — in memory of the young people who died in the Paris terrorist attacks.

At the start of the event, book fair co-founder Mitchell Kaplan also asked for a moment of silence in memory of those who lost their lives there.

Earlier in the day, essayist Ilan Stavans and jazz legend Paquito D’Rivera shared the stage to discuss their new books (*Quixote: The Novel and the World* and *Letters to Yeyito: Lessons from a Life in Music*, respectively). Unlike Smith, who didn’t have a guitar, D’Rivera played his clarinet for the delighted audience.

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## MONDAY AT THE FAIR

6 p.m.: “An Evening With Jane Smiley,” Chapman Conference Center, Miami Dade College, 300 NE Second Ave., \$15

8 p.m.: “An Evening With Robert Reich,” Chapman; \$15

At The Swamp: Poetry, film and live jazz-fusion at “Swamp Noir” at 7 p.m. Live Music with Oriente at 8 p.m. Free

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