

## Sparklehorse's Mark Linkous

Back in 2006, *Impose* had a print zine, and we used it to talk to Sparklehorse's Mark Linkous. R.I.P.

By [John Bohannon](#) » Pulling from the print zine archives for a look back at the man in 2006. R.I.P.



Mark Linkous. Photo by Tim Saccenti.

Over the past decade, Mark Linkous, otherwise known as Sparklehorse, has graced us with a handful of records made at his own pace – not a corporation's. Although he was signed to Capitol at one point in his career, he has now settled on its independent subsidiary, Astralwerks, where he can work more comfortably. Gaining a significant amount of notoriety in Europe over the years, it's clear that people have finally caught on to him in the US after he a recent handful of sold out dates stretching from Athens to New York in support of his new album *Dreamt for Light Years in the Belly of a Mountain*.

Sparklehorse's first album, *Vivadixiesubmarinetransmissionplot*, was considered by many a lo-fi work of art. By contrast, his new album was produced by the elite likes of Danger Mouse and Dave Fridman. When asked how he thinks he has progressed over the years, he says, "technically its changed. With *It's a Wonderful Life*, I tried to travel around to other studios just to learn how to record sounds that I heard in my head. As far as sound goes, I've changed since the first album because I've gotten better at recording."

He continues. "I did the first two albums pretty much alone. Then I wanted to travel, like I mentioned before, and sort of learn more technical aspects and watch more instead of doing everything. I really like the sound of the records Dave Fridman has done like [Mercury Rev's] *Deserter Songs* and The Flaming Lips's] *Soft Bulletin*. That's the main reason I went up to work with Dave. Having Steven Drozd play on this album [was great]; I love the way he records his drumming."

Linkous seems to always have the right connections with the right people, working with the kind of people many fans create grandiose images of and every aspiring artist fantasizes about working with. Danger Mouse also makes a guest appearance (most noticeably on the track "Getting it Wrong"), and anything that he touches these days turns to gold. Linkous and Danger Mouse are planning on taking on a new project in the very near future. "I'm hoping to push the kind of thing he was doing with the *Grey Album*, and maybe I can bring in the pop thing I do and whatever hip-hop background he has. I would like it to be an even more realized thing [than] the *Grey Album*."

Mark also recently had the chance to produce Daniel Johnston's last record. "He's great. I've been a fan of his music for so long. Just being around him and seeing and hearing what comes out of his head – I don't know. There's something about Daniel; the music that comes out of his head is so pure and uncorrupted and unpretentious and uncontrived. He's just a pure artist."

Linkous went on a five year hiatus after releasing *It's a Wonderful Life* in which he experienced quite a hefty amount of turmoil in his life. Battling a drug addiction, he escaped from reality to live in seclusion. I asked him what still drove him to make music after all that. "It's the only thing I know how to do," he says, "and I don't want to work in the coal mines like my fathers and my uncles and my grandfathers. I have all this stuff in my head and it just needs to come out and I'm lucky that I'm able to make the stuff in my head into art. I'm really lucky to be able to make a living out of doing what I do". During his time off, Mark also found time to pursue his hobbies outside of music. "I've spent a lot of time watching black and white movies on satellite TV. I have some old motorcycles I like to ride and work on. I've got some old Italian bikes and an old British motorcycle. I guess that's my hobby."

Linkous intends to keep pushing on his own way and making albums at his own pace. I asked Mark what words he wanted to leave his audience with, and they were as follows: "After I play, sometimes people tell me the songs are things that helped them through hard times. [I'm happy] if they can listen to the records and understand that there is a lot of hope and optimism is in the records, and that sadness can be ok sometimes, that it doesn't always have to be a miserable thing."