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SPEAKERS

Jewel Gray, Speaker 2, Speaker 1, Scott Lewis, Jimmy Carper



Jimmy Carper 00:07

Of a frank or sensitive nature, which may be considered objectionable by some, listener discretion is advised. Whoa, it must be Saturday night at midnight because you're listening to After Hours, a continuing tradition on KPFT Houston 90.1 FM. The crew of After Hours is ready to bring you news, interviews, and music, here for gay and lesbian people. Just as Gloria Gaynor says in this song, it's time to open up your closets. We at After Hours urge everyone to come out of their closets. By our definition, that means standing up for yourself and taking responsibility for your own life. But if you feel that you can't come out right now, because of your age, your job or whatever reason, that's okay, we're here for you too. So sit back, relax, and enjoy this week's edition of After Hours.



Jewel Gray 01:17

And you're here you're here live with After Hours on KPFT Houston. And this is Jewel Gray. And we're going to be doing some, okay, is that louder? Any louder and they'd be blowing your eardrums out. Okay, and we're gonna be doing some stuff tonight that's a little different. We're going to talk to a young man if he comes in here shortly, who's just recently gotten out of prison. We're going to talk to him about being HIV positive and in prison situations here in Texas. We have Trenee Chardon, who is here to talk to us, they were betting I wouldn't do that. To talk to us a little about what's going on. He's local entertainment, and has his own I believe he said his own record label, and is a really fascinating person to talk to you. I spoke with him at length the other day at work, and I'm looking forward to getting him here and talking to him. We'll be talking to him at about quarter after. And until then, what I want you to know is that I have a pile of stuff here. One of the things that we're going to do is we're gonna listen to Scott Lewis interview with, who did he who's this interview with?



Scott Lewis 02:33

It's not an interview, it's review.

J Jewel Gray 02:35

It's a review of, oh, that's right, Gemini, Gemini we were talking about and you have tickets tonight. And Scott is providing tickets tonight to give away one pair one pair of tickets to see Gemini at I imagine at that the usual place. And Curtains. So that's what we're doing tonight, we'll let you know our phone number here is JAM-KPFT. And later on, we'll be given away those tickets. So keep that number close so that you can call us and get those tickets. And what we're going to do now is go to, are we ready with that? I knew we would be. Jimmy so efficient tonight. We're gonna go to some music then we'll bring Trenee in, Sylvester 12 by 12 Collection, Bonus cut. "Do You Wanna Funk?" I had to be careful. Okay, and you're back, and we're back, and we're ready for this evening. And we're going to be taking some calls a little while to give away tickets to Gemini, not Genesis, Gemini. So you know, the phone number is JAM-KPFT. And you know that we'll take calls tonight if you have questions or if you feel like dedicating something to somebody or just hearing something that you know we've played here before. This is for Diane, rattling those papers, girlfriend, thinking about you laying there in that bed, thinking about you. Sounds like George Bush, I gotta watch that. So what we have here tonight is a special guest. Trenee Chardon who is some local Houston talent. And we're going to talk to Trenee about a variety of subjects. First, what we're going to talk about is what Trenee does here in town and some of the things that you've done before. This is really an impressive list of, is that high enough, that, this is really an impressive list of credits here, Trenee, and what I'd like you to do is kind of tell us what you're doing here in town and some, something about these credits here. I'm impressed, singing with Teddy Pendergrast. And Peabo Bryson, Diana Ross. That's impressive to me.

S Speaker 1 04:50

Yeah. Well, let's see. Where do I start?

J Jewel Gray 04:54

Where do you start? Well, what're you doing now?

S Speaker 1 04:57

Right now I'm in the process of recording the new single of a new group that I have, I had a former group back in '89. '90, '91. That was formerly, we're from here, not all of us, but we had a group together that that disbanded in '92, and now, I've just put together a new, took me about a few years to look back at the mistakes we made and we decided to put a new group back together and I did and I came up with two new vocalists and called the group Diverse House.

J Jewel Gray 05:30

Yeah, yeah, I like that. You do kind of a house music techno, real hard stuff, I understand.

S

Speaker 1 05:36

And first, most of the stuff we did was considered techno, pretty much techno. We all got across between techno, dance, and I guess you call it the traditional synthesizer music more or less. Today, of course, I've highlighted my whole format of music, and I came up with the idea that dance music was not as raw as it should be. Technology is so advanced that everybody was using synthesizers to produce the sound, everybody forgot what raw sound was about, what the bass sounded like, what a guitar sounded like. So I thought if I bring back dance music and diversify it with, along with the house sound, you know, that probably I could get a better sound. And that's how I came up with diversified dance music, how, Diverse House.

J

Jewel Gray 06:28

I like that. I like, because I like both kind of things that you're talking about. I'm really, I've heard some people do some experimental music in that, in that vein, and I really like what I've heard. You've done, you want to do this and you've got this new group and tell me, it says here that some of your idols have been you know, Sylvester, we play a couple Sylvester songs who you worked with.

S

Speaker 1 06:51

Yeah, well, back in, I was in San Francisco with a friend of mine. I was working before with a club, matter of fact, Finocchio's. I'm also people impersonator. And at that particular time, I was touring the country doing Tina Turner, and I had been a great fan of Sylvester's. Before I even met Sylvester, I met The Weather Girls, back then they were called The Fab lashes. Oh, but what happened was I met a guy by the name of Eric Robinson, which was his backup singer. And through Eric, I met Martha and Izora, and through them, I met Sylvester and I just fell in love with him. I think not because of the the exciting person that he was, but because of the music, the style of music he had. And through studio musicians that were people that I worked for, there was an agency here a long time ago called MRS. That has a lot of local talent in Montrose. And what they did was they had a referral service where they set up backup singers, we were, the original girls that I sang with back then, we are, we were backup singers, and we wanted so desperately to break into the business. So we, we head out, we went to different concerts, and every time was, a artist came to town, at Rich's or everywhere else, you know, I tried to get backstage and meet them and say, look, I can sing, I can sing, here's the tape. We'd get backstage, and eventually, these people called and things happened. And I got a chance to sing with Sylvester on several things. And then are, of course, because of him, I got a chance to do some great work with some people that he worked with, great producers, Marty Blackman and Kit Kesey, and it was an experience. But I was young and I hadn't really, my full, I hadn't reached my full potential yet of what I wanted. I really know what I wanted. I knew I want to be a singer. I knew I wanted to be a songwriter and artist, I just didn't know what direction I wanted to go. And Sylvester at that particular time was my only role model. I was a young gay man, I did, my all my other idols, you know, through my heterosexual years, I'm sure we were all born heterosexual. Well, through my years, with Diana Ross and, and different girl groups, The Pointer Sisters, sisters land, you know, The Three Degrees, and I just never had any, so what I felt I could connect with. And once I heard Sylvester, it was just you know, like, this, this guy has such power and it was the gospel thing too, for a church and I had, I wasn't exposed to the Baptist Church of Pentecostal churches. I wa,s I was Catholic. It was amazing

how those churches, how much power and how they filled the churches and some. And I didn't have that. I had a kind of a classical voice and it was, I had, the soul was there all the time, I didn't even know it. And it just took him to, for me to listen to him a lot. And I just, I don't know, listen here brought out, brought out my best.

J Jewel Gray 09:52

Well, it says here, you've also done shows with, you backed up for Diana. You backed up for Sylvester. Archie Bell That must have been interesting. I'd love to meet Archie Bell.

S Speaker 1 10:03

Well, aren't you Bill's daughter sang in my group, Donna.

J Jewel Gray 10:07

Yeah, it says, you're talking about, is that the group

S Speaker 1 10:11

Alto? Yeah. Donna, Archie Bill's daughter is, we met ,I do, years ago, there was a record company here in Houston called Houston Connection Records. And they had a good local talent. They were really good for young kids, like for me, gave me a chance. At that particular time, you know, the music industry, you if you didn't know anybody, you didn't get anywhere.

J Jewel Gray 10:33

Right.

S Speaker 1 10:33

And this record company took a lot of time with younger kids. And I would go into the studios and just ask for my chance to shine. And, a lot of, through them. I got a chance to work with a lot of artists. It was hard, what was the word you use for? I was very persistent, I was persistent. I was very eager. I was determined. I knew what I wanted. I just didn't know how to get it. And they, I just started.

J Jewel Gray 11:12

How old were you?



S Speaker 1 11:12

I was very young.

J Jewel Gray 11:13

Cause you're young, you're a young person now.

S Speaker 1 11:15

Well, no, I'm not really that young. But I do look young. I, you'd be surprised.

J Jewel Gray 11:23

Well, I was asking because a lot of the people out there listening are young people. Yeah. And I would just like them to be able to connect with that period in your life. Was this like 19 and 20?

S Speaker 1 11:34

No, it really was,

J Jewel Gray 11:35

25, 27?

S Speaker 1 11:36

No, I was

J Jewel Gray 11:37

Even younger?

S Speaker 1 11:37

Younger than that. Yeah. I just had a I came from a family that was very, how would you say it? Most of these kids can relate to this, very controlling? My whole life was

J Jewel Gray 11:52

You said Catholic. That's generally what that means.

S

Speaker 1 11:54

No, usually, we call it, they call us the yuppie syndrome. I came, I went to private school. I didn't, it was more or less. The kind of upbringing that most kids run away from. I ran away from home several times, because you go to school, and people talk about the the, the wealth that your family has, and you realize you have nothing. You realize why the daddy drives a Cadillac and a Mercedes, you really don't have anything. And more or less, I wanted to, I was taught to, my family instilled a lot of independence to be as a young child. I had to be an adult when I was a child. I'd say I had to be because of schooling. That was much pressure to at home to make good grades. And a lot of times I did good in school only to make the family happy. My dreams were, weren't their dreams. They already had my life planned out what they wanted me to do, where they wanted to go to college or to the college. The summers were booked, I went to private school. It's like where other kids had a normal childhood, I, education was our major thing at home. And it wasn't that I didn't like school. It just, I felt like I want to be a kid. I want to go to the park and do what other kids and I didn't get a chance to. So it made me very, I was very inquisitive as a child, I was very curious. I was a bookworm. I learned most of my knowledge. My education actually came from reading a lot, and music was my guide, I just knew, I could think, I just heard this voice. I thought well, when did I learn how to sing. It was like taboo at home. No, no, we want you to be a doctor, we want you to be a lawyer. And I should understand why would you? Why would my parents push me in another direction? Well, I had this in me and I didn't know how to get rid of it.

J

Jewel Gray 13:48

How do you folks support you now?

S

Speaker 1 13:51

I have a very, I come from three different families.

J

Jewel Gray 13:56

It's pretty big. Get a lot of choice who's supporting you.

S

Speaker 1 13:59

I come from my paternal parents. And I have adopted parents that, that I call adopted because they're, when I ran away from home, I had my own set of parents. And right now my, my active parents are pretty supportive of my career. I left home early age, and the people that I, that I picked to be my parents were pretty, pretty open minded. And thanks to them, I guess, a little bit, as much of their gratitude, I got a lot of wisdom from them. I deal with life much better now than I would have, I think if I had been with my original parents because I see the world as it

really is. And I see that we all have a part to play. Everybody. God gave everybody a script, and we all have a part to play in it. A lot of us are not given our fair share, a lot of us are not given a chance to read our parts.

J

Jewel Gray 15:04

What do you think your your part is? We talked earlier about really wanting to work with kids and letting them know about

S

Speaker 1 15:15

I feel that today, I have felt like I came to the community and come through life, juggling idea, 12 to be exact, I came to Montrose when I was 12. I've seen so much of the years. And I've seen so many mistakes of our past sisters or brothers. And I've always had a part of my heart that said that, what if I had the ability to, to give back, to help the future generation, acquire that erode and to at least move on a little bit better than we could, we could go. I would do so. And for years, I sat in the back, the person that's at the back and watched everybody else make mistakes. And I just got to a period of my life where, so much going on, it's unbelievable. Young, I see my audience today is a mixture of young kids that are anywhere from ages 17 to 25. And I look at their lives and I look at my life. And I look at the problems that they're facing. And I know what they're going through. And there are so many kids out there, first of all that are gay that come out of the closet, because they have nobody to go to. And I feel fortunate I had a family to go to that accepted me with open arms who told me whatever I wanted to be, be the best. And what angers me most of all is kids, the kids that don't have parents. They come to Montrose. This would be the place I guess for the way, I used to put it. The unwanted, the years as our kids get dropped off by their parents here. And the kids would hitchhike to get to Montrose. Suburbs, gay in their old neighborhoods, they couldn't live there because they wanted to be around their own gay people, people that can understand them. And I'd say to myself, however, these parents drop these kids off, and just throw them here, or just let them come here and they don't, they forget about it. And what happens is these kids have dreams, these kids like myself, well, what's ballet dancers, tap dancers, we were, we studied music in choir, we would dream it to be something big. And when you come to a community, when you come to a place that you feel is your only escape, you forget all about the dreams, you have to now remember about survival and allow these kids get a job at Wendy's or McDonald's, they're, they're getting the job to survive, to eat and to make it and then the dream that they had goes down the drain. So I decided that in order to ensure a positive function for the southern for them to at least look forward to, I decided that the only way that would ever happened is if I stood up and said, look, I got something to say. And I've got a, I've got an alternative. You know, there's got to be a way to help these kids fulfill their dreams. You know, we've thought about biggest designers and makeup artists, well, a lot of them were gay. And they had to have a start. Excuse me, but the start has to, they have to get their start from here, from their community, their people, peers. And if they can't get it here, where they gotta get it from?

J

Jewel Gray 18:49

Nowhere. That's why we have so many on the streets right now. Yeah, I really admire that. And I'm, I really am proud of the thinking that must have gone on behind that. We have a caller, I think it's Aaron is out there. I want you to know, Aaron, we haven't forgotten you. In just a

minute, we'll talk about that. But first I want to get back to this thing about kids, is, does that mean that you were going to be, something that you would do is be aware of local talent to support and encourage?

S

Speaker 1 19:21

I've got some projects here that I worked out, that are really, really, because my heart is really into, really, one is my production company Desired Productions, what I'm gonna do is go to start signing, maybe a year or two soon as I establish some other projects, local talent, musicians, dancers. I want these kids that have talent to be proud to come forth and say I can dance, I can play a guitar, I can sing, so that they will be able to do what they've always wanted to do. And they don't have to feel ashamed or afraid to say this is what I've always is wanted, but nobody gave me a chance, I want them to know that there's some, I'm gonna give them a chance, I want them to have their chance to shine, because I have to remember that the road that we paved, or my sisters or brothers before me, they're gonna have to walk with that road. And I wanted to be proud to walk the road, I want them to know the significance behind being a gay and lesbian person. I want them to know why the struggle was so hard and why it was so long. And I want this generation to do that, if one of them get on stage being a female impersonator, or a singer, or country singer, or a rock singer, if he's gay and proud, I want him to be able to say I'm singing it because I have something to say this. this is my way of giving back. But I also want them to be proud to remember the struggle that went along with being gay.

J

Jewel Gray 20:44

So you said something to me, I wanted to point it out, I wanted to address before we go to Aaron, on the phone the other day about being an artist, not someone who's gay, who does drag, but an artist first. That this is an art to you rather than that you are probably really diversified? Not just one thing.

S

Speaker 1 21:03

Yeah, I probably get misled a lot. That's our fault. We don't educate our community, the community has, we just like our, the people that, we don't educate people fully like we should. And one of the things that upset me most about all the people, the person, the drag, as they say, a lot of the kids that are coming out today don't really know what the significance, the significance behind the drag and the music and whatever. And there is a difference, there's a big difference. We need to, we need to sit down and realize that there are different types of entities that go along with the entertainment business inside of the gay community. We have singers, we do have actors and actresses, and we do have female impersonators. We also have female impersonators that do perform and drag live. And they're considered artists. I think we all are artists, to be very honest, because it takes a lot of talent and a lot of hard work to go, to do what we do.

J

Jewel Gray 22:13

Stand on my stage

stand on any stage.

S

Speaker 1 22:14

Yeah, but I consider myself an artist because I don't necessarily do just the drag. I'm a songwriter a lot with being a producer, I run my own management and booking along with my manager, my personal manager, Tim Rogers, and I have been in the music industry for a little over 10 years, almost 15 years to be exact. And there is so much, it, that entails being an artist. The community right now, today our society doesn't understand the drag thing. I think they think that when you are a drag queen, per se, they think that that's a, they confuse the entertainment with the sexual gender thing, sexual identity thing. And that's not true. I can't speak for the transsexuals, the transvestites, but I can speak for the entertainers. We, there are some of us, I can't speak for all of them. There are some that are performing and dressing up in the the female attire, because they enjoy, you know, the feminin, the feminine roll. But then there are some of us that are female impersonators where when the show is over, we're a little simple gay man, we wash our faces, the costumes or the claws, then we put on a pair of jeans, tennis shoes, socks, to take time to let our beards grow. And that's where we need to, we, people are combining the two that are forgetting that there are some of us out there that don't want to be women. It's not that we don't like them. Because that's not the choice that you know, that we've made. And it makes it makes up an entertainer that go that road feel very, very, very, very much unhappy where they can't cope with the situations and because people throw things out. So many times I've been through that. I've had, I've had all different kinds of comments lately. I have to, I have to sit down and tell them look, this is the way it is this is not what you've been told, what you see is not actually what's there.

J

Jewel Gray 24:10

And what about, Aaron is asking and I know you're out there Aaron, hang on. He's asking about discrimination in Montrose and how you feel about that. We'll talk about that a second and we'll go to air and see if he wants to elaborate. Okay. Do you see discrimination in the Montrose?

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Speaker 1 24:26

I see it every day.

J

Jewel Gray 24:28

What kind of discrimination? Just basic on the street kind of, different color than they are?

S

Speaker 1 24:37

Matter of fact, I see three types of discrimination. I see the discrimination between the butcher gay men and the feminine gay men. I see it against the female impersonators, the bars, the bar orders. I see it, I guess, yes, different colors and I think it has to stop. This is enough, enough is enough, I've seen enough. And I've seen too much, and I for one, I've given a lot to the

community. We have too much to lose from fighting each other. We are, that, this is not a war that we're in. We tried to make the world, we tried to make society first of all see us as people with respect and dignity.

J Jewel Gray 25:22

You're on the radio, you're on the radio.

S Speaker 1 25:24

We tried to make this, our heterosexual counterparts and the straight society of the world see that we are normal. We are not perverts. We're not child molesters and that we are educated and that we know what's going on. We're also a big part of the country with a republic. We, I mean, you know, there's no reason for us to even treat each other the way we do.

J Jewel Gray 25:44

That's true. What is it? You have to say about it, Aaron?

S Speaker 2 25:47

Well, this is Gus. I'm Aaron's

J Jewel Gray 25:51

Oh, you're Aaron's landlord.

S Speaker 2 25:55

It's true what she says, what Trenee says. I mean, we go to clubs and some people get asked for one piece ID or other after three. Yeah. Yeah, and some clubs let you go in there with a lady friend, yet she comes back alone the next night and she's not let in. That's not right. And you know, it's time for us to you know, stick together with other stuff going around and not fight amongst ourselves.

J Jewel Gray 26:22

That's true. What is it about the police substation Gus?

S Speaker 2 26:24

Yeah. For two blocks down the street, like Trenee says, and yet, people, you tell 'em Trenee.

J Jewel Gray 26:35
You know Gus and Aaron?

S Speaker 1 26:36
Yes, Gus is a really good friend of mine. He's a very, he's a he's a bartender. Hi Gus.

S Speaker 2 26:41
I just had to call him support.

S Speaker 1 26:43
Gus is one of the best friends I've ever met. And he's the person I go to when I have problems. I go cry to him all the time. And I was upset about the substation because I remember when I helped raise money for the substation, I felt like I had been cheated. I've had several incidents where I've been bashed, I have been a victim in Montrose. But unfortunately, I'm one of the ones that can fight. And I tend to like to fight. So usually when I get abshed, the boys end up going home a little bit. They don't get to brag. Yeah, they don't get to go home and brag and say they beat up one, they got, they get to go home and say one did fight back. And I had several incidents where I don't agree with the policies of the police department. And I also don't believe I agree with the community, the way they allow the city to dictate to their when and where and how the police are going to react to a situation in Montrose. I feel that people that live in Montrose, the patrons, the people that pay or let's say the community itself, the people that they see on a regular basis, these are bar orders, entertainers. Why are they harassing them? I've got more tickets in Montrose. I live in Montrose, I've lived there for 15 years. And I get more tickets for jaywalking, hitchhiking and I live there. I don't feel like I have to go buy a car to drive to Heaven when I live two blocks away from Heaven.