

R.I.P. DMX

Rapper DMX has died at age 50 one week after having a heart attack caused by a drug overdose. Friends and family had been holding a vigil outside White Plains Hospital in New York where he was on life support. DMX became a rap star when his debut album *It's Dark And Hell Is Hot* was released in 1998. He was quickly identified by his gravelly voice, aggressive style, and love of dogs. Ruff Ryders Management was in charge of his career and he became the central artist on their label and of the rap collective that included Eve. It was at this time that his working relationship and friendship with producer Swizz Beatz whose aunt and uncle owned Ruff Ryders began. His singles "Party Up (Up In Here)" and "X Gon' Give It To Ya" were pop anthems of the late '90s and early 2000s. The success of his music led to appearances in movies including the hip-hop classic *Belly*, *Romeo Must Die*, *Cradle 2 The Grave*, *Exit Wounds* and *Last Hour*. DMX was one of the top-selling artists during the Nielsen SoundScan era. He had signed a new contract with Def Jam in 2019 returning to the label for the first time since his 2003 *Grand Champ* album. *Redemption Of The Beast* released in 2015 was his eighth and final album. Fans were happy to see him in July 2020 when he appeared with Snoop Dogg for a Verzuz battle.