

Death of Roger Troutman

Written by Westside ID132

Friday, 24 September 2004 15:37 -

Brothers Roger and Larry Troutman, founding members of seminal '80s funk outfit Zapp, were found dead Sunday (April 25) morning near their Dayton, Ohio recording studio in an apparent murder-suicide.

Roger Troutman, 47, was found just outside the studio with several gunshots to his torso, according to the Associated Press. He died while in surgery at the Good Samaritan Hospital and Health Center.

Roger's brother Larry was found dead in a car a few blocks away with a single gunshot wound to the head. Investigators believe the wound was self-inflicted, but won't know for a few days whether a handgun found in the vehicle was the same as that responsible for Roger's death.

Roger and Larry Troutman founded Zapp in 1975, along with their brothers Lester and Terry Troutman. The group became an important part of the funk scene in the early '80s with such hit records as "More Bounce to the Ounce," "Dance Floor," and "Doo Wa Ditty."

Roger, lead singer and guitarist for the group, frequently used a vocoder voice-distortion box for his lead vocals. The group's future-funk vibe provided the transition between the sloppy grooves of Parliament in the late '70s and the early electro foundations of hip-hop in the early '80s. Later in the decade, Roger went solo and earned a crossover hit with the record "I Want To Be Your Man." He later rejoined the family group under the moniker Zapp & Roger.

After depleting a finite reserve of James Brown and George Clinton samples, hip-hop artists also took a liking to Zapp. Most recently, Roger Troutman was used by 2Pac and Dr. Dre for their 1996 award-winning collaboration "California Love."

Musician Roger Troutman Fatally Shot

The Ohio Musician Had Several Hits Including "More Bounce To The Ounce"

DAYTON, Ohio, Posted 6:45 a.m. April 26, 1999 -- R&B recording artist musician Roger Troutman was shot to death this weekend, possibly by his brother, in an apparent murder-suicide, police said.

Troutman, of the rock-funk group Roger & Zapp, was found outside his northwest Dayton recording studio around 7 a.m. Sunday. The 47-year-old Dayton resident had been shot several

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times in the torso and died while in surgery at Good Samaritan Hospital and Health Center, police Sgt. Gary White said.

His brother, Larry Troutman, 54, was found dead in a car a few blocks away with a gunshot wound to the head, police said. A handgun was found inside the car, which matched the description of a car leaving the scene of Roger Troutman's shooting, White said.

"Detectives are investigating it as an apparent murder-suicide," city police Sgt. Tom Rhea said Sunday night.

White said investigators could know by Tuesday whether the gun was used in both shootings.

"Family members have been interviewed. They can offer no reason or motive for this double shooting," White said.

The brothers, natives of Hamilton, were part of the Troutman family of performers that formed the 1970s band Zapp and helped pioneer the rock-funk "Dayton sound."

Zapp, whose membership evolved during the 1980s from the original all-Troutman-brother lineup, released its last album of new material in 1989.

Roger & Zapp, artists with Warner Brothers, were known for the 1980 hit "More Bounce To The Ounce." The song was part of the band's self-titled debut album that hit the pop top 20 in 1980.

Roger Troutman eventually went solo, recording under the name "Roger." He hit No. 1 in 1987 with the single "I Want to Be Your Man."

Roger Troutman also recorded "California Love," a Grammy-nominated collaboration with hip-hop superstars Tupac Shakur and Dr. Dre. He released a greatest-hits album in 1996.

Larry Troutman left performing in the mid-"80s to manage the Roger & Zapp group full time and assume the presidency of the growing Dayton-based Troutman Enterprises, which included three recording studios, real-estate ventures and contracting.

"Roger, he was unique," said Ohio Players drummer and leader Diamond Williams. "Very, very talented. The world has lost a truly talented entertainer by another senseless act."

Cincinnati native Bootsy Collins, bass player with Rock "n" Roll Hall of Fame member Parliament-Funkadelic, said he would miss his friend and former colleague.

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Mr. Troutman III seemed more preacher than musician, at one point calling for everyone who “doesn”t know Jesus” to come to the front of the church.

“I feel like this is a Holy Ghost party,” he said. “I know this ain”t on the program, but God ain”t got a program.”

Although there was no mention of the murder-suicide during the ceremony, Dr. Arthur Thomas referred to Larry Troutman’s final act in passing.

“Larry Troutman was a creative genius who loved trying to make a difference,” said Dr. Arthur Thomas. “He fed the hungry, helped the helpless, carried everybody’s burden.”

“Whatever is written or said, Larry Troutman made this a better world.”

Bishop Rudolph Pringle remembered Roger Troutman as a “natural-born anything.”

“If anybody knew what God is, Roger did,” Mr. Pringle said. “There are just no superlatives that can describe Roger Troutman.”

Roger “Little Roger” Troutman, 47, formed Roger & the Human Body in the 1970s. That band would lead him to Zapp, which recorded its first hit in 1980.

Larry Troutman, 54, started his musical career by playing percussion in Zapp, before eventually becoming the band’s manager.

The brothers owned a number of business enterprises which funneled money back into the community and training unskilled workers for their construction business.

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