

I guess my story about Jimmy starts out like almost all the others, I first saw him behind the counter at Record Rendezvous on Prospect. I think it was in '70 or so. I already dug the Velvet, Stooges, The Kinks (god yes!, the Kinks!) & Pink Floyd. I still listened to Jethro Tull, Hendrix, The Beatles, etc., but Jimmy started to turn my tastes to more esoteric climes. I ended up coming home with Can, Amon Duul II, Kevin Ayres and Syd Barrett LPs. In fact "The Madcap Laughs" was a ticket to an introduction to Jamie Klimek and my subsequent membership in Mirrors.

Thanks Jimmy.

Mirrors would rehearse in Lakewood and Jimmy would stop by sometimes. I was drafted into the Army in '72. While I was gone Jim took my place on bass and the band kept going. When I came home in '74 Jim stepped aside and I resumed my place in the band. Later on, when I went with Rocket From The Tombs and Jamie fired me, Jim once again joined the band. Things became tense between me and Jamie but Jim always remained my friend. He was the link that kept the door ajar.

Thanks Jimmy.

I moved to Connecticut in '76 after RFTT broke up. After Lynn and I had been there a while we received a package from Jim. A note read "check this out Craig, I think you will really like it" – it was the first Elvis Costello single on Stiff. I would come back home occasionally over the years and always tried to stop by and see Jim. I followed what he was doing and always made sure I got copies of whatever band he was involved in. I was thrilled by his work in Pere Ubu. The Easter Monkeys STILL kicks ass! His musicality amazed and inspired me.

Thanks Jimmy

By 1989 I was burned out on bands and music. Then that damn Jones came back into my life again. I ended up spending an evening with Jimmy Zero and Jones telling war stories and having an absolute ball. Just being around him seemed to spark something inside me I thought had died. He had other plans that night, but instead took Claudia and me to his home and let us stay there. His heart was as big as Lake Erie.

While in Cleveland, I sat in Jimmy's kitchen with David Thomas as they played a tape for me of RFTT's show at the Piccadilly in '75 (up until that time I did not know that tape existed. I always wondered what else Jim had stashed away). The release of that set led to a show in LA with the reformed band, then to a small tour, another recording, and so on. I saw Jimmy by the side of the stage when we played the Beachland; he stood there giving me the finger and laughing. He asked me after the set when I finally learned how to play the bass, the prick, I loved him so. We also sat around talking after The Pagans reunion show. It was around this time that I became aware of how serious Jim's health problems had become. I was proud and humbled to perform at the benefit show to help out with his medical bills. I wish I could have done more for him than I did. Because of all this, I took stock of what I was doing with my life and made some changes. I was inspired to put together tapes from my Connecticut band and have since begun playing, writing and recording again.

Thanks Jimmy

The last time I was with Jim was back at that same kitchen table in August of '06. We spent a couple of hours just talking about the past, and the future and just about everything else. I really enjoyed that visit. He was delightful to be around and you always felt at ease. I'll always remember that big smile of his, as wide as the fucking sun.

A couple of weeks ago Jamie told me Jim had been going through some tough times health-wise but seemed to be doing better and suggested I give him a call. I never made that call. I didn't seem to have the time...

While working on a recording a few nights ago and I was having trouble with a guitar part. Just before we started the take, I took a moment and I asked Jim, if he wasn't too busy, to give me a little inspiration. I got a good take. He always had the time.

Thanks Jimmy

I love you, I'll miss you. We all will.

-Craig W. Bell  
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