

Mojo - The Music Magazine

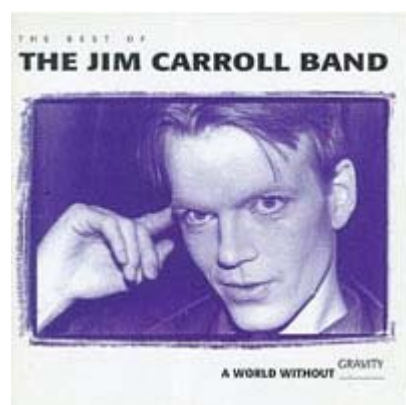
Navigation

Search: 

Features Disc of the day

Jim Carroll 1949-2009

2:23 PM GMT 18/09/2009



WHEN I HEARD THE SAD NEWS that poet, author and singer Jim Carroll had died last Friday (September 11) aged 60 from a heart attack, I went straight to my bookshelf, picked up my copy of *The Basketball Diaries* - the coming-of-age memoir he wrote between the ages of 13 and 16 - and re-read it, cover to cover, in one sitting.

Within its pages Irish Catholic Carroll - born James Dennis Carroll on August 1, 1949 in New York City - vividly describes his love of poetry and basketball (he won a basketball scholarship to prestigious NY private prep school Trinity School in 1964) and his simultaneous descent into smack addiction, prostitution and petty crime. This compelling story, first published in 1978, is set against the colourful backdrop of New York between Autumn 1963 and Summer '66 and Carroll writes powerfully and poetically; he's insightful, honest, humorous, often quite vulnerable, and the mind-boggling rollercoaster of his teens leaps from the pages.

An avid student of the New York School of Poets, of Frank O'Hara, John Ashbery and Ted Berrigan in particular, he honed his writing craft at the St Mark's Poetry Project in the East Village and published his first set of poems as *Organic Trains* in 1967. Further poetry works included 1970's *4 Ups And 1 Down*, 1973's *Living At The Movies*, 1986's *The Book Of Nods* and 1993's *Fear Of Dreaming*.

A magnetic personality, he struck up friendships with **William Burroughs** and **Allen Ginsberg**, while **Jack Kerouac** said of *The Basketball Diaries*, "At thirteen years of age, Jim Carroll writes better prose than 89 percent of the novelists working today." In 1995 director Scott Kalvert adapted the diaries for the big screen with **Leonardo DiCaprio** playing Carroll.

Carroll also counted **Bob Dylan** and **Andy Warhol** - he was a fixture at The Factory - within his circle of friends and details time spent with them in his second set of journals. These were published in 1987 under the title *Forced Entries: The Downtown Diaries 1971 -1973*.

Prior to this he'd met Patti Smith in 1970 and it was she who cajoled him to experiment with music and to form a group. **Keith Richards**, another fan, got him signed to Atlantic records and as The Jim Carroll Band - with guitarists **Brian Linsley** and **Terrell Winn**, bassist **Steve Linsley** and drummer **Wayne Woods** - he released his potent debut LP in 1980. *Catholic Boy* remains an enticing mix of jagged punk, melodic pop and jarring, raw words. Visceral single *People Who Died* quite literally detailed those in his life who had passed away. Bizarrely, it appeared on the soundtrack to the 1982 **Steven Spielberg** film *ET - The Extra Terrestrial*.

Carroll went on to release a further three LPs - 1982's *Dry Dreams*, 1984's *I Write Your Name* and 1998's *Pools Of Mercury* - and a convincing reworking of **Del Shannon's** *Runaway* in 2000. He also worked with such diverse artists as **Lou Reed**, **Boz Scaggs**, **Blue Öyster Cult**, **Pearl Jam** and **Rancid** and was an active spoken-word artist up until his death.

He is sorely missed.

Lois Wilson

Posted by Ross_Bennett at 2:23 PM GMT 18/09/2009

Related MOJO content:

Jim Carroll , Keith Richards , Lou Reed

- [Add to Digg](#)
- [Add to reddit](#)
- [Add to facebook](#)
- [Add to delicious](#)

end of body content back to top

Footer

•

end of footer back to top

[Back to top](#)