



RADIO DAYS: KMUN'S JAZZY HOST PAM TRENARY PUTS MUSIC INTO CONTEXT

PHOTO BY DANNY MILLER

Pam Trenary hosts her evening jazz show every first and third Wednesday at Coast Community Radio in Astoria.

By **KATE GIESE**
FOR COAST WEEKEND

ASTORIA — Few things touch the heart of a community like a local radio station, and Astoria's KMUN — the oldest broadcast on Coast Community Radio — is no exception. On the air since 1983, KMUN arose largely through the work of volunteers.

One such pioneer of the local air waves was Pam Trenary, of Astoria, who has volunteered at the station since its inception, and hosts "Evening Jazz" from 6 to 8 p.m. the first and third Wednesday of every month.

Trenary never imagined she would have a radio show. After the station was born, however, she began

treating listeners to jazz — hot, cool and everything in between.

Jazz history

When she initially took on the DJ job, she had, at best, a cursory knowledge of the genre. But Trenary — who grew up in Northeast Portland and now lives in Astoria with her husband, Hampton Scudder — came from a musical family.

"My grandmother played the piano and actually supported the family (with it) during the Depression," she said.

Trenary's mother also enjoyed jazz, and mother and daughter would go to concerts in Portland — on one occasion seeing Dave Brubeck, the great jazz pia-

nist, perform.

Trenary also listened to jazz while attending the University of Oregon, and got to know some of the local musicians who played in Eugene's jazz clubs.

"Jazz was coming to the universities then. I saw Count Basie there," she said. "Going (to U of O) really opened up my world."

She admits to having been an indifferent student until she became interested in civil rights. While preparing her fledgling KMUN jazz show, she drew on that interest, but Trenary also steeped herself in jazz.

"I read a lot, listened and hung out with people on KMUN's development committee," she said. "They all had terrific personal jazz

libraries that pretty much covered the spectrum."

Her knowledge of jazz came by listening to others, and by reading music biographies and black history.

"Jazz reflects the social history of this country and its race relations. You can't say it's a truly black art form ... but we wouldn't have it without their contribution," she said. "It's really a fusion of Western-Euro and African music traditions which came together down in New Orleans."

Personal favorites

The dedicated DJ tends to play early jazz on her program. "I tend toward the swing and blues sides. Mose Allison's 'In My Own Backyard' is a favorite, for

example," she said. "I'm also partial to jazz vocals, often by females, and love scat."

Another favorite is the American jazz singer Betty Carter (1929-1998). "She was a rebel, and I liked the fact that she had her own label," Trenary said, adding: "Anyone who sings scat doesn't like her much. Her voice is too pretty."

Not long ago, Trenary opened her show with The Manhattan Transfer and Pink Martini. "I'm also partial to jazz piano," she said. "Actually, I like it all except for bebop."

One big challenge of producing her show: "Coming up with listening experiences for people. It takes time to put a coherent show together

— roughly three to four hours. I like to have it flow and feature selections that tie it all together," she said. "I also try not to talk much."

With featured artists, she will sometimes offer background.

For Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, for example, Trenary found a speech the reverend gave at the International Jazz Festival in Munich. "Then I talked jazz a while and why it's culturally important — tried to give a context to things," she said.

So expect Trenary to treat listeners to great jazz and share informed insights into America's jazz heritage.

Her monthly playlists can be found at www.coastradio.org.