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- Music review Muscling in on the Irish rock scene
- March madness
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## BLOGS

### Pop Music

- New NIN basically flips the bird to existing music sales models 1:47 p.m. PT
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### Classical Music

- Biking for Beethoven 1:47 p.m. PT
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### Music

- New NIN basically flips the bird to existing music sales models 3:33 p.m. PT
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- Mad About Movies
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## FORUMS

### Movies Forum

- Semi-Pro by CHASS 03/02/2008 12:20 p.m. PT
- Ferrells schtick is... by HankyHank 03/03/2008 12:54 p.m. PT
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### Hot Topics

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## MULTIMEDIA

### Multimedia Blog

- Stan Greer, That Tricky Fellow
- Bikes left behind on TriMet
- Meet Leap Day babies Zamorah Frazier and Chloe Jin
- Extreme skier launches self off Mississippi Head
- Fresh beets on the school lunch menu
- Hampton High's high...

## Christian rock pioneer Larry Norman, 60, dies

Wednesday, February 27, 2008

**KRISTI TURNQUIST**  
The Oregonian Staff

Christian rock lost one of its pioneers when Larry Norman, 60, died of heart failure Sunday at his home in Salem.

By Tuesday afternoon, Norman's younger brother was overwhelmed with evidence that the singer-songwriter's heart had been strong enough to affect fans all over the world.

"We're receiving thousands and thousands of e-mails," Charles Norman said. "Every time I read one, it's from someone who says he changed their life. He met them somewhere, and he bought them lunch, or they were on drugs and meeting him turned them around."

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Norman's death has brought renewed attention to his role as a pioneer in what's now a thriving category in the music industry. Norman's 1969 solo album, "Upon This Rock," is "considered pivotal in the development of Contemporary Christian music," according to "The Billboard Guide to Contemporary Christian Music."

Norman was born April 8, 1947, in Corpus Christi, Texas. His family moved to San Francisco when Norman was young, and he developed an interest in the music of Elvis Presley. He accompanied his father on Christian missions to prisons and hospitals, and was inspired to write rock songs that included spiritual messages, Charles Norman said.

After living in Los Angeles for many years, Larry and Charles Norman moved to Salem in 1994. "The Northridge quake destroyed our apartment," Charles Norman recalled. "Our mom and dad had just moved to Salem from San Jose. Larry loved it here. He liked the slower-paced lifestyle."

Larry Norman was inducted into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame in 2001, and cover versions of his songs have been recorded by artists ranging from Petula Clark and Sammy Davis Jr. to DC Talk and Rebecca St. James. But for all his influence, Norman was ahead of his time with his mixture of blunt lyrics, rock rhythms and Christian message.

"I'm sure he was surprised at the resistance that he got from the church," Charles Norman, 42, said. "But he wasn't trying to address them. Like a pioneer having to hack his way through the woods to blaze a trail, he met a lot of resistance."

In his song, "Why Don't You Look Into Jesus," Norman talks about someone who's still looking for casual sex after getting a venereal disease on Valentine's Day. As one of Norman's other song titles put it, "Why Should the Devil Have All the Good Music?"

Norman earned his biggest commercial hit as the lead singer of the folk-rock band People!

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The band's cover version of the Zombies song "I Love You" peaked at No. 7 on the Billboard chart in June 1968. In later years, Norman started his own independent label, recording additional solo albums while discovering other Christian artists. It all led to him being dubbed the "father of Christian rock."

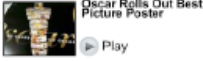
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