**James Leonard** was born in New Jersey in 1954, attended St. John the Apostle Roman Catholic grammar school where he was an altar boy, and Union Catholic Boys High School. He attended Rutgers University where he was a Henry Rutgers Scholar and graduated in 1977 with majors in music theory and modernist poetry.

Leonard moved to Ann Arbor that year to attend the University of Michigan School of Music, from which he graduated in 1980 with a Masters in Music Theory. He worked in, managed, and later owned record stores in Ann Arbor from 1977 through 2001, then went bankrupt along with the stores when music downloading became popular.

Leonard began writing music criticism for the *Ann Arbor News* in 1983, was fired for being too critical in 1988, and started writing criticism for the *Ann Arbor Observer* two weeks later. Bankrupt and in debt to the government, Leonard wrote 14,136 reviews, composition descriptions, and historical essays for the All Media Guide AKA Rovi between 2001 through 2010. He has been writing features on politics, government, and religion for the *Observer* since 2001.