

Rita Lee, Queen of Brazilian Rock, dies at 75



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Image: El Zonda

Brasilia, May 9 (RHC)-- Rita Lee, ranked among the greatest singers and songwriters in the history of Brazilian music, died Tuesday at the age of 75, after being diagnosed with lung cancer in 2021.

"We communicate the passing of Rita Lee, at her residence, in Sao Paulo, capital, late last night, surrounded by all the love of her family, as she always wished," disclosed the family of the artist, who was doing treatments against the disease, through a statement on social networks.

The G1 portal assures that Lee helped incorporate the rock revolution to the creative explosion of Tropicalismo, formed the most revered Brazilian rock band in the world, the Mutantes, and created songs in her solo career with enormous popular appeal without losing freedom and irreverence.

Always modern, she was a reference of female creativity and independence during her almost 60-year career.

The title of "queen of Brazilian rock" came almost naturally, but she thought it was corny and preferred the nickname "patron saint of freedom".

Rita Lee Jones was born in Sao Paulo, on December 31, 1947. Her father, Charles Jones, was a dentist and the son of American immigrants. Her mother, the Italian Romilda Padula, was a pianist, and encouraged her daughter to study the instrument and to sing with the sisters.

At the age of 16, the young girl joined a female vocal trio, the Teenage Singers, and performed at school parties.

Singer and producer Tony Campello discovered the performers and called them to participate in recordings as vocal backups.

Later, in 1964, Lee joined a rock group called the Six Sided Rockers which, after some lineup and name changes, gave birth to the Mutantes in 1966. It was initially formed by Rita, Arnaldo Baptista and Sérgio Dias.

The site indicates that the group was fundamental in Tropicalismo, joining psychedelia to local rhythms, and became the Brazilian group with the greatest recognition among rock musicians in the world, idolized by Kurt Cobain, David Byrne, Jack White, Beck and others.

The Mutantes participated in the 1968 album "Tropicália o Panis et Circensis", the fundamental recording of the movement.

The end of the relationship with Baptista coincided with Lee's departure. The first solo album was "Build up", before leaving the band in 1970. She also released "Today is the first day of the rest of your life", in 1972, still recorded with the group.

From 1979, she began to work in collaboration with her husband Roberto de Carvalho, and was signed from time to time in her solo career. She wrote and recorded pop-rock songs with great success.

One of the most successful albums was "Rita Lee" from 1979, with "Mania de Você", "Chega mais" and "Doce Vampiro". (Source: Prensa Latina).

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