

Mister Radio



Music is Magic: An Interview with Bradley Ski
McCollum Transcript

Music: (ULULATION)

Marshall: Your listening to Mister Radio, and I'm your host Marshall I first met today's guest in Austin, Texas on March 23, 2013 on South Congress Ave. between Annie Street East and Milton Street East, while I was recording street musicians for my Texas Road Trip podcast which is where I recorded him playing his original tune "[Sing Like The Sages](#)".

Music: ("[Sing Like The Sages](#)")

Marshall: A native of Austin Texas, he learned to sing and write from around the age of 12. He has studied Resource Environmental Science at both Austin Community College and Texas State University and prior to this attended school at the MediaTech Institute for Sound Engineering and Live Production. For his day job he is a Team Captain but after work he becomes a multi-instrumentalist of wind, string, and percussion instruments but considers himself a writer and singer first.

He also considers himself to be a magician just as much as a musician, because he feels that music is magic.

Currently in the process of creating short movies and movie soundtracks, it is my pleasure to introduce Bradley Ski McCollum.

Welcome to the show Bradley.

Bradley: Thank you for having me.

Marshall: Back in 2013 when you were busking on the streets of Austin, what was that like?

Bradley: Oh, well, it was pretty interesting. Um, I've got a lot of, I had a lot of musician friends at the time, so we were, I was jamming with a lot of musicians and I was going to school at Media Tech at that time. So it's recording also in the studio, like a high-quality studios. We had studio A and studio B, uh, that was for d"Dsaster", and that's on song on "Onyxus" album that I released in 2020. Um, the busking on the street was, I was, I was just had tons of songs and I wanted to play people on that. I was getting lots and lots of tips. And then I had a girlfriend and she's made artwork. So I had her set up next to me and we kind of geared it towards selling her artwork rather than music. So it's kind of where it wound up.

Marshall: And did you end up promoting her artwork in it?

Bradley: Oh, yeah, absolutely. Me and my brother helped build her a website [Bobnovaart](#) , helped motivator, give her some ideas on I for artwork kind of

motivation. I I'm, I'm the one who convinced her that artwork was good enough that she could sell it and make a living off it. I'm not sure if she's still doing it, but she was making pretty decent living off of it. Just doing that for awhile.

Marshall: You say you, you made a lot of friends, busking. What was it like? Did you have to get a permit?

Bradley: No, we knew the people. Uh, [Enoteca](#) [Vespaio](#), they were nice enough to host us for years. I would go out there almost every weekend and play something for sometimes I'd be out there every single day, playing out in the sun and just I'd be writing songs while I'm sitting there. I was a cheap guitar, but I would have musician, friends come down there sometimes and jam with me, or there'd be some traveling musicians and homeless people or something. They'd have a bunch of instruments and I'd sit and jam with them. We didn't need a permit. They let, they liked us. They liked that we, we would play music for people.

Marshall: There was certainly an eclectic bunch of musicians there. I remember one guy had a one man band. You were using electronics for yours. Did you ever have any strange or frightening experiences while you were doing this?

Bradley: Oh no I've lived on the street so in this city I'm pretty well known actually I would, cause I was out on the street. I would play a lot of music for people's stuff too, and I'm educated, so I would educate people and motivate people to get jobs and work. Um, so I was like a staple in Austin for as that's kinda what I'm known as around Austin is as a musician, but more of an educated

environmental sciences, trying to help people, I guess, is more what I'm known as. But there wasn't, there wasn't ever any, uh, I mean, well, down the street, trust me, I had my life threatened and everything a few times, but no I was never really fearful.

Marshall: You mentioned environmental science, are you still pursuing that interest?

Bradley: I got to my senior year. I was in Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society. I graduated from ACC with honors also. I was a, well, there's two different ones, honor societies. I got to my senior year and I was homeless and I left, my girlfriend was living in a car. And so I got a job working with General Motors instead, and that's what I'm doing now.

Marshall: You joined a lot of environmental groups, didn't you, are you still helping out?

Bradley: At present time. Yes. Uh, but I haven't been going to any meetings or anything like that. I used to go to, uh, volunteer, uh, like permaculture groups and we used to plant around. I think we did a planting in Georgetown, have a garden, a natural garden, a permaculture garden. Uh, now at this time I sold my van so I'm not really getting around a whole lot in the studio. I mean, most days I'm in the studio more than anything. And I just got done releasing that "Baby Blue", which is, is an attempt to help people understand that we need to make some changes on this earth, uh, because we're in the middle of the sixth mass extinction currently and, uh, eventually human beings are in line to go extinct as well.

Marshall: Since you brought up "Baby Blue", why don't

we take a listen to it, do you want to say anything about it?

Bradley: Uh, yeah, it's, it's, it's just my, uh, I feel like I'm not quite the head yet, I'm more the heart and that's just my, my, uh, attempted with what I have available to me and the money that I have available to me to make a short film to express, um, my desire to educate others and for us to come together as one and make some changes in the world.

Marshall: Let's take a listen to "Baby Blue".

Bradley: Thank you.

Music: (Baby Blue)

Marshall: That was "Baby Blue", written and performed by my guest Bradley Ski McCollum. You mentioned you're working for GM. That has nothing to do with music, but you're a team, a team captain?

Bradley: Well, I actually work for Teleperformance and their, uh, I guess, hired by GM in order to manage their customer experience, customer service. We handle warranty work and customers that can't afford to pay for the repairs we assist with that. We communicate with general motors management, uh, sales and after-sales and service. We work with the dealership directly, the service manager, customer experience manager at the dealership and general managers to provide a better customer experience for, for General Motors customers.

Marshall: How are you enjoying that work, does that keep you away from music?

Bradley: Uh, no, not at all. It's very fulfilling. I work from home. Um, like I said, I'm a team captain and I do escalations. So I do have some free time cause I get my work done right early. Um, and I, and I get other people's work done too because I want the customers to be taken care of and I feel like somebody is not following through on something like that. That's my job and what I want to do. Anyway, I call that customer and I made sure that they know that we do care about them and we are, we haven't forgotten about them. People are just busy.

Marshall: Let me get back to music because that's what I really want to talk to you about. When did you first realize that you had a talent for music?

Bradley: Well I've always written I've started writing when I was about 12 years old after, um, where I had a medical situation where I nearly, I guess I didn't nearly die, but I, I, I was out for a couple of days and I came back from that and I started writing and I just started writing. It wasn't necessarily lyrics. It wasn't necessarily poetry. I had been writing prior to that and studying a lot of. Mysticism. Occultism, Chinese, Asian philosophy and Taoism and Buddhism and stuff like that. But anyway, so when I came back to, I was writing and eventually, uh, I think it was six years later. I was 18. My dad taught me. He, he gave me a guitar and he taught me, he played some chords. And from there I just started playing. I was writing songs on the top three strings at one point. Cause that's all I had on the guitar. All I knew how to play on the guitar really. And I think it was all, it's all I had on the, on the guitar, strings and stuff. And anyway, it was, I was young and I just started writing songs and they weren't that great at first. And then I've written

thousands of songs over the years and I haven't recorded probably 5% of them.

Marshall: Do You read music?

Bradley: I do. I can read music. I'm not really, I can't really write it so much, but I can, I can read it. I can read tablature. Um, I taught myself to play the guitar and taught myself to play the piano and taught myself to play the harmonica any instrument I'm playing. I taught myself to play

Marshall: In your bio you say that my music is medicine, what do you mean by that?

Bradley: If I hadn't had my music with me, I would have, I used to be in a depressive state when I was younger because of the state of the world, I guess and the way people are, I guess. So I was, uh, my music was, that was the only thing that whenever I was down and out, there was nothing left. My music was always there to make me feel better. And then whenever I feel sick, 'cause I get, I have some stomach issues. If I feel sick to my stomach, I can play music and it'll make me feel better if I'm playing a heavy metal song. Cause I do all the genres. I don't, I don't, I'm not trying to sound like anybody. Uh, I do sound like some people, you know, have "Tool", is a major influence on me. Maynard James Keenan as a vocalist is a major influence on me, "A Perfect Circle" his other band. And uh, Billy Howard his guitarists. I have, I have some stylings that are really similar to them as well, but I do all kinds of music It's all medicine. And when I'm playing it a heavy metal song, it seems like it has the most effect on me to be honest.
(Laughing)

Marshall: You mentioned a couple of musicians. You said that you've been inspired by many musicians. Is there any musician in particular that inspired you?

Bradley: Yes. I mean, there's so many, I could just, the list goes on and on, but Robert Plant, uh, Bob Dylan, uh, Maynard James Keenan, Billy Howard Dell. Um, those are like the top at the top. Um, Pink Floyd is one of my favorite bands of all time. David Gilmore is my favorite guitarist of all time. So I mean, the list goes on and on Kirk Hamot. I mean, I could just, I could literally, they're all a big influence on me cause I listened to so much music and I've heard all of their songs so many times I can pick apart their songs. Like I can pick apart the instruments and listen to just that one instrument. Like there's so many of them really,

Marshall: Speaking of picking apart instruments, you also say that, "Music is mathematical, but people like to dance." I've often heard that many musicians have a mathematical mind how are the two related?

Bradley: Well, everything's vibration. That's this "Baby Blue" video. Just put out the song was written prior to the video. And I kinda, I kinda created this storyline from that song. It's mathematics because everything is vibration and the entire multi-verse in the Omniverse what is really the collection of everything. It's all vibration. So that vibration is going to affect change and throughout the world it's mathematical, because that, that vibration is a, is a mathematical certainty, depending upon the, the vibrations that you're putting. So it's going to be, it's mathematical something with the sending of the universe, the vibrations out in the universe, because

they're mathematically certain that you can calculate it perfectly. And that's the same thing with if you're playing a guitar there's numbers to it, there's phrasing to it. If you're singing, uh, there's always numbers involved with what you're doing. How many syllables are you using for each sentence? And how does it flow well with the, with the timing of the guitars mathematics, or are you playing a four, four time? Are you playing in a totally strange time? Like seven, whatever, you know, Really fast. Tool does a lot of those often, they're really mathematical when they come to their music, Danny Kerry, their drummer is extremely mathematical and they studied the occult and everything too. And that's the, that teaches that kind of stuff that teaches you about the stuff that other spiritualism won't teach you about, is that mathematical, mathematical side of things is really what it is.

Marshall: Now, you mentioned universe in your discussion of, of the mathematical aspects of music, and one of the pieces that you sent me was "Epichrome"?

Bradley: Oh yah, I just wrote that one, yeah.

Marshall: I listened to it with headphones and it took me on a trip through the Milky Way to the edge of the black hole.

Bradley: Absolutely.

Marshall: I'd like to play some of that for our audience, would you like to introduce it?

Bradley: Uh, yeah, this one was just me freestyling and on my, uh, Arturia keyboard and I just let it flow and I think I played it all straight through and just one sitting.

Marshall: Here we go with “Epichrome”.

Music: (Epichrome)

Marshall: That was Epichrome written and performed by my guest Bradley Ski McCollum. How are you marketing yourself these days, have you submitted any of your films to any film festivals?

Bradley: No. Um, that's, those are pretty much brand new. The Elysian was a little bit older, but that was an experimental track Elysian and it kind of provoked this idea. When I was, I was, I used Canva, which is kind of a cheap, uh, video editing software that I use. And they have a lot of great imagery and some actors on there and stuff. So it kinda inspired me when I was messing with that. I was like, I can make some movies with this, uh, with this imagery, if I put it together properly with the right music, I can affect some change. And like you said, take people on a trip. That's the whole plan is I want people to like, be totally engulfed in the music and taken out of their world and transported to the Omniverse exactly what I'm trying to attempt with that music. So. Uh, I haven't submitted any of it yet. My marketing, uh, I'm kind of, I don't make enough money. I do all, I pay rent by myself. So I use a couple of, growth programs for organic growth. And, uh, I may be, I have so many songs that are better than what I have out right now that I want to release for Spotify promotion and get on more playlist. But I mean, I might start promoting these that way too. I just feel like they're not the songs that I've put

out, aren't up to par with what I can do. I just don't, I haven't had the equipment. Uh, just now over the last couple of years, hadn't had the opportunity to start really recording my stuff again. And, yeah, money is an issue with getting the marketing going really.

Marshall: And you mentioned Spotify. I want to get back to Spotify a little later, but, uh, I'm just curious, are you always working solo?

Bradley: I am right now. Yeah, I have jammed with a lot of musicians in the past and I've been in a couple of bands. I had a friend of mine. I was working on like, we had some like "Tool" type music back in 2014, 13, and he died of a heroin overdose and I kind of put music aside for a while and I've married, uh, I was wasn't married, but yeah I was with Karen my ex for seven years and helped her start the business. So I put all that aside and at this time I'm yeah, I'm pretty much solo and most things I do except for work. Um, I may start jamming with some other musicians again, once I get another vehicle or maybe invite them over here. I feel like most of the musicians I've jammed with in the past, when I was meeting with a bunch of them a few years ago, wa didn't really have the vision that I was trying to, they were trying to do something else and they didn't really have the vision or the drive or the ambition. They didn't really have the goal. They didn't understand what I was trying to do. It's hard to get people on the same page. They don't understand, or they don't care enough, I guess.

Marshall: Back to the Spotify, you have an account and listeners can follow you on Bradley Ski McCollum Radio and also listen to your album titled "Onyxus", is that correct?

Bradley: Yeah, “Onyxus” and “Elysian” are under my full name, Bradley Ski McCollum and then “Baby Blue”. And, uh, right now the only, the only four out “Baby Blue” and “Get You High On My Love” are under “Roaming Sage” on Spotify.

Marshall: For listeners, and I doubt they're not too many listeners out there who are not familiar with Spotify, but how did, how does that platform work and how do you benefit from it?

Bradley: At this time, I haven't been putting a whole lot of effort into promoting Spotify. I know, I need to, like I said, I was trying to get some better recordings out first. I'm working on improving my engineering skills so I can get, I have a cheap guitar and a cheap microphone. I'm working on getting that upgraded as well. Um, because I have to pull out a lot of bad frequencies out of the, out of the microphone, out of the guitar. Mostly not really my vocals, cause I know how to sing into the microphone. I have a lot of experience into my microphone, so I know how to do that, but it's still not par. So, um, yeah, I'm still working on getting, like I said, money's an issue I've always been kind of forced, so I'm just, it's slow going is what it has been in the studio.

Marshall: Now, you mentioned earlier that you used to record in a high tech studio. What, how, how do you record nowadays?

Bradley: Well, now, I have, I have two microphones, but I'm using one. I got a producer bundle to, like I said,

it's pretty cheap. I'm trying to get a Neumann microphone, which is like a thousand dollars or more vocal microphone, but I'm recording both vocal then and guitar into one microphone from a Mackie producer bundle. It's like a 6, maybe like 50, 60, I think maybe \$80 microphone, probably cheaper than that. So, uh, I use that and then I use my, uh, I got an Arturia mini keyboard, which I use so I can play any instrument I want on that and I can load it with drum samples and I'm playing drums on there and I play the whole orchestra on there. So. That's my laptop. I got a nice laptop that I use. Uh, um, I utilize Reaper. Right now I like Pro Tools better, which is what I was trained on, but I'm using Reaper and it's really simple setup. It's just my, I can literally, I can literally be the Roaming Sage. I can take the roaming orchestra. I can take my laptop, my keyboard, and a microphone and go anywhere and, and perform. I can just turn my speakers and perform for people that way if I wanted to.

Marshall: On your Spotify account you have listed for credits, Nick Sanfilippo. Uh, how, how long have you collaborated with Nick?

Bradley: Nick is the individuals who died back in 2013. He was going to Media Tech with me. Um, and we were recording. We recorded "Disaster" all the songs on "Onyxus" where me and him except for "Onyxus", that was when I, I recorded. It's just a short little soundbite anyways, like a minute and a half that I recorded here at this apartment. But all the other songs on that album are his and my songs. And we were teaming up. He had already been sort of famous as a teenager, as a guitar, because he was just amazing guitars. I haven't been jamming with him because he died in 2013. But

everything, all of his music, I wanted to make sure, like I promised him after he died, that I was going to get his music out there, and I did, and there's people around the world that have heard it. It may not, I may not be super famous, but there's people around the world that have heard his music and so I'm still collaborating in that form.

Marshall: Well, that's a nice tribute to him.

Bradley: Absolutely.

Marshall: You sent me another track, titled, "Where Is The Sunshine?", and for me, it was like a mixed bag of an opening with a hint of John Cage and morphing into Country Joe and the Fish. Would you like to introduce it for us?

Bradley: Oh, man. Uh, yeah, th that song has about five different versions right now. Um, I think it's going to be a hit once I get it done properly. I have a version it's kind of like a Herbie Hancock. Um, it's, it's like the, my, the other version is kind of like Dark Side Of The Moon, uh, which I have some other tracks that I'm kind of working on a dark side of moon project too and that's kind of part of that, "Where Is The Sunshine?"

Marshall: Well, let's take a listen to "Where Is The Sunshine?"

Bradley: Okay.

Music: (Where Is The Sunshine?)

Marshall: That was "Where is the Sunshine", written and performed by my guest Bradley Ski McCollum. Much of your work appears to be in-house studio production, and

aside from busking, do you do any live events?

Bradley: Uh, no, not so much. I used to, uh, do some, uh, some open mics at Kick Butt Coffee and whatnot, but like I said, I was homeless until a couple of years ago and the only live events I was doing was the busking for awhile. I probably should. If I want to build my fan base up more, I should probably get back out there and do that. But I want to get a better guitar first and I had one, but it was stolen from me. And, uh, so I have like a \$30 guitar right now that I'm using even, and I'm recording with it too, and it sounds all right. But, um, strings are all on it, I just tuned the strings and everything. Um, so I probably should get back out there and start playing some shows or promoting to try to get some gigs. But I'm not a big fan of sixth street. I'm not a big fan of that whole scene. I'm not, I don't drink. I kind of more like the intimate scene. I would like to do like an arena show some at some point, but, uh, I would have to put that together before I could do something like that. And I don't have a big enough following in order to do something like that yet.

Marshall: For anyone who would like to hear more of your music, you mentioned Spotify, but uh, either listening to you live or with their earbuds, how can they find you?

Bradley: I'm all over the internet, uh, literally all over it. Um, YouTube is probably where I'm most active, just because I like visual stuff. And I also do visual, visual editing, and I like making those movies. So, um, YouTube is where I'm most active. Instagram. I share a lot of stuff from YouTube on Instagram, but that's where my, most of my new stuff's coming out. I'm trying to build

my following up on there, get it monetized so I can, uh, keep it really, it's all connected. All these movies are following one storyline thus far, and, um, eventually they're going to keep, they're going to get longer and then I'll get a camera and then they'll get better. And I'm going to record some videos of myself. But, uh, I have to keep myself motivated because I'm 37 years old and I've had a rough past and it's taken me forever to get to the point where I can do this. So, um, it's, it's not an easy process and I do it all myself. So they can find me on YouTube right now, they can find me on Instagram they can find Roaming.Sage is on Instagram. Well, YouTube, it's just [YouTube slash BradleySkiMcCollum](#), or you can just search for Roaming Sage and you'll find me on there. Um, and, uh, that's, that's really where I'm most active right now. There's a few places, but that's mostly where I'm active.

Marshall: I was very impressed with your videos, your films, short films, and I will be putting a link to your YouTube channel in the show notes. And I want to wish you luck, a lot of luck in your future musical pursuits, and I'm so happy you were able to take the time to speak with me. And I hope to hear from you again.

Bradley: Yes, sir. I do appreciate you guys, uh, involving me in this and I look forward to maybe doing it again in the future.

Music: (Baby Blue crossfades to ULULATION)

Marshall: You've been listening to "Mister Radio", and I'm your host Marshall. This program was written and produced by Marshall, our theme music was played by ULULATION.

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