

Beat: Arts

UPDATE 1 -- Legendary rock singer Lou Reed dead at 71

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USPA News - Legendary rock singer Lou Reed, who was the frontman of the `Velvet Underground` and is considered to be one of the most influential musicians in the history of rock music, died in New York on Sunday from complications relating to a recent liver transplant. He was 71. "Yes it's true. I'm in shock," said Andy Woolliscroft, the singer's UK music agent, after Rolling Stone magazine first reported the news.

Reed died on early Sunday morning at his home in the town of Southampton in southeastern New York. He shared the house with his wife Laurie Anderson, whom he married in April 2008 after dating for 13 years. Representatives said Reed passed away as a result of complications stemming from a liver transplant earlier this year. "My husband had a big surgery, which went very well. A liver transplant," Anderson told the British newspaper The Times in May. "It's as serious as it gets. He was dying. You don't get it for fun." Although Reed achieved his greatest commercial success as a solo artist, his most enduring accomplishments were as the leader of the `Velvet Underground` in the 1960s. "If Reed had never made any solo records, his work as the principal lead singer and songwriter for the Velvets would have still ensured his stature as one of the greatest rock visionaries of all time," his biography said. Among the most famous classics that Reed wrote and sang for the group are "Heroin," "Sister Ray," "Sweet Jane," "Rock and Roll," "Venus in Furs," and "Lisa Says." But the group was unappreciated at the time for their experimental rock that broke lyrical and instrumental taboos, and Reed eventually left the group after 5 years of little commercial success. He would move back to his parents' suburban Long Island home and take an extended hiatus from music before launching his career as a solo artist, beginning with the release of his self-titled debut album in April 1972. It was followed in November of that year by the album "Transformer," which included his hit "Walk on the Wild Side" and made him a star in Britain. But Reed's solo work could not stack up to his work for the `Velvet Underground,` which gained a considerable cult following in the years after its demise and went on to become one of the most influential bands in rock music history. He was also known to have been a heavy drinker and drug user for many years, although it is unknown if it caused his need for a liver transplant.

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