

In Loving Memory of Jim Chapin



I first learned about Jim Chapin in 1998. I was 16 y.o. high school student in Russia interested in drums. A teacher of mine showed me an old copy of an old foreign book (Book I) that came through many hands into our "forgotten" hometown. I liked the exercises, took the book home, curious to learn more about the text written in the book and perhaps the man who wrote it. The exercises were the only thing I could read and play - I spoke no English back then and started doing the text translation with a dictionary by my side. I was fascinated by the story about the book, the drums, and the person who created "the Bible". I was proud to be able to share the translated story with my teacher and fellow students who spoke no English either.

At that time, life in my industrial hometown was hopeless and still. I was one of the many to be born and live a dull life there. Playing, translating and learning from The Book was like a ray of sunlight coming down from the sky to me. I was very inspired by Jim, by his approach to life, his optimism, humbleness and charisma. It gave me hope and inspiration for a better future and a new vantage point to look at life. I never had this before in such a way.

At the same time, Internet was starting to come to Russia's households and my parents bought me a dial up modem. It gave me an outlet to learn more about Jim. And the more I learned, the more inspirational and eye-opening it was. With little hope, I felt that I had a friend, a mentor, and "knew" an amazing American from NY. For a 17 y.o. kid in Russia - it was a life-changing event in ways beyond drumming. With little opportunities available, I then set a goal to learn English, learn more about the US, and

become an International student. Jim's spirit and energy kept me motivated and confident with limited support from my surroundings.

When I turned 19, after a lot of studying and hard work, my dream came true and I finally came to the US as a student in 2001. Through my years here, I had a pleasure to meet and get to know Jim on several occasions, hear him tell stories, play, teach, sing. It was an honor to be near such energy; the energy of life as it applies to everything, not just drums. It was whole, it was simple, it was pure and sincere! It emitted the human light of a truly alive individual, the light that many unfortunately tends to dim and forget. Jim was always full of life and I felt like he was also in his 20s talking to me. The life and spirit in him, he always sincerely shared with open heart with everyone directly or through his creations.

Jim, your works, your passion, your heart will always be with us. It touched and changed my life as well as many others in ways you probably never imagined. The spirit of Chapinism and your work will continue to do so to many and, as you, will never grow old!

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My favorite, beautiful songs by Jim are: "I'm all I've got", "Carny Days", "Lost Lady".