

## Was rock guitarist's brain tumour caused by his PLAYING? Doctors speculate about link between professional musicians and condition

- **Guitarist told by doctor his life-threatening brain tumour was prevalent in professional musicians**
- **'It seems to be too much of a coincidence,' prog rocker says**

By Daily Mail Reporter

A brain tumour that nearly killed guitar teacher Martin Reed may have been caused by his music playing, he claims.

The father-of-two started suffering from severe headaches and blurred vision in July - but his GP sent him home with nasal drops after diagnosing him with sinusitis. When the headaches continued Mr Reed sought a second opinion and was given the shock news he had a tennis-ball sized tumour behind his right eye.



Martin Reed, recovers from brain surgery at King's College Hospital in London in August

Doctors told him the tumour was so aggressive he was just two weeks away from death. The devastated 48-year-old was sent by ambulance to King's College Hospital in London for emergency surgery.

There he was surprised to discover that patients at King's who had been diagnosed with the same tumour, called glioblastoma multiforme, were also musicians.

His consultant Dr Ash Khan told him he had also treated an opera singer, a classical pianist and a jazz saxophonist.

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Mr Reed, who has been playing the guitar for 30 years, said: 'Dr Khan told me that my particular tumour was very rare and accounted for just four per cent of all tumours.

'He also told me it seemed to be prevalent in musicians because he'd had a classical pianist, an opera singer and a jazz saxophonist. He said it was a really weird coincidence, but he didn't have a theory on why it could be.'

Dr Khan isn't the only medical expert who has made a link between the glioblastoma multiforme tumour and musicians.



Rocking: Guitar teacher Martin Reed performing in August 2011, before his illness

Mr Reed, from Herne Bay, Kent, said: 'After surgery when I started radiotherapy at St Thomas' Hospital in London the staff there said to me: "We don't half have a lot of musicians in here with what you've got!"

'I was amazed. It would be fascinating for a study to be done on this type of tumour because it seems to be too much of a coincidence.

'I'm no scientist, but I do know that with many musicians the cerebellum in their brain keeps growing. I don't know if that's got anything to do with it!'

Mr Reed, who plays guitar for the Canterbury prog rock band Gizmo, is now recovering at home after undergoing six weeks of radiotherapy and chemotherapy following the five-and-a-half hour op to remove the tumour.

He said: 'I can't tell you what an emotional rollercoaster I've been on. My consultant told me that my tumour had only been there for about four weeks when I was diagnosed.

'To go from nothing to a tumour the size of a tennis ball within four weeks and then to be told you'll be stone dead in another two weeks is just mind-blowing.

'I have literally stared death in the face and survived. I'm still stunned that I've come through it.'

Mr Reed, whose partner Jenny Lancaster, 41, has been at his bedside since the diagnosis, said he was back playing the guitar within just three weeks of surgery.

He said: 'I'm still very weak and shaky from the radiotherapy and chemotherapy, but I can play for about 25 minutes before I get too tired.

'I was really worried that I would wake up after the surgery and have lost my ability to play the guitar, but what's amazing is that I can play it now better than ever.'