

Death of a Poet

Beat poet Allen Ginsberg dies at age 70

By LARRY McSHANE
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Allen Ginsberg, the counterculture guru who shattered conventions as poet laureate of the Beat Generation and influenced the next four decades of art, music and politics, died early Saturday at age 70.

The bearded, balding Ginsberg died in his Lower East Side apartment surrounded by eight "close friends and old lovers," said his friend and archivist, Bill Morgan. The poet was diagnosed eight days ago with terminal liver cancer, and he suffered a fatal heart attack, Morgan said.

"He made us see that poets were pop stars," said Lenny Kaye, guitarist with the Patti Smith Group and a recent Ginsberg collaborator. "He had a sense of liberation — sexual liberation, philosophical liberation."

Ginsberg, whose blend of drug-inspired visions, hedonistic sex and gut-wrenching autobiography first emerged during the 1950s, spent several days in a hospice after his diagnosis. On Thursday, he suffered a stroke, fell into a coma and never regained consciousness.

He returned to his apartment a day earlier after expressing a desire to die at home.

He wrote about a dozen short poems — one titled "On Fame and Death" — and "wore himself out talking to friends," Morgan said.

David Cope, a friend and fellow poet, received one of those phone calls.

"He called all of his old friends from many

generations personally to make contact with us one last time, voice to voice," Cope said Saturday. "To me, it was a beautiful gesture."

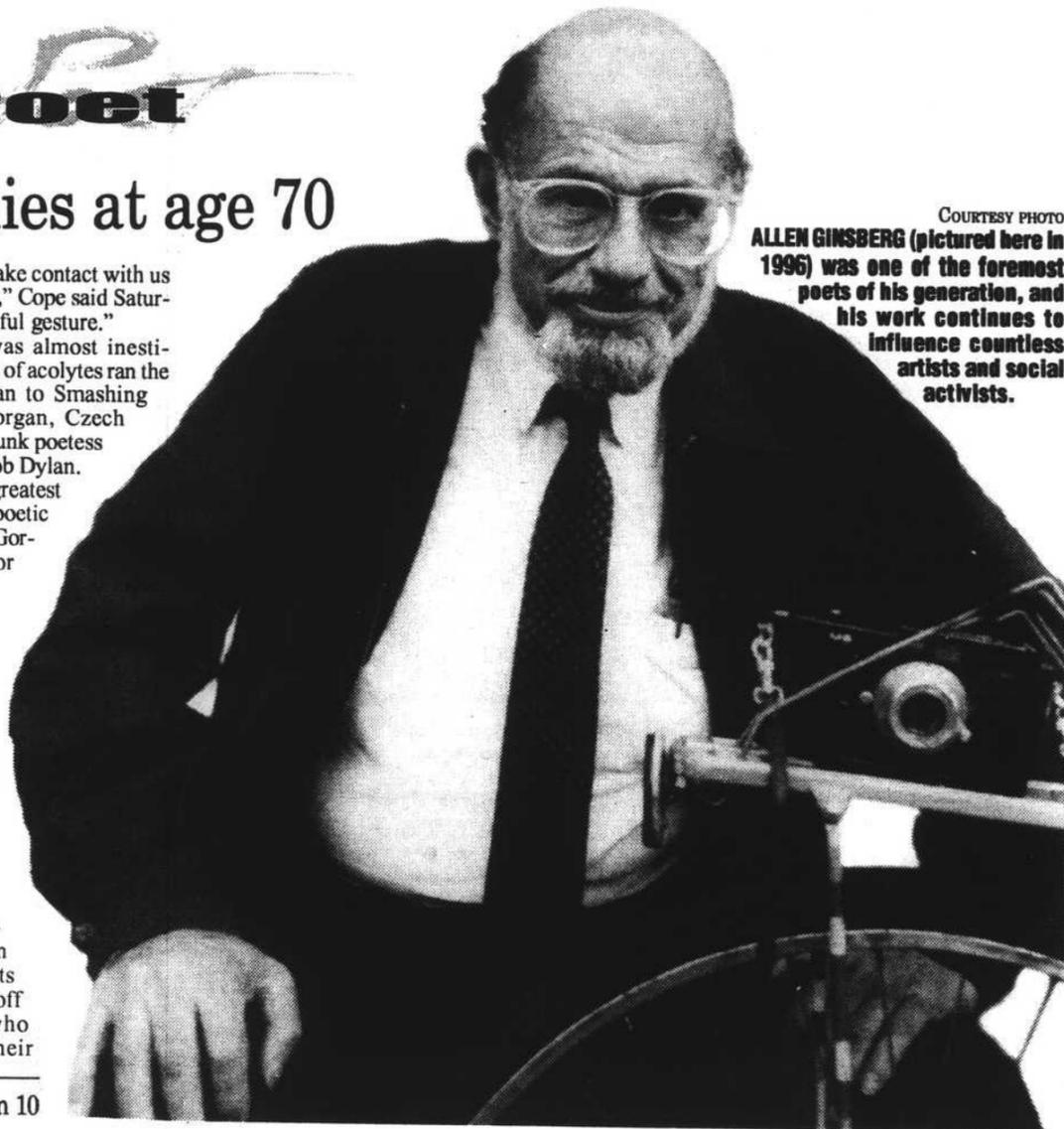
Ginsberg's influence was almost inestimable. His extraordinary list of acolytes ran the gamut from Abbie Hoffman to Smashing Pumpkins singer Billy Corgan, Czech President Vaclav Havel to punk poetess Patti Smith, Yoko Ono to Bob Dylan.

"Dylan said he was the greatest influence on the American poetic voice since Whitman," said Gordon Ball, Ginsberg's editor and friend of 30 years. "I think that's certainly true."

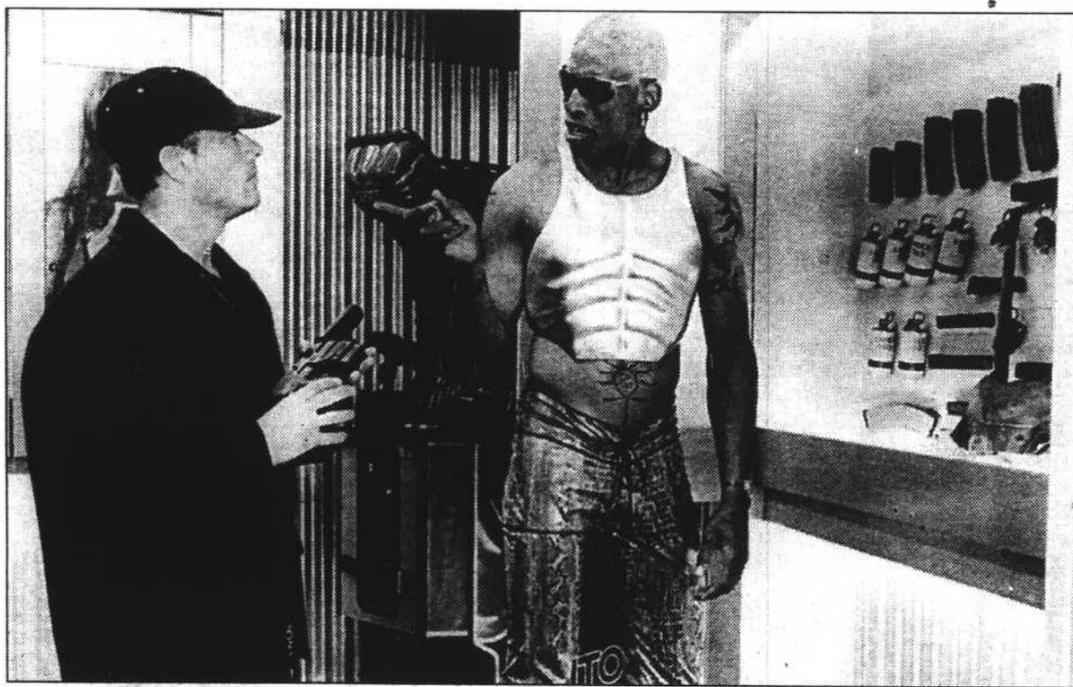
During the conservative, McCarthy-era 1950s, when TV's married couples slept in separate beds, Ginsberg wrote "Howl" — a profane, graphic poem that dealt with his own homosexuality and communist upbringing.

"Howl" then careened wildly through scores of surreal images: "a lost battalion of platonic conversationalists jumping down the stoops off fire escapes," people who "walked all night with their

Please see GINSBERG on 10



COURTESY PHOTO
ALLEN GINSBERG (pictured here in 1996) was one of the foremost poets of his generation, and his work continues to influence countless artists and social activists.



JEAN-CLAUDE VAN DAMME (left) and Dennis Rodman (right) star in the new action-thriller "Double Team."

'Double Team' lacks originality, story line

By PATRICK KELLY
Film Critic

If you love a good cliffhanger, a suspenseful and action-packed film with just the right blend of wit and romance added, "Double Team" is not the picture for you.

This film is the predictable story of a highly trained special forces agent named Jack Quinn (Jean-Claude Van Damme) who wants out of the spy ring so that he can start a family with his wife. His last assignment is the assassination of an international terrorist, Stavros, played with flavorless mediocrity by Mickey Rourke.

But the plot thickens (or curdles) when Stavros gets away and Quinn gets injured. Van Damme wakes up on an island clinic/prison

inhabited by spies who are too valuable to kill and too dangerous to be free. Quinn trains to get back into shape and — with Bond-like precision — escapes the island and meets up with weapons-dealer/technology expert, Yaz (Dennis Rodman).

Meanwhile Stavros has kidnapped Quinn's pregnant wife, forcing Quinn and Yaz to go from Antwerp to the French Riviera to Rome. The film ends with a ridiculous martial arts showdown (surprise) in the Roman Coliseum.

Usually action movies rely on breakneck speed, but this movie seems to be one long direction-less action sequence with no real substantial story line. Bizarre camera angles, meaningless slow motion shots and idiotic dialogue add to the loss of direction.

The Facts

Film: "Double Team"
Stars: Jean-Claude Van Damme, Dennis Rodman, Mickey Rourke
Director: Tsui Hark
Rating: R (language, violence)
Grade: D
Five Words: Rodman's film debut air balls

It's hard to tell if Rodman will ever have a substantial career in acting, but he will not be the last roundball player to cross over (or cross-dress, as the case may be) into film. I can see it now: Summer 1998 — Scottie Pippen is "Shaft"!

Theater Department

Double feature productions hit and miss

By LIZA HOLTMEIER
Theatre Critic

This weekend's Theatrix Double Feature — which ran last Thursday through Saturday at the Studio Theater — sparkled because of the individual performances of several actors.

The first show of the evening, "Savage in Limbo," revolved around the lives of five desperate and disillusioned people. During the play, they attempt to move their lives in a new and more promising direction.

Kristin Hensley gave an outstanding performance as the fierce and frantic Denise Savage. Her passionate portrayal of the contrasting dimensions of Savage's inherent toughness and fear was powerful. Her aggressive and sometimes halting steps illustrated Savage's explosive energy level, while allowing the audience to see her confusion.

Leticia Martinez struggled with her physicality in the opening of the play, lacking the lusty rhythm needed to portray Linda Rotunda. But she improved as the play progressed, and her swaying hips and scoffing head tilt soon symbolized Linda's inner fire and passion. Though the connection between her and Hensley sometimes wavered, her relationship with the character Tony maintained its dynamics.

Please see THEATRIX on 10