

another inadequate eulogy for Mark Linkous

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<http://jsegel.files.wordpress.com/2010/03/markinish.jpg>

Mark looking over the cliff, on the island of Inishmore after a tour in Ireland.

It's very hard to tally the ways in which Mark Linkous had an effect upon my life. To say the least, it has been profound. I want to say something (or rather scream something!) but I don't find real words do him justice. I don't know how posting something on the internet can have any real meaning, but I'm going to do it anyway.

I was introduced to Mark during the 1990s by my then-former bandmate from Camper Van Beethoven, David Lowery, who had worked with him the first Sparklehorse record. I was already a fan. Mark was looking for another musician to tour the second Sparklehorse record, I had moved to Los Angeles from San Francisco, was working doing film sound stuff and missing playing with a band, so I promptly took the job and toured with Sparklehorse for the next bit of my life.

As you might imagine, Mark was difficult and beautiful. At the time he and his wife lived in rural Virginia, where we rehearsed, with cats and dogs, horses, salamanders, all sorts of living things around. He was incredibly gentle with both the people and the animals around him, but obviously had a deep pain within him.

I'm not going to try to write about his internal workings, I can't at all presume to know (though of course I could tell stories...) To a certain extent I can understand on a personal level, having my own demons to deal with. To analogize via the motorcycle (we both rode Moto Guzzis,) one of our common-interest areas, he ran lean. His mixture was low on fuel and high in air, so he ran too hot, something that might seize the engine if he ran that way for too long. I think that's all I'm going to say.

Beyond the musical ways in which I have been affected by his songs and his playing, and the other musicians I met and heard directly because of him, there are two very specific life-changing things that are the direct result of my being in his band.

One is that, directly or indirectly, it precipitated the reformation of Camper Van Beethoven the following year. It's possible that this was due to David's prodding that I join Sparklehorse to begin with (David and I were fairly estranged at the time), maybe it was a test to see if I could still do it. But Mark was a fan of ours, and we played some of Camper's music, and at one point got David to join Sparklehorse onstage to play "All Her Favorite Fruit", which was the first time David and I had played together in many years. After my stint with Sparklehorse, we actually started playing, and Camper Van Beethoven went on to even make new records and tour extensively in the past decade.

The second major event, though of course I didn't know it at the time, was that I met a nice young woman in Stockholm in September of 1998 during the European tour promoting "Good Morning Spider" (complete with yet another funny story.) We got married 5 years later. The one time that she and I were in Virginia together when Camper was recording, we had planned to tell Mark about the sequence of events that led to our marriage, but just missed him at the studio in Richmond. I don't know that he ever knew!

I wish he knew. I wish he knew how much good there was in the world, how much good he also brought

(<http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?pid=3660046&op=1&view=all&subj=344166110508&aid=1&auser=0&oid=344166110508&id=500329334>)



<http://jsegel.files.wordpress.com/2010/03/sparkle98.jpg>

Sparklehorse, Sept. 1998: Mark, Scott Minor, Jonathan Segel, Scott Fitzsimmons