



My Day With The Four Freshmen by Dominic DeMalia (11 yrs. old)

The Four Freshmen recently came to Natick, Massachusetts, for a Friday night concert. My grandfather is Charlie Messier and he knows the guys really well, so he set it up so I could spend the day with them.

We met them at their hotel and I couldn't believe they remembered me! We all went to the radio station WICN for an interview. It was neat to watch the Four Freshmen talk about their music and know thousands of people could hear them all over the country. Then we went out to lunch. I got to ask all the questions I wanted. Curtis even gave me some tips on how to play my trumpet better! They were really nice to me and made me feel real special.

We then got to go to the sound check. This was awesome because I got to help set up the instruments on stage and unload all the gear. The sound check was really cool because I got to see how everything worked to make the show go on that night.

The concert that night was sweet! They really rocked, playing all the songs I love, especially **Day by Day** and **Route 66!** Someday I hope I'll be able to play those songs like Curtis. I had the best day ever! I want to thank Bob, Brian, Curtis and especially Vince, for taking time from your busy schedules to spend time with me. I want to give an extra big thank you to my Grampy because without you this great day would not have happened. I love you very much!

A Night to Remember with Stan Kenton by Guy Infante, Springfield, Ohio

I saw the Stan Kenton Band for the first time in July of 1944 at the open air dance pavilion at Indian Lake, Ohio. I saw the Stan Kenton Band for the last time in July of 1978 at the Convention Center in Dayton, Ohio. In between those two dates I saw The Stan Kenton Band 62 times. While any evening with Stan was indeed a pleasure to behold, all others pale in comparison with a truly memorable experience that I am about to describe.

It was a balmy August evening in 1948. The scene is back to Indian Lake, Ohio. My soon-to-be bride, Rosie Rankin, and I were enjoying The Kenton Band, standing in our usual position in the first row of the crowd of people gathered around the bandstand. Like out of nowhere, the skies opened up with a torrential downpour of tropical proportion. Most people took off for their cars or whatever shelter they could find. Rosie and I, and a couple of other couples, went up on the bandstand to get out of the rain. We were standing by the piano, talking to Stan. Soon it became obvious that we were in for a long siege, so Stan asked us what we wanted to hear. We told him our favorite at that time, "Eager Beaver." After that, and after each succeeding number, he kept asking what we wanted next. So we went through more of our favorites such as "Southern Scandal," "Intermission Riff," "Interlude," "Artistry Jumps," "Machito" and whatever else we could think of. This went on for the better part of an hour. When we finally couldn't think of anything else, we said we just wanted to hear Ferguson blow that horn. We can still hear Stan shouting out "Fergie- hey Fergie - do you feel like blowin'?" Ferguson stood up on a chair and proceeded to play Jerome Kern's "All the Things You Are" as the ballad for which it was intended. This was really beautiful, but not exactly what we had in mind. After he went through the number the first time, Fergie started again with an ear-piercing, heart throbbing screech that only Maynard Ferguson could create. From there he just seemed to go wild. Soon Vido Musso went over to where Ferguson was standing and picked up on what he was doing, with his tenor sax. Next came Milt Bernhart with his "bone," and they were followed by Eddie Safranski on the base, Shelle Manne on the drums, and of course, Kenton on the piano. For the next 10 to 15 minutes these six Jazz immortals proceeded to create the most frantic and utterly amazing Jazz sounds that these, or any other, ears have ever heard. We were getting so excited. My breath was beginning to come in "Staccato Stabs," as June Christy would say in her haunting rendition of "This is my Theme." When it finally ended, we could see that it was having the same effect on Stan. With shortened breath, and with that ear-to-ear Kenton smile, he said "Well, what did you think of that?" We were so stunned we could not respond.

We have related this story to many people over the years. They always say it is a shame that it was not recorded. While this is true, in a way it was recorded - in our minds and in our hearts. That incredible Jazz sound has remained with us for over 50 years. It is with us today. I know it will be with us on the day that we die and go to heaven to see Stan Kenton one more time.