

# Singer-songwriter Roy Orbison dies

HENDERSONVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Roy Orbison, the Grammy winner whose piercing voice on songs like "Pretty Woman" pioneered early rock 'n' roll and made him a legend with ballads about lost love, has died of a heart attack at age 52.

The singer-songwriter, known for his black pompadour and ever-present sunglasses, was brought by ambulance to Hendersonville Hospital late Tuesday but couldn't be revived, said Melanie Lamb, a hospital spokeswoman.

He died just before midnight, she said.

Orbison, who played guitar, gave a concert Sunday in Akron, Ohio, before 2,000 people. On Tuesday, Orbison was at the Nashville-area home of country singer Jean Shepard, who said he had been with her husband, "having a great time."

Orbison achieved fame more than two decades ago with the hits "Only the Lonely," his first million-seller, then "Blue Angel" and "I'm Hurtin'."

"Oh, Pretty Woman," in 1964, sold more than 7 million copies, and was recently a hit for the group Van Halen.

At his death, he was still on the charts, with "Handle With Care," a collaboration with artists including Bob Dylan, George Harrison and Tom Petty. They recorded an album under the name The Traveling Wilburys.

During his heyday in the early 1960s, Orbison had 27 straight records on the charts. In May 1963, he toured Britain with the Beatles. He was a smash in England but still virtually unknown in the United States.

In 1977, Elvis Presley introduced him as "the greatest singer in the world." Bruce Springsteen saluted him in a song, "Thunder Road."

Orbison once estimated he had sold 30 million records, but he added, "I don't normally keep tabs."

Some of his other hits include "Cryin'," "It's Over," and "Blue Bayou." Last year, he re-recorded his 1963 hit "In Dreams," after the song



Orbison (left) with Bruce Springsteen during Orbison's '87 Hall of Fame induction.

had been revived in the movie "Blue Velvet."

In a 1986 Associated Press interview, Orbison said the biggest thrill in his career was "just being in the business itself."

As for being called a legend, he said: "I did say facetiously once that being a legend meant being old. But someone pointed out that not all old people are

legends. Anyway, it's nice to have had longevity and to have influenced a few people for the good."

On Sept. 30, 1987, Orbison gave a concert at Los Angeles' Coconut Grove nightclub, called "Roy Orbison and Friends: A Black-and-White Night." The friends were Springsteen, Elvis Costello, Jackson Browne, Tom Waits, T-Bone Burnett and J.D. Souther, with

Bonnie Raitt, Jennifer Warnes and K.D. Lang singing backup. The concert was taped for a cable television special.

In 1980, Orbison teamed with Emmylou Harris on the duet, "That Loving You Feeling Again," and earned a Grammy award. He also was inducted into the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame and the Hall of Fame of the Nashville Songwriters Association.

Orbison grew up in Wink, Texas, and was taught to play guitar at age 6 by his father, an oil field worker. He played guitar on a radio station at age 8 and was in a country music band by age 14.

He got his early recording experience in the 1950s with Sun Records of Memphis, Tenn., the company that launched the careers of Presley, Johnny Cash and Jerry Lee Lewis.

He was one of the first "rockabilly" singers — a hybrid of rock 'n' roll and hillbilly music, as country music was known then.

Orbison began wearing sunglasses publicly all the time in 1963 when he accidentally left his regular glasses at home and had to wear shades while in London. His appearance was well-received and he kept it a tradition.

His career plummeted in the late 1960s in the aftermath of two personal tragedies. His wife died in a motorcycle accident in 1966. Two of his three sons, ages 10 and 6, died in a fire that destroyed his lakeside home in 1968. His third son is now in his twenties.

His most successful songs focused on broken romance, and his "Too Soon to Know" was written after the death of his wife. "A little hurt went a long way," he said in the 1986 interview.

Orbison remarried and had two sons from that marriage.

Asked in the 1986 interview how he would like to be remembered, he replied:

"One day when they are mentioning people who had an impact, if they just mention me among the rest of the guys and gals, it would be great."

# U.S.S.R. to open door to Trotsky's grandson

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The grandson of Soviet revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky has been given permission to visit the Soviet Union for the first time in 57 years because his half-sister, whom he hasn't seen since he was 5, is dying of cancer.

"Things are much more open in Russia now. It's all part of (Soviet leader Mikhail) Gorbachev's policy, I'm sure," Esteban Volkow Bronstein said Tuesday night, referring to Gorbachev's program of glasnost, or openness.

Volkow said he has already been granted a visa to visit Alexandra Zakharonavna, his half-sister and Trotsky's granddaughter, in Moscow. He plans to leave for Italy next week to appear on a television show about his grandfather and then fly to Moscow for a four-day visit before Christmas.

Volkow, now 62, was living with Trotsky in Mexico City when the former head of the Red army was assassinated by one of Josef Stalin's agents on Aug. 20, 1940.

Volkow, who was 14 at the time, remembers finding Trotsky on the floor, dying from serious head wounds after the attack with a mountain climber's ice ax.

Trotsky, born Lev Davidovich Bronstein, was one of the leaders of the October 1917 revolution that established the Soviet Union, but he lost a power struggle with Stalin and was exiled in 1929, eventually settling in Mexico City.

Trotsky became a nonperson, his name reviled in the Soviet Union.

"For 50 or 60 years the Russian public has been conditioned to think of him as almost the devil," Volkow said. "Things are changing, but gradually."

Now a Mexican citizen, Volkow said he had never tried to get a visa to visit the Soviet Union before, in part because he had been sure it would be denied.



Esteban Volkow Bronstein at the house of his grandfather, Leon Trotsky, in Mexico City recently.

Volkow said that until last month he had known nothing of his half-sister's fate except for a reference in a book published 10 years ago that showed she was still alive.

He said he had asked friends traveling to Moscow to try to find her several times, but none could until Pierre Broue, a historian and Trotsky specialist at the University of Grenoble in France, located her in November.

"I haven't been able to talk to her, really, because I don't speak Russian, except for a few phrases that I memorized to say to her," Volkow said. "She doesn't have long to live."

He said Zakharonavna, who is 63, had spent 10 years in Stalinist prison camps solely because she was a relative of Trotsky.

"She's suffered a lot, and now she's very weak," Volkow said.

Volkow said he doesn't remember the last time he saw her because he was only 5 when he and his mother fled the Soviet Union in 1931.

Volkow noted that his grandfather is being slowly drawn out of the shadows under glasnost. Volkow's half-uncle, Sergei Sedov, was recently rehabilitated by the Soviet Supreme Court, which ordered all charges against him dropped.

"Stalin shot him because he was Trotsky's son," Volkow said of Sedov, who was executed in 1937 during a purge. "He wasn't political at all. He was just a technician."

Trotsky was too important a figure for his role in Soviet history to be distorted, Volkow said, adding, "It can't be hidden."

Volkow, a retired chemical engineer, said he himself is not a Trotskyist believer in international revolution.