

# Who Was Phil Lynott?

By **Alexander Baron** - Jan 4, 2016

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If you are under the age of about forty, you will probably not be able to answer that question, but it is quite likely you have heard at least one of his songs, probably *The Boys Are Back In Town*. Like **Lynsey de Paul**, Philip Parris Lynott was a songwriter *par excellence*, although in an entirely different vein, hard rock/heavy metal. Unlike Lynsey, who was an abstemious vegetarian, Phil Lynott was the archetypal rock star: live fast, die you. Thirty years ago today he succumbed to pneumonia, a result of his addiction to heroin. He was 36 years old.

Although he was not as famous as John Lennon, there are some rock stars who cast a giant shadow, and Phil was one of them. The band he formed and led, Thin Lizzy, is still extant, keeping his legacy alive. Its current line-up includes Brian Downey – founder member and the only drummer it has ever had! – and American Scott Gorham, who joined the band shortly after Phil decided to bring in twin lead guitarists on the departure of Eric Bell.



In his short life, Phil produced a considerable body of work, not only with Thin Lizzy but with the short-lived Grand Slam, and as a solo artist. Most of his better known compositions can be found on SongFacts, including what is arguably his greatest song, *The Sun Goes Down*, which he co-wrote with Darren Wharton, and which could have been his epitaph.

If you want to learn more about the man and his music, a good place to start is the [Thin Lizzy Guide](#), the brainchild of one of his greatest fans, Peter Nielsen, who never saw Phil perform in the flesh. Unlike the current writer!

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