

[MUSIC PLAYING]

PRESENTER: Oh, that's pretty stuff.

TRANAE Different.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: Yeah.

TRANAE Yeah.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: I've always liked everything you've done.

TRANAE I'm maturing. Actually, this '95 is going to be a great year for me, because this is-- I'm growing musically,

CHARDON: spiritually. And I found myself. I've started to see now what everybody was talking about. You know, they always say the light is at the end of the tunnel.

PRESENTER: Oh, yeah.

TRANAE So now I'm struck though, you know. I've had fear of relationships. I've had things that I've had to go through,

CHARDON: and then I blurted out what the music business and what being a celebrity is all about, and it's not as cracked up as I thought it was. So there's a big degree of loneliness.

PRESENTER: Yeah. It's more than just the glamour stuff.

TRANAE So now I'm learning to deal with the part about being alone. And dealing with our writing is-- that's more where

CHARDON: some people like-- I think I told you that a while back, we find so many ways of dealing with our let downs. People do drugs, and I just haven't found the drugs, or drinking and getting drugged up really make me feel-- I think writing it on paper, saying what I really feel is going to do more good--

PRESENTER: That really gets to that.

TRANAE --than getting drunk. Because if I get drunk, I'm a cry and fall out. That you see, that ain't going to do nothing.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: I know it.

TRANAE You know. But also, the music. The music that I'm doing for the new year is totally message music. I'm sure the

CHARDON: kids are going to listen to the beat of the music, but--

PRESENTER: Yeah, it's great orchestration.

TRANAE Yeah. If they would listen to the words, they'd be surprised.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: Yeah. Lots of times that they know the words and they don't realize that they've heard it.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

It's in there. Yeah.

TRANAE I've got one that I wrote. There's another one called, *These are the Best Times of My Life*, where I thought about all-- the whole era of drag. I just knew that drag would live forever. And so many people passed, and then I became just a novelty now. People will say things like, Oh, I could do drag, I could do this, and--

PRESENTER: No.

TRANAE --after doing it for 15 years now, I can tell them, no, everybody can't do it. Everybody cannot do it.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: Oh, absolutely not. No, no. It takes talent. And I'm so tired of walking into a club and seeing just some person in a dress with no talent. Give me more than an outfit, baby. Give me some talent. Yeah.

TRANAE There's so much talent out there, and we have up and coming, new people approached us. The only thing that I hate is that you and I have-- I think that the one thing that I--

PRESENTER: You put in your time, baby. You have put in your time.

TRANAE I don't think that the girls are committed like I am today.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: That's right.

TRANAE You know like I come here.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: Yeah.

TRANAE And I was telling somebody that I'm probably the oldest, single a person is ever on this radio.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: You are, absolutely. Yeah, absolutely.

TRANAE I wish more with this community. I mean, we're supposed to be like a family. You know, I feel like I'm a dead mother. Because, I mean, I'm the only one that will take chances to do things, you know?

I mean, I really wanted to get up and say, because I never dreamed-- all of the artists, I never thought in my wildest dreams when I first started doing this, that I'd be talking on the radio or singing or anything. I thought I was going to have a little wig for a couple of years and do a couple of pageants, and that was going to be the end of it. I mean, I have taken this thing way--

PRESENTER: Way beyond.

TRANAE Yeah. My grandmother even said. She said, I didn't think you were going to go this far with it. I've worked for a long-- it is, what, odd, and 15 years. I'm 30 years old.

PRESENTER: Oh, baby.

TRANAE And I don't feel like 30. I think it's because I use Oil of Olay.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: I think so. 15 years, wow.

TRANAE Yeah, I have. 15 years.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: That's amazing. That is amazing.

TRANAE And I've got so many people thank. I've got Hot Chocolate to thank. Donna Day, that's my mama.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: Oh, no one like Donna.

TRANAE [INAUDIBLE] rest in peace.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: Absolutely.

TRANAE Miss T.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: A real talent there.

TRANAE Yeah. And then I have people that we work together. Diane Michaels.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: Yes. Oh, gosh. Yeah, and now, Diane, I remember Diane when she was doing amateur drag and--

TRANAE She and outlaws.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: Oh, and she was standing there on the stage and scared to death.

TRANAE Yeah. That's the only person I could actually say, he drag her out, he looks like Reba. And every time he tries to

CHARDON: pull a different wig, it looks like Reba with a different color piece of hair on. I told him, he just can't help it, he looks like Reba.

PRESENTER: There you go. Just go with it, girl.

TRANAE Yeah. There's so many people out there I want to say hello to. Hello.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: Well, tell me about Florida.

TRANAE Oh, well, I was supposed to end up in Tampa, Florida. There's an agency-- well, there's an agent, actually. Let me

CHARDON: give you a little lowdown. Boy bar--

PRESENTER: Oh, yeah.

TRANAE We booked in a club. I mean, we booked it a group, by the name of the Good men. They're having [INAUDIBLE] I hooked up with their management in Amsterdam over the phone.

PRESENTER: Oh, yes I imagine.

TRANAE They performed in Houston, and I met up with-- we sat down and I was kind of like a thing, like they really, really believed me.

PRESENTER: I understand this.

TRANAE Yeah. Things will start to happen. I convinced them that I had a great product, that I had something that they would really like. If he could shop me around overseas. The agreement was that I needed to tour in the area that was the most prevalent with the dance market, which was Florida right now.

PRESENTER: Sure.

TRANAE So I was supposed to release-- I released, finished. I have six songs on the CD. I got to release that one as a single.

PRESENTER: OK.

TRANAE That's going to be set overseas, see what the Europeans think of it.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: Yeah.

TRANAE Hopefully, I should be over in Amsterdam too. Then I want to do a 90 day tour in Florida, Indian Tampa.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: Yeah.

TRANAE I haven't decided which city I'm going to start at, but I want end in Tampa, Florida. And that's, well, going to be different. Because I haven't been to Florida since '88. The only city I did there was Pensacola and Fort Lauderdale.

PRESENTER: Gosh. You haven't toured since--

TRANAE Private tours.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: What? Canada.

TRANAE Yeah, since '88--

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: Whoa.

TRANAE --was our last tour.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: That's been a long time.

TRANAE And then I've learned a lot more about myself. Vocally, I'm more powerful now. I feel like. And now I'm getting

CHARDON: my-- You know, it's amazing. People are--

PRESENTER: You're more controlled, vocally. I have noticed that.

TRANAE Now I'm taking my time. I think at first, you know what it was? I was anxious and I was just happy. I was happy to

CHARDON: be singing. So it was like, OK, girl, just scream. Scream and holler. You know, it was like Patti LaBelle, I was going through that same thing.

PRESENTER: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

TRANAE And then people kept saying, Oh, he sounds like Sylvester, and I felt like Sylvester drinking milk. I was just

CHARDON: screaming just to scream. And sometimes I'd scream so much, if you call at my house, I go, Oh-- you know, I'd be screaming just to scream. And say, well, girl, do you ever sing a ballot or do you ever--

And then I started really looking at myself, saying, Tranae, let's, show people what you actually can do with your voice. Show them that there's some depth and there's some emotion. Because anybody, we all can scream and holler.

PRESENTER: Oh, yeah.

TRANAE And I just want to take the step of dance music a little bit out, because it was so easy for everybody to like the

CHARDON: beat. I wanted to really appreciate the person singing, because that's what a lot of people, they don't give my vocals enough credit. We, actually, we go into this wholeheartedly.

PRESENTER: Oh, if you can't act the song, then, yeah, that's right.

TRANAE I want y'all to know my lights let off a bunch of months because of these demos.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: Oh. Yeah, I've heard those stories.

TRANAE We don't look at the-- we look at the glamorous side of the entertainment life. They see me on stage, they see

CHARDON: me with blonde hair and nice clothes. They go, Ooh, she must make big money. Well, let me tell you, as soon as I perform and get paid, that money goes back into the studio and it's all spit up.

I'm a starving artist. It goes right back into the studio. Goes soon as I make it. I call them to strip and say, Hey, I got a little money. I got a couple of hundred. OK, what can we do? He goes, well, let's get a couple hours in.

PRESENTER: Sure.

TRANAE I go there, we start playing around with music and coming up with ideas.

CHARDON:

But I don't feel like I'm broke. I used to get depressed while I spent the money, and would come home with the rent is due or the light bills due. I would say, man, you know I got no money, but then I thought about it.

I said, if I was to die and somebody was getting hold of all the material I recorded, there could be a chance that they would say, this guy had something. And I can make money while I'm dead. Hey, Elvis did it. That girl was the only girl I know could still get a book and she is dead is as sad. And she is getting standing room only.

PRESENTER: I know it, I know.

TRANAE And they got a Black son-in-law. Jesus Christ.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: I know it. Isn't that incredible?

TRANAE Michelle Jackson.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: I know, yeah. That's a lesbian marriage if there ever was one.

TRANAE For those who do read the vulture's voice, if you think I'm white? I think I need about 10 more treatments to look

CHARDON: like Michael. I'd be laying on the doctor's table for a few more hours longer.

PRESENTER: OK. New Year's Eve extravaganza at the Midtowne Spa.

TRANAE That's going to be great.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: That's next Saturday night, I'm going to be right here.

TRANAE Oh, well, we want to do it.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: Yes, I know.

TRANAE We were going to call you.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: I know.

TRANAE Call you.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: I know. We wanted to do a remote on this, and it just couldn't, couldn't be this time. But we're working on it with our equipment--

TRANAE Well, we have some things on the back burner--

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: --screwed up. Yeah.

TRANAE --that I want to do with KPFT. Because I think that as the years go on, and as we get through our lives, there's so

CHARDON: much we want-- I want to give so much more. I feel like I have so much more I can give still. Today, I don't know, but your life [INAUDIBLE] And there's so much I want to do. I do want to say hello to Rolanda--

PRESENTER: Hey.

TRANAE [? Former hippie. ?] And that's my next major thing. But I'm going to wait till I come back?

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: OK.

TRANAE Yeah. I'm going to wait till I come-- I'm going to put on something very big for them too--

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: Good.

TRANAE Because I think that--

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: They're worth it. Yeah.

TRANAE Well, people forget about the kids now.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: I know.

TRANAE We're thinking about crime, but we're saying that we want to stop crime, which is good.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: And it's always--

TRANAE Don't forget about the kids.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: It's always the big problem with working with kids is that adults are afraid to work with the teenagers that--

TRANAE They're terrified.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: Yeah. That some somebody's going to say something. You're trying to get in their pants or some damn thing, when you're only trying to work and help with the teenagers. So it's always been a big problem.

TRANAE My concern is, I want to-- my concern is, as a gay man, there should be-- this is my opinion, I hope I'm not

CHARDON: politically incorrect.

PRESENTER: It doesn't matter. You can be politically incorrect on this show. All we care about is that people respect each other.

TRANAE Yeah.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: Yeah.

TRANAE I don't think that there should be anyone in the United States of America homeless. There should be not a single

CHARDON: soul sleeping on the streets. No reason.

PRESENTER: You're right.

TRANAE I don't think so. And the young kids of all--

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: Yeah.

TRANAE I will I want to say this. And I want you parents, if any of you parents are listening. It angers me to know that you

CHARDON: parents will throw your kids out. You bring them into the world, and they tell you that they're gay or they're lesbian or they're confused, and you throw them out because they don't want to be what you want them to be.

So you throw them out. And y'all leave them, and we have to pick them up. And they're left in Montrose to fend for themselves. They have to eat. They have to sell themselves just to survive in a world that has totally turned their back on them.

That is no excuse. No excuse whatsoever. There should not be a single child on this Earth, a child, if they were adult that's a different story, but a child. I don't think that a 12-year-old child or a 15-year-old child should be turning tricks to eat.

PRESENTER: I know. And you see that every day.

TRANAE And I'm ashamed of you parents that bring these children into the world. My philosophy has always been that if

CHARDON: the Lord intended for everybody to be alike, He would have made us all alike. He wanted diversity. He wanted everybody to be able to choose. We don't have the right to tell no child or no one or no person, that because they don't act to perform what we want them to that there is something wrong with them.

This world is not perfect. This world was never perfect. And you could see from the things that happened today that because of the way we are, we're going to pay for it in the end. Look at the destruction we have caused our own world. Look what we've caused amongst each other. It is just-- it's a sad case.

There has got to be more love in this world. And people have to learn that the gift of giving is given without wanting anything in return. When you give somebody something, you should feel good just giving them. It should just make you feel great to know that you're able to give. But if you expected something to return, then what was the use of giving it? It's like a payback.

We take it for granted sometimes that as men and as women, that we could control everything. We control nothing. We didn't create this Earth, we didn't create the solar system, but we didn't create the storms, the hurricanes, the volcanoes. Whoever that person is they put all this together, he controls everything.

So we have no right to judge or make any unnecessary judgment on anybody that we didn't create. We could probably put our hats off to women for creating life, because they bring lives to the world. But after you bring them into the world, look what you do to them. You just drop them off.

And somebody made the comment to me a few years ago about being gay. They said, why am I worried about having children? Why should I go and make love to a woman to bring another child in the world when the shelters are full of them. That nobody wants. They're overloaded with kids that nobody wants.

And in order to feel like you're doing something with the world, if you're not part-- if you're not helping the problem, then you're part of it. You know, there are kids out there that are begging to be adopted. I mean, there's so much we could do to make, just make things much better than what it is.

And a lot problems that we really are having in our society, are really a result of our own ignorance and our own greed. We're selfish. We complain about the crime in Montrose, you know, but yet, OK-- the way to solve that problem is if we have our own kids destroy the property that they live on, then for all the people that have businesses offer these kids a job.

PRESENTER: Yeah.

TRANAE Teach them how to read or write. Give them their self-respect back. Let them know that in order to live in this country, you have to work. Give them-- my five keys of success have always been persistence, commitment, determination, ambition, and drive. If you don't have those five things, then you can't survive. You have to have something to make you want to do something in the world.

You can't expect the kid to be kicked out of the streets at 12 and think, OK, he should be working, he should have a job and making a \$50,000 salary. If you don't know how to add and don't know how to write, what do you expect him to do? And we can help. There's no reason why these children should be on the streets, standing on all the corners.

PRESENTER: That's right.

TRANAE No reason for of all of that. Shouldn't be.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: I knew if I had you on, you would eventually get around to giving my audience a Christmas message. And there's- - I mean, you always have some inspirational message. So good luck on your tour. And New Year's Eve extravaganza at Midtowne, Saturday, December 31. You He better call for reservations if you want a room, champagne.

TRANAE And if you want work out, get your body in shape--

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: Yeah.

TRANAE --talk to Joel.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: That's right, Joel will be there.

TRANAE Hello, by the way, Joel.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: And a wonderful show, emceed by Bubba McNealy with Tranae, Black Velvet, and--

TRANAE Courtney van Wales.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: Courtney van Wales. Oh, that's great.

TRANAE And then we have a little gift, Sabrina

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: OK. Thanks for coming.

TRANAE Love you all. God bless and happy holidays.

CHARDON:

PRESENTER: OK. And we're going back to Richard Audd with the East Pacific Symphony. Now, by special request from Gigi. You are listening to KPFT Houston 90.1 FM. Message?

GIGI: For the gay community.

PRESENTER: Happy Christmas, Yoko.

GIGI: Happy Christmas, John.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Oh Yeah isn't that great?

PRESENTER: That is great. We're not saying that John Lennon was gay.

GIGI: No. But he has a message for us.

PRESENTER: It certainly is a message for everybody.

GIGI: Let's have peace in the queer community.

PRESENTER: You bet. You bet.

GIGI: It's time for us to have peace with each other and with us that are different. And to look at the diversity not as a negative, but as a positive.

PRESENTER: Yeah.

GIGI: That people with differences are beautiful.

PRESENTER: Yeah. That's kind of the direction we're going here. We're beyond politically correct, and we're more in celebrating the diversity and respecting everyone's diversity.

GIGI: Right. And in celebrating the diversity.

PRESENTER: Yeah.

GIGI: Because if we were all the same, life would get so boring so fast.

PRESENTER: I know it. I know it.

GIGI: s there is such a beauty in seeing differences. It's what gives the spark to life.

PRESENTER: Now for something completely different.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Yes. That was Venus Envy again, with *Two in a Row*. Jeanette Isabella, and by request, Rhonda the lesbo reindeer. Before that, we had Richard Audd doing a little something here, I think it was Carol-- no, *The Bells of Christmas*.

We've been having a lot of fun tonight. We've been playing a lot of music and had Tranae Chardon stop by, and all of that kind of stuff. But I wanted to get a little bit serious here, because I don't want the next few days to go by without letting you remember something. That on December the 27th a man died in this city a few years ago, by the name of Bruce Cook.

Now, you may not remember Bruce, or you may have never heard of Bruce. But he was one of the original activists in this town. He started the PWA Coalition. He was instrumental in starting Stone Soup. He was a proud leather man. And he was sort of like the Brian Bradley of the '80s, if you will.

And in 1988 he made a speech in front of City Hall for a rally that was held there, put together by the originator of this show, Buddy Johnston. And I want to do a little-- I want to do that speech. Because what he said then, makes just as much sense today. Ladies and gentlemen, Bruce Cook.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[CLAPPING]

BRUCE COOK: One thing before I start. This is-- it's cold as hell up here, but I want you to see this. It's my favorite t-shirt. Especially important now, because I am both. Still gay and proud, and I'm now a PWA also. Which is the way I'd like to address you tonight, is as the PWA Coalition. And I definitely do believe it is people living with AIDS.

This past May, as I was at home, recuperating from PCP pneumonia, I experienced some of the love that helps us to celebrate life. The love for the friends I'd made during the NAMES Project tour. The love of my friends in the gay, lesbian parade week, '88. Now that may have partly been because I'd been threatened with my life if I wasn't well enough to participate as co-grand Marshal, but it still counts. Still counts.

And the love from all the people I've met during my time when I was involved with Stone Soup. That was all love born of crisis. Those times when our emotions are highest and we feel the need to express love now or never. But we soon seem to fall back into our safe, regulated lives of normalcy, lulled into a sense that everything is all right once again. That the world is going along as it should.

That's where we are wrong. That's where you in the celebration, or that's where you end the celebration, and pack it away like so many Christmas ornaments until the next crisis requires that we dig into the back of our closets to retrieve our pride and strength, as gays and lesbians.

We must celebrate our lives as gay men, faggots, homosexuals, lesbians, dykes, and every day we're alive. Not just when our friend's deaths cover us as a smothering shroud. Not just on a sunny Sunday during the Gay Pride parade.

Not just when the right political activity comes along, but every day that we pay our gay income taxes to the government. Every day that we pay our gay insurance premiums to companies like Prudential. Every day we spend our gay incomes to travel, buy homes and new automobiles. And every time we have the chance to elect our governmental representatives.

If you even want to be allowed to celebrate your life as gay or lesbian, you must proudly and openly do so to let those moralists, Republicans, bigots, and homophiles know that we indeed are everywhere, working, shopping, living, and even praying, side-by-side with them every day. And that every bit of anti-gay legislature that they support, every mouthful of anti-gay hate that they spew out is not going to get rid of us.

My hope is that all of their united efforts will only unite us more. To join together and fight them back as never before. Empowering us to fight for our rights as loving human beings. To celebrate life, we must not do it through silence, indifference, and inactivity.

To celebrate life, we cannot depend on our dead heroes, Harvey Milk Fred Paez, or the 40,000 dead PWAs across America to do it for us. To celebrate life, we must participate in that great celebration of being openly gay and saying it proudly, I am gay. Shout it with me, I am gay! I am gay!

Before I relinquish the stand, I'd like to speak to my fellow PWAs. We oftentimes fear the double stigma of being gay and having AIDS. Just as AIDS is not a social disease, just as gay is not a physical disease, it's very hard for us PWAs to face rejection, fear, and prejudice from our very own gay brothers.

Part of this is our own fault. We must empower ourselves to live with AIDS, and not to assume that this is a death sentence. We must take an active part in life as much as we are physically able to. We must all loudly insist on the best in social service and medical care. And fight to get access to promising new treatments. Now, not in four or five years.

We must also take responsibility to ourselves, as well as to our partners in our quest for fulfilling sexual lives. I believe that we are living with AIDS. That we don't come home from our doctor's offices with diagnoses in hand to lay down and die.

I know that there's no cure yet, but I know that there are a lot of promising treatments coming up. And unless we make noise, demand more access to them and speedier approval of them, then a large number of us here today will surely die from neglect and red tape.

[CLAPPING]

Red tape. Our voices must be heard loud, long, and clear. And our voice must be every PWA and PWR who gives a damn about their treatment and lack thereof. I'd like to read a brief paraphrase of Harvey Milk's and have everyone affected by AIDS follow.

As difficult as it is, you must tell your relatives. You must tell your friends if indeed they are your friends. You must tell your neighbors. You must tell the people in the stores you shop in. And once they realize that we are indeed their children, and that we are indeed everywhere, every myth, every lie, every innuendo will be destroyed once and for all. And once you do, you will feel so much better.

[CLAPPING]

Just as I loudly declared myself to be gay earlier, I just loudly can shout, I have AIDS and I am not ashamed. Now I ask that every PWA and PWR join with me and shout the same. I have AIDS and I am not ashamed! Thank you. I wish you love and life.