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# Hal Willner, Music and *SNL* Sketch Music Producer, Dies at 64

**He wrote on March 28 that had coronavirus**

[Daniel Kohn](#) // April 7, 2020

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Hal Willner, the music producer known for his offbeat compilation albums, has died at 64 due to complications from coronavirus, according to multiple reports.

[Variety](#) was first to report the news of Willner's death.

Willner was the longtime sketch music producer for *Saturday Night Live*, having been in the role since 1981.

On March 28, Willner wrote in a [tweet](#) that he had contracted in the coronavirus.



Over the years, Willner has worked with a bunch of music legends, including Lou Reed, Lucinda Williams, Marianne Faithfull, Laurie Anderson among others. His tribute compilation albums included a wide array of stars including Deborah Harry to Wynton and Bradford Marsalis, Elvis Costello, Henry Rollins, Dr. John, Leonard Cohen and Chuck D.

In 1988, he put together *Stay Awake: Various Interpretations of Music from Vintage Disney Films*, which featured the likes of Michael Stipe, Sun Ra, Bonnie Raitt, Tom Waits, Ringo Starr and more who took on traditional Disney songs and spun them their own way.

Most recently, Willner produced a tribute album honoring Marc Bolan and T. Rex that included a number of all-star contributions from U2, Joan Jett, Nick Cave and more. That album has yet to be released.

His film scoring credits include *Finding Forester*, *Gangs of New York* and *Talladega Nights*.

Willner's final [tweet](#) was a get-well message sent to [John Prine](#), who is currently hospitalized due to the coronavirus.

Tributes to Willner poured in as news broke:



[Daniel Kohn](#)

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