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METRONOME

FREE!

July 2026



Dave Mason R.I.P.



Mark Skin Radio



Robert Ellis Orrall



The van Gogh Brothers

Mark Skin Radio

Chris Johnson began broadcasting over the internet in March of 2012. His show became a regularly-scheduled program in April. Since then, Mark Skin Radio has added disc jockeys from across the United States and more recently, from the United Kingdom. Collectively, they bring a varied set of eclectic tastes and styles to the programming. They all dig deep and find great music from local scenes everywhere featuring both established and new artists.

The people of Mark Skin Radio are the air staff, contributors, artists and listeners. The free form family thrives by making the differences and distinctions between the air personalities and the listeners blurry and indistinct. They all collaborate together in making each show special. I queried Chris Johnson and he outlined the mission for the station...

METRONOME: Where are you from?

Chris Johnson: I was born in Vermont and came to Massachusetts to attend WPI.

METRONOME: How did you catch the music bug as a kid?

Listening to the radio early on, and my older sisters' records. Everything from Emerson, Lake and Palmer to Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young.

METRONOME: Who were some of the artists/bands you were listening to when you were young?

Growing up in Vermont, I was exposed to lots of music, but very little of it was Rock. Certainly Led Zeppelin and Deep Purple. I remember vividly as a little kid watching the Beatles on the Ed Sullivan Show and the house shaking when my sisters were upstairs dancing to their Beatles 45's. Whatever that magic was, I wanted part of that.

METRONOME: What got you interested in radio?

I loved the radio. As a kid, I got a play radio set that could "broadcast to your neighbors" and I'd sit and talk about the top hits countdown and pretend I

had millions of listeners, all late at night whilst being very quiet so as not to alert my parents. When I went to school in Worcester, things changed pretty fast. The FM Rock radio scene was quite an education and inspiration.

METRONOME: When did you start Mark Skin Radio?

In 2012, after becoming aware of an effort to keep WBCN-FM from Boston alive by its original Program Manager, Sam Kopper. After CBS booted WBCN in 2009, moving it to Sports Talk, Sam

was trying to keep things going with an HD radio and streaming station, "Free Form WBCN." The intention being to keep the older free style of the early days of WBCN, 1968 through the early 80's. A group of us became online friends via social media, and I became a supporter of the effort and met Sam at a live broadcast event at 1265 Boylston St. in Boston early in 2012. A good friend of mine, Rob Lembree, was assisting Sam with technical setup for Sam's rolling mobile studio, the "Gypsy Dancer."

Within weeks I was working on ways to do my own streaming rock station, based on that inspiration.

METRONOME: How did you come up with the name Mark Skin?

Its intended to be "sticky," as in stay in your head. Its loosely based on fun cassette mixtapes my brother, son and I would put together in the 1980's and our silly fake DJ names.

METRONOME: Does it hold any meaning for you?

It represents the mystery and magic of the shared listening experience and discovery of great old and new music, and its unforgettable effect when an audience discovers great music together.

METRONOME: What was the radio stations mission when you started?

Our focus has been the same since the beginning. We work to connect artists and the audience, bringing them together in traditional and new ways.

METRONOME: How many DJs work at Mark Skin?

We've had quite a few. There are currently 15 active on-air hosts, scattered around the U.S. and the U.K.

METRONOME: How did you find them all?

A number of us were friends early on in the online WBCN community, and since then we've grown from those roots with new members from the music fans here in the Boston area, and beyond.

METRONOME: When do you broadcast?

The station broadcasts 24/7, and currently we have several hours of live programming every week. There is no central studio. Our folks all broadcast from their home studios in Idaho, Colorado, Utah, Virginia, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Norwich UK. Our updated broadcast calendar is available on our website.

METRONOME: How can bands get their music heard on your station?

Our website at markskinradio.com has a page with details on how to submit music. We recommend and even encourage artists to listen in and request



their music once its submitted. We really do try to blur the lines between the artists and the audience.

METRONOME: What informs your choice of what bands you play?

We are genre-agnostic in general. We want rock-based music as our foundation, and our on-air staff are entirely responsible for their own content. Some shows have specific goals, but I want everyone to balance old and new music. We don't believe that "they don't make good music anymore." It's just not true. We call the influx of great new music "drinking from the firehose." Our DJ Adam Signore currently breaks ALL the traditional FM radio rules, effectively playing all new and unheard music on his Original Music Showcase (nominated for a '22 Boston Music Award). Kirsten Chervinsky's Rock Opera show includes fascinating rock music combined with opera music and commentary from singer and voice teacher Annelle Delfs.

METRONOME: Do bands have to pay for airplay?

Never.

METRONOME: Who are some of the bands you've played over the years?

An incredibly difficult question. Certainly anything and everything from the history of Rock, Soul, Blues, Gospel, Country, Americana, Indie, Pop, Punk, Metal, Dance, Opera - you name it. We have a massive and growing access to new music from this area and beyond. Current local acts actively touring, like Bad Marriage, singer-songwriters from all over the world, and legendary regional artists like Sal Baglio, Eddie Japan, Nervous Eaters and Jennifer Tefft.

METRONOME: Do you do live, on-air interviews? If so, who are some of the bands you've have on?

Yes, I do, and a few of our DJs also do. Folks can check some of these out on our website in the "Rock Talk" section. We've spoken with Robin Lane, Justine Covault, Eric Gales, Will Dailey, Derek Smith, Jon Butcher and many more. Our Michael J currently does a regular live segment with Smitt E. Smitty, a local Detroit/Boston rock star on Saturdays.

METRONOME: Where do you broadcast from?

I broadcast from my home in Lunenburg MA. We have Doug Folos from Utah, Jim Farrar from NH, Chris

Chin from Lowell, Adam Signore from Medway, MA, Destiny Costa (formerly of WBCN) from Portsmouth NH, Frank lafolla from Medfield, MA, Jim Rhodes from Boise, ID, Ashley Elizabeth from Deerfield, MA, Kirsten Chervinsky from Cambridge, MA, Lee Ashfield from Longmont, CO, Marian Ferro from Arlington, MA, Marc Hurwitz from MA, Michael J from VA and Steve Yourglvich from Norwich, UK.

METRONOME: Do you do remote shows at clubs?

We have done a handful of live shows from the Zullo Art Gallery in Medfield and The Amphitheater at Herter Park in Boston.

METRONOME: How can people tune you in?

Our website markskinradio.com and a variety of streaming applications on phones, computers and TVs (including Online Radio Box and Tunein).

METRONOME: How do feel about the Boston music scene these days?

We are constantly blown away by the talent and dedication from the artists in our area and all over the world. Its a privilege for us to meet and work with

all of them. Our online scene interacting with them and our listeners is, along with our love of the music, consistently showing the brilliance of the artists and their music, past and present.

METRONOME: Where can people go on the internet to learn more about you?

Our website has a section with bio's from our DJs and we encourage everyone to find us on facebook. Our page provides an opportunity to directly interact with the live broadcasters, creating a new way to enjoy a shared listening experience.

METRONOME: Is there something you'd like to add before we close out?

Thanks for the chance to reach out to your audience. I'll end with some of our "tag" lines:

~ We go everywhere!

~ The Home of Experimental Free Form Rock.

~What the hell is Mark Skin Radio anyway?

-- Brian M. Owens

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