

Sparklehorse singer Mark Linkous dies

Singer-songwriter celebrated for his beautiful and haunting music has taken his own life, aged 47

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He left an indelible mark on music ... Mark Linkous of Sparklehorse in 2001. Photograph: Yui Mok/PA

Mark Linkous, the musician better known as [Sparklehorse](#), has died. The singer-songwriter celebrated for his beautiful, haunting and melancholy music took his own life on Saturday (6 March) in Knoxville, Tennessee. He was 47.

Linkous was found early Saturday afternoon, according to the New York Times, when police were called to an alley outside a friend's home. The musician had shot himself in the heart. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

Although a modest and self-deprecating figure, Linkous left an indelible mark on alternative folk and indie rock, beginning in the mid-90s. Albums such as 1995's *Vivadixiesubmarinetransmissionplot*, 1998's *Good Morning Spider* and 2001's *It's a Wonderful Life* are lush, expansive and utterly heartbreaking. He released only four solo albums, the last in 2006, followed by a collaboration in 2009 with electronic musician Fennesz, as well as the *Dark Night of the Soul* project with Danger Mouse. The latter, which also featured contributions from Iggy Pop, David Lynch and others, was initially issued as a blank CD; a proper re-release was [announced just last week](#).

The Virginia-based musician was a frequent collaborator, producing albums by Daniel Johnston and Nina Persson, and performing with PJ Harvey, Tom Waits and Vic Chesnutt, who took his own life in December. In the months before the *Dark Night of the Soul* sessions, Linkous described the recording process as a "happy time". "I was enjoying myself," he told [Dazed Digital magazine](#). "It was something that I wasn't used [to], a different world. All I could think about was music ... I didn't get into my brain too much because I didn't have time to like I usually do when I make music in solitary situations."

Linkous had wrestled with demons before. Touring with Radiohead in 1996, the songwriter took a mixture of valium and anti-depressants, spending 14 hours unconscious in his London hotel room. When paramedics straightened his legs, which had been pinned beneath him, Linkous suffered a heart attack. He spent six months in a wheelchair. "I was really scared that when I technically died – which I guess I did for a few minutes – that the part of my brain that allowed me to write songs would be damaged," he told *Rolling Stone* in 1999.

Just before his death, Linkous was reportedly in the process of moving to Knoxville. He had completed most of a new album, according to his manager, which he hoped to finish at a new studio. Linkous is survived by his wife, Teresa Linkous, his parents, and three brothers.