

Sparklehorse singer Mark Linkous remembered

Patti Smith, Steve Albini and Radiohead's Colin Greenwood have paid tribute to the late singer, who took his own life on Saturday

Sean Michaels

guardian.co.uk, Tuesday 9 March 2010 10.19 GMT



'A good dude whose art was genuine' ... Mark Linkous of Sparklehorse. Photograph: Eamonn McCabe

News of [Mark Linkous's death](#) has led to an [outpouring of tributes](#), including remembrances by [Patti Smith](#), [Steve Albini](#) and [Radiohead's](#) Colin Greenwood. The [Sparklehorse](#) singer died on Saturday, aged 47.

"Mark Linkous gave us so many dark and beautiful songs," Smith wrote on a [dedicated page of her website](#). "They were dark like coal compressed into diamonds and they sparkled in the deep night like spattering morning stars ... Who can know why one leaves us by their own hand. Perhaps it is despair meshed with cold clarity. Perhaps one is merely done on earth and needs to travel elsewhere. We can only appreciate his work and imagine him sailing away on a vessel composed of [the very sparrows of which he sang](#)."

In a post to Radiohead's blog, bassist Colin Greenwood recalled touring with Sparklehorse around the release of *OK Computer*. "They were great every night," he wrote. "[Mark's] first two records were very important to me, and I carried his music from the tour into my life, and my friends' lives too." It was during this tour that Linkous almost died, overdosing in a London hotel room. But Greenwood's memories are of subtler things: "He was softly spoken, with an 'Old South' courtesy I hadn't heard before: he introduced me to Daniel Johnston's music, and the West Virginian writing of [Pinckney Benedict](#). Mark wrote and played some beautiful music, and we're lucky to have it. Rest in peace."

This feeling was echoed in [message](#) by Death Cab for Cutie's Chris Walla. "Rest in peace," he wrote. "You shared so much." Canadian band [Metric](#) tweeted on Sunday night: "Don't care about the Oscars. Thinking only of our latest loss too soon, Mark Linkous." The Flaming Lips' Steven Drozd called Linkous "a kind soul". Over the years, the band recorded two songs with Sparklehorse, and toured together in 2003. "Every night he and I would share a quiet moment with a shot of whiskey and a few laughs," Drozd remembered. "A nice memory."

Writing on his recording studio's [discussion board](#), legendary engineer Steve Albini reflected on the "couple of weeks" he spent working with Linkous. "He was as open, sincere and unaffected a person as I've ever encountered," he wrote. "[Mark] was completely unguarded and enthusiastic about the things he loved, and he gave the musicians he worked with freedom to be creative and excel. Prior to seeing him at work I'd never given his music much thought, but during those sessions he impressed me

tremendously and I was really looking forward to seeing him again and finishing [his new] record."

"I have no idea what brought Mark to this decision, and I'm sure there's nothing I can say that will enlighten anybody about his death. I just wanted to say I thought he was a good dude and his art was genuine. I don't think there's a lot more you can ever ask of anybody."