

Roger Troutman (November 29, 1951 – April 25, 1999)



Roger Troutman was born in Hamilton, Ohio and was the fourth of ten children. This child prodigy formed various bands with his four brothers, including, *Little Roger & the Vels* and *Roger & the Human Body*. In 1975, he and the Human Body released their first single "**Freedom**".

Later the group changed its name to **Zapp**, and signed with Warner Brothers Records and released their self-titled debut album, where Roger revolutionized the use of the **talk box** with the funk hit, "**More Bounce to the Ounce**". The song peaked at number two on the *Billboard Soul Singles* chart in the fall of 1980. The debut album reached the top 20. Because of the fast-paced success of Zapp's first album, Troutman cut his first solo album in 1981, ***The Many Facets of Roger***, featuring his cover of Marvin Gaye's "**I Heard It Through the Grapevine**". The song exploded to number one on the R&B singles chart, helping the album sell over a million copies. The album also featured the hit, "**So Ruff, So Tuff**". In 1984, Roger released his second solo album, ***The Saga Continues***, which featured the singles "**Girl Cut It Out**" and "**It's in the Mix**" - which was dedicated to *Soul Train* and its host Don Cornelius, along with a cover of Wilson Pickett's "**Midnight Hour**" featuring the gospel group, **The Mighty Clouds of Joy**.

Alongside his success as the leader of the group Zapp and his solo career, Roger also became a hands-on producer and writer for other artists such as **Shirley Murdock**, whose 1986 self-titled platinum debut featured the Troutman produced hit, "**As We Lay**". In 1987, Roger scored his most successful solo album with ***Unlimited***, which featured the massive hit, "**I Want to Be Your Man**", which rose to number one R&B and number three on the Billboard Hot 100.

Troutman was featured with **Scritti Politti** on his 1988 hit "**Boom There She Was**". Three years later, he released his final solo album with ***Bridging the Gap***, featuring the

hit **"Everybody Get Up"**. He also made a guest appearance on **Elvis Costello's** hit single, **"The Other Side of Summer"**. After the platinum release of **All the Greatest Hits**, Zapp featuring Roger continued to tour and earned the reputation as one of the energetic and electrifying show bands in the country.

Roger was featured on hip-hop artist **Snoop Dogg's** 1993 debut, **Doggystyle** and in 1995 he was featured on **2Pac** and **Dr. Dre's** single, **"California Love"**. This song became Troutman's biggest-selling and most successful single to date as the song reached number one on the Billboard Hot 100 and sold over two million copies giving Troutman a Grammy nomination for Best Rap Performance by a Duo or Group. This success led to his top ten R&B hit cover of The Persuaders' **"A Thin Line Between Love and Hate"**, which he produced and featured his signature talk box alongside the vocals of R&B group **H-Town** and **Shirley Murdock**. He also produced the soundtrack for the **Thin Line Between Love and Hate** movie, including the club hit, **"Chocolate City"**. In 1998, Roger appeared in a remix version of **The Sounds of Blackness' "Hold On (A Change Is Coming)"**, which sampled Zapp's **"Doo-Wah Ditty (Blow That Thing)"**.

Along with the music, Roger and his brothers, for many years gave back to the city of Dayton, building new homes in urban neighborhoods via their family construction company. Throughout the 1990s until the end of his life, he continued to record, produce and tour throughout the United States and abroad.

Roger Troutman's star will never go dim and he will always be remembered as an icon in the music industry, influencing artist, such as **T-Pain**, as well as many other artists in R&B and Hip-Hop, proving the **legend** and the **music... lives on!**