

Joey Ramone

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Joey Ramone (May 19, 1951 – April 15, 2001), born as **Jeffry Ross Hyman**, was a vocalist and songwriter best known for his work in the punk rock group the Ramones. He and bandmate Johnny Ramone were the only two original members who stayed with the band until their retirement in 1996. As well as being a member of the Ramones, he also had a solo career.

Hyman stood at 6 ft. 8 in (2.03 meters) tall. He had a long shock of black hair that almost completely obscured his face. He suffered from obsessive-compulsive disorder for which he checked himself into clinics when symptoms became unbearable.^[1]

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Joey Ramone



Joey Ramone (c.1980)

Background information

Birth name	Jeffry Ross Hyman
Born	May 19, 1951 Queens, New York, U.S.
Died	April 15, 2001 (aged 49) New York City, New York, U.S.
Genre(s)	Punk rock
Occupation(s)	Singer, Songwriter
Instrument(s)	Vocals, Drums
Years active	1974 - 2001
Label(s)	Sire
Associated acts	Ramones

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Biography

Early life

Hyman grew up in Forest Hills, Queens. He and his future bandmates attended Forest Hills High School.

During his youth, he was by general accounts something of an outcast and had a dysfunctional family life, which inspired the song "We're A Happy Family." His parents divorced in the early 1960s. His mother, Charlotte Leshner (1926-2007), encouraged an interest in music in both him and his brother Mitchell (a.k.a. Mickey Leigh).

He was a fan of The Beatles,^[2] The Who, among other bands (particularly "oldies" and the Phil Spector-produced "Girl Groups"). He took up drums at 13, playing throughout his teen years, and was originally the drummer for the Ramones, while Dee Dee Ramone was the vocalist. However, Dee Dee proved to be unsuited for the position as he could not play his bass guitar and sing at the same time, so on Tommy Ramone's suggestion, Joey switched to vocals.

Ramones

Hyman was said to be the "heart and soul" of the Ramones, and his favorite songs from their repertoire were often the ballads and love songs. C.J. Ramone called him the "hippie of the group."^[3]

Hyman did not speak to guitarist John Cummings (Johnny Ramone) for many years. This animosity began when Cummings "stole" Hyman's girlfriend Linda, whom Cummings later married. Cummings discusses this animosity in *End of the Century: The Story of the Ramones*. The documentary also claims that this love triangle prompted Hyman to write "The KKK Took My Baby Away" for the *Pleasant Dreams* album. They also were strongly averse to each other's politics, Hyman being a liberal while Cummings was a staunch conservative. The pair never truly resolved their differences.

Other projects

In 1985, Joey joined Little Steven Van Zandt's music-industry activist group Artists United Against Apartheid which acted against the Sun City resort in South Africa. Joey and forty-nine other top recording artists, including Bruce Springsteen, U2, Bob Dylan and Run DMC, collaborated on the song "Sun City" in which they pledged they would never perform at the resort.

In 1994, he formed Sibling Rivalry with his brother Mickey Leigh. They had one release, the *In a Family Way* EP.

Joey appeared on the Helen Love album *Love and Glitter, Hot Days and Music* singing the track "Punk Boy". Helen Love returned the favor, singing on Joey's song "Mr. Punchy".

Hyman co-wrote and recorded the song "Meatball Sandwich" with Youth Gone Mad. For a short time before his death, he took the role of manager and producer for the punk rock group The Independents.^[4]

His last recording as a vocalist was singing backup vocals on the CD *One Nation Under* by the Dine Navajo rock group Blackfire. He appeared on two tracks, "What Do You See" and "Lying to Myself". The CD, released in 2002, won "Best Pop/Rock Album of the Year" at the 2002 Native American Music Awards.^[5]

Death

Joey Ramone died of lymphoma at New York-Presbyterian Hospital on April 15, 2001. He had apparently had lymphoma for a little over four years; he was sighted at a New York City cancer clinic that specializes in lymphoma in the mid 1990s. Countless memorials followed, from both his fans and the many rockers he influenced.

He was listening to the song "In a Little While" by U2 when he died.^[6] This was during U2's Elevation Tour, and from that point on during shows Bono would introduce the song as a tune that was originally about a lovestruck hangover but that Joey turned it into a gospel song.

His solo album *Don't Worry About Me* was released posthumously in 2002, and features the single "What a Wonderful World", a cover of the Louis Armstrong standard. The song was featured in a 2001 episode of *Gilmore Girls* and is included on *Our Little*



Joey Ramone was honored with the creation of "Joey Ramone Place" outside the address of CBGB in New York City.

Corner of the World: Music from Gilmore Girls, the show's official soundtrack. The recording was also used for the closing credits for the Michael Moore documentary *Bowling for Columbine*. It also features "Maria Bartiromo," a tribute to a financial-news broadcaster. More recently, his cover of "What a Wonderful World" has been used in a 2007 advertisement for the PS3 iteration of Ratchet & Clank and was also used to open the release celebration for Windows Vista and Microsoft Office 2007.

MTV News claimed: "With his trademark rose-colored shades, black leather jacket, shoulder-length hair, ripped jeans and alternately snarling and crooning, hiccupping vocals, Joey was the iconic godfather of punk."^[7]

On November 30, 2003, a block of East 2nd Street in New York City was officially renamed Joey Ramone Place.^[8] It is the block where Hyman once lived with bandmate Dee Dee Ramone, and is near the music club CBGB, where the Ramones got their start. Hyman's birthday is celebrated annually by rock 'n' roll nightclubs, hosted in New York City by his brother and, until recently, his mother. Joey was buried in Hillside Cemetery in Lyndhurst, New Jersey.^[9]

Vocal style

Joey Ramone's vocal style was unorthodox in that he had no formal training in an era where vocal proficiency was arguably the norm for most rock bands. His signature cracks, hiccups, snarls, crooning and youthful voice made his one of punk rock's most recognizable voices. Allmusic.com claims that "Joey Ramone's signature bleat was the voice of punk rock in America."^[10] As his vocals matured and deepened through his career, so did the Ramones' songwriting, leaving a notable difference from Joey's initial melodic and callow style—two notable tracks serving as examples are "Somebody Put Something in My Drink" and "Mama's Boy".

Discography

For Ramones albums, see Ramones discography.

Solo

- *Don't Worry About Me* – (2002)

EP

- *In a Family Way* – Sibling Rivalry (1994)
- *Ramones: Leathers from New York* – The Ramones and Joey Ramone (solo) (1997)
- *Christmas Spirit...In My House* – (2002)

Singles

- "I Got You Babe" - (1982) (A duet with Holly Beth Vincent)
- "What a Wonderful World" - (2002)

Notes and references

- ↑ WordPress
- ↑ BBC News | MUSIC | The musical misfits
- ↑ MyRamones
- ↑ Independents band bio
- ↑ Blackfire.net
- ↑ VH1 news
- ↑ MTV News obituary
- ↑ Officialramones.com
- ↑ "Sometimes the Grave Is a Fine and Public Place", New York Times, March 28, 2004. Retrieved on 2007-08-21. "But there are a slew of other places around New Jersey with their own pantheons. Consider the eclectic group at rest in Hillside Cemetery in Lyndhurst: the Pulitzer Prize-winning poet William Carlos Williams and both founders of the former industrial giant Becton-Dickinson, Maxwell Becton and Fairleigh Dickinson, for whom the New Jersey university is named. Three years ago, they were joined by the seminal punk rocker Joey Ramone, whose birth name was Jeffrey Hyman."
- ↑ Allmusic.com—Joey Ramone

External links

- The Official Joey Ramone Website
- Monte A. Melnick Ramones Tour Manager "On The Road With The Ramones" [1]

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Categories: 1951 births | 2001 deaths | American Jews | American vegetarians | Jewish American musicians | American singers | American punk rock singers | New York musicians | Ramones members | Lymphoma deaths | People from Queens | People diagnosed with obsessive-compulsive disorder | Jewish musicians

Hidden category: Articles needing additional references from January 2007