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DAILY MUSIC NEWS

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Edited By Jonathan Cohen. June 07, 2004, 2:55 PM ET

Guitarist Robert Quine Found Dead


ROBERT QUINE



PHOTO: Godlis
 Guitarist Robert Quine, one of punk rock's most daring soloists, was found dead Saturday (June 5) in his New York apartment. He was 61. According to close friend and guitar maker Rick Kelly, who discovered Quine's body, the musician died of a heroin overdose Memorial Day weekend. He had been despondent over the recent death of his wife.

Born in Akron, Ohio, Quine was heavily influenced by the Velvet Underground, whose music he recorded obsessively while living in San Francisco. He moved to New York in 1971 and became the lead guitarist for bassist Richard Hell's important group the Voidoids, with whom he recorded two albums. His skittering, unpredictable work with Hell defined the possibilities of punk guitar.

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During the '80s, he recorded and toured frequently with Lou Reed and played on saxophonist/composer John Zorn's best-known albums. Quine made key guest appearances on Tom Waits' "Rain Dogs" (1985) and Marianne Faithfull's "Strange Weather" (1987). In 1989, he began a long association with Matthew Sweet; he also worked regularly with Lloyd Cole.

In 2001, Universal released a three-CD box of Quine's live 1969 recordings of the Velvet Underground, "The Bootleg Series Volume 1: The Quine Tapes."

"Robert Quine was a magnificent guitar player -- an original and innovative tyro of the vintage beast," Reed says in a statement released to Billboard.com. "He was an extraordinary mixture of taste, intelligence and rock'n'roll abilities coupled with major technique and a scholar's memory for every decent guitar lick ever played under the musical son. He made tapes for me for which I am eternally grateful -- tapes of the juiciest parts of solos from players long gone. Quine was smarter than them all. And the proof is in the recordings, some of which happily are mine. If you can find more interesting sounds and musical clusters than Quine on 'Waves of Fear' [from Reed's 1982 album "The Blue Mask"], well, it's probably something else by Robert."

"He was a marvelous guitarist, a soulful music lover with high standards and had an eviscerating wit," Patti Smith Band drummer Jay Dee Daugherty tells Billboard.com. "He did not suffer fools gladly, but made up for it with a thinly disguised generosity of spirit."

-- Chris Morris, L.A.; Jonathan Cohen, N.Y.

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