



Rock star-turned-morning host celebrates 10 years on KUFX

Rock 'Kihn' Roll Mornings

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I'm going to let you in on a little secret. I'm not going to have any more hit records." ■ And so began my peek into the life of rock star-turned-morning radio host Greg Kihn, who, after charting such hits as "The Breakup Song (They Don't Write 'Em Like That)" and "Jeopardy" in the early to mid-'80s as frontman for the Greg Kihn Band, is celebrating more than 10 years as the morning host of Clear Channel's classic rock KUFX (K-Fox)/San Jose.

"I did a ton of radio back in the '80s with my band, and I felt comfortable on the air," Kihn says of his career lane change. "Things have worked out well. I never expected to do morning radio, especially since I'm not a morning person. It isn't what rock musicians are known for."

Kihn doesn't do your garden variety rock morning show. His is most definitely music-driven, and often it's music he's personally performing with fellow classic rock stars.

"Morning radio in general is so rancid, it's just the worst," Kihn says. "It's the lowest form of humor and name-calling and innuendo; it's just crap. I would never get up in the morning just to listen to radio."

"My show is not a morning show," he continues. "It's timeless and could happen at any time of the day. It's just me talking like I'd talk to anybody:

conversational, relaxed and it's clean. I get a ton of soccer moms that e-mail me every day saying, 'Gee, thanks for not doing the sexual innuendo, the T&A and all that stuff,' which seems to me to be part and parcel to most morning shows.

"Hey, I'm not a prude," he adds. "I got mine in the '80s, so I can see why guys like Howard Stern that never really got it when they were supposed to get it are always perpetually horny."

On any given morning, Kihn's show might feature an interview with rock royalty like Pete Townshend or Paul McCartney, or you may hear him jamming live on the air with anyone from Eddie Money to Dennis DeYoung of Styx to members of Cheap Trick.

"That's what sets my show apart from all the others," Kihn says. "Whenever my musician friends come into the K-Fox studios I'm ready

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—Greg Kihn



Greg Kihn Band's '80s Album Output:

- 1981: "Rockihnroll"
- 1982: "Kihntinued"
- 1983: "Kihnspiracy"
- 1984: "Kihntageous"
- 1985: "Citizen Kihn"

Kihn's KUFX Ratings

- Persons 12+: 3.1-4.2 (ranked No. 6)
- Persons 25-54: 4.1-5.1 (No. 3)
- Men 25-54: 5.5-5.7 (No. 2)

Mornings, 6 a.m.-10 a.m., summer-fall 2006
Source: Arbitron

with some good acoustic guitars and other instruments for us to do some songs live."

Kihn also believes he has a leg up on other rock radio morning shows because he has been on both sides of the microphone, as an artist and now a radio host.

"I know what a rotten interview sounds like, and I know what a good one sounds like. To me, a good interview is when I'm talking to someone and we're on an equal footing. For instance, if I'm talking to Pete Townshend, I'm talking to him as a fellow musician and not as a radio guy. I think that makes a big difference in what the listener is getting out of it."

There are other elements to Kihn's show besides music. His longtime producer and "best friend"

Chris Jackson helps steer him through topics pulled from the day's national or local news.

"I'm hawkish on the war in Iraq, but I'm a social liberal," Kihn says. "I don't go out and beat people up with my views. Occasionally, though, I'll put my foot in my mouth. The thing about radio is, if you say something people don't like, you're going to hear about it in five minutes for sure."

Kihn, who also voice-tracks weekend shows on classic rock sister KRFX (the Fox)/Denver, is preparing to self-syndicate "Greg Kihn's Big Rock Beat," a daily four-hour program for classic rock stations.

"We don't have a big corporation behind us," he says. "We're just a couple of guys. I'm paying for everything out of my own pocket. All the satellite time, the software and hardware, the licensing issues, all of it."

Kihn says he is taking a stab at syndication because most other shows he has heard sound like a guy in a studio voice-tracking.

"They all sounded like static to me, so I thought, 'Why not just bring the whole breath of fresh air that we're doing in the morning at K-Fox and make it available nationally?' It's worked in the Bay Area for the past 10 years, it should pretty much work anywhere." (You can hear a sample of the forthcoming show at gregkihn.com, or listen to versions of it at live365.com.)

Kihn still does about a half-dozen concerts per year with the Greg Kihn Band, now featuring his son Ry on lead guitar. He also recently issued a new live CD and is the author of four books.

The key to his radio success, he says, is adapting what he was in the '80s as a rock musician in a way that has relevance to listeners in 2007.

"I'm still part of the scene, still making money and hopefully I still have my wits about me." **R&R**

How Kihn Got The Gig

KUFX/San Jose PD Laurie Roberts remembers the station sending out a direct-mail marketing piece—part of which asked recipients who their favorite K-Fox jock was. That was 1995 when Greg Kihn was doing nights.

"He overwhelmingly got the best response," Roberts says. "At the time we were on a national search for a new morning show to replace Imus, and because of the direct-mail response we thought he'd be great for the morning show."

"Over 10 years later it's still a great-sounding morning show," Roberts says. "It's folksy and different. Nobody else does what we do in mornings."

Echoing Kihn's comment that he stays away from sexual innuendo, Roberts emphasizes that the station is not "Suzy cream cheese" in the morning.

"It's simply honest, real people radio without the blue humor." —**MB**