

Guwahati to pay tribute to the 'Iron Man of Metal'



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Aiyushman Dutta 30 May 2010 16322 views

He was a man who sported some of the wildest hairdos ever conceived. A man whose fearsome presence enthralled people the world over. And he was the man behind some of the heaviest music ever made in the world. But despite all this seemingly “negative” traits, he still remained a hero nonetheless. Or so it was till a few days back. Around ten days back, May 16 to be precise, heavy metal lost a bit of its heaviness when it lost its biggest hero ever. Ronnie James Dio, fondly referred to as the ‘Iron Man of Metal’, died of cancer.

A pall of gloom seems to have got cast over the entire rock fraternity worldwide ever since news about Dio's demise passed around. For Ronnie can very well be said to be the man who shaped the growth of the metal genre. If Michael Jackson brought to the world his famous "moonwalk", Dio will be remembered for popularizing the famous "devil's horn" hand gesture, which went on to become an inseparable component of metal culture. A thorough gentleman to the core, the rich tenor of his baritone still continues to haunt his countless fans spread throughout the world. Ronnie James Dio was a man who, throughout his life, strove to keep aloft the metal banner, which he did with powerful and consistently excellent music marked by deep lyrical thoughts. As such, it was not surprising to see rockers of all hues in remote corners of the world, even in our seemingly far flung Northeast India, line up to pay tributes to a musician who is now being referred to as the "Michael Jackson of Metal".

For those unacquainted with the man and his music till now, Ronnie James Dio was an American heavy metal vocalist. In a career spanning over half a century, he performed with groups, like [Elf](#), [Rainbow](#), [Black Sabbath](#), [Heaven & Hell](#), and his own band [Dio](#). It would not be wrong to say that Dio, as he is fondly known, shaped the growth of the heavy metal genre. As a critic noted: "He developed his near-classical style of vocal production in an era when amplification was yet to be developed. Along with Bruce Dickinson of Iron Maiden and Rob Halford of Judas Priest, Dio pioneered the semi-operatic style of vocal production in metal, one instance among many of the genre's classical roots."

For once, musicians in the Northeast have left aside their differences and come together to hail the contributions of one of the finest musicians to have ever walked on the face of the earth. One of the first among them was Maharaja Pradyot Manikya Debburman, the King of Tripura, who remarked on his Facebook profile: 'Rest in Peace Ronnie James Dio. We will miss you'. I think Maharaja Pradyot Manikya Debburman is the only King in our country, and probably the entire world, who has been going all out to promote our rockers, especially those in the Northeastern corner of the world. I salute his dedication and commitment towards the growth of rock in Northeast India.

Meanwhile, musicians in Guwahati will be jamming in city-based cafe 'Blues' next Friday on June 11 in a tribute function organized by the Eastern Beats Music Society. The pub rock fest will see performances by Dhruva Sarma – front man of *Friends* and one of the pioneering rockers of the State, rock sensation Lucid Recess and a host of other musicians and bands from Guwahati and Shillong.

The tribute celebrations in Guwahati have caught the notice of music lovers all over the world. Mumba-based musician Harish Ramakrishnan tells me, "The initiative to hold a pub-rock fest in the memory of Ronnie James Dio is simply brilliant. I can hardly think of anybody paying a tribute to this legend, even though he's been such an inspiration to other vocalists. His end seems so much like the song he sang...*Die Young*... If only I could be there."

It is unlikely that the music community, especially followers of the metal genre, will easily forget Ronnie James Dio. And if I were to quote a musician friend of mine, the volume of work and reputation Dio leaves behind ensure that he will always be a 'Rainbow in the Dark'.

Aiyushman Dutta

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BY AIYUSHMAN DUTTA

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