

Rolling Stone

Sparklehorse's Mark Linkous Takes Own Life

by: Caryn Ganz

Singer, songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Mark Linkous has committed suicide, his manager confirms to *Rolling Stone*. Best known for his acclaimed work with Sparklehorse, who released four albums of imaginative ambient psych-folk, Linkous also produced Daniel Johnston's 2003 album *Fear Yourself* and collaborated with Danger Mouse on *Dark Night of the Soul*. Linkous, who was 47 years old, shot himself in the heart outside a friend's home in Knoxville, Tennessee, where he had recently relocated to work on music. "It is with great sadness that we share the news that our dear friend and family member, Mark Linkous, took his own life today," reads a statement from his family. "We are thankful for his time with us and will hold him forever in our hearts. May his journey be peaceful, happy and free. There's a heaven and there's a star for you."

Linkous' dramatic, lush music often came from a place of pain. In 1996, Linkous actually died for two minutes after ingesting a dangerous mix of Valium and antidepressants while on tour in the U.K. behind Sparklehorse's 1995 debut *Vivadixiesubmarinetransmissionplot*. He recovered, but the incident left him crippled — he laid unconscious for 14 hours, cutting off circulation to his legs. He suffered a heart attack when medics attempted to straighten his legs, and underwent seven surgeries to save his damaged limbs. But after the incident, he recorded 1999's *Good Morning Spider*, 2001's *It's A Wonderful Life* and 2006's *Dreamt for Light Years in the Belly of a Mountain*. "For a while there, 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 my ability to write songs would be damaged," he told *Rolling Stone* in 1999.

Linkous most recently teamed up with Danger Mouse and director David Lynch on *Dark Night of the Soul*, a multimedia project that was tied up in legal issues with EMI; just this past week, Danger Mouse and the label [resolved their dispute](#) and agreed to let the album come out as it was originally intended. The last time [Linkous spoke with RS](#) in July 2009, he explained how after he and Danger Mouse worked together on *Dreamt For Light Years in the Belly of a Mountain*, he brought the producer an instrumental track called "Revolution." "I just couldn't sing it," Linkous told *Rolling Stone*, "and I thought that it should be an anti-war song, but I'm not that good at writing literal lyrics." Gruff Rhys from Super Furry Animals added lyrics and vocals and the song, retitled "Just War," kicks off *Dark Night of the Soul*. "That was the egg for the entire project," Linkous said.

Linkous' manager confirms he was nearly finished with a new album that was due on Anti- Records.