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Edited By Jonathan Cohen. August 29, 2005, 12:00 PM ET

## Voivod Guitarist D'Amour Dies

By Greg Prato, N.Y.



VOIVOD

Voivod guitarist Denis D'Amour, better known to fans as Piggy, died Friday (Aug. 26) at a Montreal hospital after a battle with colon cancer. He was 45. Although it was the group's futuristic lyrics on which fans most focused, D'Amour's complex, jazz-y guitar work fueled the band musically.

One of the first Canadian thrash metal bands, the Quebec-based Voivod (which also originally included singer Denis "Snake" Belanger, bassist Jean-Yves Theriault and drummer Michel Langevin) has released a string of genre classics such as 1984's "War and Pain" and 1987's "Killing Technology." But the band truly hit its stride on 1989's prog-metal effort "Nothingface," even headlining a U.S. tour over Faith No More and Soundgarden.

Just as it appeared the mainstream metal world might be catching up with Voivod in the '90s, Theriault and Belanger exited the band. Voivod continued recording throughout the decade and was in recent years rejuvenated by the addition of former Metallica bassist Jason Newsted, as well as the return of Belanger.

The new lineup toured as part of Ozzfest in 2003, and issued a new, self-titled studio album the same year on Newsted's Chophouse label. In 2004, Belanger appeared on Dave Grohl's star-studded metal detour, "Probot."

Voivod recently signed a new contract with the End Records, and was gearing up to enter the studio early next year. Newsted [recently told Billboard.com](#) that more than an album's worth of songs had already been demoed.

"It's the most complete demos I've ever been involved in," he said. "Snake has already chosen his effects -- exact timing of milliseconds for delay. We've had a long time to develop the demos, so there's about 23 or 25 songs that are absolutely listenable right now."

As for Voivod's legacy, Newsted said, "They created something a long, long time ago that may have been emulated many, many times since -- but nobody can do it like the original."

While it is unknown what will happen to the newly demoed material, D'Amour recently completed guitar tracks for a reunion by the obscure '70s Montreal band, Aut'Chose. First up will be Voivod's first DVD, "D-V-O-D-1," due Oct. 25 via Music Video Distributors. The project compiles all the group's videos from 1983-1991, as well as classic live performances from this period.

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