

Highland

A new Glasgow radio station run by artist **Mark Vernon** opens the airwaves to Scotland's radiophonic workers

frequencies



Mark Vernon at home in Glasgow

"I really like the possibility of accidental listeners spinning through the dial and coming across something completely unexpected," says Mark Vernon, explaining the motivation behind Radiophrenia, a temporary FM art radio station broadcasting live from Glasgow's CCA during April. "Podcasts and webcasts are all well and good, but people have to deliberately listen to them. Of course there are existing art radio stations like Resonance FM and Sound Art Radio, which are great and I contribute to their broadcasts quite often. But I thought it's about time that Scotland had something similar and this might just be the first stage in that." An open call for radio works and programme ideas has received an encouraging response. "It's largely a case of build it and they will come – once the platform is there people will use it. The level of interest we've had already has been phenomenal."

The project builds on the work Vernon, a sound artist and radio producer, did with Radio Tuesday, a Glasgow based FM station which ran sporadically between 1999–2001. "We did a big project in the Transmission Gallery [an artist-run Glasgow space] and we based it around a recording studio where people could come in and record whatever radio work they wanted to: anything from poetry and plays to full bands. We'd record those things and broadcast them later the same day," Vernon says. "It made the opportunity available to people who didn't have equipment. These days people can do

that themselves with a computer, they can even broadcast, but with Radiophrenia we're still trying to provide an alternative to what's already out there. We didn't just want DJ mixes or things that there's already a home for.

"The idea is to give a home to productions that wouldn't get commissioned on mainstream stations, more experimental approaches to radio production and creation," he continues, "It's not necessarily whether the experiment is a success, it's the fact there's been some experimentation and engagement with radio as a medium. For me, the radiophonic is that special mix of sound, voice and music that elevates these things to another level in the listener's imagination."

Pre-recorded submissions range from a series of contemporary reimaginings of the radio works of Walter Benjamin by Katie Hastie and Amy Bromley, to field recordings of the Glasgow subway augmented with dark ambient synths by The Psychogeographical Commission. Other works explore the far right Pediga movement in Germany, Daphne Oram's sound work on Samuel Beckett's radio play *All That Fall*, and modern teenagers' responses to vintage pop hits.

Another strand of programming involves live to air performances, specially commissioned for the project. Vernon and his colleagues have aimed for a balance of local and international artists, so in addition to works by Felix Kubin, The Resonance Radio Orchestra, Peter Lanceley and Shelly Nadashi, there will be special performances by Glasgow based artists Kathryn Elkin,

Nichola Scrutton, Julia Scott, Jim Colquhoun and Elizabeth Veldon.

Kubin will be contributing a version of *Paralektronoia*, a performed essay exploring the phenomena of electricity and metaphysics through a mix of documentary and science fiction. "He is the only one of our commissioned artists who is not doing an entirely new piece," says Vernon. Nadashi, a former Glasgow resident now based in Paris, will be performing a new work based around PA announcements on public transportation systems. One of the more fully realised proposals comes from Veldon. "She is focussing on the nature and history of radio, including texts created from essays on the use of radio as a propaganda tool in World War Two and passages from a Rudyard Kipling short story about two people trying to listen in to the first transatlantic radio broadcasts by Marconi."

At this stage, most of the other performances are still in the development stage. "We want to take a chance," says Vernon. "People don't know exactly what they're going to do, but there's something about their practice that has indicated to us that they would do something interesting with this opportunity. It's also to challenge them to think about what will work in both contexts: before a live audience and with an audience of listeners at home." □ Radiophrenia broadcasts between 13–19 April at Glasgow's CCA. radiophrenia.magicmonkeynet.com, cca-glasgow.com Stewart Smith