

Jeff Around Town – July 22nd, 2025

Jeff: It's Jeff Around Town, and back is Anne Marie Kenny. We had such a great time talking the first time. I thought we could talk again about all the incredible things that you've done. Your book, *Song for Bohemia*, is something we chatted about in our last conversation, and if you'd like to listen back to that, you could go to KVNO.org. Music, language, art, those are all themes that run through your life, certainly, in your book. How have you pursued those things? You've done all of those things so very well.

Anne Marie: Jeff, it's just a way of communicating. We communicate every day with many different people at different times, but music, for me, just elevates any kind of emotion or communication. Well, it's why I listen to KVNO, seriously, and it's also why, speaking of KVNO, I realize I can't do background music. I turn on the radio, and then I have to drop what I'm doing to start listening.

Jeff: Ah. Do you think that's because it's the musician's brain in you, the creative brain? Or...That's interesting.

Anne Marie: I think in our world, and I'm just coming up with this now, so I haven't thought much about it, but we don't do enough listening. We have all kinds of static going on everywhere, and writing a memoir, what I did was I had to listen to my memory and go back and listen again to conversations and try to listen as accurately as possible, not what I wanted to have said. And language, for me, is so beautiful to be able to write because, like right now in this interview, I have to find the words to really express what I'm trying to say, whereas when you write, you have way more time.

Jeff: Do you think it's more authentic to just have a conversation than to write, or is it a different kind of authenticity when you're writing because you're able to think back to previous conversations, maybe?

Anne Marie: I think they're both certainly authentic because one is spur of the moment, and you're going to get it right because what's right? What's right is what I'm thinking right now, and it's a thought. It can't be wrong, but writing gets it really right because you home in on exactly what you want to say.

Jeff: Yeah, yeah. I've heard you sing in English, of course, and in French and in Czech, and you speak those languages. Certainly, you're speaking English now, at least I'm trying to. When you first went to Paris and then later to Prague, you were how old?

Anne Marie: I was 21 when I first moved to Paris all on my own, and I stayed for a year. At Mercy High School here in Omaha, I had my French lessons. In those days, Catholic high schools made you take Latin, a wonderful base...

Jeff: Great base

Anne Marie: ... for learning any of the Romance languages. I was glad I did that, but then I moved right into sophomore year to French, and I took French for three years. Loved it. I don't know what it did to me, but it gave me a new way of thinking because as you know, because you speak French and other languages, you think differently when you are speaking a different language.

Jeff: You do. I find, Anne Marie, that when I am speaking in English, I'm learning French, I continue to learn it. It changes the way I think about English.

Anne Marie: Me too.

Jeff: Maybe even the way I phrase a sentence that I'm writing or something like that, or the emphasis.

Anne Marie: Don't you sometimes just want to throw in a French phrase, even though you're going to sound snobbish?

Jeff: I worry, oh my gosh, I have done that at the store. I'll say, oh, merci. It's like, oh, no, I'm not snob, it's just where my brain works. Do you dream in various languages?

Anne Marie: No, I don't remember dreaming in any various languages, although I'm a really avid dreamer.

Jeff: Does that inspire your other areas of creativity, your dreams?

Anne Marie: Yes, they certainly do. They do. I have woken up before in the middle of the night and after a dream and started writing, for example.

Jeff: Yeah, yeah.

Anne Marie: Or thinking about things or making different decisions.

Jeff: That's just a different part of your creative brain, your dream.

Anne Marie: I hope so. I think so. It's us.

Jeff: It is us. Ohhh.

Anne Marie: It's such a mystery. Language, though, I do love French. And then when I went to the Czech Republic, I did everything to learn Czech. And my Czech is pretty bad because in that country, everyone was wanting to learn English. I'm like the free English lesson person. But French, I would say I'm fluent.

Jeff: Anne Marie, merci.

Anne Marie: Je vous en prie. Je t'en prie pour dire.

Jeff: Thank you very much for joining me again on Jeff Around Town.

Anne Marie: Jeff, it was so nice to be here.