

JESSE YOUNAN 21.5.73 - 22.7.08

Eulogy - Part One by John McAloon

In Jesse's words:

KEEP YOUR HEAD, THIS AIN'T NO TIME FOR BREAKING DOWN,
KEEP YOUR HEAD, THIS AIN'T THE END OF THE WORLD.

For those of you who I haven't met before my name is John.

The first time I heard Jesse's voice was one of those occasions that you always remember, that you always know exactly where you were and what you were doing. I was on Military Rd in Matt's car in 2003. We'd just come around those two bends, the left then the right as you climb back up the hill from the Spit Bridge towards the city. We were passing that big brick sandy coloured block of flats on the right hand side. The one with the white wrought iron railings. And then, one of the most beautiful love songs I have ever heard, I will ever hear, began to play.

Over the next five years I came to know Jesse. I came to know a man who was immensely talented, a man who struggled, a man who laid his life before us. He offered us his feelings, his faults, his frailties and his struggles in his songs. And as he did this, he reminded us that that people are beautiful because of their feelings, their faults, their frailties and their struggles, and not in spite of them.

Its ironic that since Jesse was diagnosed with leukaemia in February, some of the themes he sang about really came home in his life, and in the lives of those around him.

Jesse sang about sadness, and the sadness that surrounds Jesse's death is indescribable. Its sadness about him only just beginning to receive the recognition he deserved, its sadness about how helpless we all were in the face of his illness, its sadness for ourselves and for what we are left with, its sadness that we didn't or can't or don't do more for those we love.

The theme of loss that Jesse sang about is here too. Loss for those who called Jesse a son, loss for those who called him a brother, and a father, a cousin, and a friend. The loss that Jesse felt as it became clear that he was ill, as it became apparent that he could not tour, as he became unable to hold a guitar.

The theme of family that Jesse sang about is also here. Jesse sang of family, of its richness, of its stumblings, of its potential. Of its importance in the good times, and in the bad.

But above all Jesse sang of love. A love thats here. An immensely personal and imperfect love. A love that falters. A love that is as strong and gentle and determined as that Nadia and Tony and Emad displayed as they cared for their dying son and brother.

We were all aware of the potential of Jesse's illness. But we all hoped beyond hope that there might be some way, some effort, or some words that would redeem the situation. We were proved wrong.

To Jesse, and in his words:

I WANT TO TELL YOU SOMETHING BUT YOU AIN'T HERE.
I CAN FEEL YOU BUT YOU AIN'T HERE



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Eulogy - Part Two by Matt Jessimer

I'm Matt, who made John listen to Jesse in my car. Ride with me, you will be listening to Jesse. I was his manager of course!

As Jesse's friend & manager, I have looked after his email & Myspace for the last 6 months. During this time Jesse received lots of wonderful messages of support, and more recently, condolence.

Stories of people driving hundreds of kilometres to see Jesse perform. Which is actually not surprising if you saw him perform anywhere near his best.

Throughout many of the emails, a recurring theme became obvious.

Of Jesse's amazing ability to connect with people at a very deep level – even if he had only met them briefly. I'd like to read an email which exemplifies this. I could have picked a dozen others... This one is from Rhondda.

The Subject Heading is - *I knew Jesse for one whole day:*

"I met Jesse on the night I first heard his music, and I was captivated, humbled, an instant fan. I spoke to him briefly about his work, bought his album, which he signed for fandom. Some time later, I took a day out to see a gig he played with Tim & Lara. I was the only person there specifically to see Jesse that afternoon. I guess I was just lucky - I spent most of the afternoon chatting to him between sets, and ran an errand for guitar parts in time for their evening gig. I brought friends to that show and was delighted to be able to talk with Jesse again. I had complained earlier that he had failed to play 'Annie's Song' at the afternoon gig, and he made my (already legendary) day, by announcing that evening "This one's for Rhondda".

I stayed late and my friends left. I walked out still chatting to Jesse and his touring buddies. They walked me to my car and we parted with a warm embrace, an embrace that I will always remember. An expression of the appreciation that we had for each other - me the fan, living a life that's a far cry from the lives described in his songs, and Jesse, the artist, so absorbed in his expression and brutally honest lyrics - barely comprehending the effect he had on his audience.

He seemed to appreciate discussion but shied away from acknowledging his own talents. The hug, was to me, his thanks for expressing my appreciation for having had the pleasure of his company, for having witnessed his talent, and having accepted the gift of his music into my life to enjoy and share.

I am very glad I knew him, even if it was, only just for one day."



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Eulogy - Part Three by Carla Younan

Our Dear Jesse

A celebrated cousin and friend

A loving son of uncle Tony and aunty Nadia

A pillar of strength to brother Emad

An everlasting father to young daughter Ella

And an unforgettable musical talent and idol to many of his listeners and fans

Anyone who truly proclaims they know Jesse will testify that he is "Christ like" in many ways. He lived his short life of 35 years upholding all of the Christian values in his own unique and special manner. His character certainly shone through his breathtaking music that has touched many hearts and will continue to do so as one of Jesse's memorable legacies. Jesse will be with us for ever.

Jesse lost his battle against leukemia. Throughout his 5 months ordeal, Jesse remained strong, positive and hopeful. His chief concern was the state of his immediate family in coming to grips with his illness. This speaks volumes of Jesse-the person. He was honest and realistic, compassionate and caring, inspiring and amazing. Jesse always put others before himself.

Jesse's music is saturated with life's troubles and his frank, tender and raw lyrics coupled with his calibrated voice and intricate guitar playing, which will continue to resonate with his family and friends for years to come. When asked in a radio interview whether it was his intention to wear his heart on his sleeve through his music, Jesse stated that this was a natural occurrence, which is a testament to his character – an honest and genuine human being.

Prior to admission to hospital, he had only just completed recording his latest compilation of songs. His album "A Good Day for a Migraine" speaks in a loud, clear and honest voice about life's confronting realities. His superb masterful playing and singing will provide a huge refuge to many of his listeners. For that we are extremely grateful.

There is a terrible irony in Jesse's entire ordeal. As a result of his extreme health concern, he has touched many of our hearts in a powerful and special way. An outpouring of love, concern, praise and tributes have arisen and a realization of Jesse's huge talent. We can hear Jesse just saying "THANK YOU and SORRY to trouble you".

Jesse has a message for all of us gathered here today:

*"Our time here ain't long, just one blink and we're gone.
Don't be carrying the world on your shoulders.
Put all those little things behind you,
there are bigger things ahead for me and you.
Don't let those little things guide you.
The Road has long Been Travelled and it ain't for you"*

Jesse didn't like saying goodbye. This is true
His gift of music is a blessing for me and you



Thank you Jesse for the person you were to us. We have lost much in your passing but have gained enormously in the memories. The line from "Queeny".
"Come sit by me my love and tell daddy why so sad"
will always be a reminder of your wonderful persona.

As one fan puts it:

May ur Angels guide and protect U in the Heavens above, may ur Spirit always feel warmth, appreciated and loved. May U grow more beautiful each day that U are away from us and know of the Love that will one day join U. May all the Rainbows U had in Life, light ur pathway to the Stars. Sadly missed, Forever loved & in our Heart.