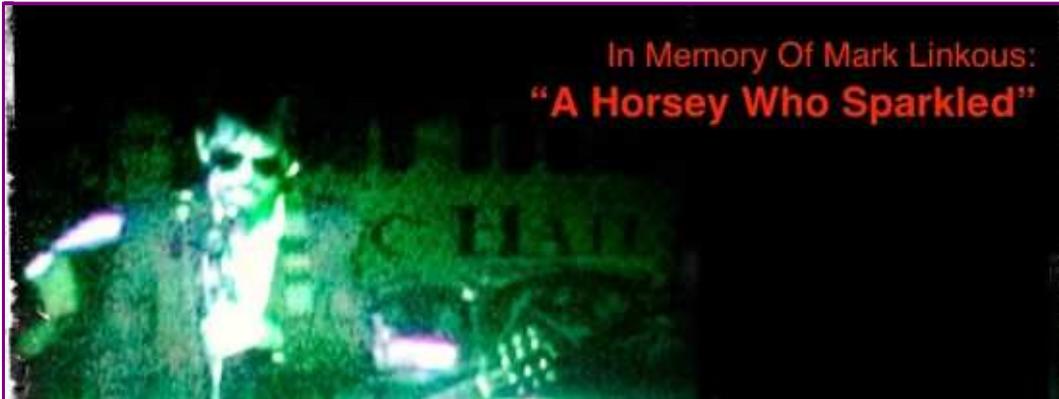


In Memory Of Mark Linkous: "A Horsey Who Sparkled"

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Sunday September 9th 2012 would have been the 50th birthday of Virginia born 'Sparklehorse' main man, Mark Linkous.

When I first picked up their 1995 debut "Vivadixiesubmarinetranmissionplot", from the opening strains of "Homecoming Queen", I was slowly transported to a curiously painted world, made all the more surreal by the ghosts of high school summers that had all come back to life with regret and reflection to the tune of a melancholy vaudevillian carnival. By the time the 2nd song on the album 'Weird Sisters' appeared, with the lingering drag of an open 'D' chord, ominously foretelling of the economic downturn, I was firmly hooked by it's haunting majesty...

After listening to 2 full-length albums and an EP, I found myself eagerly anticipating the release of 2001's 'It's A Wonderful Life'. When it eventually arrived, I was not disappointed and played it to all those around me. The album presented an eloquent vision of life out in the woods, nestled in the Smoky Mountains where Mark made his Static King Studios and where bees, bears, cats and frogs all populated his world with a comforting re-assurance and familiarity. The album featured guest appearances from the likes of PJ Harvey, Nina Persson of The Cardigans & Tom Waits amongst others...

2006's astounding "Dreamt For Light Years In The Belly Of A Mountain" was to be Mark's last full-length album released under the "Sparklehorse" name. Once more, his imagination and deft touch with loops, detuned short-wave radios and "found sounds" featured prominently in making up the album's distinct texture.

A tour followed and I finally got the chance to see "Sparklehorse" live with the shows in Dublin & Belfast in September of 2006.

I was also fortunate to have the opportunity to meet Mark, on the eve of the first Irish show at Whelan's in Dublin as they set up. Mark was tall and wiry, quiet, but a true Southern gentleman. He had been studiously setting up his array of effects on stage and had a roll of gaffer tape in his hand when I walked in on off the back alley with the tour manager I'd been chatting with offered to introduce me to Mark.

Mark politely signed some vinyl and a poster I had with me and said that he was looking forward to the show and being back in Ireland. He was ponderous, shy and not wishing to take up any more of his time, I thanked him and left.

Other members of the touring band, long-time drummer Johnny Hott, as well as vocalist and bass player Paula Jean Brown (former Go-Go & of Giant Sand) also took time to chat.

The shows (three dates at Whelan's) were incredible: the band was tight, the sound was fantastic and the material was a mixture covering the entirety of the Sparklehorse back catalogue and we returned to Belfast eager for a final date, this time at the Empire Music Hall.

I caught on video, a portion of this performance in Belfast, which was his last on the Emerald Isle. The appreciation shown by the audience was evident and Mark seemed genuinely touched by the enthusiastic response of the crowd.

The beauty of these shows played on the Emerald Isle will live long with me and all those who were fortunate to have been there.

Mark later collaborated with Gnarl Barkley on David Lynch's 'Dark Night Of The Soul' soundtrack, as well as with Austrian musician Fennesz on "In The Fishtank 15".

Mark was in the process of moving the Static King Studios to Knoxville Tennessee in March 2010, when he died of a self inflicted gunshot wound to the heart. He was just 47.

At the time he had just completed production on Angela Faye Martin's album 'Pictures From Home' and was said to be putting the finishing touches on a new "Sparklehorse" offering. Nothing has appeared as of yet but fans remain hopeful.

Mark made beautiful, varied music and gave a unique voice and quality to songs that comforted so many in a difficult world.

So, 'Happy 50th Birthday Horsey!', thanks for the gift of your beautiful tunes!

Hope the dog, hasn't eaten your birthday cake, but I guess if it did, then hopefully it made you smile on your apple bed.

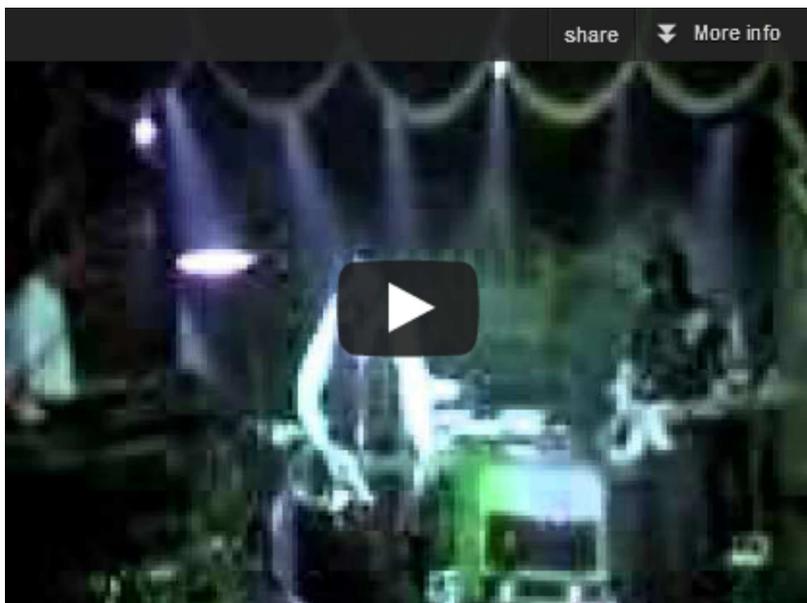
"I wish I had a horse's head, a tiger's heart, an apple bed..."

© Mark Linkous, Sparklehorse, 'Apple Bed', "It's A Wonderful Life" 2001.

My extended condolences go out to Mark's friends and family.

To 'Sparklehorse' fans the world over, continue to spread the word and hope you enjoy the video I have uploaded and wished to offer for sometime.

Apologies in advance for the picture quality – we are hoping to amend this in due course -sound remains unaffected.



Please note: no copyright infringement is intended by use of this video and all songs/material contained therein are © Mark Linkous / Sparklehorse.

May the music live on...

Sparklehorse LP Discography

- 1995 – Vivadixiesubmarinetransmissionplot
- 1998 – Good Morning Spider
- 2001 – It's A Wonderful Life
- 2006 – Dreamt For Light Years In The Belly Of A Mountain
- 2009 – Dark Night Of The Soul (with Danger Mouse)
- 2009 – In The Fishtank 15 (with Fennesz)